

AN ASSESSMENT OF THE CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE TO THE  
PRESENT ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY OF THE LAND RESERVED AT FRAMLINGHAM  
IN 1861

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Introduction

On 24 May 1979 I agreed to provide the then Minister for Conservation, W.A. Borthwick, with an assessment of the 'historical and cultural interest of this area to the Framlingham Aboriginal people', insofar as there was evidence in the official archives and other written records I have studied. My assessment is obviously incomplete, for I have had no opportunity to learn about the oral history preserved by the Framlingham community. During nineteen years work with other Victorian Aboriginal communities I have always been impressed by the accuracy and completeness of the historical reminiscences preserved and passed on by Aboriginal families. I urge the Land Conservation Council to take account of the historical perceptions of the Framlingham people concerning the land which the Council has proposed should become a regional park, for their accounts of the past will supplement and correct the bias of records compiled by 'alien' officials.

Since the Minister and Council have offered no guide-lines for the requested assessment, I have decided to summarise what is known about the occupation of this land by Aboriginal people over the last 150 years - a matter of two lifetimes - since this is probably the span of the oral history passed on by the grandparents of the oldest living generation, and passed on in turn to their own grandchildren, which surely influences their reaction to present-day events. The first part of this report summarises what I could learn of Aboriginal entitlement to land in the Hopkins River region and the policy decisions which led to the loss of all but 586 acres of the reserve allotted in 1861; secondly I describe official efforts to remove the Aboriginal people who clung to their former home during the period 1891-1938; and finally I sum up the policy decisions which affected this community from 1939 to 1969, when my contacts with members of the Framlingham community, and my access to official records, ceased.

Throughout this account I have had to use the terms 'fullblood' and 'half caste' because these terms had a legal meaning in the Victorian legislation and this distinction was important in official policy decisions until 1957. But this distinction is - and always has been - considered false and objectionable by Aborigines themselves. The distinction was generally based on 'commonsense' judgments about physical appearance, with the farcical result that individuals were often reclassified at the whim of successive officials. The story of the Framlingham community is in fact the story of the tragic consequences this distinction had for people whose Aboriginal identity was defined (or denied) by officialdom rather than by their own choice.

As early as 1858 public opinion had favoured different treatment for 'fullbloods' and 'half castes'. The 1886 Aborigines Act altered the 1869 Act's definition of Aboriginal to include only fullbloods, half castes born before 1852, half caste women married before 1887 to Aborigines, and children of those in the above categories too young to earn their own living. Some limited additional powers allowed the Board to license needy half castes to reside temporarily on the station to assist half castes to purchase Crown lands; to apprentice half caste children over the age of 14 years; and to transfer half caste orphans to the care of the Department for Neglected Children. Exiled half castes were allowed some aid until the end of 1893. In 1910 this Act was amended to remove the time limit from the Board's power to aid needy half castes.

For the purpose of the 1886 Act and all subsequent legislation the term half caste was defined to include 'all other persons whatever of mixed Aboriginal blood' thus the Board was always empowered to license any person of Aboriginal descent to reside on a reserve and to assist (and control) them in the same way as 'fullblood Aborigines. A legal opinion on the Aborigines Acts of 1910, 1915 and 1928 (the legislation in force until 1957) confirmed that the Board had authority to aid any person of Aboriginal ancestry - despite the contrary opinions of Board officials throughout the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s (personal communication, Professor L.A. Zines 1963).

The introduction of the 1886 absorption policy (explicitly called 'assimilation' as early as 1892) unfortunately coincided with the severe economic depression of the 1890s. The Board's funds were then halved and aid was given only in the most desperate cases. The forced dispersal had catastrophic effects as the exiled half castes, many in poor health, had to house and feed up to twelve dependent children on the meagre and intermittent wages paid for seasonal rural labour. Public prejudice worsened, and the homeless exiles were refused jobs and housing, and their children were excluded (informally) from State schools. The sympathetic MLA for Warrnambool, appalled by their plight, vainly criticised Board neglect for two decades and finally, as responsible Minister, over-ruled the Board and amended the legislation in 1910. But after his death the new Board (reconstituted in 1916 to include mainly the Parliamentary representatives of areas where Aborigines resided) was peculiarly susceptible to postwar pressures for alienation of the Aboriginal reserves - and few persons of Aboriginal descent were able to vote. From 1917 to 1957 the Board's powers to aid 'half castes' were interpreted very narrowly by officials within the Chief Secretary's department. Eligibility was apparently defined by appearance, on the uninformed judgment of a succession of clerks and constables who had no knowledge of the history of the reserves or the families who clung to them.

As a result six generations of Framlingham folk have lived in appalling physical circumstances and have been subject to arbitrary official interference in their

domestic affairs. It is not too far-fetched to suggest that their lives -- and their bitter resentment--should be compared with those of European victims of enemy occupation. The alienation of most of the reserve in 1891 was intended to force their assimilation; it forced them to become homeless outcasts. If the land which became an agricultural college reserve had been allotted to the families who petitioned for adequate farms in 1889, their descendants would have continued to enjoy a living standard equal to that of their working-class neighbours. After ninety years of deprivation their descendants are still pleading for a chance to control and profit from this land.

Detailed discussion of the development of Board policy and its rationale is necessarily omitted from this report; doubtless an account of the Board's philosophy would make its actions more intelligible--but the reasons for administrative decisions never were explained to the Framlingham community.

#### 1. The destruction of the Aboriginal population 1829-1860

The Western District of Victoria had at least 3000 inhabitants when European settlers arrived. By 1852 only about 700 remained. In 1863 there were only 505 survivors. By 1877 only 272 Aborigines remained in the whole region (Barwick 1971).

This well-watered region had high population densities and political leadership was well-developed. But their country was rapidly occupied by European pastoralists, whose stock competed for water and soon destroyed the Aborigines' food sources. Driven from their homelands, the unarmed Aborigines effectively used guerilla tactics, but the 'warfare' of 1842 in the Portland and Port Fairy districts was soon crushed by the settlers, aided by patrols of Native Police recruited from the distant and hostile Kulin peoples of central Victoria. The Gunditjmara and their neighbours continued to harass settlers long after other tribes had been subdued (until 1849 in the Warrnambool district) but the settlers' use of poisoned flour and raiding parties, as well as the introduction of diseases to which the Aborigines had no acquired resistance, soon reduced the native population (Corris 1968).

The 'Mara-speaking' peoples formed a cultural bloc occupying the whole area from Colac to beyond the South Australian border. Five major linguistic or 'tribal' groups can be identified: the Bunganditj, Gunditjmara, Tjapwurong, Kirrae (Kirawirung) and Kolak<sup>(g)</sup>at. Tindale (1974) has mapped their boundaries, using all known records. Each was composed of many smaller named land-owning groups ('clans'), which were linked by intermarriage (even across 'tribal' boundaries). Children inherited certain rights to use and occupy territory from both parents, so that the composition of communities was always fairly flexible, a necessary adjustment to ecological conditions for all hunter-gatherer populations.

Despite their displacement by settlers, Framlingham residents clearly remembered their clan names and territories in the 1870s (cf. Brough Smyth 1878; Dawson 1881; Curr 1886). But the terrible mortality of the early decades meant that the localised clan groupings were rapidly submerged in a broader 'tribal' identity, as the

survivors became heirs to the land of extinct clans through well-recognized traditional rights of inheritance. The continuity of occupation by certain Framlingham families, documented in records covering the period 1862-1969, is discussed in Appendix I.

The Port Phillip Protectorate scheme of 1839-49 gave little help to the native people of the Western District. A depot was opened at Terang in 1841, then moved to Mt Rouse. After 1843 the residents received medical care but no rations. Mt Rouse was closed in 1851. The Buntingdale Mission (1839-48) in Kolakgnat territory was also unable to provide sufficient rations to enable the Aborigines to settle permanently. Both reserves were alienated as a result of settler lobbying. Aboriginal labour was needed during the early gold rush years (in 1852 two-thirds were employed, mostly at sheep-washing, for wages of 5 to 20 shillings a week) but the few employed by pastoralists later in the 1850s received half the European wage and were expected to hunt to maintain their dependents.

Expelled from their clan territories - now pastoral stations - by all but a few sympathetic settlers, the remnants had to beg for bread and offal around the townships, where they were considered merely a 'nuisance' rather than a menace to sheep and cattle. It was in fact the townsfolk - mainly the doctors, clergymen, magistrates and government officials who had arrived in the 1850s - who at last forced the government to take action.

## 2. The fight for land at Framlingham, 1860-1869

The Gunditjmara and Kirrae clans to the west and east of the Hopkins River from Warrnambool to Lake Bolac received no government aid until 1861. In 1860 a 'Board for the Protection of the Aborigines', composed of 'gentlemen resident in Melbourne' was appointed to control policy and expenditure, with the Chief Secretary as responsible Minister. Board policy required the able-bodied to support themselves and their dependents by working for settlers, but occasional supplies were given to the aged and ill by 'Local Guardians' who maintained ration depots at Warrnambool, Tooram, Camperdown, Wickliffe and Belfast.

But the Aborigines had no secure place to camp. Prominent citizens of the district petitioned the Board to establish a supervised reserve where the homeless remnants could settle and receive food and medical care. The site first requested was alienated by the Lands Department before its formal gazettal, without consulting the Board (BPA-Minutes 13 & 15/5/61), but on 17 September 1861 an area of '3,500 acres' (actually surveyed at 4,426 acres) on the Hopkins River was gazetted as a 'temporary reservation for the use of Aborigines'. In 1862 only 136 survivors were enumerated about Tooram, the Hopkins, Belfast, Hexham and Terang, and throughout that year Warrnambool citizens reported that they were suffering severely from hunger and disease, and repeatedly protested the Board's neglect. But after a brief visit the Board's Inspector reported that only 51 'sick and infirm' were eligible for aid, and were receiving some food at the depots. From 1862 to 1865 concerned citizens

also sent numerous 'memorials' urging that the inadequate reserve be extended to 15,000 acres and demanding appointment of staff for a supervised station. But the Board deferred every request because its scanty funds were insufficient to maintain the Coranderrk station near Healesville and three mission stations in the Wimmera and Gippsland.

Finally the 'Melbourne Church of England Mission Committee' hired a Warrnambool layman, Daniel Clarke, to begin mission work on the Framlingham reserve in August 1865. By April 1866 there were 68 residents. The over-extended Committee then relinquished control. Since the remnants of the western clans could not be persuaded to settle at Framlingham, the Board and Committee decided to move all the Western District Aborigines to the unoccupied reserve at Lake Condah.

But when the Framlingham folk were removed on 15 November 1867 force was required. Local settlers recalled this 1867 removal when another attempt was made to abandon Framlingham in 1889 (CSIC 89/M12225, 14/10/79):

a number broke away from their escort at Woodford, some seven miles distant, and returned to their camp. The remainder (of whom a number were children) were hurried to their destination. Shortly after their arrival serious disturbances took place... with the exception of a few children, the Framlingham blacks returned to their old quarters, thus proving their attachment to the place; and it is very unlikely, if now removed, they will be induced to remain.

Members of the Kirrae and Gunditjmara clans adjacent to the Hopkins River would have had various kinds of inherited right to occupy the Framlingham reserve, on the boundary of the Gunditjmara area, but no claim to the distant Lake Condah reserve. Moreover, there was no basis for friendly relations with the western Gunditjmara clans and their Bunganditj neighbours who were settled there. Remembered 'tribal animosities' were blamed for friction between certain Lake Condah and Framlingham residents up to the 1890s, but because there were so few survivors-- and so few births--the young folk 'had to marry where they could'. Marriages between youngsters reared at the two settlements forged new ties, and their offspring of course had claims on relatives in the home area of both parents.

In April 1868 the Board reluctantly re-opened the Warrnambool ration depot but owing to lack of funds rejected the petition signed by Framlingham Aborigines begging that their station be re-established. Another petition, signed by 12 Aborigines and over 70 settlers, brought the Board's Inspector to investigate in November 1868. He informed the Board that he had spoken to 70 Aborigines: 60 said they were anxious to settle on the reserve to 'get a home for themselves'. None would go to Lake Condah. The 40 adults who attended a special meeting were able to 'name 80 blacks who would settle on the reserve if a master were appointed'. As well as the 62 belonging to the 'Framlingham, Warrnambool and Belfast' clans, another 18 at Camperdown had refused to go to Lake Condah.

The Board ignored this (and continuing local complaints of neglect) until April 1869, when Melbourne newspapers publicised an Aboriginal deputation to the Chief

Secretary. Accompanied by the local Crown Lands bailiff and the Parliamentary representative, Billy Livingstone and Tommy Dawson asked for an instructor competent to teach them farming, reading and writing, and for materials and implements so they could farm the reserve for themselves. Ordered to 'explain' the forced removal to Lake Condah, the embarrassed Board reluctantly agreed to form an Aboriginal station, to cost no more than £100 a year. A young Warrnambool teacher, son of a local farmer who had immigrated from Tasmania in 1848, was appointed 'chiefly at the blacks' request' as superintendent from 1 June 1869.

### 3. The development of the station, 1869-1889

The Framlingham folk, living in their 'own country' and 'remarkably attached to their home', worked contentedly under the supervision of the just and warm-hearted superintendent William Goodall Jr, who had their 'respect and confidence'. For twenty years this was the happiest of the six Aboriginal stations. But it was also the most neglected, for Goodall was not supported by any influential mission committee. He was wholly dependent on the Board, which spent an undue proportion of its budget on Coranderrk, the main training centre for orphaned children.

Table I summarises the history of farm development at Framlingham. Early reports described the reserve as mainly heavily-timbered stringybark ridges, poorer than the rest of the neighbourhood and too wet for cultivation -- which perhaps explains why settlers did not oppose the 1861 reservation. But a third was good grazing land, and neighbours continually petitioned to use it. Refusal of agistment, although the reserve was 'under-used', increased local resentment. Neighbours incessantly broke the fences and residents spent much of their time impounding trespassing stock. The Board never could afford to stock the station fully, and residents necessarily spent much time hunting and fishing. They subsisted on fish and eels, with scanty rations of flour, sugar and tea. Although the medical officer blamed the lack of meat and vegetables for the continuing high incidence of 'scrofulous' sores, only the male workers were given meat rations during the first decade.

