

NATIVE WELFARE CONFERENCE

PARLIAMENT HOUSE

CANBERRA

26TH-27TH JANUARY, 1961

VERBATIM RECORD OF
PROCEEDINGS

The conference met at Parliament House, Canberra, at 10 a.m. on Thursday, 26th January, 1961.

MR. HASLUCK.- Before we begin the conference, I should like to mention several points. I take it that we agree that the press, as is customary, shall not be admitted.

Arising out of that, I suggest that the press will want statements and that perhaps at the end of each session we take a few minutes to consider the preparation of a statement to be handed to the press. I take it that that is agreeable to all.

CHAIRMAN'S OPENING ADDRESS.

MR. HASLUCK.- On behalf of the Commonwealth Government, I wish to welcome all Ministers and officers to Canberra and to thank you for your ready response to the invitation to take part in this Native Welfare Conference.

I can see some persons here, such as Mr. O'Leary and Professor Elkin, who have a lifetime of experience behind them in matters relating to the Australian aborigines. Others may have come more recently to the field, some by the door of politics and others by the path of public administration. But all of us, in one capacity or another, have an administrative responsibility in the advancement of native welfare. The purpose of our meeting is to help each other to see that job more clearly and to do it better.

This is not a general conference of persons interested in aborigines but a meeting of representatives of the seven governments in Australia. Our agenda is made up of items relating to those matters that governments can and do handle - the statutes made by our respective Parliaments, the provision of various services and facilities, the administrative arrangements, and the laying down of policy. Such a meeting, I suggest, is a time for business rather than piety. Yet, at the same time, all of us know that we would not be here, engaging in these talks, if we did not share a belief that this is a work that touches

our humanity, our faith and our national self-respect. This is a work that demands a clear head but it also warms the emotions. It calls for idealism as well as common sense.

By a coincidence, the conference opens on the anniversary of the founding of the first settlement in Australia - a day which, I think you all will agree, was a fateful day for the aboriginal people of this continent. On such an anniversary, while we acknowledge the tasks that governments must do, we should remind all the people of Australia of the claims of the aboriginal Australians, for, in the long run, it is not the governments but the people of Australia who can bring to them the chance of a fuller and a happier life, and give them a helping hand. One of our purposes must be to find ways in which governments and people can work more closely together for the social reforms we are trying to shape.

To-day we have to deal with the situation that exists to-day. We are making decisions and plans not for the 30 years that have just passed but for the 30 years that are just starting. The first requirement, I suggest, is to see more clearly the conditions as they are and to understand the needs that have to be met now and in the future, and to find out the most useful practical way of meeting those conditions. The first item of the agenda will give us the opportunity to discuss that point.

It is certain that, as we proceed, we will find that, as governments, we face a variety of situations. In some States the aborigines are few in number and have lost all tribal links. In other States there are aborigines in larger numbers and at all stages from the urban house dweller to the fully tribal nomad. As governments we may not have identical tasks but we all carry the same basic obligation. There is a single cause but many ways of serving it. That cause is advancing the welfare of the aboriginal people so that each and every one of them may

find a chance for a happy and satisfying life as an Australian in Australia.

Probably better than any one else in Australia those around this table know how complex that task is and how many obstacles have to be overcome. We know how much patience is needed. We know both what has been done and what remains to be done. I am sure not one of us would underrate the difficulties or expect to see quick results.

Yet at the same time we should keep the matter in perspective. We are concerned with the problems of advancement and adjustment of a racial and social minority of approximately only 70,000 people in a total population of 10,000,000. Already, living unnoticed among the Australian population, are some tens of thousands of coloured people who have found acceptance and usefulness in the general community. There is in Australia to-day a tendency to try to draw analogies between our situation and racial situations in other lands. I think that most of those analogies are false, and we only bedevil our affairs when we exaggerate or distort the local situation in order to make such analogies. As an Australian, I am confident - and I am sure that as Australians you share this confidence with me - that a country like Australia, which has already mastered so many of the problems of living together in a free society and has achieved so large a measure of social justice, respect for human rights and equality of opportunity, has it well within her capacity to deal with the situation of 70,000 people in a community of 10,000,000. This is the land of the fair go, and our job is to make that saying real for every one within our borders.

I trust that this meeting will prove an encouragement and a reinforcement to each of us; that it will enlighten our understanding of our task; and that it will be of ever-growing benefit to the aboriginal people whom we seek to help.

In that hope and confidence, I have pleasure in declaring the conference open.

Following the usual procedure at these ministerial meetings, I think I should now give Ministers around the table an opportunity in turn to say briefly anything of a general nature that they want to say before we proceed with the agenda item by item.

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I suggest we adopt the plan followed by the Agricultural Council. I think it is a good one. It is that on the first round we call on New South Wales and then proceed in order of Ministers. In the second round Victoria would speak first, in the third round Queensland would be called on first, and so on. In that way, each State has its turn as first speaker.

Mr. HILLS. - Let me say in the first place that New South Wales is very glad to participate in this conference. We thank you, Mr. Chairman, for having called us together and we compliment you upon the great work your officers have done in preparing for the conference. Let me apologise for the absence of Mr. Kelly, the Chief Secretary of New South Wales who, unfortunately, is abroad attending another conference. In his capacity as Minister of Tourist Activities, he deals with this all-important problem.

New South Wales feels that this conference is of great value, firstly in demonstrating to our own aboriginal people our desire to help them to the best of our ability, and secondly in demonstrating to the peoples of the world that we are very conscious of our responsibilities in this regard. We know, of course, that in Australia over recent years the interest of the public has been focussed on the welfare and rights of the coloured people. I think we all appreciate that we do not have the same racial problems that exist in other parts of the world, but that does not prevent us from being appreciative of the problems that we do have here, and we should do whatever we can to rectify whatever anomalies exist within the Commonwealth.

The New South Wales government, principally through the agency of the Aborigines Welfare Board, and with the aid of many voluntary groups and citizens, is actively engaged in the promotion of aboriginal welfare. We need say no more than that we in New South Wales wish the conference every success and readily appreciate the advantage of coming here together to

exchange ideas and improve the facilities available to these people throughout Australia.

MR. PORTER. - At the outset, on behalf of Victoria, I thank you, Mr. Chairman, for calling us together in what could be a conference of great importance to Australia. I think we all realise that the problem of the general welfare of our native people is one of wide ramifications and one which differs from district to district. In fact, within some districts there can be quite a wide variety of individual problems. This is not a matter that can be solved by rule-of-thumb methods.

I also thank the Commonwealth Government for its assistance to Victoria in making social service payments available to these people in whom we are interested. It is essential that the Commonwealth and the States understand the **problems** of their sister governments because they differ, all having different implications in our respective communities. A conference such as this where we can have a frank exchange of views and experiences can only prove to be of benefit to Australia as a whole and the aboriginal people in particular. I wish the conference every success and may we all learn something which will be of benefit to our respective States.

