"The absolute retention of all remaining reserves, with native communal or individual ownership." Principle 5, Federal Council for Aboriginal Advancement.

CLOSURE OF MAPOON ABORIGINAL MISSION

High on the West Coast of Cape York Peninsula, Mapoon Mission, conducted by the Presbyterian Board of Missions, at one time contained 2,140,800 acres.

The June 1959 report of the Queensland Native Affairs Department indicated 787,200 acres had been excised, to be leased to Colmalco Aluminium Corp. Pty. Ltd.

The Mission is now to be closed.
Forced out of Mapoon Mission, six adults and 10 children are living in this 12 ft. x 18 ft. hut at Mareeba.

Following the receipt of a letter from an Aboriginal elected representative of Mapoon, asking for assistance to maintain their position in the Reserve, the Cairns Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders Advancement League sought out past residents of the Mission who were living near Cairns.

With the threat of the imminent closure of the Mission being held over their heads, the Aboriginal families had been given the option of obtaining an exemption from the "Aboriginals Protection Acts," and making their own way in southern cities of Queensland, or remaining under the control of the Native Affairs Department and going to a settlement at Hidden Valley, where a house and 20 odd acres of land would be made available to them. Under pressure many have chosen exemptions and looked for a new life in the South.

Disgust
One elderly leader voiced the disgust of most when he rejected the first alternative, giving his opinion, "Not only is the land unsuited at Hidden Valley, but passes must be obtained every time people wish to go hunting, or even visiting—all we want is to be free. We want our freedom to live in our own country."

Before leaving the Mission he had also made himself clear to the superintendent, "I do not want to leave. It is not right to send me and my old woman away when we are going out life's door."

At the time of the interview this elderly pensioner and his wife were living in an old hut at Mareeba, 40 miles from Cairns, with their married children and grand-children. There were ten children and six adults living in the hut, which was about 12 feet by 18 feet. (See photo.) They had arrived at Mareeba to find it was not possible to obtain employment and child endowment had been slow in coming through, so that the family was forced to live off the elderly people's pension, their bank savings and some assistance from local church people and other Aboriginal people.

Another Aboriginal living at Machin's Beach, a few miles from Cairns, who left Mapoon in November, 1961, added, "Mapoon people desire to have their freedom to live at Mapoon. People lived there before I was born, and they could go on living there now. Pressure is placed on people to leave. They have been hammering people to leave for a long time. When we asked, 'If we go south and leave here to obtain our freedom, who will take over this place?' we received no reply.'

Possible Industries
Representatives from four families from Mapoon who were interviewed stated emphatically

Forced out of Mapoon Mission, six adults and 10 children are living in this 12 ft. x 18 ft. hut at Mareeba.
they believed there was potential on the Reserve for the community to make a living. The Aboriginal who had been head stockman for many years on the Mission, claimed the hunting grounds were the best in Australia, and the sand behind the Mission, off the beach, could grow anything. (This man had also stated, "The church and the Government are trying to help the people, but the people have it in their minds they do not want to shift from that place. We are a part of the people. If there had been satisfactory education for my children at Mapoon, I would never have left").

The people mentioned the following things could help them to make a living: crocodile hunting, making of shell beads and fans, beche-de-mer (if price right), fishing, growing of coconuts, citrus fruit and bananas. (The sale of 130 head of cattle and the slaughtering of 50 bullocks for home consumption are mentioned in the 1960 Native Affairs report.)

Ulterior Motive
The suspicion as to the reason for being deprived of their land, voiced above by the question, "Who will take over this place?", is based not only on the people's desire to remain at Mapoon, they also know of the land being leased to Colmanco, and that at least as late as 12th May, 1960, a church rally was held in Brisbane to raise money for a new church building to be erected at Mapoon.

Board of Missions' View
(The following information was supplied to the Secretary of the Federal Council For Aboriginal Advancement by Rev. J. Stuckey, General Secretary for the Board, in an interview in Sydney on 15th January, 1961.)

For 70 years the church has been pouring men and resources into Mapoon, and it is not possible to see any way it can be developed to enable the residents to maintain an independent existence. During the last seven or eight years, the church, in conjunction with the Queensland Government, has been attempting to find a satisfactory solution to the problem. Government experts have all reported unfavourably on the potential of the reserve. (A letter requesting a copy of the reports has been forwarded to the Native Affairs Department.)