The residents' efforts to cultivate oats, potatoes, hops and vegetables proved a poor investment of labour, for the chronic summer water shortages, recurrent floods and plagues of kangaroos and later rabbits meant that the acreage cultivated barely met their subsistence needs. The men laboured willingly, despite the lack of tools, and visitors annually commended the remarkable amount of ringing, clearing, fencing and building achieved. Up to 1885 they had only one plough and their own horses, and had to cut and cart local materials for all fencing and buildings. No wages were paid until 1877, despite Goodall's pleas that the men could not afford to work at home to develop their reserve. There were never more than 20 able-bodied men, and virtually all were absent shearing for 3 to 4 months each year in order to obtain the cash they needed to support their families and improve their homes. Their only other income came from the manufacture of opossum rugs, weapons and baskets. Throughout the 1870s and 1880s residents were readily hired, at wages equal to

## FRAMLINGHAM STATION 1864-1890

Enrolment, Costs, Income, Wages, Stock Numbers, Cultivation and Fencing

	ENROLMENT				TOTAL COSTS		INCOME SENT TO BOARD		WAGES	STOCK SUPPLIED					ACREAGE CULTIVATED		FENCING (miles)
	Total	Average	Men	Children	Provisions, Stock, Wages, Medical, Tools, Bldgs., etc.	Staff Salaries	Crops, Hides, Stock Sold Net	Magistment Fees	(included in total cost)	CATTLE		SHEEP			Wheat, Oats	Potatoes, Orchard	Boundary, garden and subdivision
										End of year muster	Bought	Eaten	End of year muster	Bought (*=also butcher's meat purchased)			
8/64-7/65	?	?	?	?	114	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
8/65-7/66	68	?	?	?	188	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	?	?	0
8/66-7/67	70	?	?	?	322	85 <sup>p</sup>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	?	?	?
8/67-7/68	5	?	?	?	114	8 <sup>b</sup>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
8/68-7/69	35	28	23	3	135	15 <sup>b</sup>	0	0	0	8	8	0	0	0	1	3	-1/2
8/69-12/70	68	39	?	?	445	128	0	?	0	58	50	0	0	0	2	7	4
1871	63	54	22	16	408	90	0	?	0	68	0	2	0	0	?	10	-1/2
1872	70	50	33	15	471	90	?	0	0	60	4	?	0	0	7	6	?
1873	65	54	24	16	488	90	28	0	0	?	7	?	0	0	14	10	?
1874	67	53	25	13	357	90	?	0	0	80	0	6	0	0	12	13	1-1/4
1875	63	49	25	19	547	98	52	0	0	82	0	?	0	0	0	4	?
1/76-6/77	74	59	39	19	811	193	28	?	10	83	?	?	0	?	21	10	?
7/77-6/78	73	60	30	17	768	140 <sup>c</sup>	30	105	100	100	0	7	0	?	10	6	1
7/78-6/79	67	60	33	21	898	176	36	?	12	99	0	?	0	?	14	6	2
7/79-6/80	75	70	32	23	742	220	37	29	50	75	9	10	0	77	21	7	1
7/80-6/81	75	70	32	23	569	200	49	?	50	175	100 <sup>d</sup>	26	0	0*	15	10	?
7/81-6/82	83	70	31	26	1201	233	75	25	50	178	26	30	0	6	7	7	?
7/82-6/83	96	74	33	31	1132	219	40	75	25	96	0	25	0	0*	17	3	2
7/83-6/84	98	90	.	31	1208	268	32	170	12	100	29	20	0	2	30	6	?
7/84-6/85	104	82	.	.	1152	257	125	?	62	33	4 <sup>e</sup>	?	0	0*	8	4	?
7/85-6/86	91	85	27	32	1826	259	226	?	0	13	13	12	344	1134 <sup>f</sup>	?	4	4-1/2
7/86-6/87	96	90	.	33	2068	350	227	100	70	92	97	15	34	0	15	10	?
7/87-6/88	100	94	.	35	2210	350	23	?	51	159	52	26	213	518	40	10	?
7/88-6/89	96	90	30	39	1798	350	307	18	82	152	23	30	0	1056 <sup>g</sup>	20	?	5
7/89-6/90	80	.	24	32	990	538	226	?	30	0	4	4	0	3*	0	?	?
7/90-6/91	29	.	12	9	419	127	0	?	2	0	?	?	0	?	0	?	?

a B.P.A. salaries for missionaries 24/9/66-31/8/67.

b B.P.A. salary for Goodall 1/6/69-1/10/89.

c B.P.A. salary for female teacher 24/6/78-31/10/90.

d 100 cattle transferred from Lake Condah.

e 71 cattle sold.

f 366 sheep sold.

g 100 sheep bought; 956 transferred from Lake Condah; 700 sold

h Total fencing 18 miles, boundary and 10 paddocks.





Europeans, for shearing, stock work, harvesting and hop-picking. Goodall offered them a thorough training in all farm tasks and was enthusiastic about their abilities as craftsmen and workers. The school offered the normal curriculum and the youngsters proved themselves equal to the white children attending.

The Aborigines were accepted participants in the sporting, religious and temperance associations of the district, and provided music at local dances. Goodall's local contacts perhaps helped their acceptance, but certainly they lived at the same standard as their working-class neighbours until they were forced from the reserve and encountered serious discrimination during the economic depression of the 1890s.

Residents of the other five stations were able, and indeed required, to work at home: but their occupation of these better-developed reserves was always threatened by covetous neighbours who wanted access to their labour and their land. The Framlingham folk were to some extent exploited as a cheap and convenient seasonal labour pool for the district, but local farmers and pastoralists supported their protests when efforts were made to dispossess them of the reserve. The main threat to their tenure came from bureaucrats in Melbourne, who visited rarely and briefly, and discounted all evidence of their 'attachment to their home'.

The Framlingham people built their homes on land to which they had no secure tenure. The government could cancel the temporary reservation by notification in the Gazette, without consultation or any right of appeal. Threats that the land would be taken from them, or that they would be removed elsewhere, recurred every few years from 1867 until the remnant of the reserved land was permanently gazetted in 1967!

At first the Board's Inspector urged that all the children be removed from their parents for training elsewhere, but his pessimism about the ability of the Framlingham residents to develop their reserve soon altered. In 1872 he reported that the men had returned from shearing to ask him whether 'the Government was going to break up their station' and he had promised that 'if they would only work better the Government would never break it up'. Yet removal was again threatened in 1875. Learning in 1876 of 'secret endeavours' to have the reserve 'thrown open for selection', Goodall begged the Board to counter the settlers' arguments by stocking the station. The Board instead approved annual agistment leases from 1877, but despite the residents' pleas all income went to the Treasury instead of being used for stock, implements and wages so Framlingham could be developed like the other stations. In May 1879 members of the reconstituted Board (who had never visited) resolved to close Framlingham and Coranderrk, but the planned removal to the Wimmera and Gippsland was averted by an influential deputation - and the disapproval of the Chief Secretary.

In March 1882 Goodall agreed to take charge of Coranderrk but insisted on a temporary appointment since he had been associated with the Framlingham Aborigines

'almost since infancy' and could not 'bring myself to the point of voluntarily parting with them'. Until his return in August 1885 the residents worked cheerfully with the local Congregational minister, eagerly fencing and clearing to improve the grazing capacity, on the promise that the reserve would be stocked at last.

But in May 1884 they learned from newspaper reports of a new threat to their tenure. Under the Board's new 'merging' policy all 'half castes' under the age of 34 (born after 1852) had to leave the reserves and support themselves, to become 'absorbed' in the general population. The younger 'half castes' approved the Board's promise to aid them to 'take up land'; but the news that their relatives and descendants would be permanently exiled from Framlingham was 'strongly denounced by the Blacks'. The news prompted many local bids to purchase the reserve (now worth £5 an acre) and in August 1886 the anxious residents appealed to the Board. They were assured that Framlingham 'was not to be broken up, on the contrary it must be kept for the blacks'.

Elsewhere 'half castes' were exiled from 1884, although the necessary legislation was not passed until December 1886 --largely because Chief Secretary Graham Berry and his protégé and successor Alfred Deakin (who had fought the abandonment of Coranderrk for a decade) disapproved of the Board's refusal to heed the wishes of the Aborigines. From 1887 Goodall was ordered to help the younger half castes find jobs and homes elsewhere, and to place in domestic service the children of those over-age half castes still eligible to remain.

Meanwhile several Western District agricultural societies began a campaign to obtain a portion of the reserve, asserting that this was the 'only available' site for an agricultural college. In June 1887 the Board refused to allow excision of 2000 acres for this purpose, but decided to inspect Framlingham for the first time. In August the vice-chairman reported that 42 of the 100 residents were 'half castes'; 19 were over-age and entitled to stay, and of the 23 who must leave before the December 1889 deadline only a few children were yet old enough to go to service.

During 1888 shire officials and certain neighbours harassed Goodall about rabbit extermination, but he proved their charges false and informed the Board this was a tactic in the increasingly bitter local campaign to secure the land for an agricultural college. By the middle of 1889 numbers on the six stations had been halved, and the Board was under pressure to economise by amalgamating the station populations. But closure of any mission would offend influential church groups and the Board could not easily close Coranderrk because it had been made a permanent reservation in 1884 through the efforts of the politicians who were now Chief Secretary and Minister for Lands and Agriculture! The Board Secretary had already recommended abandonment of the small Wimmera mission, while the second Moravian/Presbyterian mission, in Gippsland, was also being sought for an agricultural college.

In June 1889 the dying secretary was replaced by Rev. F.A. Hagenauer, who had been executive officer for both Anglican and Presbyterian church committees

since 1872. These Moravian missions had been his life-work, and he had always disapproved of the Board's secular stations (which he did not visit and could not control). He had no understanding of, or sympathy for, Aboriginal language, culture and territorial attachment although he had worked among them since 1858. The current vice-chairman was the Presbyterian mission committee representative. He and Hagenauer had drafted the 1886 Act and their reputations depended on successful implementation of the 'merging' policy. It had been ruthlessly enforced by every manager except Goodall, who had sent only four youngsters to service before the removal deadline.

At the first meeting after Hagenauer became secretary the Board deferred closure of the Wimmera mission and began to debate a Lands Department request for 2,000 acres of the Framlingham reserve. Goodall's letter opposing the scheme was debated at the August meeting (closed to the press): it was 'unanimously' agreed that the four members of Parliament on the Board should persuade the Chief Secretary to relinquish the whole of the reserve. Hagenauer wrote Goodall that no decision had been made, but somehow the truth became known. On 28 August a deputation of Framlingham men, accompanied by Goodall, protested to Chief Secretary Deakin, who merely referred them to the Board. But the only members who met them were the mission society representatives. Both were recently appointed, had no contact with Aboriginal communities, and relied on Hagenauer's advice.

On 4 September the Board heard their version of the deputation's pleas and re-affirmed their decision to give up the whole reserve as soon as the government could be persuaded to act. Goodall had risked his job and pension by publicly supporting the Aborigines' political protest; the incensed Board arranged his immediate transfer to another branch of the public service in Melbourne. Given only one week's notice, he left Framlingham on 30 September 1889.

#### 4. The loss of the reserve, 1889-1890

While waiting for the Chief Secretary's decision on the £2000 grant required for the removal (including £100 compensation for the Aborigines' houses and improvements --which never was paid), the Board considered petitions from six Framlingham half castes asking for portions of the reserve to farm, which were strongly supported by district residents. The Board decided they had no power to deal with the matter, having handed the reserve to the Lands Department. However, they did refuse to give up Hagenauer's own station for an agricultural college.

The closure of Framlingham was clearly 'engineered' by Hagenauer, but perhaps his motives were not entirely selfish, for the other five managers were aging missionaries who would be homeless and unemployable if their stations were closed, while Goodall was suitably qualified and young enough for redeployment within the public service.

Goodall and the Aborigines lacked any influential backing in Melbourne or Warrnambool, where the local newspaper supported the agricultural college lobby and

ridiculed the 'spurious sympathy' of certain proprietors who wished to sell their own land to the government or opposed the removal because 'the blacks are sought after as shearers' (Warrnambool Standard 1/10/89).

But a few of the pioneer squatters were sympathetic, and there was solid support from the small farmers of the district who had known Goodall from boyhood and perhaps also felt some solidarity with the Aboriginal labourers who would be deprived of their homes by this government action. Fortunately, too, the district MLA and MLC had a long and friendly acquaintance with the Framlingham folk. The new member for Warrnambool, John Murray, told Parliament on 25 September 1889 that many in the district opposed this 'ruthlessly cruel' action, which he condemned as 'the first big national case of eviction that has occurred in this colony'. The Chief Secretary and the Lands and Agriculture minister, who had so publicly opposed Board removal of the Coranderrk residents, were embarrassed at having to justify this removal. Dow retorted that the Lands Department knew only that the land was demanded by district agricultural societies; Deakin asserted that the Board had long wanted to close this smallest and most expensive station and would compensate the residents. He admitted that a deputation had protested to him, but said the Board had since assured him the Aborigines were 'resigned' to the move. He agreed that they should not be moved if the Board could not justify its decision and promised an opportunity for Parliamentary debate before taking action. On 3 October 1889 the influential member for Belfast also objected, reporting that other land was available and that the Aborigines were 'preparing petitions to Parliament'. He too was assured they would not be moved without Parliament's consent.

On the same day the Chief Secretary received a petition signed by 556 residents of Warrnambool, Camperdown, Terang, Mortlake and surrounding districts which protested the injustice of removing the 'original possessors of the soil' and begged him to oppose the Board's proposal (CSIC 89/N11756). Other petitions to Deakin reported the Aborigines' 'alarm and grief' at the Board's breaking up the 'houses they were taught to believe were theirs in perpetuity', and asked him to forbid removal as the Aborigines had 'always looked upon their present location as their own property' (CSIC 89/N11754; 89/M12225). Another petitioner urged that portions be retained for the Aborigines and as farms for the half castes, and the rest reserved as a State Forest as 'nowhere around can such a splendid lot of timber be found and soon good timber in these parts will be a thing of the past' (CSIC 89/N11622). Even the unsympathetic Warrnambool Standard (1 & 3/10/89) recommended a compromise: retention of some 500 acres including the graveyard for eligible Aborigines, allotment of 100-acre farms for the half caste families, and reservation of the remainder for an experimental farm since no other land was available.

The anxious vice-chairman then sent Hagenauer down to check his earlier assertions about the number of Aborigines eligible to remain, since they contrasted with his own tally (compiled with Goodall's help on the Board's 1887 visit) which found only

42 half castes, 19 of them over-age, among 100 residents. After a two-day visit Hagenauer reported that his own statements were correct: the 80 residents included '33 fullbloods and 47 half castes and about 6 or 7 of these are the only people born in that locality while others have come from all parts of the colony and even from South Australia'. Alarmed by sympathetic press reports of Deakin's own visit on 1 November, the vice-chairman forwarded Hagenauer's report when asking the Chief Secretary to meet a Board deputation (CSIC 89/N13183). The Board considered the same report, which asserted that 9 residents had already gone to Coranderrk (they had in fact gone home after a brief visit), and 'permission was gladly given' to the 30 who had asked to go to other stations. In fact ten of the 30 named were wanderers who had earlier made their homes at Lake Condah and were visiting close relatives settled at Framlingham; 20 were under-age half castes required to leave anyhow. The minutes (like the report) say nothing about the 50 long-time residents determined to remain at Framlingham, but do note that Hagenauer opposed granting any portion of the reserve to Aborigines or half castes.

During 1890 the Board removed all stock and the 'very few farming implements here', closed the school and sold the houses as they were vacated. The evacuation, supervised by visiting missionaries, took thirteen months because of the residents' resistance. Hagenauer's instructions were indeed ruthless: residents were warned that anyone seeking medical aid at the Board's expense would immediately be removed to a healthier station, and that any half castes (now 'legally white') who remained after December 1889 were liable to a £20 fine for trespassing on an Aboriginal reserve. The exiled half castes were threatened with police action for cutting timber from the reserve to build huts, while their former dwellings were sold to strangers and removed.

After considering further petitions the Board sought another interview with Deakin in February 1890; although he forbade any 'coercion' in their removal, he agreed that all residents who left should be prevented from returning. In June Hagenauer told the Board that only 35 remained at Framlingham, but did not mention that many families forcibly removed to distant stations had written pleading to return to their home. The Board's 1890 Annual Report mentioned that 27 Aborigines 'are determined to live and die here', and on 3 September Hagenauer told the Board that many had already returned and others wished to do so. He 'had not much hope that the blacks would consent to go to the Condah station or to any other', but again blamed 'outside influence' (Age 4/9/90).

