

TEARS OVER ABORIGINE FILM

Petition launched on Aborigines

SYDNEY: There were cries of disgust and horror and people openly wept when a film showing the plight of Aborigines was screened in the Town Hall on Monday.

"WE hear plenty about what happens in Hungary but not too much about what is being done to these people" commented Rev. W. Childs, an Anglican Minister who was on the platform.

The film was made by Pastor Douglas Nicholls, of Victoria, on a recent tour of the Warburton Ranges in Western Australia.

It showed Aborigine children too weak to brush flies from their faces; the bones of an Aborigine who had died of thirst; and others in various stages of emaciation and starvation.

The screening was a feature of a meeting called by the Aborigine-Australian Fellowship to protest against the ill-treatment of the Aborigines. Pastor Nicholls was chairman.

The meeting decided to launch a petition for a Referendum to make Aborigine Affairs a Commonwealth responsibility—thus depriving the Commonwealth Government of the alibi it uses to excuse its past and present neglect.

Petition appeal

Mr. Leslie Haylen (Labor), MHR for Parkes, appealed for the maximum number of signatures and promised to submit the petition to Parliament.

He pledged the full support of Dr. Evatt and the ALF for the objects of the meeting and the petition.

Mr. W. Onus, president of the Victorian Aborigines' protection league and Mr. H. S. Groves, president of the Aborigine-Australian Fellowship, attacked the Federal Government for its "shameful" treatment of the Aborigines.

If it continued, Mr. Groves said, the Aborigines would be extinct in a few years.

Mr. Onus also condemned the Western Australian Native Affairs Board.

Messrs. Onus and Groves are Aborigines.

Well known Aborigine singer Harold Blair also spoke movingly on the plight of his people.

Drawing on her long experience, Dame Mary Gilmore paid eloquent tribute to the Aborigines' moral and intellectual qualities and their contribution to Australian history.

Other speakers were Dr. A. Kappell, an anthropologist, and Dr. R. Wern.

Attendance was 1500-2000 people and over £350 was subscribed.

The AWU General Secretary, Mr. Dougherty, sent a message of support.