

# AUST. CONDEMNED ON TREATMENT OF NATIVES

**CANBERA, Friday.** — Australia's treatment of aborigines was condemned before delegates and observers from every South-East Asian country at the United Nations seminar on human rights today.

Miss Shirley Andrews, of North Melbourne, said some States gave the police dictatorial powers over aborigines. She outlined cases of alleged abuse of the powers.

Miss Andrews, an observer at the seminar, was representing the Anti-Slavery Society for the Protection of Human Rights, which incorporates the Aborigines Protection Society.

Her allegations were answered by six Australian speakers, including the Victorian, N.S.W. and Tasmanian police commissioners.

After Miss Andrews had spoken a Singapore delegate told the seminar he had had to make assurances that he was not a journalist before he was allowed to visit an aboriginal reserve.

More than 80 delegates from 22 countries are attending the seminar.

## Arrest Likely

Miss Andrews said Australian police were more likely to arrest an aborigine than a white Australian.

This situation arose from Australian laws applying only to aborigines.

- Miss Andrews said:
- Australia's discriminatory laws applying to aborigines were a violation of human rights.
  - Some States give police officers dictatorial powers over aborigines.
  - Police arrested aborigines, sometimes violently, on flimsy pretexts.

## Searches

- Aborigines were the only people in Australia whose homes could be searched without warrants.
- Authorities continually avoided investigations of complaints involving aborigines.
- Some police officers who

had control over aborigines had come to believe they were an inferior race, not entitled to human rights.

Miss Andrews said the seminar had spent much time discussing the protection of human rights.

This protection applied even more acutely to abori-



• Mr. Porter.

gines than to white Australians because of special circumstances of racial discrimination which unfortunately existed in this country.

"In Australia police are much more liable to arrest an aborigine than any other Australian, and often under conditions which are a violation of human rights.

"The background of this situation lies in the discriminatory laws that exist in Australia, which apply only to aborigines.

"Those laws are most

severe in Queensland, Northern Territory and Western Australia, where the majority of the aboriginal population lives."

Miss Andrews said some States, including Queensland, appointed police officers as "protectors of aborigines."

"These police officers have very dictatorial powers, even to the extent that an aborigine may have to ask the local policeman for permission to draw money from his own bank account.

## Country Cases

Miss Andrews said police arrested a young aboriginal woman and her 18-month-old baby at Mossman, in Queensland, in January this year, with no charge.

The mother and her baby were physically ill-treated.

In Redfern, Sydney, police "rounded-up" more than 30 aborigines and charged them with offensive behavior and indecent language because of some trouble with a small group of aboriginal lads.

Interested organisations had found it very difficult to get the appropriate police department to investigate the incident, said said.

The aboriginal people tended to regard the police, rather than legislators, as instruments of tyranny, because they came in daily contact with them.

"More effective methods of dealing with complaints from organisations and individuals would provide greater safeguards for the aborigine."

## "Speechless"

Mr. F. Seow, Crown Counsel and Deputy Public Prosecutor of Singapore, said Miss Andrews' speech had left him "benefit of words."

"On an earlier visit to Australia I expressed the wish to see a native reserve.

"I had to go through a lot of red tape, and I had to assure people I was not a journalist," he said.

The N.S.W. Commissioner of Police (Mr. Allan) said the wrong impression could be created if the matter was left as Miss Andrews had put it.

## Isolated

The Victorian Commissioner of Police (Mr. Porter) said it appeared the cases mentioned were isolated from the point of view of complaints, and in each case investigations had been made.