Meanwhile the Agriculture Department had applied for the whole reserve and in July the Board advised Deakin to surrender all but the strip where the houses were located. On 23 September the MLA, Murray, censured Deakin in Parliament for betraying his promise to allow debate, and publicly reminded him of promises made to the Aborigines when he visited Framlingham. Deakin was forced to admit that the transfer of the entire reserve to the Council of Agricultural Education had been gazetted on 12

September but insisted the transfer was subject to occupation by those who wished to remain. When Deakin would not consent to Murray's demand that 500 to 600 acres be reserved specifically for Aborigines 'so that at no future time could they be disturbed by this or any other body', Murray won support for an adjournment debate. He then criticised Hagenauer's 'not altogether honourable' methods of inducing residents to leave. The embarrassed Chief Secretary admitted he had ordered Hagenauer to withdraw a letter and said he had from the beginning warned the Board 'not to press for the removal of any Aborigines who wished to remain'. He insisted that the government did not want this land and the Council had no plans to establish a college there. He quoted from the Board's statement that only 25 Aborigines remained (plus four under-age half caste families due to be removed). But his assertion that only 19 were 'fullblood' was challenged by Murray, who contradicted from his own life-long acquaintance Hagenauer's statements about the ancestry and age of certain residents declared ineligible for aid. He and other Western District representatives strongly criticised Hagenauer, quoting James Dawson's complaint that the 'comfortable huts' of elderly Aborigines were torn down if they left them even 'for a day or two' and a detailed report by a lady (probably his sister Miss Mary Murray, who assisted local Aborigines for decades) that the 42 still there were 'giving up all hope, as they expected Mr Hagenauer down to wind up the camp and send them all about their business'. The Board members present retorted that without 'undue influence' the Aborigines, 'who were simply so many children', would long since have consented to removal.

Next day Deakin ordered the Lands Department to gazette an area as Aboriginal reserve, and again ordered the Board to respect the wishes of Aborigines wanting to remain (CSIC 90/Q10015; 90/P10110). These arrangements were confirmed after the 1890 election by Deakin's successor, and Hagenauer sourly informed the Board in November that the Framlingham residents were 'in a state of jubiliation' at retaining their own small reserve.

On 2 January 1891 a 'permanent reservation' of 3,679 acres was gazetted as endowment for agricultural colleges. The 'temporary reservation' of 548 acres for the use of Aborigines was not gazetted until 27 May 1892, and the original reservation of 1861 was not revoked until 1 July 1892. A 38-acre tract of the original reserve not included in the 1891 and 1892 gazettals was allotted by the Board on a 'temporary permissive occupancy basis' to the over-age 'half caste' Frank Clarke in February 1891. This area, still farmed by Clarke's descendants, was described as a 'water reserve' when gazetted as an addition to the Aboriginal reserve by a temporary reservation on 9 August 1897. On 1 February 1967 the 586 acres were gazetted as a 'permanent reservation' for Aborigines. Excisions for road extensions in December 1969 left an area of 585 acres, 2 roads, 22 perches. This was transferred by Crown Grant (under the Aboriginal Lands Act (No. 8044) of 17 December 1970) to the Framlingham Aboriginal Trust on 1 July 1971.

The agricultural college reserve was never developed because the land was unsuitable for an experimental farm and (in the opinion of some) was too near the Aborigines. In 1892 the Council of Agricultural Education offered the whole area for lease in 20 blocks. Some clearing was done by unemployed workers brought from Melbourne during the 1890s depression, and wood-cutting (presumably on a lease or royalty basis) continued for decades. The Council refused to give up any portion of the reserve for the use of Aboriginal descendants when requested by Cabinet in 1934. Under the 1944 Agricultural Colleges Act control of this land was transferred to the Lands Department. Between 1949 and 1952 six blocks (totalling 1,062 acres, 2 roods, 9 perches) were excised for farms. In 1966 an area of 2,700 acres was gazetted as a reserved forest under the control of the Forests Commission. On 30 May 1968 nine acres was set aside for public recreation; the rest remained State Forest (data obtained from Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, personal communication M.R. Worthy 2/9/71).

#### 5. Resistance to removal, 1891-1902

By 1891 some 36 half castes had been exiled and only 43 'lawful' residents remained, yet more houses were sold in 1892 when others were removed. Elsewhere Hagenauer modified his 'absorption' policy to license needy half castes to return to their former homes, but the Framlingham exiles were told they could only be licensed at distant stations, as Framlingham was no longer a 'residence for Aborigines'. The Framlingham community defied Hagenauer, and he was unforgiving. He complained repeatedly that they considered their reserve 'a free republic' and that 'they wish to be quite their own masters, and this cannot be allowed to them' (SLB 6/7/94; 17/8/92; 25/7/95). Citing Deakin's agreement that none who left Framlingham could return, the Board refused all petitions to return from the families sent to other stations (including the Hood family who had gone to their old home at Hexham).

The agricultural college reserve became a refuge for many homeless exiles from the 1890s to the 1940s. The Board would not aid the exiles -- and learned that it could not control them. They made themselves unauthorised homes in the forest as near as possible to their aged relatives, on land which had been their home since 1861.

The Board ignored the suffering of the Framlingham exiles in the 1890s depression, but some idea of Western District conditions comes from the reports of the Lake Condah manager. His 42 exiles were 'struggling for a living'. In 1893 he supported their petition to farm portions of the Lake Condah reserve as 'they cannot find or get land anywhere on which to make a home for themselves'. Despite the Board's promises and the aid of sympathetic MLAs only two Western District families were able to select land, and all who applied after 1891 were simply told that 'the time for aid had expired'.

In 1892 the half caste Clarke family was ordered from their adjacent tract but after a visit the Board relented. The widowed Mrs Saunders and the Crow family went to



relatives on the small Colac reserve when exiled in 1892; Crow's sister Mrs Gibb repeatedly sheltered them, but after the Gibbs' 1894 appeal to the Premier, the Board procured an Order-in-Council to remove them to Coranderrk. The widowed Mrs Couzens was ordered to marry and settle at a Gippsland station or be sent to the 'women's refuge' in Melbourne; her house was sold but she and her children were sheltered by her sister Mrs Brown. The widowed Mrs Dawson did go to Gippsland to marry, while her daughter's family vainly tried to get land near Lake Condah and returned to seek shelter with an aunt, Mrs Edwards.

The 1895 Annual Report said 36 residents remained. In fact 67 were crowded in the few remaining houses: 20 lawfully receiving rations, 25 who had given up their entitlement when allotted farm blocks in 1894, and 22 'trespassers' - who were their close kin. More Orders-in-Council were obtained to remove families in 1895 but the constable was reluctant to use force when they refused to go to distant stations and their removal did not occur until 1897. In 1897 there were 58 residents (36 receiving aid) but the Annual Reports published to 1912 show only a gradual decline from 36 to 18 as the aged 'lawful residents' died one by one.

The 'absorption' policy was rigidly enforced. From 1886 marriages between fullbloods and half castes were 'discouraged' - those who did marry forfeited their right to aid and were forced to make a home off the reserve with their 'white' spouses. All half castes aged 13 to about 40 were required to find employment elsewhere and threatened with a fine of £20 for 'trespassing' if they returned to the reserve, while the eligible residents who 'harboured' them - even when unemployed or ill - risked the loss of their own rations. Withdrawal of rations and the threat of removal was also used to punish heavy drinkers and unmarried mothers! Instead of licensing destitute half castes to receive aid, the Board asked local police to commit their children to institutions for 'neglected children'. To keep their children with them, over-age half castes had to leave the reserve, as the Ross family did in 1891. By 1895 the Board could no longer place youngsters in service as 'wages are very low and girls are plentiful everywhere'; but when unemployed youths and girls returned to their parents they were ordered off as 'trespassers'. The removal of the younger half castes left the mostly childless aged fullbloods without care except for the weekly visits of the constable serving as Local Guardian. Yet the Board refused their many petitions for appointment of a resident supervisor.

Those eligible to remain had acted as 'proprietors' in collecting agistment fees from neighbours until their land was re-proclaimed as an Aboriginal reserve in 1892, but now the Board claimed all income. Meat was no longer supplied, and the residents pleaded in vain for increased rations. The complaints of the district MLA and MLC were equally vain, until they told Parliament in January 1893 that the Aborigines went hungry because their own stock were 'eaten out' while the Board leased the reserve. The embarrassed Board members visited, but concluded that residents were hungry because they shared their rations with needy relatives. They were allowed to

keep the agistment income, and in August 1893 the Board approved their petitions (sent via Murray) for 'farm' blocks of about 80 acres. On condition that they did not draw rations or 'harbour' trespassers, 'temporary permissive occupancy' was granted in 1894 to the Egan/Good, Austin/Wiselaskie, and Blair/Brown families, and the Clarkes were allowed some acreage bordering their adjacent water reserve. The Board continued to profit from agistment leases of the remaining 212 acres, and refused to allot more blocks to families wishing to farm for themselves.

Murray criticised Hagenauer's unjust allotment of aid during the budget debate in October 1895, and in June 1896 forwarded to the Chief Secretary a petition asking that Daniel Clarke (the original missionary in 1865) be appointed supervisor. The Board merely replied that they had decided to 'break up' Framlingham. On 19 August 1896 Murray demanded that Parliament appoint a Royal Commission or Select Committee to examine the conditions of Aborigines and half castes throughout the colony, reporting that those in the Warrnambool district were near starvation in winter. When he described their fear and hatred of Hagenauer, whose visits were 'followed by some treatment distressful to the blacks', the Chief Secretary admitted they had petitioned him about their grievances, and promised to visit them. They also published complaints in the Warrnambool Standard, and the Board requested the government to reply in the Melbourne press (Minutes 2/9/96).

After a hasty visit to Framlingham the Board sent a deputation to the Chief Secretary on 23 September 1896. Blaming 'evil influences' and 'outside interference' for the protests, they urged him to remove the 28 'lawful' residents and 'close Framlingham as soon as possible'. But because the Aborigines had petitioned him to rebuild their station he insisted he must visit before deciding. Murray rose in Parliament next day to rebut the Board's statements (quoted in press reports); he presented detailed evidence that eligible people were denied aid and demanded an impartial inquiry into this 'infamous scandal'. The chastened Board doubled the meat ration (to 6 lb a week), replaced the unsympathetic constable and repaired some houses but deferred petitions for more farm blocks in hope that the Chief Secretary would close the station.

Chief Secretary Peacock visited on 29 January 1897. All residents repudiated the statement in Clarke's June 1896 petition that they would go with him to Lake Condah --they had been told that it asked for his appointment at Framlingham and had signed 'as it offered some prospect of their 15 children being educated in winter when the roads to Purnim State School were impassable'. Explaining that they could not leave the graves of relatives, all refused to go to Lake Condah, insisting that 'we would rather live and die here... and be buried with our friends'. Reminding Peacock of the 1867 removal, they declared that 'most of the blacks' at Framlingham 'were born there and would not care to leave' (CSIC 97/E12788).

They told Peacock they were contented now that Murray had succeeded in replacing the Local Guardian and increasing their rations. In May 1897 they petitioned him to

send a 'Christian lady teacher' but the Board refused to re-open their school. On 8 September the Board was informed that the Chief Secretary insisted Framlingham 'shall be kept up for some time longer'. Yet it was Peacock who granted the Orders-in-Council by which the Gibbs, Rawlings and Blair families were removed 'with no warning' to Coranderrk and Lake Condah late in 1897, ignoring a December petition from the residents begging him to prevent all removals (CSIC 97/F12753). When Blair returned 'in defiance' he was again removed by police. The three families incessantly petitioned to return home, even offering to relinquish their entitlement to aid to 'gain their freedom', but the orders requiring them to reside at distant stations were not cancelled for some years lest they return home to Framlingham (Minutes 5/5/97, 9/2/98, 8/6/98, 5/7/99, 7/3/00). Blair's sister was warned she would be 'punished for disobedience' when she continued to write urging her brother to return (Minutes 5/7/99).

In 1893 the over-age Ross family had asked the Board to help them to get work clearing the agricultural college reserve but were told that only unemployed men sent from Melbourne were eligible. By 1895 they were employed in the forest but 'trespassing' on the Aboriginal reserve. Their 1895 and 1897 requests for help to build a 'bush house' were refused as 'the Board does not spend money on land which is not their property', and a later plea to move the house to the Aboriginal reserve so their grandchildren were nearer school was forbidden as 'all half castes in the neighbourhood would follow this example' (SLB 9/9/97; Minutes 7/8/01).

The official correspondence shows that Hagenauer was more indulgent to the families he found amenable, but his favouritism created added strains in this community. Three families now allowed to shelter close relatives complained in April 1897 that the Edwards and Wiselaskie/Austin families harboured 'unauthorised' half castes. When evicted, the Austin sons camped on the agricultural college reserve, where they worked as wood-splitters. Mrs Edwards was sheltering her niece's family while Henry Alberts built a hut in the forest; the old couple lost their rations after telling the constable they 'would not turn her and her children out, I could stop the rations, - they could beg for a living' (BIL 2/5/97). An aged fullblood who married a half caste was also exiled; when he complained to the Chief Secretary Hagenauer retorted that any change in the 1886 policy would mean that 'many of these people would at once return to the stations' (SLB 11/6/97). In 1898 the Board refused the new constable's plea that the empty houses be given to the homeless half castes who were 'too poor to pay rent', and then threatened 'punishment' for the elderly relatives who shared their own dwellings with the needy (BILL 10/1/98, Minutes 9/2/98).

No Framlingham correspondence survives for the 1899-1908 period, but some clues are available in Board minutes and other records. The 1902 Annual Report noted that the Board still profited from agistment on 212 acres but the aged residents could no longer maintain the fencing. The four families allotted blocks collected their

own fees for agistment and sold milk from their few cows, but attempted no cultivation as the land was 'wet and unsuitable'. Only six cottages remained, and their 26 occupants made their living by shearing, hop-picking, rabbiting and basket-making, with some rations for the eligible aged.

#### 6. John Murray's intervention, 1902-1915

Early in 1902 Premier Peacock ordered the Board to economise by closing various stations, but his government fell before this policy was implemented, and in June John Murray, MLA for Warrnambool, became Chief Secretary and thus ex officio chairman of the Board.

During the budget debate of February 1903 another member reported that the Framlingham residents were annoyed by rumours of removal; Murray replied that he had opposed all previous schemes and would be no party to depriving them of the remaining land, which 'would be perfectly safe' so long as he was in power. In the bitter October 1903 debate on the revocation of the Wimmera reserve Murray reminded Parliament that he had fought the excision of 'very much more valuable land than this' at Framlingham - but as Minister of Lands and Agriculture 1904-06 he was responsible for the 1904 revocation bill. Murray declined to attend meetings (in case he had to 'take action regarding the Board') but as responsible minister 1902-04 he repeatedly intervened to protect the Framlingham folk. He refused to approve the sale of the small Colac reserve where the Saunders and Crow families now lived, pressed vainly for the return of the Gibbs family from Coranderrk, and rebuked the expulsion of another fullblood who married a half caste (the Board then relented, admitting the old man was 'unfit to work'). He referred all of the Aborigines' petitions to the Board, but was openly annoyed that their rigid interpretation of the 1886 Act led to refusal of the requests.

Hagenauer retired in 1906 but the clerk he had trained succeeded him as secretary and policy was unchanged. When a tenant on the agricultural college reserve complained of the 'habits etc. of the half castes' the Board denied responsibility but advised police action. In 1907 the Board planned to close several stations and the new secretary visited Framlingham to arrange the transfer of the 19 eligible aged to Coranderrk (Minutes 5/6/07). The surviving elders of the exiled Saunders, Rawlings, Couzens and Ross (Rose) families had by this time rejoined their friends and relatives on the Aboriginal reserve, but the children and grandchildren of this pioneer generation were still in unauthorised camps on the agricultural college reserve. Already a generation had grown to adulthood without schooling or vocational training because of the decision to close Framlingham.

