

# Information Sheet 7

## W O M E N ' S V I E W S O N S O U T H S E A I S L A N D L A B O U R

### SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Deputation of Women
- Women's National League Conference
- Anti-Labour Ladies

### D E P U T A T I O N O F W O M E N

A very large deputation of women waited upon the Hon. George Reid, Federal Prime Minister, on Saturday morning, at the Treasury Buildings, to ask that the Act relating to the deportation of Kanakas now in Queensland should not be harshly or unjustly enforced. The deputation was received by Mr. Reid in the Executive Chamber, and was introduced by Mr. Richard Edwards, M.H.R., who referred to the Queensland Women's Electoral League and the Women's Branch of the N.L.U., which, he said, were working in the best interests of the community. Mrs. Leslie G. Corrie, president of the Q.W.E.L., said that the league was an organisation which had at heart the welfare of the women and children, of the weak and the oppressed. They considered that the league would not justify its existence as a woman's organisation if it did not protest against such cruel

legislation as the enforced deportation of the Kanakas now in Queensland. Letters had been received from Mitchell, Rockhampton, Charleville, Yeulba, Mosman, Warwick, Boonah, Fairymead, Townsville, and other places expressing sympathy with the deputation.

Mrs. Britten spoke of the Kanakas as she had seen them in their homes, and reminded Mr. Reid that the women of Queensland were watching the course of Federal legislation with deep interest. Mrs. Spence (Ipswich) said she also represented the women of the Moreton Federal electorate, and they were pleased that in his speech at Bundaberg Mr. Reid had partly anticipated the object of the meeting, in his interpretation of the words, "the Minister may deport." Many of the islanders had not only forgotten their island, but had even forgotten their own language. Their

children were natural-born British subjects, spoke, nothing but English, and had been educated in our State schools.

Mrs. Williams, who spoke clearly and forcibly, said that many Kanakas had married and had acquired property. She understood that to hold property in Australia one had to become a naturalised British subject, therefore these men were entitled to the rights of subjects. It was unfortunate that any Parliament or Government should inspire a feeling of mistrust.



## D E P U T A T I O N   O F   W O M E N   C O N T I N U E D

Mr. Reid complimented the speakers on the brief, clear, and pointed way in which they had introduced a difficult subject, and wished that equally clear speeches could be heard in Parliament. Though circumstances had made him a rather hardened specimen of humanity, he was susceptible to feminine influences, and to the feelings of humanity. There were two aspects of the Kanaka question. He had been recently approached by sugar planters, who simply regarded the Kanaka as a question of labour or profit. But not a single member of the present deputation, he believed, had any pecuniary interest in the sugar industry. (A Voice: "Not one!") The feelings of humanity weighed far more with him. The words in the Act, "may deport," should not be interpreted as giving a Minister the option of deporting or not deporting the Kanakas. The basis of the agreement made by the planter was that after a certain fixed term of service the Kanakas should be returned to their islands, and to insure this each planter had to deposit a certain sum to provide for their deportation. The Legislature had determined that the Kanakas as a body should be returned, but their return would not be forced, but optional. (Mrs. W. Jones: "Why should the Commonwealth Parliament come and upset our laws"?) Mr. Reid retorted that he was afraid the ladies were developing Parliamentary

methods. (General laughter.) In accordance with the law, the Government desired to return the Kanakas to their island, but the words, "may deport" threw upon the Government a heavy responsibility. If rough and ready methods were followed the results might be so utterly cruel and unfortunate as to stain the name of the Commonwealth. He could not speak decisively, as a Minister could not, as in Russia, do as he liked, but he would place their appeal before the Cabinet. One statement he might make, and that was that in carrying out the Act all possible care would be taken to avoid the evils and hardships anticipated by the deputation. An outrage would be committed if the Kanakas were returned like cargo. Australian statesmen would preserve the characteristic of their race, and show no inhumanity. On Friday he had received a deputation of Kanakas, who had been ten, twenty, and thirty years in the State, all speaking English, and having wives and children who were being educated in the State, and he felt that if these people were to be forcibly deported some other man would have to carry out this Act. (Loud applause.) In conclusion, there was one thing he wished to say to the women of Queensland. Why should not women take up this duty and use the franchise? There might be a danger of class and selfish domination; but his words were addressed just as

much to the women of the Labour party as to the others. No matter how they intended to vote, whether for him or against him, he would urge all women to record a vote in accordance with their consciences. In many cases a personal interest influenced voters, but patriotism rose above personal interest. He approved of the leagues in Queensland, and thought they were doing a useful work. (Applause.)

