

Paper *Tribune*

File No.

at *Sydney*

Date *18-9-63*

UNIONS BACK ABORIGINES ..

"Give us back our tribal land!"

SYDNEY: The New South Wales Labor Council is supporting a petition by Aborigines of Cummeragunga (NSW) for the return of their tribal lands, and the formation of an Aborigines co-operative.

CORRESPONDENCE was sent in by the Teachers' Federation asking that action be taken.

It is understood that discussions are now being held between the Labor Council and the Teachers' Federation with a view to an approach to the State Government.

Plans have been drawn up for a proprietary company, the shareholders to be from among the Aborigine residents of Cummeragunga, to grow wheat and raise sheep or cattle.

Victorian plan

The plan was drawn up by the Aborigines' Advancement League of Victoria, which is supporting the petition.

The land the Aborigines want is their own land which was leased to whites in 1919.

In a press statement the Aboriginal-Australian Fellowship of Sydney appeals for public support for the return of the land to the Aborigines.

As long ago as 1881 the Aborigines of the Molra and Ulupna tribes petitioned the Government, for land to cultivate and this was eventually provided at Cummeragunga on the Murray. A prosperous farming community, including a farm of 46 cottages, covering 2600 acres, was established.

Board broke up

However in 1919 the Aborigines' Welfare Board decided to abandon farming activities on reserves and enforce the provisions of the 1909 act that all able-bodied men and half-castes must leave the reserves and work in the general community.

Stock and equipment were sold; 2000 of the 2600 acres were leased to whites.

In 1938 Cummeragunga people were prominent in organising a Day of Mourning and protest by Aboriginal people to mark Australia's 150th anniversary (on January 26).