Abandonment was forestalled by Murray's return to office as Premier in January 1909. He remained Chief Secretary until his death in 1915, and the wishes of the Framlingham community - conveyed in letters, discussions, and his sister's reports on her regular visits - at last influenced Board policy. Repairs to the fencing and seven houses were approved, the Board's decision to exile two aged farm block

holders because of their marriage to 'half castes' was reversed, and rations were granted in winter (when unemployment was always severe) to the families camped in huts and tents on the agricultural college reserve (Minutes and SLB 17/6/09). When the Board resolved that no 'half castes' would be assisted after September 1909 Murray convened the members to announce his intention of amending the 1886 Act to give 'permanent assistance to half castes' (Minutes 3/8/10). In September 1910 Murray introduced his Bill to Parliament, explaining that it was intended to extend the Board's powers to aid needy half castes 'but not to interfere in any way' with those who wished to be independent. The Bill passed without challenge.

Despite the Local Guardian's 1911 reports that their huts in the forest were 'not fit to live in' and their children's school attendance was irregular because the roads were 'almost impassable' in winter, the Board still declined to rehouse the second-generation exiles at Framlingham or admit them to Aboriginal stations (Annual Report 1911; Minutes 2/8/11). Instead the Board arranged to have the children of four families committed as 'neglected children' - but gave up this scheme when Miss Murray and the district MLC condemned the cruelty of separating children from parents whose only fault was poverty (Minutes 4/10/11). In June 1912 three families 'consented' (so their children would not be seized) to move from the agricultural college reserve to distant stations. The Lake Condah manager soon complained of their 'insubordination'. The Board rebuked the Chief Secretary for 'interfering' when he and Miss Murray visited them at Lake Condah (Minutes 12/2/13). To placate the manager the Board ordered one family transferred to Lake Tyers. But they managed to interview Murray, who blocked the transfer and in a confrontation 'refused to accept the Board's opinion' (Minutes 25/5/13). He also allowed the Rose and Blair families to return from Coranderrk. But he could not persuade the Board to allot more farm blocks to the younger half castes, and in fact one reverted to Board control in 1913 when the holders became feeble, although their nearest relatives had pleaded to occupy it.

On an August 1913 visit Murray learned that no Board member or official had visited Framlingham for years. He had attended the meetings in 1913 (the first Minister ever to do so), but convened the Board only once in 1914 and then assumed direct control of Aboriginal affairs. The Board did not meet again until reconstituted by his successor in May 1916.

#### 7. The post-war threat, 1916-1930

In August 1915 Murray had assured Parliament there were no government plans to close Aboriginal stations. But the members of Parliament composing the new Board were strongly influenced by electorate pressure groups which demanded that the Aboriginal reserves be sold for soldier settlement. The new member for Warrnambool, H.S. Bailey, joined the Board in 1917, when the Board agreed to transfer all eligible Aborigines to Lake Tyers and sell the other reserves for European occupation.

On 5 July 1917 a member of the Council for Agricultural Education complained in Parliament that his colleagues were demanding revocation of agricultural college reserves for their constituents' use, and urged them instead to see that the Aboriginal reserves were 'put to a more useful purpose'. Framlingham, worth '£40 an acre', had 'room for quite a number of returned soldiers'.

The Board obtained valuations of all reserves: in May 1917 the Framlingham land was worth £3975. At their August and October 1917 meetings the Board merely 'deferred' their decision on various petitions (signed by the Aborigines, prominent settlers, most of the shire rate-payers, and many residents of Warrnambool) opposing the removal of the Framlingham residents. These were forwarded by Bailey and other Parliamentary representatives. In September and October the sympathetic MLC informed Parliament that the Aborigines considered it a 'hardship' to be sent away from 'their own districts' and reported that the rate-payers and townsfolk had petitioned for Parliamentary intervention. In July 1918 he again complained that the Board and Chief Secretary had ignored all demands for an assurance of the residents' right to remain.

In fact the Board had already made its policy decision: to 'concentrate all down to half caste standard' at Lake Tyers and refuse future aid to all who refused to transfer there (BPA - Minutes 6/2/18). Bailey and other members had visited Framlingham on 5 April 1918 to organise the transfer and disposal of the reserve. This sub-committee's report noted that all strongly opposed the move to Lake Tyers despite the promise that they would receive training for skilled trades, enabling them to 'compete with white population on equal terms instead of being merely employable in casual occupations'. At this meeting William Rawlings, John Wiselaskie, Henry Rose and Fleetwood Clarke 'spoke on behalf of the natives, whose objections to removal were on the grounds of sentiment, long association, and by reason of the fact that their relatives are buried there'.

The sub-committee recommended that the old pioneers should be allowed to remain on a small plot when the rest of the 548 acres was sold - largely because Miss Murray was collecting subscriptions for their support. In February 1919 Cabinet approved the sale of the reserves to the Closer Settlement Board, but the profits could not be funded for the benefit of the Aborigines at Lake Tyers without enabling legislation, and the necessary Bills lapsed in 1925 and 1928. Meanwhile the Board leased the reserves to white farmers, despite bitter protests from Aboriginal war veterans whose forebears had cleared these areas.

Because of the planned transfer to Lake Tyers (delayed by lack of accommodation), the Board refused to replace the house and the church destroyed by fire in 1919. But the community's plea for a place of worship was publicised by the Argus (10/6/20), which commented on the number of returned servicemen and reported that all residents refused to leave Framlingham, 'to which they are much attached'. Shamed by the statewide publicity and donations, the Board promised a portable church - which could be moved to Lake Tyers.

The 1921 Annual Report (the first published since 1912) noted that one 'fullblood' and 65 'half castes' now lived on the reserve. A visiting missionary (Our Aim 15/9/21) counted 70 persons in this community, living in 7 reserve houses and 'in the forest nearby in their own cabins', subsisting by shearing, splitting firewood and selling rush baskets.

But Board policy altered again in 1921. In March the Local Guardian was ordered to see that only persons of 'half caste standard' were licensed to live on the reserve, and in October he was ordered to exile the fairer residents and refuse winter aid to the needy as 'The Board is limited by the Act and Regulations to assisting fullbloods and (full) half castes only'. The constable was ordered to conduct a special enumeration in May 1921. Of the 47 adults and 25 children named, only 15 received full rations, 20 never received any aid, and the remainder had been granted 'occasional' rations in winter when 'work is unobtainable in the district'. The constable, ordered to specify eligibility for aid, reported that only 10 were 'of half caste standard' and the rest were 'quadroons or octoroons'. (These terms are correctly used to specify persons who have one Aboriginal grand-parent or one Aboriginal great-grandparent.) The injustice of the constable's classification can be demonstrated by genealogical research: 51 of the persons he named were in fact true second and third-generation half castes, whose parents and grand-parents were all half castes.

Without further investigation the Board accepted the constable's determination of eligibility, announcing in the 1922 Annual Report that 'about 50 half castes and quadroons' were not entitled to aid, and that rations were given only to 'one black' and 16 'half castes'. This report also announced the impending sale of the reserve - but pledged that the claim of any 'fullblood' wishing to remain would be considered!

Another valuation was obtained in 1922: the improvements were worthless, but the 548 acres of poor quality land (with only a small area suitable for cultivation if fenced and drained) could be sold for £6 per acre (£3288) if subdivided into areas suitable for use by neighbouring dairy farmers. The agricultural college reserve was described as 'given over to the breeding of rabbits' (Disposal of Reserves File, 19/9/22).

A Mr Heathershaw (by 1927 Under Secretary of the Chief Secretary's Department and thus Board vice-chairman) was sent to report on 18 January 1922. He named 19 adults and 6 children in seven cottages, reporting that 15 adults and 30 children lived nearby on the agricultural college reserve. Two pioneers now received an age pension and only 11 drew rations. He reported that 'colour' handicapped workers' search for employment 'as farmers locally regard them as Aborigines and will pay only a meagre wage and then for casual employment'. He urged that the reserve be sold for soldier settlement to discourage the persistence of this community, and recommended that all children of parents not eligible for transfer be committed to the care of the Department for Neglected Children. He named 23 to be removed when accommodation was

available, but reported that 'none of the natives who are eligible for transfer seem willing to go'. This is scarcely surprising, since his classification required separation of two married couples, and the detachment of individuals from their parents, grand-parents and siblings. In the end the Board resolved merely to 'discourage rations to doubtful castes'.

While the Board lobbied the government to introduce enabling legislation, Heathershaw inspected again on 10 October 1924. To ensure dispersal of this 'undesirable fringe' population he urged sale or leasing; at 2/6 an acre, the Board would obtain £68/10 a year. Only one block-holder was dairy-farming and 17 aged received rations. On the agricultural college reserve lived 20 adults and 31 children in 'bark humpies'; Heathershaw complained that they had been 'repeatedly told to keep off the reserve but make back directly the Local Guardian turns his back'. He and the constable again urged that all children be committed to institutions.

A Western District MLA newly appointed to the Board urged in 1924 and 1925 that the young families exiled from Lake Condah, Coranderrk<sup>and</sup>/Framlingham should be allowed to farm these reserves. The Board's last published report, submitted in October 1925, announced that Framlingham would be sold as soon as alternative accommodation was available and legislation enabled the Board to profit from the sale, since 'an undesirable population of quadroons and octoroons', who should be absorbed in the community, tended to gather here. But the objections of the aged Mrs Bon and the new member forced the Board to cancel the sale of the late Mrs Good's cottage (now occupied by her crippled nephew John Egan who had returned without permission from Lake Tyers). Although part of the £317 income accumulated from leases was voted for repairs to cottages, it was not spent, and the Board merely deferred various petitions asking that the exiled families be allowed to build themselves homes on the reserve.

After an inspection in May 1926 Bailey and other members reported that 21 residents of 'half caste standard' now received aid, but 21 members of 'quadroon' families (including brothers of those aided) were not eligible. Although this subcommittee recommended leasing 520 acres now that the last block-holder had died, the Board decided to allow residents the use of 48 acres 'subject to its cultivation'. In 1927 there were no tenders but in 1928 the Board 'deferred' a lease application by John Couzens (whose mother, widow of the last block-holder, was one of the few surviving pioneers). Instead the Board agreed to sell 17 acres to a neighbour, and ordered the constable to evict the two Couzens families and two Austin families (BPA - Minutes 21/8 & 7/11/28).

When Mrs Couzens pleaded for aid for her young children in 1929 Heathershaw refused because '50 others of similar colour in the Framlingham district had an equal claim, none were eligible under the Act'. A new member, Sir John Bowser, indignantly announced that he would move an amendment of the Act, to extend the power of the Board to all persons having an admixture of Aboriginal blood: but



he lost his Parliamentary seat before he could act. Plans to reconstitute the Board lapsed, it was rarely convened, and executive control remained with the Under Secretary and a clerk. Funds were severely reduced as a result of the economic depression, and in 1930 the Board resolved to narrow, rather than widen, the definition of eligibility - and to organise the 'removal of the very fair from Lake Tyers'.

#### 8. The depression years, 1931-1938

In 1931 neighbours would not tender for short-term leases of the Aboriginal reserve as long neglect had rendered the fencing useless and portions of the college reserve were now available for lease (at 4/- an acre in 1932). Despite the pleas of Mrs Bon (a Board member since 1904) that the 548 acres be divided among the needy families, the Board offered the Aboriginal reserve on a five-year 'improvement lease' which allowed removal of some of the residents' 'huts'. Early in 1932 the Chief Secretary ordered the transfer to Lake Tyers of the few eligible for aid, but they appealed his decision. After an inspection he announced that he had decided not to remove them (Argus 23/2/32). Eleven years later he told Parliament he had been appalled by conditions there; the Warrnambool Hospital would not accept Aboriginal patients but the Board and government had decided that no special assistance could be given - he belatedly regretted that 'the facts were not made public' (VPD 16/12/43, p. 2460).

The plight of this community became an issue in the 1932 and 1933 elections, when Bailey lost the Warrnambool seat. The new MLA, McGarvie, was appointed to the Board in December 1933 and although Bailey remained a member he soon ceased to attend.

In November 1933 Framlingham was inspected by Bailey, the new Under Secretary, Chapman, the Board secretary and the sympathetic MLA representing the Lake Condah region, who recommended that the cottages be repaired. His pleas were over-ruled at the December meeting, when the Board resolved to advertise the reserve for long-term lease. McGarvie's appeals had already been publicly rejected by the Under Secretary, who asserted that the Board was not responsible for people who 'had a little Aboriginal blood only' (Age 13/11/33). The neighbour who sought to obtain the reserve and occupy a cottage warned the Board on 4 December that McGarvie had attended a meeting on the reserve and 'promised the half castes' he would 'try and get the station divided up among them'.

The government was embarrassed when the Melbourne Star launched a campaign publicising McGarvie's complaints at the end of 1933. On 27 December the Star reported that only 8 old folk received Board rations (worth 2/9 a week), while some 70 Aborigines 'turned off' the Aboriginal reserve camped in huts of bark, tin and bags on the college reserve, fearing dispossession at any time. There was no work except poorly paid wood-cutting, they had been refused the sustenance relief given to other unemployed, and because local charities and churches had no funds their only help came from two storekeepers. The Star emphasised that none would consent to leave Framlingham. Subsequent reports quoted the Under Secretary's insistence that the Act permitted the Board to aid only 'pure and half-blooded Aborigines', most of whom had

been concentrated at Lake Tyers. Eight had been allowed to remain at Framlingham 'for sentimental reasons, because their relatives were buried there'. He rejected public demands for a Royal Commission inquiry, asserting that the campers on the college reserve had merely the same right as other unemployed to register for sustenance relief. The store-keepers retorted that only 3 families received sustenance; it had been withdrawn from 5 single women and 1 man, and 2 families were ineligible because each owned a few cows. They explained that lack of job training - and employer prejudice - limited the Aborigines to seasonal harvesting and casual work in milking-sheds. Most worked in the forest in summer but wood-cutting was impossible in winter.

When the Chief Secretary demanded a report the clerk asserted that the excluded campers had begun this 'agitation' because a long-term lease would end the 'surreptitious' grazing of their few cattle on the Aboriginal reserve. He admitted that their claims were 'resented by the local sustenance committee' and that 'unemployed whites are now competing in timber cutting' but advised the Minister that alteration of the Act would be against the best interests of people who should 'merge into the white population'. A second memorandum asserted that the granting of sustenance to some 'proves they are nearer white than half caste standard as no fullblood or half caste is eligible for such assistance'. The Under Secretary also opposed aid to the exiles, as they had 'supported themselves for years and will do so again when times improve'.

John Egan risked loss of rations and removal when he wrote to the Star (6/1/34) on behalf of the Framlingham community, insisting that the good workers there would scorn to 'crawl to any man' for favours but under depression conditions 'even the most wealthy dairymen cut their own wood and split their own posts' and the Aborigines had long been unable to get roadwork or other employment with the shire council because they paid no rates. He explained that '67 of the blacks at Framlingham were born there, and many others have spent 20, 30 or 40 years of their lives here', and noted that local farmers pressed by the Board to lease the reserve had said they 'would not even dream of robbing the natives of their land'.