DR. NOBLE. - On behalf of Queensland, I thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your welcome today and congratulate you for your initiative in calling this conference. Like you, I trust that from it will flow a great deal of good and positive action following a conference such as this, otherwise the implication will be that we give only lip service and not real service to our task.

To my mind, there is no question more alive in the international sphere today than this question of colour. It is a question which has been misrepresented and misinterpreted especially by those agencies throughout the world which are working not so much for the betterment of these people as for their own ends. As a matter of fact, it is a well-known

historical fact that down through the ages man's inhumanity to man has been a very common fault. It has not been confined to coloured people only. It has been practised by white to white, white to coloured, coloured to white and coloured to coloured, and I think all must agree that even today all is not right in the world on this very question. In Europe we have seen the rape of Hungary, and we have seen suppression. We have also seen the rape of Tibet in Asia. In the United States of America there is trouble between the white people and the coloured people. Even in Australia we have come in for some criticism over what we have done, but I should say that a great deal of this criticism in Australia has been entirely unfair. I am not talking now of days gone by but of the present and what we hope to do in the future.

I feel that every authority in Australia, both State and Commonwealth, is striving to the one end - to do what is best for the coloured people of the nation. I feel, too, that some responsibility for this impression which has got abroad - it was mentioned at the United Nations by those who do not wish us well - rests with the press which stimulates the criticism by its reports which tend to deal more with the sensational and do not lay enough stress on the solid progress that has taken place over the years. We can still do a lot more, and I feel that this conference would not have been called by you as Minister in charge in this sphere unless you, too, felt that there was still a great deal to do. Even in respect of State legislation there is much to do because some of the wording of our State laws is open to misinterpretation. A conference such as this can do much good by seeking to find where the mistakes are and then devising ways of rectifying them.

I am more or less new to native affairs. I have been Minister in charge of this department for about four years, but, as I see it, many steps have been taken in Australia from the nomadic state up to the present standard of assimilation. As I

see it, in Queensland, the closer these people come to assimilation the more complex and difficult the task becomes because their needs become greater. We in Queensland aim at reaching complete integration. By that I mean that we are aiming at reaching the stage at which the question of colour will be completely forgotten. For example, we say these people should be citizens. Once they leave the protection of any Act in any State they should, only as a last resort, revert to control by that Act. They become citizens of Australia when they leave the protection of the Act and should be treated as such whether they are coloured or not.

Recently we altered our policy in connection with coloured children. At one time it was the custom to send them to our settlements when they were taken before the Court as neglected children. They then again became aboriginal natives of Australia. Under our new approach to the matter we feel that these children should be ordinary citizens of Australia; and the State Children Department now take them over and they go into the white orphanages and enjoy the same privileges as the white children in the institution.

As I see it, there have been many years of painstaking effort by men who have been most devoted to this task. I know that in Queensland all my officers are vitally concerned with this welfare activity, and we feel that we would lay ourselves open to the severest criticism if, once these people were ready to be assimilated, we did not give them the extra push needed to absorb them into the general community. The great danger is that unless they are given that extra push, unless extra facilities are made available to give them a fair chance to take their part as full citizens, they will deteriorate and become mendicants again.

One thing I hope will stem from this conference is co-operation between the State and Federal Governments, and that what happens in any one State in the international world is not

regarded as a State matter but will be treated as an international matter. The only way we can reach complete assimilation in Queensland is to have full co-operation between the Queensland and Commonwealth Governments. We will certainly carry out our policy to help these people. If it is necessary to have a little extra finance to give us the means of hurrying along the assimilation a little, we hope the Commonwealth Government will help us. Again I thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your welcome. I do hope that a great deal of good will stem from this conference.

Mr. PEARSON. - I add my word of thanks to those already expressed for your invitation, Mr. Chairman, and for the convening of this conference. I should like also to commend you for your remarks when addressing us. I commend you, too, for your attitude to this problem, and for the statements you have made from time to time. If I may say so, they have been right on the ball and full of commonsense. Sometimes they have been forthright, but that is necessary at times. Certainly you have given evidence of your desire to approach this problem from the only standpoint from which it can be approached for the material welfare of the aboriginal people. I think the statement you made in the Lyceum Theatre some two years ago might well be taken as a model in these matters. I personally come here with a very deep sense of goodwill towards you. I find myself very much in agreement with your attitude. I commend you for what I know to be your views on these matters.

We are here, I think, primarily to exchange ideas and discuss problems which are with us. We are all aware that this is not an occasion for beating our breasts and acclaiming what we have done. We are also conscious to the amount of work as yet undone and which must be done in the future. But it is a slow business. That is the first thing we have got to realise. The findings of anthropologists and people well versed in native affairs definitely warn us that to expect results too

quickly is only to invite disaster particularly on the psychological side. Whatever pressures might be exerted upon us by any individual or body it must be borne in mind that people who have been for very many centuries nomads and unused to any aspect of life as we know it in the western world must, of necessity, be gradually educated into it.

At this conference we should aim at obtaining agreement wherever possible with respect to our policies in so far as our varying problems will permit of agreement. We should aim particularly at agreeing that the various States will not attempt to score off administrations in other States by publicly comparing our policies with those of other States with a view to demonstrating, either for political or public reasons, how good we are.

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We have a common objective in view and the moment our objective is translated from the real welfare of aborigines into some lesser objectives, maybe political, we have exchanged the greater for the lesser. I would at this stage suggest that we endeavour to agree amongst ourselves at this conference that we will accept the views of other States with tolerance, that we will accept the view that whatever our decisions may be between the States, they are made with the highest motives, and that we will not go away and say, "This is what they do in another place, we are ever so much better", so creating an atmosphere which we believe would be favourable to ourselves.

I think we are all aware of the pressure exerted upon us by uninformed public opinion. One of the dangers is that we may capitulate to expediency in these matters. We are, of course, governed by public opinion - that is the way of democracy - but at the same time we know from administrative experience that we can run along well ahead of public opinion or we can proceed slowly behind public opinion and still retain the approval of the public. In these matters I think it is wise for us to ensure that we do not capitulate to expediency where doing so would be to the detriment of those we are trying to help. Another matter that we must keep in mind is that we could very easily change the status of the native people from one of extreme under-privilege to one of rather affluent over-privilege. We must remember that seeming great wealth is of no value to our semi-primitive and our primitive people. More particularly we must avoid the atmosphere of continual hand-outs for no reason and where no service is rendered in return. That is demoralizing and dangerous, and should be avoided.

Most of the matters I could touch on will be dealt with in detail during discussion of agenda items. I would like to commend those who have compiled the agenda for its comprehensive nature. I thank you, Sir, for your invitation, and I subscribe to

the wishes already expressed that we may have a successful conference.

