

***The Age*, 22 January 1938, p. 20, Australian Aborigines. Protest to Minister. Adelaide Comments Resented**

Resentful of the comments from Adelaide regarding the proposal that Australian aborigines should regard the opening of the anniversary celebrations in Sydney as a day of mourning, the Australian Aborigines' League has written the Minister of the Interior (Mr McEwen) outlining its attitude. The comment at which the league's complaint was directed was that attributed to Mr David Uniapon, viz., "the 'wailing' day will be availed of to criticise Governments and generally finding fault, instead of showing appreciation of the efforts being made to aid the aborigines".

In its communication to the Minister the league stated that it was perturbed by the references, which, if left unnoticed, might be prejudicial to it. The league had always been most courteous and appreciative, and had repeatedly informed the Prime Minister and Mr McEwen's predecessor (Mr Paterson) that it was seized of their good will. The league had felt that it had too good a cause to have to resort to any other policy, and years of dealings with the Federal and State Governments had proved the wisdom of its methods. Never had the league let up on its claim for equality or ceased to protest at any proposed adverse action, but it had always conducted the campaign with clean hands. It did not intend to depart from that course, being buoyed with the knowledge that its cause must triumph and by the assurance that the Federal Government desired it.

The day of mourning, the league continued, was but a protest to white fellow Australians. There was nothing ulterior in it, and the league was unable to appreciate how any reasonable person could twist the matter as had been done.

The secretary of the league (Mr. W Cooper) said yesterday that his executive was very perturbed at the bitter comment by Rev. J. H. Sexton, honorary secretary of the Aborigines' Friends' Association, Adelaide, regarding the day of mourning. The term "wailing" used by Mr. Sexton was mean, to say the least of it. It was felt that the wide publicity given to his remarks, unless repudiated, must prejudice the case of the aborigine in the minds of white people, whose good will the league sought to cultivate. Aborigines were not fools, and knew that in the Briton there was a deep sense of fair play. They had been "getting there" steadily over the years, and resented the attempt to break down the value of their work in such an underhand way.