The Warrnambool Standard (9/1/34) gave sympathetic coverage to a public meeting convened by the influential Australian Natives Association, quoting reports that eight years earlier the Board had tried to force removal to Lake Tyers 'but as 82% of them had been born on the station they declined to go. Framlingham was their home and the place where their forebears were buried and they wanted to stick there'. The community now included 84 persons; another 41 had, in desperation, gone 'to the slums of Melbourne last year' in the hope of obtaining work or sustenance relief. Three-quarters of these people, born in the locality, were forbidden to live on the Aboriginal reserve and were 'hounded off by the authorities'. Before the depression they had earned 'quite a fair living by woodchopping' but now work was scarce and they were 'often hungry'. Since all refused to go to Lake Tyers, the meeting had resolved to aid community members to farm for themselves, and to obtain a school on the reserve for their children.

More detailed proposals, to be supervised by a committee of experienced farmers, were put to Chief Secretary Macfarlan and the Board secretary by a deputation of Warrnambool and shire officials introduced by McGarvie on 12 January 1934. Macfarlan acted immediately on his promise to extend sustenance benefits, to ask the Board and Education Department to cooperate in providing a school, and to obtain 10 acres per family, on a 30 year lease, from the agricultural college reserve. On 17 January he reminded the Minister for Agriculture that this reserve had originally been part of the Aboriginal reserve but 'very little has been done with the deleted area of 3,679 acres, other than to obtain some revenue from leasing and from timber royalties', and urged excision of 200 acres 'under leasehold' for no more than 20 families at a nominal rental of 30/- a year for each 10-acre block. But the Council of Agricultural Education refused to give the Aborigines tenure of any portion of the college reserve because 'such a settlement would not be in the best interests of the people themselves' (BIL 17/1/34, 26/3/34), and continued to refuse even though the government guaranteed the annual rental. Macfarlan was no more successful with his other requests: assistance to the Education Department was refused as the children who would benefit 'are in no way under the protection of this Board', and officials in charge of sustenance reported that all of the 29 persons eligible were receiving relief. Their inspection confirmed the storekeepers' report that the community included 59 adults and 34 children (plus 3 adults and 14 children still in Melbourne), and that all were 'eager' to work but were 'given few chances by the Shire administration' (BIL 16 & 25/1/34).

Board minutes of 21 February 1934 show that McGarvie tried to persuade Bailey and the Under-Secretary (the only members attending) to lease the Aboriginal reserve to community members rather than white farmers, but they would only consent to defer leasing until 'provision was made for octoroons and quadroons' on the college reserve. The Under Secretary insisted that established policy was to 'restrict the numbers aided', that the Framlingham problem 'would disappear with better times', and support of the many fringe communities in the state would merely burden taxpayers.

A day earlier the Chief Secretary had received a letter from the only Board member who had developed close friendships with Aborigines throughout Victoria. Mrs Anne Bon (1837-1936) had fought against the alienation of their reserves since the 1870s, but was now too frail to attend Board meetings. She informed him that the Framlingham folk had been 'cruelly and unjustly treated in the past and that for no other crime than that of refusing to leave their homes and the graves of those they love, to go to Tyers at the bidding of the Board'. Reviewing the history of Board attempts to lease and to sell the 500 acres from which the Aborigines 'have been driven', she reported that all such efforts 'were futile, as the people of Warrnambool objected to act dishonorably towards the "original owners of the soil"'. A second plea informed the Chief Secretary that residents had been forced from the reserve - 'in some cases hand-cuffs were mentioned', and insisted that the present population were 'heirs-at-

law and have a legal claim to its re-occupation'. But her letters were merely referred to the Board secretary for reply (BIL-20/2 & 13/3/34). To Bon's third appeal, pointing out that Warrnambool committees were prepared to guarantee rental of 10-acre blocks of the Aboriginal reserve for 20 needy families, the Chief Secretary replied that he was 'not prepared to allow them on the Framlingham reserve at the expense of the Aborigines' (BIL 19 & 26/6/34). Macfarlan was in fact contradicting the promise, publicised in May by the Star, that he would ask the Board to give these families 10-acre blocks on the Aboriginal reserve.

In fact the Board could not find a tenant, so strongly was Aboriginal re-occupation supported by district residents. The Aboriginal community, 'keen to settle down on land from which they would not be in daily danger of eviction', offered to fence the reserve by voluntary labour --yet still the Board refused. McGarvie's speech-in-reply at the opening of Parliament on 20 June was a plea for an amending Bill enabling the Framlingham community to take possession of the reserve. At the July Board meeting McGarvie urged that the 20 needy families should be given secure tenure of 10-acre blocks of the Aboriginal reserve so they could build decent homes for themselves without fear of eviction. But the Under-Secretary and other members were still determined to lease the reserve for profit, and 'stressed the danger in letting light coloured people on the reserve as it was extremely difficult to get them off later. To allow them to settle would practically give them permanent possession as public sympathy would be against later removal'. The Board voted to accept the Chief Secretary's compromise: to ask Cabinet to excise 200 acres of the college reserve for lease to those 'natives' who had been 'residing in the forest reserve for 20 years already'.

The Under-Secretary's July memorandum recommended an excision from the college reserve ('not being put to any use at all') for families 'unwilling to leave the locality', and asked that jobs be provided so they could obtain the higher 'sustenance work' rate. Cabinet approved, but when McGarvie and others questioned Macfarlan in Parliament on 3 September about plans for these people who wished 'to remain in the district owned and inhabited by their forefathers', the Chief Secretary admitted that nothing had been done as the government could not force the Council to give up its reserve, sending these 'almost white' people to Lake Tyers was 'unthinkable', and the government could do no more for them than for other unemployed 'unless it took on some peculiar form of obligation'.

Meanwhile the Women's Weekly (25/8/34) had given national publicity to the plight of this Aboriginal community, noting that only 8 persons were allowed to live on the Aboriginal reserve while 120 relatives occupied 'hovels', and that only 2 of 36 school-age children were able to attend school. Condemning the government's plan to provide 'poorer uncleared land... not near water', the Victorian Aboriginal Group urged that the exiles be allotted farm blocks on the Aboriginal reserve at a nominal rental. On 13 October the Local Guardian reported that 7 families had returned and

built 5 huts; they refused to leave the Aboriginal reserve, saying that 'McGarvie was working for them and would not have them shifted'. He could remove them only by prosecution for trespassing, which 'would cause a bit of a stir locally if not in other places'. The Under Secretary advised prosecution, but Cabinet 'deferred' permission on 11 December 1934.

The reserve school had been closed and demolished forty-four years earlier, but the Education Department began to use the church for a State School in October 1934. This facility created new hope for the Aboriginal community and encouraged their return to the Aboriginal reserve. On 16 February 1935 the constable reported that 23 adults and 27 children now lived in the four old Board houses, the Clarke house on the adjacent water reserve and five new huts, while 56 adults and 57 children were still camped <sup>in</sup> bark huts and 'humpies' on the college reserve. This 'invasion' prompted an April 1935 visit by the Under Secretary and Bailey, recently re-elected member for Warrnambool. The Under Secretary's report noted that the men on sustenance work earned 30/- a week, which he thought 'as much as they ever earned in normal times'. Nicholas Couzens had erected substantial buildings and was 'unlawfully' dairy-farming (on the 70 acres farmed by his mother and step-father for over 50 years). Complaining that Aboriginal occupation prevented the Board from leasing its reserve and 'a valuable asset is thus rapidly deteriorating' because the land rapidly reverted to bush and scrub if not grazed, he urged the government to provide work with the Forests and Rivers and Water Supply Commissions - 'in distant localities' - and give these people 'the choice of taking it or of being ejected from their present situation', as only 12 were eligible for Board aid.

But by December 1936 the seventy residents of the reserve had formed their own 'Progress Committee', and the shire and municipal councils, all churches and fifteen associations in Warrnambool had combined to draw up an elaborate welfare scheme. While Bailey was Chief Secretary 1936-1943 lobby groups concerned about the Framlingham community were able to exert direct pressure on the responsible minister. His attendance at meetings had been poor ever since his appointment in 1917, and while he was chairman the Board was convened only once or twice a year. An August 1939 letter in the archives of the Hamilton Aborigines Uplift Society (which tried to persuade Bailey to duplicate the Framlingham housing scheme on the Lake Condah reserve) suggests that Bailey was forced to take action: '...All done at Framlingham has been done despite him and because his constituency wanted it done. He would have been in rebellion against his key men if he had not yielded'.

An influential deputation asked Bailey to block renewed plans to transfer certain residents to Lake Tyers, and to persuade the Board to divide its reserve into farms. But it was not until the Warrnambool Standard (2/12/36) publicly complained of Bailey's failure to act that he hastily brought the Under Secretary to meet representatives of all interested groups. At this meeting on 7 December 1936 he promised to see that no resident of the reserve was evicted or sent to Lake Tyers, to seek Cabinet and Board

support to divide the 548 acres into fenced farm blocks for 20 families, and to obtain funds for new dwellings.

In March 1937 the government surveyor drew up plans to divide the reserve into allotments. In December the Warrnambool 'Committee of Management' publicly complained that members of this community were still in miserable huts and had to carry water three miles up the steep river bank because the government would not provide £70 worth of materials to give them an adequate water service. The Minister's credibility was further challenged at well-attended public meetings in Melbourne (Argus 17/12/37). This certainly embarrassed Bailey, who had publicly praised Victorian policy and strongly opposed Commonwealth control of Aborigines when he was chairman of the first Commonwealth conference on Aboriginal welfare in April 1937. In December he informed the Board that he had asked the Unemployment Council to finance a housing scheme.

Another Warrnambool deputation came to protest government inaction in April 1938. Bailey then secured the Premier's pledge that £3000 would be granted from unemployment relief funds to fence the reserve and provide a water supply and 12 cottages, on condition that the work was carried out, under supervision, by those residents registered as unemployed. The Warrnambool Standard (4/5/38) reported Bailey's visit to announce the news, when he summarised board policy during his twenty-year involvement, asserted that 'quadroons and octoroons' were not eligible for Board aid without alteration of the Act, and admitted that only the 'persistence and humanitarian principles of the Warrnambool organisations' had caused him to make 'special efforts' to obtain government aid. In reply to objections that subdivision would ruin two dairy-farmers and that each family needed at least 80 acres to make a living (as 'colour prejudice' prevented them from obtaining employment), Bailey insisted that these families had no right to graze their cows on the Board's reserve and in any case no more land was available: the adjoining college land 'could not be alienated from permanent reservation'. Bailey intended only to provide decent housing (at a nominal rental to 'protect the ownership rights of the Government'), and he felt that even this much assistance to persons not legally Aborigines would 'establish a dangerous precedent'. He warned that the committee supervising the reserve for the government would be required to prevent any 'influx of half castes' and 'clear away any who lived on the fringe of the settlement'. Two months later Bailey informed the Board of his actions; the four members attending once again resolved that the Act should not be amended.

#### 9. Re-occupation of the Aboriginal reserve, 1938-1946

The inaugural meeting of the Committee of Management was held in June 1938. Twelve organisations were allotted specific responsibilities in the comprehensive welfare scheme - the Australian Natives Association undertaking to 'inculcate a love of Australia and teach the tradition of the race'. The first new home was officially opened on 26 November 1938 and all were completed by June 1939. By October 1939

16 families were housed in new or repaired cottages but the promised new school and windmill water supply were delayed until September 1940 because the Education Department could not build on an Aboriginal reserve and the Board was -as always- reluctant to spend money on this settlement.

Board officials drafted the tenancy agreements which residents were required to sign in 1938. Occupancy was conditional on payment of a 3/- weekly rental 'and good behaviour'; tenants pledged that they would restrict their households to 'immediate family' and were forbidden to share with their relatives - a remarkable requirement for any lease. By June 1939 the Warrnambool committee was already complaining of the unsatisfactory division of authority between it and the Board's Local Guardian, and (disturbed by the residents' 'apathy' and lack of appreciation) demanding greater disciplinary powers. The Board then sought legal advice. The Crown Solicitor reported that since the land was 'reserved from sale or lease' the Lands Department would have to re-proclaim it as reserved from sale only before residents could be required to sign tenancy agreements. Moreover, 'in view of the circumstances under which these people settled on the reserve in the first place, action could not be taken against them for trespass' (BIL - 12/6 & 24/8/39). Despite this legal opinion, the Chief Secretary informed the local committee that they were empowered to control residents 'up to complete ejection' from the settlement. The constable was also authorised to request every publican in the district to sign an agreement that no liquor would be sold to reserve residents (Warrnambool Standard 3 & 4/11/39). The Minister and Under Secretary visited on 19 January 1940, and warned that any block-holder whose land was not fenced and improved within three months would be evicted. Bailey publicly informed the committee that 'a better form of punishment than eviction would be to remove the children under the provisions of the Children's Welfare Act'. One tenant whose rent was up to date was evicted for drinking on the reserve and warned he would be arrested if he returned. A second eviction, for 'immorality', occurred in February 1940. In a 9 February memorandum the Under Secretary advised his Minister to act upon his January promise to arrange that camping on the college reserve be forbidden, 'to dispel the feeling of settlers that nothing can happen to them', since George Clarke had advised fellow-residents that if all refused to pay rent the government could do nothing. The residents were in fact making a concerted attempt to force delivery of the promised water supply, since they still had to carry drinking water 5 miles, and water for other purposes had to be carried a quarter mile from the Hopkins River.

On 3 April 1940 the Warrnambool Standard published a letter from Nicholas Couzens, secretary of the residents' Progress Committee. He warned that a surfeit of advice from the many organisations involved made it likely that 'before this year is out there will be a good many of these model homes empty'. He argued that criticism of residents' housekeeping was unjust since they had no water and the four-roomed cottages had to accommodate families of 12. The threats to expel residents who had

not yet developed their blocks were unfair since the promised farming equipment had not materialised; the committee still had funds for tools but had ordered the men to work with pick and shovel. He concluded:

Give us a chance and let us do our own planning. We have taken enough advice from this so-called Board of Management...I do say that we would better off if we were left alone, instead of being ordered about and complaints made about dirty houses. This talk makes the womenfolk very annoyed...The people of Warrnambool and district think it is a great life; but to have visits paid by one of the Board's members, and then comments made and printed in the paper, when they have their Board meetings, makes one feel miserable. We might be told to do a few things, but we won't be driven by anybody.

By May 1940 most residents had fenced, ploughed and begun to cultivate their blocks. Those on sustenance labour had built a road through the reserve, and residents were now able to get timber and firewood from the college reserve in winter. The Under Secretary again warned residents, during his inspection of 8 May, that the government had power to evict them from the Aboriginal reserve and also to prevent them from camping on the adjacent reserve.

Meanwhile the committee had recommended appointment of a resident missionary. On 24 May 1940 Bailey replied that the government had no special obligation to these 'ordinary citizens' and opposed the appointment since it could be interpreted as acknowledgement of this community's special claim to state assistance. Influential deputations eventually persuaded him to allow a 'practical farmer' representing the United Aborigines Mission to use a vacant cottage from September 1941. The missionaries remained until 1955.

The Framlingham community responded to wartime employment opportunities. Residents left for garrison duty and military service overseas, work in city munitions factories and well paid share-farming in the district. But when they left, even for seasonal harvesting work, they risked the loss of their homes, for the Board insisted that only the original occupiers had any tenancy rights, and forbade occupancy by even the closest relatives.

At Bailey's final meeting as chairman in July 1943 the Board resolved to sell two old cottages then vacant, to evict another tenant for rent arrears, and to make plans for the sale of all Aboriginal reserves except Lake Tyers for postwar soldier settlement. The Under-Secretary's August report on 'Disposal of Aboriginal Reserves', which noted that only 2 of the 81 Framlingham residents were eligible for Board aid, was approved by the Surveyor-General's department on 1 December 1943. Framlingham was to be divided into three blocks for sale at £6/12/9 per acre - a total of £3,637 including fencing and windmills valued at £229 - but this department cautioned that 206 acres including the cemetery could be retained if an Aboriginal reserve were still required.

