Lake Tyers Settlement

SIR, FOR six months I have been a member of the staff of the Victorian Children's Board, and I feel I ought to take this opportunity to give you some statement of the facts relating to the settlement at Lake Tyers.

This testing has been carried out by the Government in the spirit of their agreement with the aboriginal people that the reserve at Lake Tyers should be for the aboriginal people. In this respect, Lake Tyers is a distinctively advanced case.

The policy of assimilation has been adopted in this State and throughout Australia, and it is not difficult to see how the social life of the aboriginal people is being changed. They are being taught to sit in the streets and to look at us. It is a policy that is bound to destroy the aboriginal people, and it is for the welfare of these that I write.

Up to the present I have been in the habit of speaking publicly at the meetings of the Welfare Board. But I feel that I should make my views known, especially to the members of the Welfare Board, and I am writing to you to make you aware of my views on the matter.

Mr. Meagher concluded his letter by stating that Mr. Meagher knew well that Lake Tyers was a case in point. He went on to say that Mr. Meagher had been acting as a sort of welfare officer on the reserve for some years. Mr. Meagher further stated that he did not think the matter could be settled by negotiation with the aboriginal people, as they had no understanding of the concept.

The only ideas that do not appear to be considered are those which are based on the principle that the land should be returned to the aboriginal people. If anything constructive is to be done, it seems to me that the only way out is to establish some kind of a scheme for the return of the land to the aboriginal people. This could be done by negotiation with the aboriginal people, and I am sure that this would be the best way to settle the matter.

In conclusion, I wish to express my thanks to you for your interest in this matter. I believe that it is the duty of the people of this country to support the work of the Welfare Board and to see that this matter is settled in a way that is fair to all concerned.