The Mission settlement is itself on a sandy ridge on a peninsula, and is unsuited for a permanent settlement. Attempts to find another site have all been unsuccessful. Aboriginal residents have been consulted on this matter, and sites suggested by them investigated, all to no avail.

Criteria for such a site are:
(i) It must be readily accessible at all times and seasons.
(ii) It must have an adequate water supply.
(iii) It must have suitable soil to enable a village to be built and maintained.
(iv) It must be an area with economic potential, which would offer life for the future of the community.

Pressure To Leave
The Missions Board disagrees with the use of coercion to have the people leave Mapoon. However, certain pressure, "for the good of the people," is considered legitimate, when they are not facing the facts. They see the deterioration of the Mission, and the hopelessness of trying to maintain a community in the area has been explained to them, but many of them are refusing to make a choice of the alternatives. If the Mission was to withdraw the people would starve.

Rev. Stuckey was emphatic that there was no ulterior motive behind the closure of the Mission, and the persuading of the people to live elsewhere.

He claimed that some families had looked over Hidden Valley, and were now eager to go there.

What Can Be Done?
The right of the Aboriginal people to choose to remain at Mapoon must be maintained.

The inalienable right of the people living on the Reserve to own, communally or individually, the land previously recognised as their reserve, must be established.

Legislation must be made to grant royalties to the people for any mining or forestry enterprises carried out on the Reserve.

An external authority on the development of indigenous populations should be invited to assist Mapoon residents to develop local industries.

(N.B. — The International Labour Organisation, an agency of the United Nations, has successfully advised and assisted other indigenous groups in the way to best develop their land. The Queensland Government, through the Commonwealth Government, could invite the I.L.O. to send experts to North Queensland.)

Letters of Protest
Letters protesting against the closure of the Mission can be sent to:

- Mr. C. O'Leary, Director of Native Affairs, Native Affairs Department, Brisbane, Queensland.
- Rev. J. Stuckey, General Secretary, Australian Presbyterian Board of Missions, Box 100, G.P.O., Sydney, N.S.W.

Brisbane.

(Statement prepared by Stan Davy, Hon. Secretary for the Federal Council For Aboriginal Advancement, 409 Mountain Highway, Bayswater, Victoria.)
Statement issued by the Cairns Aborigines and Torrest Strait Islanders’ Advancement League, March -1962.

Mapoon People Object To Bamaga

Bamaga (Hidden Valley), is considered by the people at Mapoon to be an inferior location geographically and that game is in short supply there. The killing of game is a vital aspect of their basic diet, which also goes to supplement the mission ration.

Contrary to statements by the Department of Native Affairs, the League has been informed that it is not the desire of the majority of Mapoon people to be moved, and any arbitrary action by the D.N.A. is contrary to elementary justice.

Are Mining Interests Taking Over?

Has the decision to close Mapoon been motivated by the desire of Colmalco to extend their mining activities of bauxite from Weipa to this area? Already Aboriginal people at Weipa have been divested of their tribal lands of approximately 200 square miles.

Is the continual appropriation of Aboriginal Reserves to continue until such time that they are divested of land to which they are morally entitled.

The D.N.A. in its roll of “protectors” should ensure that the people at Mapoon are safeguarded against disruption of their way of life by the annexation of Aboriginal Reserves.

Proposal For Self-supporting Community

Five miles inland at Mapoon, families have established homes on more arable land than exists at the mission site, and the League suggests that instead of moving the people to Bamaga, that it would be advisable to re-settle them on this site. With proper guidance there is no reason why the people at Mapoon could not establish their own self-supporting community by the development of cattle grazing, native crafts, crocodile shooting, etc.

It is vital that these people retain their identity as a group, and be allowed to develop their own industries, of which they are perfectly capable of doing . . . any surplus of labour at Mapoon could be devoted to Thursday Island, where the D.N.A. reports that ample employment is available in the pearling industry.

The action by the D.N.A. to remove these people from their original tribal lands is indicative of the Department’s attitude towards Aborigines who are unfortunate to come under their control, and such is a violation of civil liberties and human dignity.

J. McGINNESS,
Secretary.

THE ACT—
AND THEIR RIGHTS

The following quotations are from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Queensland’s Aborigines Preservation and Protection Act.

I would remind all interested persons that this Act affects 26,278 people (DNA, 30/6/61), and—although it’s wickedly revolutionary of me to say so—these figures represent human beings.