MR. PERKINS. - I too would like to express my thanks to you, Sir, for your welcome. I hope that this will be a very instructive conference for us all. I should like to apologize for the trouble that I have caused you personally in organizing the conference. I know you wanted to have it much earlier, but it was simply impossible for me to attend late last year when you contemplated having it because of problems that arose from our parliamentary tasks. I have three other portfolios in Transport, Labour and Police, and it is difficult to find enough hours in the day to do all that I would like to do. I must apologize also for the fact that we were unable to have an officer present at the officers' conference. You were good enough to ring me. I discussed the matter with Mr. Middleton, but we have a lot on our plate at the moment in Western Australia and he has been very much tied up. In addition, it was necessary for him to have some medical attention. So it was impossible for him to get here by last Monday. I would like to apologize for whatever inconvenience we have caused. However, I know that the other officers have done an excellent job.

In Western Australia, we have rather peculiar problems. In native welfare work, I am impressed by the fact that problems vary from area to area and particularly from State to State. I would not be so presumptuous as to say that what we are attempting to do in Western Australia is the answer to the problem in another area. We are tackling our problems energetically and I feel that we are making considerable progress. I have been Minister for Native Welfare for almost two years, and though I have many other responsibilities, I must admit that in dealing with these problems which affect people who are so helpless in many ways, I find that whatever is done is well rewarded. I am sure that you will appreciate that our problems in Western Australia are somewhat different from those in other States in that our

aboriginal population is spread over practically the whole of the State, extending from the cold south coast right to the tropical areas around Wyndham. They are spread fairly evenly, and the problems vary from area to area. We probably have more nomadic types living under difficult conditions than any other State, but that is not necessarily the greatest problem. We find that the measures we are taking to produce the general objectives which I know are common to all the States are meeting with great public support. This is very encouraging. We have been accustomed to think that in remote areas absentee owners of pastoral properties in particular have not had very much thought for the welfare of the natives in their areas, but I am inclined to think that we have misjudged the position. Recently I discussed what we are attempting to do in the remote Kimberley area with an absentee owner of a very big property there. He lives far away, right on the other side of the Commonwealth. When I put certain suggestions to him and said I planned to go up there as soon as the wet season ended, about May or June, he told me that if I let him know when I was going there he would fly through to meet me on the spot to co-operate as far as possible in implementing our policies. I am inclined to think that we have under-estimated the amount of co-operation that we can obtain from the public. There is a very great interest in native welfare, and I am sure that the sharing of experience and knowledge in a conference such as this will be of great help to all of us.

I would like to repeat that I would not be so presumptuous as to say that what we are doing or what any one is doing is the final answer to this very complex problem. However, I will be very interested to hear the views of other States.

MR. SMITH. - I would like to apologize for the absence of my Minister, Dr. Gaha, who is genuinely interested in this matter. It is largely because of that interest that he insisted I should come here. It is often thought that Tasmania has either solved or in some other way disposed of its problem.

We have a small number of part-aboriginal people and we are inclined to think of them not as aborigines but as part of our community and insofar as they present problems, the problems are part of our social welfare programme.

I have found from this conference that perhaps we have not recognized that there are special aboriginal elements in our problem in Tasmania and we should be giving more attention to them. I do not mean that we should prepare a specialized programme for them, but we should recognize that even amongst these folk who are comparatively assimilated, there are nevertheless still the same problems in Tasmania as have been found elsewhere by these very experienced officers with whom we have met earlier in the week. I therefore appreciate your thought in including Tasmania in this conference, although I am afraid that we have not a great deal to contribute. I am sure my Minister will be very interested in the material that I take back to him.

MR. HASLUCK. - I shall ask my colleague, the Minister for Social Services, to say a few words. Before doing so, I may mention that my colleague, the Minister for Health, who is very closely engaged in some of the problems affecting aborigines, has been good enough to send the Director-General of Health to represent him, Dr. Refshauge. My colleague, the Minister for Supply, who has a particular interest in the weapons range in Central Australia, has asked Mr. Macaulay of his department to be present. Mr. Robertson, Minister for Social Services, is very closely associated with certain aspects of native welfare, and I will ask him to say a few words.

MR. ROBERTON. - I too have to say how very pleased I was to receive an invitation to be present here and take some small part in these really important proceedings. As an Australian citizen, I am interested in the general question of native welfare; as a member of the Commonwealth Parliament,

I have parliamentary responsibilities in that connexion; but as a Minister of State, I come into the field of native welfare largely because of an amendment to the Social Services Act which I introduced some twelve months ago.

When I became Minister for Social Services five years ago and discovered that there was a degree of discrimination levelled against the aborigines of our country, I found it difficult to satisfy my mind that that discrimination could be justified on any grounds. But I also discovered that successive Commonwealth Governments and successive Ministers for Social Services always said in explanation of the discrimination that because the Australian Constitution laid down that the Commonwealth Government shall have power to make laws with respect to the people of all races other than the aboriginal native race of Australia, aborigines could never be included in social service legislation as it applied to other people. I examined that argument very closely and had other Ministers, including the Minister for Territories, examine it. We came to believe that it was quite wrong in substance. However, it took some time to effect an alteration. First, I had to make some exploration in all the States where there were aboriginal natives and try to win the co-operation of the departments and ministers concerned. Having obtained that with great enthusiasm, may I be permitted to say, it was my duty to ask the Premiers in specific terms, if an amendment to the Social Services Act could be introduced to permit us to pay social services to qualifying aboriginal natives in precisely the same way as they are paid to other people, whether they would give me an assurance that this would not mean a retraction of State expenditure on native welfare. I am happy to say that every Premier wrote to me and gave me that personal assurance and the government assurance that, if anything of the kind were done, there would be no retraction.

Largely because of the co-operation that I received from the Native Welfare Departments and the Premiers I went ahead and introduced the amendment. The only variation so far as aboriginal natives are concerned is that those who are nomadic and whose identification cannot be made with any degree of accuracy currently are excluded. But the same thing applies to other people. Europeans in this country who cannot be properly identified or who have no fixed location cannot qualify for social service benefits. There are many variations in the method of paying benefits. The vast majority of people is competent to handle the situation. Other people are not so well equipped and there must be variations in the method of payment. In all cases social service payment are designed to assist the person who qualifies. That applies to aborigines.

I will be glad to assist this conference in its very important sociological work in any practical way.

Dr. REFSHAUGE. - The Minister for Health tenders his apologies for being absent to-day. He is most interested in aboriginal affairs in the fringe work that his department does, especially in the Northern Territory. He gives his assurance that his department will do everything possible to help in this problem.

Dr. NOBLE. - The report is in two parts. The States say what they are doing and then suggestions are made. At other conferences that I have attended the States have said what they are doing. I suggest that we could expedite the proceedings today if the recommendations were considered later.

Mr. HASLUCK. - I think I will ask the Chairman of the Committee of Officers to read the first item. We can direct our attention to the item to see whether we agree with the statement on the meaning of the policy, whether we want to add to the statement on the measures to be taken and whether we can reach agreement on the further measures required.

The policy of assimilation accepted at the 1951 Native Welfare Conference.

- (a) The meaning of the policy.
- (b) Methods for advancing the policy.
- (c) Progress made.
- (d) Further measures required to be taken either severally or in co-operation to advance the policy.