The local committee had already complained in April 1943 that all of the unlined new cottages were 'uninhabitable' as the Public Works Department has used such poor materials that there were one-inch cracks between the weatherboards; in September



the committee strongly censured the 'public scandal' of the Board's neglect in recent years. The Under Secretary replied that the committee and tenants were responsible for maintenance and stated that 'from the point of view of the Board, it would be preferable if the present residents left the reserve'.

In 1944 residents milked some 60 cows and worked at rabbiting, wood-cutting, harvesting and dairy work. One man had tried to grow vegetables 'but shortage of water and unsuitable soil left him out of pocket by the venture' (Warrnambool Standard 7/3/44). A Board member was now Minister of Lands, and he joined the Board inspection of Framlingham in February 1944 to arrange for its disposal. But the local committee strongly opposed the scheme. While correspondence dragged on, the Board was strongly criticised for forbidding the return from Melbourne of a former tenant, a widow in great need. All pleas to return were opposed by the Under Secretary, who reported that district residents 'did not welcome the settlement' and although prepared to accept the original tenants would 'object to any influx from other parts of the state'. He argued that such applicants had 'no more claim to a house at Framlingham than any other citizen' and insisted that numbers must be reduced because the Lands Department had recommended the reserve for soldier settlement (Memorandum 2/5/45). But he was over-ruled at the May 1945 meeting, when the committee was given full authority to lease to 'persons of Aboriginal blood' any cottage which was, or became, vacant. Despite this delegation of authority, the Board resolved that it 'could not give any assurance that the reserve would remain undisturbed indefinitely' due to government plans for soldier settlement, but thought it 'unlikely that present tenants would be deprived of their homes'. A public statement of Board policy was made by Chief Secretary Hyland in June 1945: in reply to local demands that the 46 acres still occupied by the Lake Condah Aboriginal community be retained for their exclusive use when the Board sold this reserve for soldier settlement, he asserted that this land (including the cemetery and occupied dwellings) must be reserved for 'public purposes' since 'the Board feels that because a person may be one-eighth or one-sixteenth Aboriginal should not give him prior rights over a person who is wholly white' (Hamilton Spectator 16/6/45).

In fact administration of the Framlingham reserve remained with the Board's Local Guardian. This constable was extremely critical of the local committee - which disbanded in 1946 - and openly unsympathetic to the Aborigines. Members of the Framlingham community who had worked elsewhere during the war were now returning home, driven out of Melbourne and the towns by the universal postwar housing shortage, complicated by the general reluctance of landlords to accept 'coloured' tenants. As they could not rent or buy housing anywhere, they were compelled to seek shelter with relatives on the reserve or - once again - build shelters in the bush on the adjoining reserve, which had been transferred to the Lands Department in 1944. Although the constable agreed that the unlined cottages were 'uninhabitable' by January 1946, he ordered <sup>tenants</sup> to pay rent arrears or be evicted; they told him they would withhold payment

until the houses were lined and repaired. He then urged the Board to visit and make a 'census' of the many unauthorised occupants, who could be expelled by taking legal action for trespass (BIL 22/4/46).

Although invited, Bailey did not attend the conference held by Chief Secretary Slater and Board members with the constable, missionaries and chairman of the new 'Welfare Committee' at Warrnambool on 5 June 1946. The prominent businessman Fletcher Jones explained that the former committee had disbanded because of dissatisfaction with the punitive attitudes and the neglect exhibited by the Parliamentary representatives, successive Chief Secretaries and the Board, which had demonstrated on its last visit that it was concerned 'only with property'. Told that the residents would not buy lining materials because they 'objected to spending their money on Government property', the Chief Secretary agreed that structural alterations were the Board's responsibility; his 'revolutionary attitude' was commended by Jones, who went on to urge that residents be allotted a greater area of land so they could earn a satisfactory living. The Chief Secretary was told there was now little work for them in the district because of 'the necessity of paying award rates'. There were now 51 adults (with 51 children) crowded in 12 cottages; many were age and invalid pensioners, and the constable explained that if the newcomers were evicted there was nowhere for them to go.

Despite the Under Secretary's advice, this Minister decided that rent arrears due to sickness and other hardships should be written off, and he ordered the Public Works Department to assess needs and supply materials - but the cottages were not improved until 1956. On 5 September 1946 the Under Secretary provided his Minister with an extremely distorted résumé of the history of Framlingham, advising him to surrender the reserve for soldier settlement since it 'was not being properly used'. It was he who replied to petitions from Bailey and the Warrnambool Shire Secretary which urged the Minister to transfer the Aboriginal reserve to the Forests Commission; he pointed out that it had already been offered to the Soldier Settlement Board (BIL 17/10/46).

#### 10. Post-war policy, 1947-1956

The Board was reconstituted in May 1947 with the appointment of four new members, including an Aboriginal. But because it was convened only once or twice a year from 1946 to 1957 two officers of the Chief Secretary's Department continued to control policy. Successive governments insisted that persons of Aboriginal descent were legally white, had 'full civil rights' and could secure adequate aid from the resources available to ordinary citizens; thus it would be a 'retrograde step' to put them under the control of the Board. Asserting that there was 'no native problem in Victoria', the government declined to send a representative to the 1951 Native Welfare Conference convened by the Commonwealth government, at which a new national policy of 'assimilation' was adopted. The 'Framlingham Reserve Welfare Committee' shared control of the reserve with the Board's agent, and could do little while

distant bureaucrats (who considered this Aboriginal community an inconvenience) controlled policy and expenditure.

The Board's secretary seems to have reclassified the residents for a report dated 30 June 1947: 62 were described as '3/4 and 1/2 castes' and 16 as '1/4 and 1/8 castes'. But none now received Board rations and the future of Framlingham was still 'obscure'. In May Bailey, still a Board member and MLA, had requested a special Health Department survey because of local concern about recent deaths from tuberculosis. Focussing particularly on the 38 children living with 35 adults in 13 cottages, the team's June 1947 report strongly criticised the substandard housing, lack of water and inadequate diet. In September the Shire Medical Officer recommended that facilities should be improved or the reserve closed. The Board's reply denied any responsibility but said that the Public Works Department was undertaking repairs and the Minister would be asked to consider legislation to extend Board control over persons of 'lighter colour'; in fact the Under Secretary advised him to accept no responsibility as the government would have to rehouse all those living in worse conditions at five rubbish tip settlements elsewhere in the state (Memorandum 23/9/47).

No repairs had been made by July 1948, when the Board refused to allow construction of a teacher's residence because the sale of the reserve for soldier settlement was still expected. A Western District MLC then put questions in Parliament about leasing and demolition of houses at Lake Condah and Framlingham. He was told that Framlingham had never been leased, that the Public Works Department had removed only three dwellings, and that there were 'no aboriginals' on the reserve, merely 70 'light half castes, quadroons and octoroons'. In December 1948 this MLC told Parliament he had been a member of the Board for 2 1/2 years: he considered its administration of Aboriginal welfare was a farce and a disgrace.

The Board offered another cottage for sale in September 1949. Chief Secretary Leggatt visited at the committee's request in October, and agreed that the Board should accept responsibility on a 'landlord-tenant basis'; a week later he assured Parliament that tenants' homes 'were being repaired'. This was untrue. And while he (and his successors) refused to grant the Aboriginal farmers extra land on this reserve a thousand acres of the adjoining reserve was allotted to white farmers between 1949 and 1952.

In December 1949 the constable and committee agreed to oppose another planned sale; this cottage had been occupied since 1947 by the invalid daughter-in-law of the original tenant. The Minister refused to accept this 'newcomer' and the house was sold. He was of course advised by the Under Secretary, who insisted that policy forbade the return of former residents and that houses vacated by the original tenants must be removed. He also objected to the committee's plan to provide water tanks and other improvements (for which tenants had agreed to pay half the cost). He warned his Minister that the Board 'had no power of control over any resident' and that the committee's new tenancy agreements were illegal unless the lands

Department altered the terms of the reservation, citing the Crown Solicitor's 1939 opinion - which the Board had ignored for 10 years.

The constable had reported 12 months earlier that 5 aged tenants refused to pay rent because their houses were not lined; the committee now informed the Chief Secretary that a 'certain communistic influence' had encouraged residents to assert that they would not pay rent because 'the land was originally their forefathers and was taken from their race without payment'. The Minister replied that the Board intended to sell the houses 'with the ultimate object of revoking the reservation and putting the land to some useful purpose'; this policy was intended for the good of the residents, who would thus be encouraged to achieve 'absorption' in the general community.

The committee strongly protested another proposed sale in October 1950, as the tenant had painfully paid arrears on the promise he could retain the dwelling, currently occupied by his widowed sister-in-law. They censured the constable for refusing to accept the rent money she offered: every dwelling had 12 to 16 occupants and none could rent or buy accommodation elsewhere as housing was extremely scarce throughout the district. The Minister approved the Board's acceptance of a £400 tender, asserting that the occupant was a 'trespasser' and that this community must be dispersed in their own 'best interests'. But publicity in the Melbourne press caused the purchaser to announce that this family could stay as his tenants while he sought a refund from the Board (Age 27, 28, 30/12/50).

This cottage was again offered for sale shortly before the new Board members (including the new MLA for Warrnambool, R.W. Mack) made their first visit. The Aboriginal member strongly condemned the sales and commented that residents could hardly be blamed for the small extent of cultivation, since they still had no water supply or implements. The local committee was told that it had no statutory authority (although this had been provided for in every Act since 1869!) and that the constable would remain the Board's agent despite their complaints about his failure to cooperate. The Warrnambool Standard (26/1/51) quoted Chief Secretary Dodgshun's announcement that the Board was legally able to assist only 'fullbloods' - of whom only 10 remained in Victoria. Dodgshun stated that the Board planned a 'new' policy of dispersal so that Framlingham residents would be 'absorbed into the community as ordinary citizens'; but he expressed concern about the likely reaction if Warrnambool and surrounding towns 'were asked to absorb them'.

In early 1951 the Melbourne press gave sympathetic coverage to public meetings organised by welfare groups to protest recent evictions, to evidence that the Framlingham folk could not afford - or obtain - housing elsewhere and that attitudes to Aborigines were worsening in this district. Mrs Mary Clarke's plea that the government should 'leave us our tiny corner' was supported by a wide section of the community, and the Chief Secretary then promised that Framlingham 'would not be broken up' (Age 25/2/51). The Board had met a few days earlier to consider the

committee's requests for improvements (all declared urgent by the Health Department in 1947), but the Board secretary advised the minister that these proposals were 'impracticable' and urged that the 20 families crowded into the remaining 14 houses should be sent elsewhere. The planned sale was cancelled, but no improvements were made. At the end of 1951 the Health Department and Shire Council warned the Board that the settlement must be rebuilt or closed, pointing out that the cottages could not be moved to towns unless greatly improved to meet housing regulations.

In 1952 the district MLA was told that the Board had no funds for improvements; the Board was instead making plans for 'removal and dispersal in their own interests' of most of the 59 residents in the 13 cottages. Despite the committee's opposition to 'forced removal', the constable was asked to name those to be removed: he recommended that only the pensioners and 4 'potentially good farmers' (27 persons) should remain.

When the MLA for Warrnambool bitterly criticised the government's neglect in Parliament in April 1953 the Under Secretary hastily advised his Minister that Cabinet had given approval for the sale of Framlingham and other reserves on 20 March 1944, and insisted that the only 'practicable' policy was to sell the houses as they would not meet housing regulations and there were no Crown land sites available in the towns of the district. The Chief Secretary then approved the sale of another house, but this too was cancelled when the committee objected that the original tenant had returned.

Melbourne welfare organisations backed the vigorous protests of the 70 residents when an occupied cottage was offered for sale in January 1954, but the Chief Secretary merely announced that 'steps must be taken to close the reserve' (Herald 29/1/54). When the committee pleaded for a 'less legalistic and more humane policy' the Minister merely replied that young families were to be discouraged from remaining at Framlingham; police were asked to superintend the removal of the 'squatters' (close relatives of the original tenant), but the purchaser withdrew and there were no further tenders.

In March 1955 the Public Works Department called for tenders for 3 cottages (occupied by 20 persons), although every house and temporary shelter at Framlingham was already overcrowded. By May 2 were sold, but only 1 could be removed because of the determined opposition of the 80 residents (described in a 1957 report to Parliament): 'occupants ploughed around their houses in an attempt to prevent demolition. In May 1955 a home containing sick children was pulled down over their heads although fourteen people crowded into the dwelling to try to prevent demolition'. The Board secretary ridiculed the committee's advice that none would leave the area willingly because their 'ancestral roots' were there, and urged his Minister to sell the houses and send the occupants to Lake Tyers if all else failed. But the outraged protests of welfare organisations and other citizens forced the government to refund the purchase price of the second cottage sold. Finally the Board member R.W. Mack

(now MLC for the region) intervened, insisting that the government replace the unsympathetic constable and give the committee a £3 to £1 grant to provide the baths and water supply delayed since 1947. In January 1956 the Framlingham Reserve Welfare Committee (with Mack as government nominee) was authorised to manage the reserve and retain the (increased) rents to provide amenities. Morale improve immediately. Although the Health Department considered the cheaply-built 1938 cottages 'beyond repair', the construction of water tanks, lavatories and lean-to wash-houses financed by a £375 grant and residents' contributions made life more comfortable. But occupants were required to give a written undertaking to remove all improvements on request. The Board Secretary had advised his Minister to take this precaution, since Board policy aimed to 'disperse' the occupants, 'clear the improvements and return the reserve to the Lands Department' but it seemed the committee was 'establishing the committee on a permanent basis' (Memorandum 16/8/56).

Further improvements and policy decisions were deferred pending the report of the state-wide 'McLean Inquiry' on Aboriginal welfare, conducted by a former chief stipendiary magistrate, assisted by the Board's secretary. On his 1956 visit he found some 60 persons occupying 14 dilapidated dwellings which lacked sewerage, electricity and a reticulated water supply. Eight household heads were pensioners but the rest of the adults were in 'fairly constant work' except in winter, when unemployment was always a problem.

#### 11. Effects of the assimilation policy, 1957-1968

McLean's 1957 report noted that his terms of reference required him to report on the possibility of absorbing Aborigines into the larger society. He recommended adoption of a 'helpful, but firm, policy of assimilation'. Under the Aborigines Act 1957 (1958) this became the statutory duty of the Aborigines Welfare Board established in July 1957. Policy was from the beginning oriented towards the dispersal of separate Aboriginal communities by more or less forcible resettlement in standard dwellings scattered among white neighbours. Assimilation was to be achieved by teaching Aborigines (now defined to include any person of Aboriginal descent) to become 'responsible citizens'. Finance was limited, and all special government assistance was considered to be a temporary measure, to be phased out as Aborigines were taught to utilise the resources available to ordinary citizens. The new Board included no members who had training or experience in the complex field of community development, and the small professional staff was frustrated by the unwieldy Board structure and their exclusion from policy-making.

