

Vote 'YES' for Aborigines

ON May 27, a Referendum will be held at which all enrolled voters in the six States of Australia must answer "YES" or "NO" to each of two questions.

These questions are:

"Do you approve the proposed law for the alteration of the Constitution entitled 'An Act to alter the Constitution so that the number of Members of the House of Representatives may be increased without necessarily increasing the number of Senators,'" and

"Do you approve the proposed law for the alteration of the Constitution so as to omit the words relating to the people of the Aboriginal Race in any State and so that Aborigines are to be counted in reckoning the population."

The questions will be in the above order and must be answered separately by writing in "YES" or "NO" in the appropriate boxes. An informal vote on one question will not invalidate a formal vote on the other.

Unanimously Approved

The proposed Act on Aborigines would amend Section 51 of the Constitution and repeal Section 127. This has been approved unanimously by both Houses of the Commonwealth Parliament.

Section 127 reads: "In reckoning the numbers of the people in the Commonwealth, or of a State or other part of the Commonwealth, Aboriginal natives shall not be counted."

This section was originally included in the Constitution for two reasons. Sixty or seventy years ago there was genuine difficulty in counting Aborigines because many were nomadic. This is not the case today. Also, Aborigines were at that time not considered worthy of a vote. Today they are entitled to vote in all States and Territories of the Commonwealth, and therefore ought to be counted in the census which determines the size of the electorates. All Parties are agreed on the desirability of repealing this Section of the Constitution.



Will THEY have equal opportunities?

WRITE "YES" ON MAY 27.

P.T.O.

Section 51 reads: "The Parliament shall, subject to this Constitution, have power to make laws for the peace, order and good government of the Commonwealth with respect to (xxvi); the people of any race OTHER THAN THE ABORIGINAL RACE in any State, for whom it is deemed necessary to make special laws."

It is proposed to delete the words, "other than the Aboriginal race in any State." This will enable the Commonwealth to make special laws in relation to Aborigines anywhere in Australia.

Would Help States

This need not conflict in any way with State powers. Rather, it should result in the Commonwealth helping the States—for instance, with financial assistance for Aboriginal housing, vocational training, etc. This would particularly benefit Western Australia and

Queensland, which have large Aboriginal populations.

In view of the special disadvantages of lack of capital, education and "know-how" suffered by the Aborigines, there is a strong argument for special Commonwealth legislation to enable Aborigines to overcome their disadvantages.

This principle is widely applied to other classes of peoples, for instance, ex-servicemen under the Repatriation Act.

World opinion holds Australians collectively responsible for the treatment and conditions of the Aboriginal people. Proper race relations is a national and international issue which therefore ought to be dealt with by Australia at a national level as well as at the State and local levels. At present there are six different Aboriginal administrations with six different policies.



Aborigines are a national responsibility. We must see to it that the National Parliament is able to accept that responsibility. We can make this possible by writing "YES" for Aborigines on May 27.

Authorised by Mrs. Kath Walker, Qld. Secretary, Federal Council for Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders (FCAA) and Secretary, Qld. Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Islanders (QCAATI).
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