

transportation ceased]. There were intensified demands for the Legislative Council to be at least partially elected, and changes were approved. (de Garis 1987a:302; Appleyard 1987:216)

1870s

There was a boom in lead and copper mining, and the 'discovery' of high quality pastoral land in the north of W.A. led to heavy investment in railway and telegraph construction during 1877 to 1885. Successive gold strikes followed into the 1880s. (vanden Driesen 1987:354) Also during the 1870s legislation was introduced for the "protection" of "Aboriginal natives" in employment and allowing special judicial procedures in cases involving Aboriginal defendants which greatly increased their chances of imprisonment. (Haebich 1992:47)

1870

By 1870, major resistance to encroachment by settlers on the coastal section of the Murchison ended. The ethos of the frontiersman and the explorer was reflected in the extraordinary influence of pastoralists and former explorers on the political life of the colony from 1870 onwards. (Green 1987:97) The first formal election was held in W.A., the Legislative Council for the first time being predominantly elected. However, real power remained with the Governor who was answerable primarily to the Secretary of State for the Colonies in London. All males over 21 could vote if they owned property worth £100, paid rent of £10 p.a., or held a depasturing licence. Candidates were required to possess property worth £2,000 or productive of £100 p.a. In 1871, persons holding paid government appointments were debarred from holding office, as were ex-convicts. The Governor could prorogue or dissolve the Legislative Council and had to approve legislation. Only he could introduce legislation to appropriate public moneys. Land policy and alterations to the Constitution required imperial sanction. (de Garis 1987b:327)

The W.A. census of 1870 was the first to be conducted since the end of transportation and had a considerable section devoted to Aboriginal people. The Registrar General estimated that there were some 3,000 Aboriginal people in contact with white settlers as well as numerous others. Four hundred and fifty-three Aboriginal men and 238 Aboriginal women

were in employment as well as 46 "native men" who were mounted assistants to the police. Two hundred and sixty-six Aboriginal men and thirty-one Aboriginal women were employed in the Roebourne district. The Registrar-General noted that

without their assistance, the district would scarcely be tenable, as they not only serve in the capacity of shepherds and labourers, and thereby save much expenditure to the graziers, but their services to the Pearl Fishing are indispensable.

He also commented that no report on Aboriginal people could be complete without a reference to the penal establishment at Rottneest. He noted that there were currently about 80 prisoners held there, and in 1869 the island had generated £600 revenue. He noted that diseases, drunkenness and quarrels had reduced Aboriginal numbers around Perth to half or less their previous number, "and the intercourse between their women and Europeans seems to have reduced the increase of their population to a very great extent". The Registrar General reported that up to 1842 much was done to "ameliorate" the social condition of the Natives, but because the children who had been institutionalised "died off in great numbers", currently there was only three institutions in operation, holding a total of 74 children. (Colonial Secretary's Office 1871:26–28)

1871

The Anglican Swan Native and Half-Caste Home (for children) was opened on the outskirts of Perth. (Haebich 1992:8) The Pearl Fisheries Acts after 1871 progressively imposed restrictions and conditions on the employment of Aboriginal people in pearling — and the introduction of deep-sea diving suits reduced the demand for Aboriginal labour. (Green 1987:108)

1872

The Flying Foam massacre occurred at Nikol Bay in the north of W.A. Sixty men, women and children were killed by McRea and Withnell — who were then officially thanked for this service to the white community. Edmunds dates the massacre as occurring in 1868; and states that a policeman, his native assistant and two pearlers had been killed by Aboriginal people. In retaliation two parties of special constables killed 30 to 40 Aboriginal people, including women and children. (Green 1987:102; Edmunds 1989:6)