Mr. Edwards, M.H.R., thanked Mr. Reid on behalf of the deputation. As regards the Kanakas, they came here under a three years' engagement, but he doubted whether they could be forcibly returned if they desired to stay. Amongst those present were: Mesdames Leslie G. Corrie, Williams, G.W. Bennett, J. Philp, Partridge, Britten, A.J. Thynne, Cliffe-Mackie, W. Jones, Hobday, Reeves (Pittsworth), Hobson, Frew, Fereday, Alex, Murray, Frank Little, T.B. Cribb, Knowles, Davies (Mayoress South Brisbane), T Holder Cowl, Darnley, Murray, Miles, Wynne, G.A. K. Darbyshire, Johnson, Misses Ogg, Murray, Waldie, Rivers, Fells, Hobday, Waldie, Nolan, Beckett, Munro, Macpherson. Broad, Gray, Barry, Mr. Sheppard (private secretary to Hon. G.H. Reid), Mr. P. Phillips, M.H.R. (Victoria), Mr. Richard Edwards, M.H.R., Mr. Leslie G. Corrie, and Mr. W. Langley.

## W O M E N ' S N A T I O N A L L E A G U E C O N F E R E N C E I N M E L B O U R N E

The following article appeared in the Bendigo Advertiser on Friday, 25 October 1907.

A conference of representatives of all the anti-Socialistic organisations of women throughout Australia was opened this morning at "Cliveden," the residence of Janet Lady Clarke, president of the Women's National League. Included in the number present were representatives of the women's branch of the People's Reform League, of New South Wales, the Women's Liberal League, of New South Wales, the Queensland Women's Electoral League, the South Australian women's branch of the Australasian National League, the women's branch of the Mount Gambier Farmers and Producers' Political Union, and the progressive League of Tasmania. Western Australia was the only State not represented. The programme provided for the conference included a large number of important items, such as immigration, white Australia, training of State children, individualism v. Socialism, adulteration of foods, compulsory military training, the best method of interesting women in politics, religious instruction in State schools, censorship of literature, and suppression of undesirables. Janet Lady Clarke presided, and Miss Grace Watson was elected secretary to the conference. The president, in opening the conference, extended a hearty welcome to the delegates from the other States. She expressed the hope that good work would be done, and was sure that the

league would become a great and mighty power in the Commonwealth if its members would only work unitedly. Miss M.A. Ogg, organising secretary of the Queensland Women' Electoral League, addressed the conference on the subject of immigration. She said that there was presented the strange spectacle of a vast continent practically railed off for the white Australians. What title deeds had the white Australian got to Australia other than those signed in scarlet and with the old legend, "Might is right," Inscribed? A policy of immigration was a policy of wisdom, sanity, sobriety and patriotism. Before very long Australia would not be in the position to say who should or should not come in. The door would be burst open by force, and the feeble hat of a white Australia would be as though it had never gone forth. To get people to come to Australia, it would have to be made more attractive than the other "empty countries." The solution of this difficulty was in the land laws and the administration of them. The land must be as nearly free as possible. She desired to move - "That in the opinion of this conference, the necessity of an immediate and reasonable system of immigration is of paramount importance, and deserves the support of all the organisations represented at this conference." Mis Taylor (Tasmanian Progressive League), who seconded the resolution, called attention to the slow increase of

population in Australia. Immigration to Australia from Great Britain would bind us closer to the old country, and be beneficial to this community. Especially in developing agriculture, mining and wine growing. Immigrants of the Tentionie and Scandinavian races should be encouraged, as they were the most likely to fall into line and work under our laws. The motion was carried. Mrs. Molyneaux Parkes, of New South Wales, moved - "That, while this conference approves of the principle of a white Australia from the racial point of view, it considers that the importation of colored labor is necessary for the development of the tropical territory." The two points of view were the maintenance of a perfectly white community and the best means of developing our tropical territory especially the Northern Territory, which was now going to waste because of the prejudice against colored labor, was by colored labor. There were thousands of the King's Indian subjects who might be permitted to work the territory with their families. Australia had commenced a white policy in a wrong way by dismissing the kanakas from the sugar fields. The Labor party had imagined that it had done a great thing by repatriating these people. They were not nearly so dangerous as the Japanese regarding the racial question. Mrs. Hattin, of Toowoomba, supported the motion. The proceedings have not yet been concluded.



**L E S T W E F O R G E T  
B L A C K A T H E A R T  
S E C R E T P O L I C Y O F T H E F U S I O N P A R T Y  
B L A B B E D B Y A N T I - L A B O U R L A D I E S**

Worker, Thursday, 20 March  
1913

As the elections are drawing near, all electors should remember who are opponents of the White Australia policy. A few years ago a conference was held in Melbourne of all the Anti-Labour Organisations of Women throughout Australia, and we again republish (from the Melbourne "Herald" 24/10/07) a few of the more important speeches delivered on that occasion on the White Australia question. "They met," said the Melbourne "Herald," "at Cliveden, the residence of Janet Lady Clark, who was president of the Women's National League in Victoria."

The Philp party of Queensland had as its representative Miss A. Ogg, organising secretary of the Queensland Women's Electoral League, Mrs. Hatton (Toowoomba), Mrs. Mitchell (Mackay), Mrs. Leslie Corrie (Brisbane), Miss Dewing (Brisbane), Mrs. Welmore (Brisbane), Mrs. Thompson (Mayoress of Brisbane), and Mrs. Chataway (wife of Senator Chataway).

