

HANSARD 1886, Oct 7, Victorian Parliament

Supply.

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THE ABORIGINES.

On the vote of £6,084 to complete the vote (£10,584) for the aborigines,

Mr. BROWN observed that the vote showed an increase over the vote of last year. Surely, with the aboriginal race dying out, there should be a reduction rather than increase.

Mr. BENT thought the Chief Secretary would do well to inform the committee what were the intentions of the Board for the Protection of the Aborigines with respect to half-castes. The last time this vote was under consideration it was promised that there should be more economy. It was stated that there was a large number of half-castes, and that the board would do something to procure their employment on work befitting their position. He would also like to hear some explanation of the item of £9,308 – a very large sum – for contingencies.

Mr. DEAKIN stated that the amount appropriated for salaries was comparatively very small. The bulk of the vote consisted of the £9,308 set down for contingencies, that was to say, of money which was to go to the aborigines themselves in some form or other. The question of the expenditure upon the aborigines was an important one. It should, however, be borne in mind that the vote was subject to a deduction amounting to some £1,200 or £1,300, which was annually received from the hop plantation. The honorable member for Mandurang (Mr. Brown) very properly described the aborigines as a nearly extinct race, and, therefore, the expense attending their maintenance ought to become less and less. There was at the present moment on the table a Bill under which it was proposed that the State should get rid of the maintenance of the half-castes and quarter-castes of the aboriginal population; and the board hoped that that measure becoming law would soon enable them to largely decrease their expenses.

(Mr. Zox – “Are the half-castes and quarter-castes to merge into the general population?”). That was the intention.

The vote was agreed to, as were also the following: – £310 to complete the vote (£420) for the Registrar of Friendly Societies; and £425 to complete the vote (£600) for the Inspection of Officers in charge of Stores.