

Daily Telegraph (Sydney), 24 January 1938, p. 2, Natives Here for Mourning Congress. Anniversary Day Protest

Three aboriginal delegates from Victoria arrived in Sydney last night to attend the Day of Mourning Congress on Wednesday (Anniversary Day). They were Mr W. Cooper, secretary of the Australian Aborigines' League, Mrs Marjorie Tucker, and D. Nicholls; interstate Australian Rules football player.

The congress will be held in the Australian Hall, Elizabeth Street. A Melbourne woman public speaker, Miss Helen Baillie, drove the delegates to Sydney in her car.

Miss Baillie said last night that the terrible conditions under which aborigines lived in Australia had caused her to devote her time and money to their cause.

“Treated Like Cattle”

“I have been In Central Australia and witnessed the degrading manner In which the aborigines are treated by white people”, she said.

“They are treated like so many cattle: their women are debauched and the men flogged and killed.

“I have visited politicians and the Aborigines' Board on numerous occasions to urge more humane treatment of our colored brothers, but it seems all in vain”.

Upon their arrival in Sydney, the party went straight to a public meeting called by the Rationalist Association in the Rationalist Hall, Crown Street.

A motion condemning the Government for having “coerced” the Menindie aborigines into taking part in the Anniversary Celebrations was passed at the meeting.

Rations Threat Alleged

The secretary of the Aborigines' Progressive League (Mr W. Ferguson) said he had received letters from residents on the reserve stating that the manager had threatened to cut off the rations of any aboriginal who refused the Government's Invitation to attend the Celebrations. ‘

Australia's day of rejoicing would be the aborigines' day of mourning said the Rev. T. E. Ruth at the Pitt Street Congregational Church yesterday.

The average Australian was not interested in the aborigines' fate and resented ‘the mere' mention of them, he said.

They had decreased in number from 300,000 to 60,000 as a result of the treatment they had received.