

Select Committee of the Legislative Council upon the Aborigines, Colony of South Australia

1860 – 1860

Details

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The report stated that:

All the evidence goes to prove that they have lost much, and gained little or nothing, by their contact with Europeans; and hence it becomes a question how far it is in our power, or what is the best possible means of compensating them for the injuries they have sustained, or of mitigating the evils to which, so far as they are concerned, our occupation of the country has led – or awarding compensation for injuries sustained by them consequent on the forced occupation of their country.

A newspaper report from 31 October 1860 quoted the Chairman of the select committee

On a review of the question, the Committee are unanimously of opinion that it is the duty of the Government to supply the physical necessities of the natives, especially the aged, the sick, and the infirm, which provision should include dispensing of medicine and medical attendance. The appointment of a Chief Protector would enable the Government to mature the details of a system for the advancement of the race socially and morally.

The Committee, however, submit, as their strong conviction, that permanent benefit, to any appreciable extent, from attempts to Christianize the natives can only be expected by separation of children from their parents and evil influences of the tribe to which they belong. However harshly this recommendation may grate on the feelings of pseudo philanthropists, it would in reality be a work of mercy to the rising generation of aborigines. A central elementary school to receive those children, in the first instance, should be provided; and after preliminary training they should be transferred to an establishment where complete isolation would be secured. Your Committee are of opinion that such adjuncts are absolutely necessary to any scheme for Christianizing the aboriginal inhabitants of this province.

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