MR. SWIFT.- The report of the Committee of Officers is as follows:-

(a) Meaning of Policy

The policy of assimilation has been stated to mean that all aborigines and part aborigines are expected eventually to attain the same manner of living as other Australians and to live as members of a single Australian community enjoying the same rights and privileges, accepting the same responsibilities, observing the same customs and influenced by the same beliefs, hopes and loyalties as other Australians. Thus, any special measures taken for aborigines and part aborigines are regarded as temporary measures not based on colour but intended to meet their need for special care and assistance to protect them from any ill effects of sudden change and to assist them to make the transition from one stage to another in such a way as will be favourable to their future social, economic and political advancement.

In making this statement attention should be drawn to the rather loose use of the term "citizenship" in reference to the status of aborigines who are excluded from provisions of special State and Territory statutes and to their assimilation into the community.

Australian aborigines are Australian citizens by virtue of the Nationality and Citizenship Act 1948-1958. The special rights and disabilities which they have under State and Territory statutes can in no sense derogate from citizenship in the sense of status as Australian citizens.

In effect then, a person placed under the provision of State and Territorial Native Welfare Acts has certain restrictions placed on him in respect of consumption of liquor, control of property, franchise, employment, etc., but that does not in any way take away from him his status as an Australian citizen

(b) Methods of Advancing the Policy

- (i) Extension, where applicable, of government settlement work to encourage nomadic and semi-nomadic natives to adopt a more settled way of life and to make health services, better standards of housing and nutrition, schooling, vocational training and occupation available to them and their children, as a first stage towards their assimilation.
- (ii) Provision of health services including particularly child welfare services.
- (iii) Provision of education in normal schools and pre-schools to the extent possible otherwise in special schools and pre-schools for all aboriginal and part aboriginal children.

- (iv) Continual improvement in housing and hygiene standards on government settlements, missions, rural properties, in towns and assistance towards provision of and training in the use of improved housing facilities particularly in town areas.
- (v) Vocational training (including apprenticeship) and employment, particularly in ways which will assist aborigines and part aborigines to make a contribution to the advancement of their own people - teaching assistants, nursing and medical assistants, patrol officers, welfare officers, etc.
- (vi) Encouragement of social and sporting activity both among aborigines and part aborigines and participation by them in general community activity.
- (vii) Extension of welfare work, particularly to assist those people living in or near towns to adjust themselves to the life of the community.
- (viii) Welfare services provided for other members of the community to be available to aborigines and part aborigines (child, family and social welfare services).
- (ix) A liberal approach to the removal of restrictive or protective legislation as soon as the capacity and advancement of the individual makes this possible.
- (x) Encouragement of the community generally to receive aboriginal and part aboriginal people into the community without prejudice.
- (xi) Further research into special problems associated with the native welfare programme.

(c) Progress made

A. New South Wales

- (i) Since the conference of 1951, certificates of exemption have been granted to 877 applicants who have reached a satisfactory standard of social development.
- (ii) In recognition of the fact that housing is an essential prerequisite to conditioning part aborigines for assimilation, the Aborigines Welfare Board has, since 1954, acquired building lots and erected dwellings in towns rather than construct further homes on stations and larger reserves. Since 1952, from £294,273 loan moneys made available, 35 town houses have been erected and 13 homes on small reserves within town boundaries. At the same time, 140 houses were constructed on stations and larger reserves.
- (iii) Since 1955 the Treasury has established a Special Deposits Account, amounting to £29,500 from which loans have been made to part aborigines for housing.
- (iv) Since 1946 the Aborigines Welfare Board has awarded bursaries each year to aboriginal and part aboriginal school pupils; 64 awards have been awarded since the inception of the scheme. From this number six obtained their Leaving Certificate and one was subsequently awarded a University scholarship.

- (v) Aborigines and part aborigines in New South Wales are employed under the same conditions as other members of the community, for work of a similar nature, and possess the right to full membership of appropriate trade unions.
- (vi) The employment and conditions of aborigines and part aborigines are covered by Statute, and strict supervision of these conditions is maintained by field staff.

B. Victoria

- (i) The Aborigines Welfare Board in Victoria was established in August 1957, following a report by a Board of Inquiry which examined the Aborigines Act 1928.
- (ii) There are 2,260 part aborigines in Victoria, none of whom is subject to civil disabilities.
- (iii) The Board has built two transit community settlements adjacent to towns but aims to centre any further building projects in the towns.
- (iv) A number of medical surveys have been conducted in conjunction with the Department of Health, and the Board is supplying drugs and supplementary foods through Infant Welfare Sisters and workers of the Save the Children Fund.
- (v) Allowances have been made to about ten part aboriginal children who are receiving post primary education.
- (vi) The Board's welfare staff visits Victorian part aborigines regularly and assists in finding employment, meeting financial crises, providing assistance where they have to travel for medical or other reasons. The staff also refers part aborigines to appropriate agencies.

C. Queensland

- (i) Queensland has centred its welfare policy on the establishment of Government settlements and church missions. On four (4) Government settlements there are 1,397 aborigines and 2,660 part aborigines; on eleven (11) church missions there are 3,210 aborigines and 617 part aborigines.
- (ii) On all of these reserves schools, hospitals and child welfare centres are provided. Training facilities at the reserves are a means by which the young people are prepared to be assimilated into the general community.
- (iii) The present aim of Government policy is to educate its people residing on Government stations to the possible maximum; to encourage education and industrial tuition on church missions; and to ultimately take over those church missions approaching Government settlement standards, so that the people may be given preliminary tuition necessary for ultimate assimilation.

- (iv) Housing and hygiene tuition are related to the primary school education of aboriginal and part aboriginal children who are approaching the stage of assimilation as it is believed this will influence the standards of their parents. The parents of these children are provided with semi-modern homes.
- (v) Educational standards have been consistently raised, and each year a number of students qualify for secondary education. Some have sat for the Queensland Junior Public Examination, and two have satisfactorily qualified at State teacher training colleges.
- (vi) Mission school buildings are subsidized by the Government, and about 90% of the schools have actually been built by the Government. The schools are equipped with furniture and standard school supplies by the Government. Although mission schools usually take pupils only to primary Grade IV, selected pupils from these schools are sent to secondary church schools at the expense of the Department of Native Affairs.

D. South Australia

- (i) Some hundreds of part aborigines have been encouraged and developed to a standard where they accept employment and live in the community, although they are not necessarily accepted.
- (ii) A large number of part aborigines have been exempted from the provisions of the Aborigines Act 1934-39, and they and their descendants have mostly been successfully assimilated.
- (iii) The policy of housing aborigines and part aborigines has proved successful, and they have mostly adapted themselves well to the new living conditions.
- (iv) On reserves, relief is not issued, but the people are employed and trained in certain industries so that they can and do find employment away from a reserve.
- (v) Although progress has been made towards assimilation in South Australia, it is believed that it will be necessary for the less developed people to be segregated for some time until they can take their place in the community with every chance of success.
- (vi) All costs of selected aboriginal and part aboriginal pupils proceeding to secondary school are met by the Aborigines Department and in 1960 39 children were receiving secondary education. In the last seven years a considerable number have passed the Intermediates and some have proceeded to Leaving Certificate standard. One girl is doing social welfare studies at diploma level at the University of Adelaide.

