

***Workers' Voice*, 3 May 1939, p. 4, Aboriginal Refugees Starving**

Seventy-five aborigines are practically starving on Victorian territory.

Driven again from the Cummeroogunja Mission Station (N.S.W.) by the harshness of the administration, this little band of aboriginal refugees (that is precisely what they are) returned to their former strike camp at Barmah (Victoria) about six weeks ago.

Denied sustenance by the Victorian authorities, unable to obtain food or clothing from any other source, shut off from any possibility of an appeal to the public by an obvious press "freeze-outs," the Barmah aborigines, including many women and children, are facing starvation rather than return again to New South Wales.

When they declared their first strike off and returned to the Mission they were promised a New Deal by the recently constituted N.S.W. Aborigines' Welfare Board.

They got it ... a New Deal that surpassed in harshness and official intimidation the old regime against which they had revolted.

There is no doubt that the Board, alarmed by its narrow escape from a prolonged aboriginal strike, and stampeded by the prospect of a public inquiry, resolved on "disciplinary" measures.

MANAGER'S POWERS

The officials doubled the powers of the Mission manager, Mr McQuiggan, a man whom, the aborigines allege, was primarily responsible for the walk-out in the first place.

The investigation promised by the Board when the aborigines first returned turned out to be a farce.

Evidence was accepted from aboriginal gangsters employed by the Mission, but the elected spokesmen, representing the 200 odd aborigines concerned in the walk-out, were not allowed to put their case to the "investigating" officials.

Strikers were victimized. In one case a mother of eight children was refused rations.

SECOND REVOLT

Goaded into a second revolt, nearly half of the aborigines who returned to the Mission on the Board's promises of improvements are back on the Victorian side of the Murray, and are prepared to stay here, no matter what the cost in suffering to themselves, until their right to be treated as human beings, and not as animals, is recognized by the Stevens Government in New South Wales.

"Voice" readers who would like to contribute to the aborigines' Strike Fund can do so through this paper.

All contributions received will be forwarded to the secretary of the Australian Aborigines' League, and will be acknowledged in our columns.