The Framlingham Reserve Welfare Committee, formally constituted in March 1959 as a Local Committee under the Act, shared control of the reserve with the new Board's welfare and property officers. Despite the committee's pleas, conditions at Framlingham remained virtually unchanged until 1964, partly because housing needs elsewhere seemed more urgent, and also because of the policy decided by the Board in May 1960: to resettle younger families in towns and demolish the houses as they were

vacated. At the same meeting the Board approved the committee's suggestion that the Forests Commission (which now controlled the adjoining reserve) be asked to allow unemployed reserve residents to cut firewood on a contract basis for sale. The Commission replied that it would not employ wood-cutters, but Aboriginal people (like other applicants) could be licensed to cut on a royalty basis for 1/- a ton.

Board orders for eviction began in 1958, when white spouses of residents were required to leave the reserve, but early in 1959 the Lands Department advised the Board that it must act through the Supreme Court for legal evictions. In 1959 13 families were required to sign formal tenancy agreements 'terminable at any time': 60 persons then occupied the remaining 12 cottages and another 30 lived in huts. All were warned they could be evicted for rent arrears or misbehaviour. The Board approved 3 evictions in May 1959 and asked the Crown Solicitor to institute proceedings. By 1961 certain residents were refusing to pay rent until provided with water, but their April petition for a water supply was rejected because the Board considered the reserve unsuitable for a permanent settlement. In March 1961 the Board decided that pensioner occupants of these sub-standard dwellings should be treated more leniently than tenants of town dwellings since their eviction from Framlingham would increase public criticism of Board administration. The Board then issued 'permits to reside' (valid for 8 months) to all but one resident - who was told she and her white husband were not eligible to reside on an Aboriginal reserve. All residents were ordered to pay rent arrears in April 1962, and more evictions were approved. But in September the Crown Solicitor advised that the Board had no authority to grant leases or tenancies of Aboriginal reserves and the requested legal proceedings for eviction were unlikely to succeed; further inquiries revealed that it was impossible to alter legislation to cover the case and the Board should take no action to evict. Rents were remitted to the Board, in return for the annual grant of £375 which, supplemented by funds raised locally, was the committee's only source of finance for improvements from 1958 to 1963. When the committee learned in 1963 that Lake Tyers residents paid no rent and received many additional benefits, they declined to collect rent at Framlingham. But the Board's property officers still made demands, and the system of issuing residence permits to approved tenants (with the implication that Aborigines occupied the reserve on sufferance) was retained.

In 1958 the Agriculture Department and Board members reported on the operations of two dairy-farmers and the potential for expansion, concluding that 586 acres would support only 4 family farms. Moreover, the necessary reorganisation would be resented as the residents 'look upon this land as their own'. The Board and a majority of the local committee rejected (because the persistence of this community was deemed contrary to the policy of assimilation) a sub-committee's December 1959 recommendations for a five-year farm development plan which would provide interested families with a good living and, with an expenditure of £10,000 (including £2000 for fencing) increase the value of this land to £40,000. In 1961 residents had to sell many cattle

impounded for straying, but despite all pleas the Board refused to help with fencing, feed or pasture development. In winter the Aborigines' stock ran mainly on the adjoining reserve and when the Lands Department poisoned this area in 1962 more than a hundred cattle faced starvation. Loss of access to this land (which they had utilised since 1861) was another defeat for the Framlingham people. Their legal right as Aborigines to occupy this land had ended in 1891; leasehold occupation had been denied in 1934; and apparently none of the Aboriginal veterans were considered when acreage was allotted in 1949; a claim to title by 'adverse possession' - justified by their long residence on this Crown land - was impossible because of its status as a permanent reserve. But in their own view they had a moral claim to this land, allotted to their forebears as compensation for the territories of which they had been deprived.

The Board's insistence that Framlingham must be closed, the harassment over rent arrears and threatened evictions, and the failure to assist the farmers and improve the appalling physical conditions all increased the bitterness of the Framlingham folk. In their experience, and that of their forebears, government authority was not a reliable source of help but rather a remote and unpredictable power threatening their occupation of this land. Board officers who had no knowledge of the history of this community were dismayed by their hostility to officialdom from Melbourne: 'It takes me a week to get over a visit there... they tell me to leave them alone' (personal communication A.W., 16/11/61). Rev. A.E. Ellemor, who had worked for 18 years with Northern Territory Aborigines and was chairman of the committee to 1961, told me in April 1962 of his concern about current policy. The committee's 1961 report on the implementation of 'assimilation' had noted that 'it may be difficult to find families willing to move', and he emphasised the strength of the Framlingham community's 'attachment to this land. It is said to be "the gift of Queen Victoria, to be their home forever". There is strong feeling about the little cemetery on the reserve. They care for their relatives living and dead... This land is their home and they don't want to leave it. I don't know if they will. The Aborigines Welfare Board may have to use pressure...'

During a January 1962 visit the Board made an 'agreement' with the committee to provide loans totalling £3500 for 2 farmers, to renovate the homes of 5 pensioner families, and rehouse others in standard town accommodation. These plans were announced in the 1962 Annual Report. In September 1962 the committee threatened to resign unless the Board took action. After the Chief Secretary publicly announced that 2 Framlingham farmers had been assisted (Herald 4/4/63) the committee sent a deputation to the Minister for Transport, who was Board chairman. But in May 1963 the Board reversed its decision to aid the farmers. When the committee was finally informed they wrote to the chairman complaining of the Chief Secretary's false statements and the 'heartbreak' caused by the Board's vacillating policy. Their 8 October letter warned that 'the people have lost faith in the Board's empty promises' and that the committee was likely



to resign and make these criticisms public. After the Board confirmed its policy of rehousing residents and refusal to aid the farmers the Superintendent advised the Under Secretary of the Chief Secretary's Department (the deputy chairman) that this December decision was certain to embarrass the government (for three Cabinet members were involved, including the district MLC, who was Minister for Health and a member of the committee). He quoted from a resident's letter to show that the Board's broken promises were affecting the morale of the Framlingham community:

... some who are battling the hard way is still puzzled what is going to happen, or are they going to get help. All the white man does is come on the place and say hullo and good-bye, and all the promises and vows goes in one ear and out the other.

He also explained that the Board had not been able to secure land to rehouse 2 families owing to 'considerable local opposition from land owners and agents'.

The Board was then persuaded to make a special grant of f1000 to renovate the homes of those likely to remain. The f480 spent by the Committee on fencing was refunded, and a Housing Commission home was found for one of the Framlingham families.

More substantial changes came in May 1964 when the Board adopted a programme of community development framed by a new social worker and community members during months of discussion. He had made some effort to review the administrative records of their history, and had been shocked to discover that they had never, over a century, been consulted or involved in making the policy decisions which had shaped their fortunes. The proposal he submitted argued that official records proved

that the same families, basically, have for generations resided at Framlingham. These people have suffered shocking housing conditions, nor have they enjoyed the other fundamentals of decent living - adequate water, electric power, sewerage and even warmth... Policies have come in fits and starts. Promises have been broken and staff changed. Ignored today, interfered with tomorrow, this community has experienced too little in the way of patient consultation. More than this, authority represents a constant threat to the very small area of personal security which they do have, to be able to live in a known place among known people.

Noting that some residents did not wish to move into towns and 'it would be an infringement of their rights to make them do so', he urged the Board to guarantee their security of tenure. On 8 May 1964 the Board approved funds for self-help projects, electricity, and a water supply (but no new housing on the reserve), and resolved that 'residents will never be induced to leave the settlement'. At the next meeting the Board confirmed that there was 'no intention of compelling the people to leave the reserve'. Residents were already planning 'centenary' celebrations (as a result of a visit by the son of the first missionary Daniel Clarke). A grant of some f1500 made possible the connection of electricity and other improvements, officially 'opened' by Mr Mack on 12 December 1964, when the Board chairman announced another special grant of f1500. Given full control of the expenditure of this money, residents responded enthusiastically to the self-help scheme; the Board's pledge of secure tenure had given them an incentive to improve their homes.

This pledge also brought new hope for farm development. In 1964 the blocks alienated from the adjoining reserve a decade earlier were valued at f80 an acre, and local advisors considered that the Aboriginal reserve, presently worth only f10 an acre, would reach an equivalent value if top-dressed and sown for improved pasture. Commenting on the historical account he had asked me to prepare for the centenary celebrations, the social worker reported that:

Many residents today resist moves to get them to leave the settlement. They recognize the fact that it has been their only security in the past and their often threatened occupation of it has made them suspicious. They recognize its value as farm land and do not wish it to be taken over by white farmers. The historical and personal ties of many people to the land cannot be discounted. Their claim to Framlingham is at least as valid as any official one. In an environment lacking every modern amenity - adequate water, electricity, drainage, sewerage, finance - these people have progressed and advanced against incredible odds (personal communication, Phillip Boas, 11/11/64).

By April 1965 the Board had rehoused only one family elsewhere, and others had declined to move to town housing. Residents now participated fully in the decisions of the local committee, whose members agreed that 'we should not try to force them to assimilate' (Sun News-Pictorial 8/4/65). But still Melbourne bureaucrats intervened. In 1964 the social worker had asked residents to decide whether their children should be educated on the reserve or elsewhere. This was perhaps the first time that they had been furnished with all the relevant facts and asked to decide a complex issue of importance to their future. Their unanimous decision, and their decisive arguments to retain the school, were accepted by the committee and the district inspector of schools. The Board instead advised transporting the children to Warrnambool because (as the Chief Secretary informed Parliament on 23 March 1965) the Board supported McLean's 1957 recommendation that mixed schooling was essential for assimilation.

And because some Board members still insisted that dispersal was a prerequisite for assimilation (and that the Aboriginal farmers should not be given special assistance unavailable to other district farmers), major improvements were delayed until the Board was reconstituted in July 1965, when new members joined in the formulation of policy for the future of Framlingham. The national policy of assimilation had been somewhat modified to take account of Aborigines' rights of choice in 1965, and the principles of choice and consultation were at last recognized in the Board's dealings with the people of Framlingham. At a joint meeting in February 1966 the Board, the committee and the residents agreed that this community would be permanent and that its residents should enjoy the same living standards as neighbouring communities. It was agreed that additional Crown land in the vicinity of the settlement should be acquired to meet the needs of young farmers in the future. Officials planned to investigate the alienation of most of the original Aboriginal reserve and the postwar excisions from this area for soldier settlement: there seemed to be a good case for seeking the return of the remainder of this forest reserve for expansion of the Aboriginal reserve.

But apparently negotiations failed, for only the remnant 586 acres was gazetted as a permanent reserve for Aborigines on 1 February 1967.

Grants for septic tanks, water pumps and tanks and extensive renovations were approved in 1967, when volunteer work camps assisted residents with construction. In 1967 the Board again investigated the farming potential of the reserve, concluding that when developed it could carry up to 300 cows. Doubling the present herds to 60 cows would bring a return of \$8000 a year. The Board approved loans totalling \$4,400 for equipment and stock, but then learned that in the Crown Solicitor's opinion they could not make loans to the two farmers because they were on a reserve. The matter had not been settled when the Aborigines Welfare Board was dissolved by new legislation at the end of 1967.

## 12. Epilogue

Like officials in earlier administrations, the staff of the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs which succeeded the Board tended to believe that dispersal was a prerequisite for assimilation and deplored the persistence of separate Aboriginal communities. In 1964 special home ownership grants of \$9000 (much more than the assistance offered to Aborigines living away from the reserves) were made available to induce residents to leave Framlingham and Lake Tyers. But finally, in response to residents' wishes, one Framlingham cottage was fully renovated and the rest were demolished and replaced by 1972. On 1 July 1971 the reserve was transferred to the ownership of the Framlingham Lands Trust, composed of the remaining residents.

In 1969 I was asked to summarise the history of Victorian policy for an 'Aboriginal Teenagers Conference' held at LaTrobe University in May and again in August. Most of the teenagers talked eagerly, asking for more details, contributing stories 'the old people told us'. One girl said nothing, but later screwed up her courage to come and ask me to write to her about the history of Framlingham, so she could share it with the people at home. Miss Elizabeth Clarke explained:

They know all what happened, like you said. They tell us the history, and they've got pictures too. But when they try to explain why they want to keep Framlingham, why they don't want to shift, the white people don't listen. ... Mr Worthy and them come down telling us things. They're trying to force us to move off, but some keep on saying they won't go. Some was going to get a house somewhere - the welfare officers made them sign a paper to go. Those officers and Mr Worthy, they keep talking at the people. But the people say they won't shift, no matter what government does.

She talked with enthusiasm and knowledge about incidents I had mentioned, and others not recorded in the official documents, telling me shyly that 'you were right when you said we young ones got a duty to keep our own history. The old people tell us the same. We've got a right to our land. And we've got a right to be proud'.

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## APPENDIX I

## ORIGINS OF FRAMLINGHAM FAMILIES: INFORMATION RECONSTRUCTED FROM GENEALOGIES, ENUMERATIONS AND OTHER DOCUMENTARY RECORDS 1862 - 1965

The continuing attachment of certain Aboriginal families to the Framlingham reserve is demonstrated in family histories collected in genealogy form during the 1960s, and confirmed by evidence in documentary records dating from the 1860s to the 1960s. More proof of their continuous occupation of the land reserved in 1861 comes from 27 dated lists naming members of the Framlingham Aboriginal community. These surviving enumerations date from: July 1862; 1863; September 1876; September 1882; October 1889; February 1893; April 1894; December 1895; August 1896; May 1909; May 1921; January 1922; January and October 1934; October 1939; July 1941; May 1942; March 1943; September 1944; June 1946; June 1947; November 1948; December 1950; June 1952; June 1955; May 1959; May 1961; February 1965.

This alphabetical listing of the surnames of Framlingham families is based on a list of the 'pioneer' families resident when the station was closed in 1889. Beside the capitalised surname is shown the 'tribal' affiliation(s) of the pioneer couple, followed by the date of the first record of this surname at Framlingham. Since personal names were used more commonly than surnames before the late 1860s and the surviving records are very incomplete, this date should not be interpreted as the date of the family's arrival at Framlingham. Obviously married daughters took the surnames of their spouses, which accounts for the appearance of 'new' names in the Framlingham enumerations; such surnames are listed here to indicate the connections with pioneer families. Most such spouses were in fact members of Gunditjmara, Tjapwurong and Bunganditj families settled at Lake Condah.

Abbreviations are used to indicate actual ancestry: Fb for 'fullblood' Aboriginal; F1 for a first generation 'half caste', the child of an Aboriginal and a European; F2 for a second generation half caste, the child of half caste parents;  $\frac{1}{2}$  for the child of a fullblood and a half caste.

ALBERTS Gunditjmarra/Kirrae; at Framlingham 1867-

HENRY ALBERTS (1858/62-1934+), Fl, son of Jeannie, later wife of Thomas Green of Lake Condah. Married 1885 to

RACHEL DAWSON (1866/7-1903?) see Dawson

8 children: married surnames of daughters - Nobourne, Wilson

AUSTIN Kirrae/Tjapwurong; at Framlingham 1867-

ALBERT 'POMPEY' AUSTIN (1844-1889), Fl, son of Alice of Lake Colac, later wife of Billy Murray of Colac. Married ca. 1867 to

ROSIE WISELASKIE (1851-1907), Fl, of Wickliffe, sister of John Wiselaskie.

4 children.

BLAIR Kirrae; at Tooram 1862; at Framlingham 1867-

FRANK BLAIR (1854-1924+), fb, half-brother to Jessie and Harriet, married MARGARET (ca. 1858-1889), fb.

6 children.

JESSIE BLAIR (1841/4-1921+), Fl, married: JOHN BROWN (1836/46-

1905), fb. 1 child died infancy; WALTER LANCASTER;

HENRY ALBERTS.