E. Tasmania

- (i) Tasmania has only a small problem, but the Government has under its control about 150 part-aboriginal people on the Bass Strait Islands. There are no restrictions applied to these people who have full citizenship rights.

- (ii) They are administered under the normal social services programme, but some special assistance is needed, especially in regard to housing. Thus a few families will be placed in towns in houses at an uneconomic rental.

F. Northern Territory

- (i) Introduction of the Welfare Ordinance 1953 which adopted the principle of bringing people under protective legislation according to their capacity and needs as individuals rather than their race.
- (ii) The removal of about 1,900 persons (including some full-blood aborigines) from protective legislation in 1953 and the acceptance of the principle that part-coloured persons as a group would not be subject to the restrictions and protections of the Welfare Ordinance.
- (iii) The opening of four new welfare settlements (two government settlements and two mission stations) and the removal of three government settlements to more suitable sites. There are now thirteen settlements and fourteen mission stations in the Northern Territory and preliminary work at a further new government settlement in the Borroloola area is under way.
- (iv) Increase of financial assistance to missions from £46,600 in 1950-1951 to an estimated £317,500 in 1960-1961.
- (v) Substantial improvements in housing and other facilities and particularly those for infant welfare, health, education and training on settlements and missions.
- (vi) Special measures to provide better housing for part-coloured persons and full-bloods in the normal communities.
- (vii) Substantial increases in health services provided for aborigines. Up to three qualified nursing sisters are stationed at each welfare settlement. A modern leprosarium has been established just outside Darwin.
- (viii) Thirty-one full-blood aboriginal children are attending normal schools and enrolment at special aboriginal schools (including schools established or subsidised at pastoral properties) has increased from 1,061 in 1953 to 2,185 in 1960.
- (ix) The introduction of the Wards' Employment Ordinance providing for improved working conditions for aborigines (increased wages, better housing, messing, sanitation, laundry facilities, etc.).
- (x) Convening of a series of conferences with employer (mainly pastoral lessees) and employee associations concerning conditions of employment preparatory to the bringing down of the regulations under the Wards' Employment Ordinance.

- (xi) Establishment under the Wards' Employment Ordinance of an employment advisory board representative of employer and employee associations and missions to advise the Administrator on, inter alia, conditions of employment of wards, development of vocational training programmes and provision for further employment opportunities for aborigines.
- (xii) Work on vocational training and employment placement has been greatly increased by appointment of employment officers in two main centres and additional training of patrol officers to accept increasing responsibilities in this regard. Some aborigines are now employed under award conditions.
- (xiii) Eligibility for Commonwealth social services benefit was greatly liberalised early in 1960.
- (xiv) Residential training programmes have been developed for native nursing, teaching and hygiene assistants.
- (xv) Additional officers have been appointed to Welfare Branch Northern Territory Administration to enable more effective welfare services to be operated. In 1954 the establishment in the Native Affairs Branch comprised 64 officers; 19 in headquarters and 45 in the field. In July 1960 the establishment was 281 officers. Field staff (including patrol officers, welfare officers, settlement staff) increased from 45 in 1954 to 195 in July 1960.
- (xvi) With the appointment of additional supervisory and specialist staff inspections of missions and of field offices have been improved. Also specialist assistance (works and services) in planning buildings and layout of missions, catering, education and social welfare has been provided to missions to enable them to establish, maintain and improve these specialist services.
- (xvii) Special training courses have been established for patrol officers and for teachers in aboriginal schools. Further details of the programme of training for teachers is given in the Agenda item dealing with education.
- (xviii) A special educational programme has been developed for selected part-coloured children to assist them to obtain further education and training both in the Northern Territory and in the States.
- (xix) Extension of interschool sports meetings where children are brought into main centres and visits interstate by groups of aboriginal children.
 - Ø (1) This figure includes teachers in aboriginal schools who in 1954 were not members of the Native Affairs Branch, pre-school teachers and some officers engaged in child, family and social welfare.
 - (2) Since July, 1960 approval has been given by the Public Service Board and funds are being sought for an additional 43 positions. Of these 33 are field positions, mainly settlement staff.

(d) Further measures required to be taken either severally or in co-operation to advance the policy

The Committee considers that apart from measures covered by other items on the agenda, particular attention needs to be given to the following:-

(1) Housing

The absence of special housing for aborigines and part aborigines in a number of States is considered to be a major factor militating against a successful assimilation policy. For example, in Queensland about 200 houses are required immediately to house aborigines and part aborigines, now residing on government settlements, who have been trained to engage in normal employment and live in the normal European way, but who cannot use their training until they have been housed in residential areas on a scale comparable with their fellow workers; and it is estimated that about 100 houses a year will be required in future for this purpose.

(ii) Transitional Housing

It is believed that in some States there is a need for transitional housing for aborigines and part aborigines who are able to accept award employment but require further guidance in home management before they can manage a normal home. Such houses may be simple in construction and established quite cheaply but should conform with local government minimum building standards.

(iii) Supervision by Welfare Staff.

In all phases of assimilation there is a need for an increase in the number of welfare workers to assist the people in making the necessary adjustments. Personal contact and guidance is essential.

(iv) Welfare Work

It is necessary to encourage aborigines who are deemed fit to take their place in the community to leave the settlements and reserves. Welfare policy should be more strongly directed towards creating an interest in the new way of life.

(v) Pre-school education should be included as an integral part of education in special schools.

MR. PORTER. - Mr. Chairman and gentlemen, on the first item on the agenda I propose to cover the three sub-headings as briefly as possible because I agree, with Mr. Perkins, that there is no need to discuss them at length. On the question of the meaning of "policy", the first heading, Victoria is in complete agreement. It is in line with our own statutory requirement, which lays down the duty of the Welfare Board to promote the moral, intellectual and physical welfare of aborigines, with a view to their assimilation into the general community. In Victoria, the objective is to enable the aboriginal to become a responsible member of the local community, having no disadvantages or discriminating modifications of citizenship because of race. In fact there are no such discriminations in our statutes. We agree with the first sub-heading in its entirety.

As regards methods of advancing the policy, some are not applicable in Victoria, because there we are dealing with a rather limited number of people of part aboriginal blood. We have very few full bloods in Victoria and of the 2,000 odd aborigines in our State the vast majority live in the white community, or on its fringes, and have done so for many years. Ours, therefore, is a problem of assisting a people who are part aboriginal only and who, through force of circumstances, are suffering from some social disability. It is our aim to assist them to take their place in the general community.

