

***Advocate* (Melbourne), 12 January 1939, p. 21, Australian Aborigines' League.
William Cooper, Honorary Secretary, Australian Aborigines' League, Letter to
the Editor**

I have been very concerned since the advent of the Aborigines' Progressive Association because those in control of the movement have shown no desire to cooperate with the league, which has been in effective operation for years. The attitude of the new organisation has rather been to ignore the league altogether. I have tried to avoid any clash because I have realised the disservice done to our cause by want of unity among our white friends. A divided native voice would be much more harmful. I am now, however, compelled to speak because of the utterances of the president of the association, Mr. J. Patten, which are not in the interests of the cause.

The particular utterance to which I am taking exception now is that action of Mr. Patten in telegraphing the West Australian Government congratulating them on their attitude towards missions, "the aborigines' greatest enemy". This league and an overwhelming majority of natives realise that missionaries have been our best friends, and if it had not been for missions and the work and interest of missionaries, very few aborigines would have survived. We take off our hats to missionaries who have left the comforts of civilisation for the heat, flies, dust, bad water, and other discomforts of the mission field. It is too bad, in the light of the self-sacrifice of missionaries, for those who have to thank missionaries for all in life they ever received of any value to have such ingratitude expressed. Natives know their friends and deeply appreciate their splendid work. One of them is the writer in the person of.