The conference was presided over by Janet Lady Clark, and it was held in the ball room at Cliveden, which was tastefully decorated for the occasion. There is a miniature stage, with scenery for private theatricals, at one end of the room, and this served admirably for a dais.

**White Australia Attacked**

In introducing a motion in favour of immigration, Miss. A. Ogg, in a paper which she read, said: "Immigration was a beautiful law of adaptation, obedience to which meant a better adjustment of the human race as it increased. The world had grown old since necessity first revealed this law, and now man took it on himself to adjust the human race, as he, in his wonderful arrogance, presumed that it ought to be adjusted. So we had the strange spectacle of a vast continent practically railed off for the White Australian. WHAT TITLE DEEDS HAD THE WHITE AUSTRALIAN GOT TO AUSTRALIA other than those signed in scarlet, and with the old legend, 'Might is Right,' inscribed?"

Then followed the treasonable motion against White Australia, Mrs. Molyneux Parkes (N.S.W.) moving:

"That, while the conference approves of the principle of a White Australia from the radical point of view, IT CONSIDERS THAT THE IMPORTATION OF COLOURED LABOUR IS NECESSARY for the development of the tropical territory."

The mover said that "there were two points of view in connection with this subject. One was the claim on behalf of a perfectly white community, and the other

was the best means of developing the tropical territory, especially the Northern Territory which was now going to waste because of the prejudice against coloured labour. If they were to draw a geographical line for the restriction of coloured races they should certainly be allowed within the greater part of the tropical territory. THERE WERE THOUSANDS OF THE KING'S INDIAN SUBJECTS WHO WOULD BE SUITABLE FOR THE WORK IN THE TERRITORY, AND MIGHT BE ALLOWED IN WITH THEIR FAMILIES."

Mrs. HATTON, of Toowoomba (Q.), seconded the resolution. She said the sugar industry was going out of Australia. She agreed with the motion so far it was possible, and believed that it was possible with discretion to get in coloured labour."

Mrs. MITCHELL, of Mackay (Q.), said that "this was a very important subject, especially to Queensland. That State had accepted the verdict of the other States, and it was trying to manage in the best way it could; but it did not seem quite fair that the kanakas, who were the most harmless of the coloured races, should be the only ones removed. In the Mackay district, women and children were now to be seen working in the cane fields. Children who should be at school were obliged to help to make a living."

L E S T W E F O R G E T  
B L A C K A T H E A R T  
S E C R E T P O L I C Y O F T H E F U S I O N P A R T Y  
B L A B B E D B Y A N T I - L A B O U R L A D I E S  
C O N T I N U E D

**“Kanakas Better than White Men.”**

Mrs. LESLIE CORRIE, of Brisbane, said that she had “had conversations with a leading sugar grower, who said that THE OUTLOOK WAS MOST SERIOUS, OWING TO THE CLASS OF WHITE LABOUR AVAILABLE, IT WAS VERY LOW. Now, in the cane districts, the domestic maid-servants were afraid to go out at night, and THE HEADS OF FAMILIES DARE NOT TAKE THEIR EYES OFF THEIR CHILDREN. The men were a floating class and included MANY ex-CRIMINALS. The wages were good, but the work hard. The men made a cheque and then spent it in the public-houses. When these facts as to the danger of women and children were known it would be seen that it was a very serious matter. The kanakas, on the other hand, were to be trusted absolutely.”

Mrs. THOMPSON, Mayoress of Brisbane, also SPOKE ADVERSELY OF THE CHARACTER OF THE WHITE MEN EMPLOYED. Miss Dewing, of Brisbane, said that she had lived with a leading lady in the sugar district. The lady’s husband frequently went up country to another station, leaving his wife and little children with the kanakas. She (Miss Dewing) asked the lady if she were not afraid, and she said, “No,” for she had never suffered by theft or by the least unkind action on the part of the kanakas. The kanakas were very fond of the children. Mrs. WILMORE, of Brisbane, added her testimony to the good conduct of the kanakas.

Mrs. CHATAWAY (wife of Senator Chataway) of Mackay, said that it must be recognised that they could never bring the kanakas back again. When quite a girl she lived in Java, and there she

saw all black people. There were kanakas, Solomon islands’ “boys,” and others, with loin cloths, and their bows and arrows, and they looked like savages. When they came up to the house, she was told that they knew she was coming, and this was their way of giving her welcome. THE KANAKA IN QUEENSLAND, HOWEVER, HAD BEEN CIVILISED AND CHRISTIANISED, and yet they were deprived because they had no gunboats. Australia would not dare to insult China or Japan in that way. THE WHITE MEN NOW EMPLOYED WERE OF BAD CHARACTER AND UNRELIABLE. Mrs. MOLYNEUS PARKES did not agree with the remark that there was NO CHANCE OF THE KANAKA COMING BACK. THEY SHOULD PUT IN A LIBERAL MINISTRY FAVOURABLE TO THE KANAKA, AND THEN THE THING WOULD BE DONE.