On the further item regarding the steps required to be taken either severally or in co-operation, I agree that housing must play a big part, because it is one of the major factors of our work in Victoria. It is given our number one priority so far as the limited State finances allow us. On the second, third, fourth and fifth sub-headings we would be in complete agreement. I would like to add that we believe

that in our work in assisting these people we must always be conscious of the fact that we are dealing with people who have exactly the same human problems as anyone else in the community and each family requires individual treatment in accordance with its needs. We have therefore placed and will continue to place great emphasis on the necessity for individual welfare work and social case work.

Dr. NOBLE. - Queensland agrees entirely with the general remarks under headings (a) and (b). In Queensland we have those aborigines who are controlled and those who are uncontrolled. The controlled section, numbering 10,284, are mostly in the Gulf area. The half bloods who are controlled number 7,920, and we have no nomads. The full bloods uncontrolled number 1,080 and the half bloods uncontrolled number 19,700. These people are full citizens and enjoy all the rights of the normal citizen in Queensland. In our act at the present time we have different designations for these people. We feel that this is wrong and we are putting a suggestion to the Government that the act be amended to designate these people native wards of the State. We feel that we should not do as was done in the Northern Territory, where all the coloured people were declared free citizens and only those who were not capable of looking after themselves were taken back under the act. We are going to adopt the attitude that all those in Queensland who are at present under the protection of the Government will continue to be protected even though they are designated by another name.

At the present time a native who is under protection can apply for exemption and it is in the hands of the Director of Native Affairs to say whether he can get an exemption. We hope to overcome any criticism levelled at us, by setting up an appeal board so that where Mr. O'Leary might say "You are not yet fit to be a full free citizen", the native will have

the right to appeal to the appeal board to see whether the exemption can be granted. The board will decide whether he can be granted full citizenship and become an uncontrolled native. Because there is no right of appeal in Queensland at present we might be open to the implication that we are suppressing these people. If we have an independent board, perhaps consisting of a magistrate, to have the final say, we think a great deal of the objection will be done away with.

In the matter of housing we believe that as a native comes to a stage close to where he is ready for assimilation the progress becomes more complex and expensive. In Queensland the natives under the act, apart from the times when they are working away from our native settlements, live in their villages much the same as other people, with all the amenities of the normal town. They have sewerage, electricity supplies, hospitals and child welfare centres and they live, like normal citizens, in cottages, just as they would outside. Many of these people are at present capable of moving out into the community. One point about the settlements which always distresses me is the levelling down. When natives go on to a settlement which is controlled by the Government they are all on the one level, under the control of the superintendent of the settlement. I believe that any society which does not give opportunity for people to get on to a high level does not provide for ambition. Ever since I have been in this job I have thought that that was wrong.

I have had these people working for me. For some years I have had a very lovable half caste girl who has wonderful attributes and I do not think one would find a nicer girl anywhere. After a couple of years with us she could not be distinguished from a white person, apart from the difference in colour. I had her presented to Princess Alexandra, as a representative of the native people, and she looked lovely.

She speaks beautifully. She lives in our house like one of us and has developed like one of our own children. Recently her mother took ill and she went back on the settlement for a while. On her return to us we found that her speech had deteriorated; her eyebrows, which she had kept plucked, had grown again. This was due to going on to the settlement, where she felt an inferiority complex. I think we will never get very far if we let these people stay on the settlements where they get a complex and lose ambition. This girl now has her exemption and will never return to the settlement if I have any say in it. We must get these people off the settlements and out into the community. On the settlements these people are well looked after and are well fed and clothed. Whereas in the community at large among these people there is one child for every three and a half adults on the settlements at present there is one child per adult.

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Many children are growing up in the settlements and unless we do something to get them off these places we shall develop an inferior and mendicant race. A man can go off and earn £20 per week and yet pay only £2. a week for his family who are left there and who are kept and housed. The big thing is to get these people into the community. As I said, about 20,000 of them are out in the community and others are leaving the settlements at the rate of 100 or so a year. The great thing is to get them into houses, and we have endeavoured to do that with the co-operation of the Housing Commission.

When some of these natives get employment, they do particularly well. A half-caste is the mechanic who is second-in-charge at a large motor firm in Brisbane. Another man went to Lake Manchester the other day to take a job as a mechanic. We try to house them in normal Housing Commission homes for which they pay the usual rental, and we have a large number of them out. However, there is a great demand for these houses by both white and coloured people and only a small proportion of the numbers of natives that we feel could be out in the community can be so housed.

I say that this is one matter in which there could be full co-operation between the States and the Commonwealth. We do not want a grant for this. It is very nice to get a grant, I suppose. If I could recommend to my premier, if other Ministers could recommend to their Premiers, and if Mr. Hasluck could recommend to the Prime Minister a special loan to the States for native housing of this kind, and if the proposal were accepted at a Premiers' Conference, these natives would come out of the settlements. The natives that I have in mind would all be in full employment. They could pay a deposit on a house and many of them could pay it off straight away. Many of them could own their own homes.

If we did this, we would take a tremendous step forward - a step which we must take if we are to get complete integration in the community.

In my view, housing is one of the most important matters. I am particularly keen about it. It is very frustrating to know that you just have not the finance to get these people out of settlements. I may say that the Native Affairs Sub-Department in Queensland runs bank accounts for the natives and pays interest on them in the same way as a normal savings bank does. The natives have lying to their credit savings of about £850,000. Out of that money, large numbers of these people could put deposits on houses and come to own their own homes. I strongly urge on the conference that housing is the little extra that we need to bring about complete assimilation, and I feel that some way of bringing that about will be found.

There is tremendous scope in supervision by welfare staff and in welfare work, and I agree with the recommendations of the Committee of Officers. Education is mentioned only in the final part of the report, but it is very necessary. Only education will allow the coloured person full scope to give of his best. If he is capable of academic training, he should be allowed to have it. If he is capable of trade training, that should be arranged for him, too.

I feel that in Queensland we have not done half as much as we should do in the field of education. I am hoping that the Education Department will come into the schools on our settlements and handle them as any other schools are handled. At the present time, we pay the salaries of the teachers. A certain number of them are seconded to us. Then we have a number of native monitors. They are taught to a certain degree, but to my mind it is not nearly enough. The native people should have education and the same rights and privileges as are enjoyed by children outside the settlements. They should have

proper trade training. I think that the Education Department should provide these things.

One of the things that strikes me with respect to welfare work, housing and the like is that it is a dreadful thing to train a man for certain work and then not be able to put him to the work for which he is trained. If we reach that stage, it will be a very bad thing for Australia and we would be rightly criticised by people overseas. We in Queensland hope that we shall be in a happy position because of the proximity of our main settlements to industrial centres. As people leave the settlements they can be trained in industry and to out into the community generally. We might even bring children down from the mission areas along the Gulf of Carpentaria and have them spend their school time at the settlements where they can be trained. They will be able to go back to the missions for their holidays. As they get older, they can be trained as apprentices and put out into the community.