HARRIET BLAIR (1852/7-1921+), Fl, JAMES COUZENS (1847-1890), fb,

Bunganditj of Dergholm; WILLIAM ROBINSON, Fl, Gunditjmarra;

JOHN WISELASKIE see Wiselaskie

4 children (COUZENS): married surname of daughter: Rose

BROWN- see BLAIR

CLARKE Gunditjmarra/Kirrae; at Lake Condah 1871-77; Framlingham 1878-

FRANK CLARKE (1853-1918), Fl, probably taken from Framlingham to Lake Condah 1867; returned to Framlingham 1877, married 1878 to

ALICE DIXON (1858/9-1947), Fl, orphaned niece of Governor Baxter, 'last of Belfast tribe', brought from Hortlake to Warrnambool by relatives; sent to Lake Condah by authorities before 1876; retrieved by relatives 1878.

6 children: married surnames of daughters: Lovett, Taylor

COUZENS - see BLAIR

CROW Kolakmat/Kirrae; at Framlingham 1872-

JIM CROW (1825-1892), fb, of Colac; married HELLIE (ca. 1840-188?), fb widow of 'Warrnambool tribe', who had a half caste son:

JOSEPH CROW (1865-1922+), Fl, married 1899 at Framlingham to LIZZIE SAUNDERS (1872-1922+), F2, of Framlingham see Saunders 11 children born at Framlingham and Colac.

LOLO MURRAY CROW (1869/70-1911), Fb, daughter of Jim and Nellie, married 1886 at Framlingham to JOHN KOLAR GIBB see Gibb  
 DAWSON Gunditjara; at Port Fairy 1882; to Mansertong with James Dawson 1866; at Framlingham 1869-  
 HENRY DAWSON (1835-1915), Fb, married 1894 to MARY ANN, widow of Harry Robinson. No children.

JOHN DAWSON (1842-1883), Fb, married  
 SARAH EDWARDS (1853-1936/8), Fl, see Edwards  
 4 children: married surname of daughter: Alberts  
 EDWARDS Gunditjara; at Framlingham 1870-

GEORGE EDWARDS (1843-1899), Fb, married 1862 at Framlingham to EMILY (1842-1913), Fb, widow of Tommy Willis, a Wjamburong of Wickliffe; Emily's mother and sister buried at Framlingham before 1862.  
 No children.

SARAH EDWARDS see Dawson

EGAN Gunditjara; at Framlingham 1871 (also relatives at Lake Condah)  
 ELLEN EGAN (1846/7-1924/5), Fl, married WILLIAM GOOD (1847-1912), Fb, of Tooram.  
 No children.

JAMES EGAN (1848-1911), Fl, married EMILY SUTTON (1848-1898), Fl, of Lake Condah; children reared by Mrs Good.  
 3 children: married surnames of daughters: Farcy, Rose (see Ross), Brice, Young

AMY EGAN (1858/60-1876), Fb, married WILLIAM CARTER (1851/6-1910), Fb, of Lake Condah, who remarried at Lake Condah in 1872.  
 1 child.

JANE EGAN (1864-1889), Fb, married at Lake Condah to JAMES YOUNG (ca. 1868-1941), Fl, trained tailor. 2 children reared by Mrs Good.



GIBB Tjapwurong; at Penshurst 1867; at Framlingham 1876-

JOHN KOLAR GIBB (1867/9-192?), fb, son of Jack Gibb and Annie (nee Gorrie ?) who wandered between Penshurst and Framlingham, married 1886 at Framlingham to

LOLO MURRAY CROW see Crow

4 children.

GOOD - see EGAN

HOOD Gunditjmarra/Tjapwurong; at Hexham 1853; at Framlingham 1872-

COLIN HOOD (1832-1914), fb, born at 'Lawidgee near Caramut', married first MORAN, fb, of Hexham. 1 child died 1876. Married LOUISE LUTTON (ca.1842-1890), fb, of Penshurst.

3 children.

LANCASTER Gunditjmarra; at Framlingham 1871-

JAMES LANCASTER (1845-1880), Fl, married at Lake Condah to ELIZABETH MARY GORRIE (1847/55-1939), Fl. Lived at Lake Condah 1871-76 to be near wife's mother Mary, wife of William Gorrie.

4 children: married surnames of daughters: Arden, Austin

Mrs Lancaster was married 1884 at Framlingham to

WILLIAM RAWLINGS (1868/60-192?), Fl, son of a Warrnambool Aboriginal and a 'mulatto Negro' who was still living in the district in 1890.

3 children: married daughter's surname: Couzens

McKINNON Gunditjmarra; at Framlingham 1876-

ANDY McKINNON (1856-1892?), Fl, (known as Edwards 1876, McKinnon from 1878), married 1884 at Ramahyuck to

EMILY BRINDLE (1873-1906), Fl, of Ramahyuck

3 children: married daughter's surname Lovett

ANNIE McKINNON (1860/5-1937), Fl, married 1883 at Lake Condah to

ALFRED McDONALD (1859/62-1937), Fl, of Hamilton district

9 children

MURRAY Bunganditj/Gunditjmarra; at Framlingham 1872-

FREDERICK MURRAY (1855-1918+), Fl, of South Australia, married 1879 at Framlingham to

SUSAN LUTTON (1863-1900+), Fl, of Penshurst, daughter of Mrs Louise Hood.

6 children.

RAWLINGS - see LANCASTER

ROBINSON Gunditjmarra; at Framlingham 1876-

HARRY ROBINSON (1833-1892), fb, married 1869 at Lake Condah to  
MARY ANN (1836-1906), fb, widow of Lake Condah man.

2 children.

SAM ROBINSON (1832/4-1899), fb, married MARY (1831-1896), fb.  
No children.

WILLIAM ROBINSON (? - ?) see Blair

ROSS (later ROSE) Gunditjmarra/Bunganditj; at Belfast 1872; at  
Framlingham 1872-

JOHN ROSS (1841/6-1918), Fl, married before 1873 to  
MAGGIE MASON (ca 1855-1897+), Fl, of Denola, S.A., who had kin at  
the Dergholm reserve and at Pt McLeay, S.A.

5 children.

SAUNDERS Gunditjmarra/Bunganditj; at Framlingham 1876-

HARRY SAUNDERS (1852-1892), Fl, married before 1872 to  
ELIZA MITCHELL (1852/5-1898+), Fl, of 'Poongedict tribe, Pt  
McLeay, S.A.'

4 children: married daughter's surname: Crow

Mrs Saunders married 1892 at Colac the 'mulatto Negro'  
Warren, 'from the West Indies', but was again known as Mrs Saunders  
after their separation in 1894.

1 child.

WISELASKIE Tjapwurong; at Nareeb 1871; at Framlingham 1872 -

JOHN WISELASKIE (1844-1922/6), Fl, married 1909 to  
HARRIET BLAIR COUZENS see Blair

No children.

ROSIE WISELASKIE see Austin

## APPENDIX 2

## TRIBES OF THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF VICTORIA

Extracts from: Norman B. Tindale, Aboriginal tribes of Australia.  
Canberra, A.N.U. Press, 1974

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## Bunganditj

## 'Buḡanditj

Loc.: Glenelg and Wannon rivers, Victoria; at Dartmoor, Balmoral, Mount Zero, Casterton, Western Grampians; at Lake Mundi; west to Mount Gambier, Penola, Robe, and coast south of Cape Jaffa. At least five hordes in South Australia and others in western Victoria. Under pressure of Jaadwa people, they were contracting southward toward Casterton about the time of first white contacts. Visitors from the stoneless north were interested primarily in the stone ax factory site near Harrow and the black flint of Cape Northumberland beaches. The word for man was ['buḡ] at Mount Gambier, ['ba:ŋ] at Lake Wallace, changing to ['kuli] near the boundary with 'Jaadwa and 'Tjapwuring tribes, to ['tura:l] in the northwest and to ['koloin] at the Wannon River, indicating differences of dialect in the several hordes and differing degrees of association with adjoining tribes. Stewart in 1854 stated they had only 25 miles (40 km.) of coastline, a gross error, perhaps due to a misprint, since 125 miles (200 km.) would be closer to the mark. The Burhwundeirtch of Smyth apparently were the same people. Color plates 4 and 12 are relevant.

Coord.: 141°10'E x 37°35'S.

Area: 7,400 sq. m. (19,200 sq. km.).

Alt.: Pungandaitj (a valid pronunciation), Buanditj (valid short version), Bungandity, Bungandaitj, Bungandaetch, Bungandaetcha, Pungantitj, Pungandik, Buanditj, Boandik, Buandic, Booandik, Banganditj, Buandik, Buandic, Boandiks, Bunganditjngolo (language name), Borandikngolo (misprint), Barconedect, Bak-on-date, Smoky River tribe, Mount Gambier dialect, Nguro (of eastern tribes), Booandik-ngolo, Drualat-ngolonung.

Ref.: Eyre, 1845; Robinson, 1846 MS; Stewart, 1854 MS; Thomas, 1862 MS; Stewart in Fison, 1874; Stewart in Fison and Howitt, 1880; Stewart in Carr, 1887; Learmonth in Smyth, 1878; McLeod in Smyth, 1878; Officer in Smyth, 1878; Gray in Smyth, 1878; Fisher in Taplin, 1878; Smith, 1880; Carr, 1887; East, 1889; Learmonth in Bride, 1898; Mathews, 1898 (Gr. 6464), 1900 (Gr. 6448, 6524), 1903 (Gr. 6480, 6484), 1904 (Gr. 6505, 6451), 1906 (Gr. 6422); Howitt, 1904; Giglioli, 1911; Campbell, 1934; Tindale, 1940; Campbell et al., 1946; Tindale and Lindsay, 1963.

## Gunditjmarra

## 'Guḡnditj'mara

Loc.: At Cape Bridgewater and Lake Condah in the west; Caranoot and Hamilton in north; Hopkins River in the east; at Warrnambool, Woolsthorpe, Port Fairy, and Portland. Three principal hordes at Lake Condah, Port Fairy, and Woolsthorpe. The name used is the best available. The language name could be an acceptable alternative.

Coord.: 142°0'E x 38°5'S.

Area: 2,700 sq. m. (7,000 sq. km.).

Alt.: Dhauhurtwurrū (language name), Kuanditjmarra, Gourditch-mara (['Guḡnditj] = name of Lake Condah ['mara] = ['mar] = man), Gurnditschmara, Nil-can-condeets, Kurn-kopan-noot (descriptive language name), Kirundit, Tourahonong, Weeritch-Weeritch, Ngutuk (means "thou," name given by an adjacent tribe), Villiers tribe, Spring Creek tribe (a horde called Mopor, around Woolsthorpe), Port Fairy tribe (a horde along coast, its dialect called Peckwhurong).

Ref.: Robinson, 1846 MS; Craig, 1859; Lydiard et al., 1859; Green in Smyth, 1878; McLeod in Smyth, 1878; Musgrove in Smyth, 1878; Smyth, 1878; Stähle in Fison and Howitt, 1880; Dawson, 1881; Howitt, 1885, 1904; Stähle in Howitt, 1885; Carr, 1887; Robertson in Bride, 1898; Semon, 1899; Mathews, 1903 (Gr. 6511), 1904 (Gr. 6451, 6505), 1905 (Gr. 6553); Giglioli, 1911; Tindale, 1940.

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## Kirrae

## 'Kirrae (Kirawirung)

Loc.: Warrnambool and Hopkins River east to about Princetown on the coast; inland to Lake Bolac and Darlington; east to beyond Camperdown. There are names of twelve hordes speaking slight dialects. According to Cary, the original name was Mammait but this name is of horrid style; one horde, the Dantgurt, became of more importance than the others after white settlement. Other hordes apparently included the Colongulae, Jarcoort, Elneamut, Barrath, Warrnambul (Pertobe), Bolaga, Tooram, Narragoort, and the Coonawancee.

Coord.: 143°5'E x 38°10'S.

Area: 1,900 sq. m. (4,900 sq. km.).

Alt.: Kirawirung (valid alternative), Kirawuutong, Konoug-willam (? typographical error), Mammait, Dantgurt, Dautgart, Tautgart, Targurt, Dyargurt, Jarcoort (apparently the horde at Jancourt), Bolaga (horde at Lake Bolac), Bolagher, Mount Shadwell tribe, Colongulae tribe (a horde), Warntallin (lit. "rough language," a name given them by western tribes), Ngutuk (of neighboring tribes; means "you"), Ngungung. Word for man = ['mar:].

Ref.: Eyre, 1844, 1845; Hurst, 1844; Robinson, 1844; Tuckfield, 1844; Scott in Smyth, 1878; Smyth, 1878; Dawson, 1881; Carr, 1887; Goodall in Carr, 1887; Cary, 1898; Tuckfield in Cary, 1898; Tuckfield and Mossman, 1898; Howitt, 1904; Mathews, 1904 (Gr. 6485); Massola, 1962.

## Appendix: extracts from Tindale 1974

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## Kolakngat 'Kolakngat ('Kolidjon)

Loc.: Vicinity of Lake Colac and Lake Corangamite; inland boundary south of Cressy. It is possible that Kolidjon was the original name rather than the one conventionally preferred.

Coord.: 143°30'E x 38°25'S.

Area: 900 sq. m. (2,300 sq. km.).

Alt.: Kolidjon (valid alternative), Kolac-gnat, Kulidyan, Lolijon, Colijon, Koligon (read *g* as *dj*), Coligan, Lolifon (I is a misprint), Kolac (misprint for Kolac, a place name), Colac-conedeet (horde name), Karakoi, Karakoo, Bungilearney Colagiens, ['tharog] = man.

Ref.: Mossman, 1841; Tuckfield, 1844; Eyre, 1844, 1845; Parker in Eyre, 1844; Hurst, 1844; Robinson, 1844; Murray, 1859; Thomas, 1862 MS; Dennis in Smyth, 1878; Smyth, 1878; Dawson, 1881; Bonwick, 1883; Wedge in Bonwick, 1883; Cary, 1898; Mossman in Cary, 1898; Tuckfield in Cary, 1898; Bride, 1898; Mathews, 1904 (Gr. 6485).

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## Tjapwurong 'Tjapwurong

Loc.: At Mount Rouse; west to Hamilton, east to Hopkins River and Wickliffe; north to near Mount William, Stawell,

Ararat, and the Dividing Range; eleven named hordes, some speaking slight dialects. Color plates 10 and 12 are relevant.

Coord.: 142°40'E x 37°30'S.

Area: 2,700 sq. m. (7,000 sq. km.).

Alt.: Tyapwuru, Tyapwurru (wurong = mouth and speech), Chaap Wuurong, Chaapwurru, Djabwuru, Pirtkopen-noot (northern dialect name at Ararat), Pirtkopen-noot (a dialect), Purteet-chally (lit. "fight seekers"), Puncinjon (name of a lake), Nutcheyong (horde at Moyston), Buninjon (Buninyong, place name), Kolor (place name of Mount Rouse), Kolor Kuurndit, Kooloor, Kolorer, Girriwurra (horde near Maroona), Hopkins River Tribe, Wonnin dialect, Bolakngat (eastern name), Bolagher (apparently based on name of Lake Bolac but may apply to northwestern horde of the Kirrac), Knindowurong (i.e., "clear speakers," a term claimed also by the Jaadwa).

Ref.: Sievwright in Eyre, 1845; Thomas, 1862 MS; Gray in Smyth, 1878; Smyth, 1878; Dawson, 1881; Carr, 1887; Mathews, 1902 (Gr. 6401), 1903 (Gr. 6503), 1904 (Gr. 6451, 6505); Tindale, 1940, and MS; Massola, 1957; 1961, 1970; Hercus, 1966.