The Act states: "The Director may . . . cause any Aboriginal, save and except an Aboriginal to whom this section does not apply, to be removed from any district to a reserve and kept there for such time as may be ordered by the Director . . . Any order issued by the Director for the removal of an Aboriginal to a reserve or another reserve shall be sufficient authority for any protector, or any officer of police to arrest such Aboriginal and to remove him to the reserve named . . ."

The Declaration states that: "Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each State." (Article 13.)

Quoting the Act again, it states that: "The protector shall undertake the protection and management of the property of all Aboriginals in the district assigned to him and may—subject to the approval of the Director—take possession of, retain, sell or dispose of any property of an Aboriginal whether real or personal . . . The protector or superintendent, with the approval of the Director, may order that any letter or mail matter addressed to or written by Aboriginals of the reserve, settlement or mission reserve over which he has control, shall be delivered to him . . . and may at his discretion be opened by him and perused . . . Every Aboriginal who disobeys an order of the protector or superintendent to cease dancing and/or other native practices shall be guilty of an offence. A protector or superintendent shall have power to prohibit, in writing, the playing of any game . . . any person found
guilty of playing any such game shall be guilty of an offence.”

On the other hand, the Declaration says: “No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family home or correspondence…”

(Article 12.) How educational it would be for certain self-righteous people to have to live under this benign Act on the idyllic missions and settlements they boast about.

R. HALL.

LETTER FROM ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY LONDON

22nd December, 1961.

Dr. The Honourable W. H. Noble,
Minister for Native Affairs,
Brisbane, Queensland, AUSTRALIA.

ABORIGINES RESERVE

Sir,

A number of this Society's correspondents in Australia have brought to our notice the hardship inflicted on Aborigines who have been told to move from the area of Mapoon Mission following the granting of concessions in that area to Comalco mining company.

It appears to us that the Aborigines are suffering under a great sense of injustice at this removal, and we request that you give us an account of the action taken by the Government, and the means adopted to mitigate the hardship involved.

At this time, when the Government of Indonesia is laying claim to Dutch New Guinea, the actions of Australia, as the administering Member State of another part of the island, are subject to critical examination. Arbitrary treatment of Aborigines in Australia will be noted when Australia’s fitness to retain the Trusteeship is considered. The whole record of Australia, both as regards Federal and State Governments, in relation to its treatment of dependent people, and those whose political development is insufficient to safeguard them from exploitation and injustice, will be considered as one. A good record in New Guinea will be cancelled out in this reckoning by actions elsewhere that create a sense of injustice.

This Society under its second title of Aborigines Protection Society has for over a century concerned itself with the welfare of people who are easily subjected to unfair treatment, but we do not wish to give publicity to the reports received until we have heard both sides of the question.

Yours faithfully,

THOMAS FOX-PITT,
Secretary.

Further copies of leaflet obtainable from Mr. STAN DAVEY,
409 Mountain Highway, Bayswater, Victoria.

THE FIFTH NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

To be held at Leavitt Hall, Wakefield Street, Adelaide, on Friday, 20th, and Saturday, 21st April, 1962.

Proposed Agenda:

Friday, 2.00 p.m. - 3.30 p.m.: "Aboriginal Education."
3.45 p.m. - 5.15 p.m.: "Fringe Settlements."
7.30 p.m. - 9.30 p.m.: Aboriginal Conference for People of Aboriginal Descent Only.
Saturday, 9.30 a.m. - 11.00 a.m.: Report From Aboriginal Conference.
11.15 a.m. - 12.45 p.m.: "Des-trabalised Reserves."
2.00 p.m. - 3.30 p.m.: "Tribal Reserves."
3.45 p.m. - 5.15 p.m.: "Co-operatives and Community Development."
7.30 p.m. - 9.30 p.m.: "Employment and Wages."

Attendance is open to all persons and organisations actively working for the advancement of Aborigines.

Enrolment Fee: 10/- per person registering for Conference.

Enrolments can be made through Mr. Stan Davey, 409 Mountain Highway, Bayswater, Victoria.

THREATENED CLOSURE OF MONA-MONA MISSION
(Information received 30/3/62)
Area: 4,318 acres.
Location, North of Cairns.

Due to the development of an irrigation scheme, this mission is under sentence of closure. The people are to be dispersed throughout the surrounding Tablelands.

Mona-Mona has been conducted by the Seventh Day Adventists since 1913.