I am anxious for co-operation. This is not just a Commonwealth matter or just a State matter. If the authorities in the Northern Territory wanted to send children to us and have us arrange for their education, we would be happy to co-operate. If the authorities in the Territory wanted native children brought up near industrial centres so that they could go out into industry as apprentices, we in Queensland would be happy to work with the other authorities as a team in this regard. I must say that great work has been done in the Northern Territory in only a few years. The Commonwealth authorities have really been getting "stuck into it". The thing that struck me was that you were training the natives but that there would be no work for them when they were trained. The

Territory has the pastoral industry, but there is no industry in Darwin, and that is where your difficulty will lie. If the States, especially Queensland, can help you in this regard, we shall be happy to do so.

MR. PEARSON.- Mr. Chairman, I was recently visited by members of the board of a very important and influential sectarian body which has widespread ramifications throughout Australia. They asked me whether my Government agreed with the policy of assimilation. I ventured the comment that assimilation was a policy which the community required governments to subscribe to but itself refused to have any part in. That caused the representatives of this body to think a good deal. I think that that situation is one of our great problems. I have no disagreement with the meaning of the policy as set out. It conforms with and in my opinion sets out very well our own views.

I have very little to say on the methods of advancing policy except to comment that after three years of experience as Chairman of the Aborigines Protection Board in South Australia I have crystallised in my own mind two or three major objectives. The first is the education of children. The second is the employment of adults. The third, which is a developmental one, is housing and ancillary things.

I shall deal with education a little more fully in a few minutes. With respect to welfare, we in South Australia have increased our welfare services tremendously. Our Budget expenditure on aborigines has risen from, I think, something less than £100,000 seven years ago to almost £500,000 in the Budget for the current financial year. I think the exact figure is £480,000. Quite a bit of that has gone into welfare work. I think I can claim that our welfare officers in South Australia, between them, know and can identify by sight and by name at least the senior member of every aboriginal

family in the State. These officers have been very ably assisted by the Commonwealth's patrol officers at the Weapons Research Establishment at Woomera. Because South Australia is the State most closely associated with that organization, I should like to pay special tribute to the work that the Commonwealth is doing. I think its officers have far exceeded their actual obligations in the matter of the welfare and the well-being of the aborigines in their area. They have gone wholeheartedly into the work of the betterment of aborigines. I am very pleased to see Mr. Macaulay at this conference. I travelled with him for a fortnight in the north-west of South Australia. He and Mr. Macdougall are very capable officers and they are doing a first-class job. Our officers co-operate and work very effectively with your officers at the Weapons Research Establishment. As I have said, they have a complete coverage of the aborigines in South Australia.

I regard the education of the native children as being probably the most important measure that we can take to further our policy of assimilation. In that respect, we have recently appointed to the Aborigines Protection Board the Superintendent of Rural Schools in South Australia. He is a senior officer of the Education Department, and through him we are establishing a very good liaison with that department. My colleague, the Minister in charge of it, has authorised me to say at this conference, if I wish to do so, that the Education Department in South Australia is prepared to take over progressively the whole of the education services for aborigines. The schools that they attend will not be aboriginal schools. They will be departmental schools staffed with teachers and housed in buildings equivalent to the teachers and buildings of other State schools in South Australia.

We have a number of missions which endeavour as best they can to teach the children on those missions, but one by one

they are coming to us and saying, "We cannot do this job. Will you help us?" Progressively, the Education Department in South Australia will take over the whole of the education of aboriginal children. Wherever there are settlements or families adjacent to ordinary State schools, the children attend those schools. The children at Point Pearce Mission, which is one of our two major State settlements, go to the area school at Maitland, as do the ordinary children, to get their secondary education. That is typical of our attitude to integration so far as education is concerned. I think that assimilation must start with the children.

The second point is the employment of adults in gainful, worth-while and dignified work. In our State, that is very difficult. Many of our natives are located in areas where employment is scarce. There is not a very great potential for employment on cattle stations. Natives are accepted, by and large, on cattle stations as employees, but not a great number of them can be gainfully employed by the owners of properties. We are developing Musgrave Park as a departmental venture, and we hope to run it as a commercial undertaking. That would not employ very many people, but we hope to use it as a training centre for the employment of aboriginal natives in the cattle industry. We are working at one or two of our centres where we hope to develop employment capacity. The employment of natives gainfully in a dignified kind of work is a real problem in South Australia.

We have stepped up housing very materially. We have recognized that housing is extremely important in its two phases - its transitional stage and its final stage at which the natives are capable of living as normal Western people live. We have had a good deal of success, and I think that we can perhaps take some risks on the positive side with housing. In other words, we can perhaps give the aborigines a standard of housing as good

as anything they have had, if not a little better, in order to encourage them to go out into employment.

On the question of citizenship generally, I notice that a table which has been prepared by the Committee of Officers shows that we in South Australia have probably as few restrictions on aborigines as most other States have. I do not want to boast about that, but, as you know, South Australia exempts aborigines from time to time and they have all the rights of ordinary citizens. Our non-exempt aborigines have probably all the rights of ordinary citizens except when it comes to alcohol.

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They can own property and they must vote. They can do all the things an ordinary citizen does, whether they be exempt or not, but they are not exempt so far as alcohol is concerned. However, I think the board will be inclined to take a more lenient view of exemptions in connexion with alcohol than it has taken in the past, and I think we can possibly take some risks with probation rather than wait until we are absolutely certain that an aboriginal might be exempt.

MR. PERKINS. - First let me say that Western Australia will have prepared and circulated to the various Ministers a statement similar to that provided by the other States. Obviously, the points I should cover now are the ones that have a bearing on those particular decisions. There are one or two that we cannot quite accept and there are others on which I feel I should make some comment.

The position in Western Australia is somewhat different from that in the other States in that the natives are spread throughout the whole State. There is not a portion of the State in which we have not got an agent. Our most difficult problem is in the agricultural areas, particularly round the large cities. Natives can become very degraded through association with poor types of whites. We think we have approximately 2,000 nomads, but we are not sure. There might be fewer than that. Their main contact with civilization is through Cundalea in the Warburton Ranges, Jigalong, about 400 miles north of Wiluna, on the fringe of the desert and Balgo above Hall's Creek, also a desert fringe area. There is an unknown number of natives in that area and it could be much less than 2,000 nomads.

That brings me to the methods to advance the policy. I can only accept them with reservations. These people in Western Australia are living in an area where there is no civil settlement. They are living as their ancestors lived for

perhaps thousands of years. Civilization has had some impact upon them but it would be taking on a great responsibility to drag them into settlements. We have had some unfortunate experiences in that respect. They do come in contact with the missions. While they have contact with the missions and the missions are used as feeding stations for those in need, no great problem arises. The children receive education and health services there, but when the primitive nations move to the more settled areas of the State we do have very great problems indeed. The assimilation is too quick for them and there are real problems. As soon as they move into the settled areas obviously we have a responsibility to care for them, and we are doing that; but, on the other hand, I must place some reservations on a policy which could be indicated by this paragraph which suggests that we go out after them and bring them into what might be classed as perhaps a more congenial life. Undoubtedly, they would be very much better cared for but whether they will be better people after they are brought in to the benefits of civilization is a very moot point. There have been instances in which they have gone down very badly indeed and great problems have resulted. I do not wholly disagree with it but we can only accept it with reservations, and in Western Australia it would have to be applied with considerable discretion.

In the pastoral areas such as the Kimberleys, the north-west and the north-eastern areas where the natives lived long before the white man went there, the natives living on the stations have played a useful part in developing the pastoral economy. At times there might have been some criticism of the way they have been treated but our experience of recent times has been that the pastoralists are paying much more regard to the welfare of the natives, and where we are planning schemes to upgrade the way of life of the natives the pastoralists are giving us great co-operation. Many problems arise in such areas.

Even the white children have difficulty in getting education in such sparsely settled areas. While we have schools of the air and itinerant teachers to help the white children, it is not practicable to help the native children. Some of the larger stations have a teacher and the native children immediately adjacent to the station get some education, but you have to realize that on the large pastoral properties only a few of the natives live close to the homestead. It is very difficult to educate the native children in those circumstances. The result is that a very big proportion of the natives in all these pastoral areas are illiterate and this fact has given us a good deal of concern.

In the last twelve months we have worked out a new policy which we are just putting into effect now. It is the development of hostels where the native children can stay and go to school. They are trained in the three R's and we also give them some basic trade training. They are not taken from their parents. We are trying to insist that the parents remain on the properties where the children came from. We do not want to see a shift of population. At the end of the school term the children go back to the homes they came from just as our white children return home from boarding school. The encouraging thing is the co-operation we are receiving in the area concerned. Mr. Middleton, officers of the department and other people interested in the areas have had meetings. I was afraid that the government might be left with full responsibility for the whole project but we are receiving co-operation. I adopted the attitude that the white people are going to have the natives in their areas whether they liked it or not and that it was up to the whites whether they had good or bad natives. In each case they have agreed to appoint committees, and some of the most prominent and efficient pastoralists in the district are travelling long distances to serve on the committees. They

are also running the hostels. We underwrite them and staff them, but we are receiving enthusiastic co-operation from the pastoralists.

The scheme is just getting under way. So far we have had very limited experience. We have a hostel at Derby and another at Nullagine, but we are moving out on a much bigger scale and next week the Commissioner and I are opening one at Onslow which cost £30,000 and will house approximately 55 native children who will attend the Onslow school side by side with white children. The corner stone of our policy is that there will be no discrimination between white and black.

MR. HASLUCK. - Do these native children know any English already?

MR. PERKINS. - Some of them do but in much of the north-west they speak their own tongue amongst themselves. At Hedland, for instance, we have put in teachers to deal with them at the transition stage. We do not aim to keep them separate. The teacher at Hedland has these children from tiny tots up to boys and girls of 14 years of age and as soon as they are sufficiently civilized to go into the main school they are moved in. There was a bit of difficulty with the white parents at the start but we have now found that as soon as we are able to upgrade their social and living standards the native children are accepted without difficulty. We have called tenders - in fact we are now building it - for another hostel at Cue which we think will attract native children from a very wide area. We are calling that the Murchison hostel. There will be further development farther out as the project proceeds. I think we will have to cover the whole of the north-west and the Kimberley areas.

The other phases are still experimental. While we have the children at the hostels we are making special provision for some trade training to give them skill with their hands. The untrained person, whether he be white or black, does not fit into our modern economy very well, and the natives can become very

proficient in work, particularly manual work. As a primary producer myself, I employ natives sometimes. One native shearer who works for me is far and away the best shearer I have ever employed. There are other instances in which the natives have developed great skill with their hands. I do not say they do not develop in other spheres but we find that they do so less frequently than in practical work. While we have the native hostels we aim at giving the natives some trade training to give them skill with their hands. Again, in the pastoral areas where the main avenue of employment will be in the pastoral industry, the pastoralists are volunteering to train several of the boys. The girls are not such a problem. They are given domestic science training and are being employed readily.

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The boys are more difficult, and various pastoralists have volunteered to take a number of boys and give them a further period of practical training. To put it shortly, the objective is to fit them into the work force in the area to which they belong. We will have some disappointments and there will be all sorts of problems - it would be foolish to think otherwise - but I am sure that we are making considerable progress. We need special teachers to give them this training. It really needs a handyman type of tradesman who has teaching ability. Fortunately, the Education Department with some help from Mr. Middleton has been able to find suitable people to carry on this work.

I will try to give some of this in more detail and put it on paper. It is hardly fair to ask others to discuss these points without something concrete before them, but it does not affect the matter raised in the paper. I mention this to give some background of what is happening in Western Australia.

Educational facilities are already available in the southern areas where we have a great many aborigines, and this comes back to a question of housing. In the southern areas, we are pressing on with the transition type of housing. The Housing Commission has built a few houses but it has run into trouble in collecting rent from some of the natives. They need some training to get them accustomed to the idea of paying rent. The Housing Commission is not well geared to follow up these matters, and we are using our native welfare officers to do this work. I am interested in what Dr. Noble has had to say, and I think he is right on the ball when he emphasizes the need for this type of housing. We must use a form of transition housing before we make full-scale housing available. We are spending as much as we can from our own resources. I suppose we will build about 100 of these transition houses in the south-west, mostly further out from Perth, but we would like to build many more. If the money were available, we would go much further and more quickly.

I was interested to hear what Dr. Noble had to say, because if you, Sir, can influence your colleague at the Commonwealth level, it could mean a very big step up. It seems unfair that the States which by accident have a great many natives in their areas should be forced to spend their resources on these matters. There is some responsibility on the people of the whole of Australia to make some contribution to this problem. I entirely support the suggestion of Dr. Noble. We should get on particularly with transitional housing.

These houses need not be expensive. They need only give the basis of civilized living. Our experience is that where we have done that, in a comparatively short time the aborigines get a taste for civilized living and if they have regular jobs they are willing to take on much greater responsibilities. There was an instance of this in Geraldton. We had difficulty in getting a person to take one of these transitional houses at £1 or 25s. a week, but within a year she was pestering us to get her into a better house. We have four transitional houses at Narrogin. Once you get into settled areas, the transition type of housing is the key to the problem and we are certainly spending every penny we can collect on this. I am afraid our Treasurer regards me as a nuisance.

I agree with Dr. Noble that settlements have no future. We have done away with any that looked like developing. I think the alternative is to have these people living in their own homes adjacent to areas where employment is available and where they will eventually fit into the community and the work force and perform a useful job. The only other point I wish to raise concerns the point made in the report that "pre-school education should be included as an integral part of education in special schools". I do not like the word "special". It cuts across what we are aiming to do. Our policy is to use the ordinary schools and, in effect, use our white children to civilize the natives.

Mr. HASLUCK. - There are certain areas where there are no white children but only black children.

MR. PERKINS. - Wherever that applies, yes, but in the siting of hostels, we have gone to the extent of putting hostels where we will get white children. Cue is an instance of this. After careful discussion by the department, we decided to spend £20,000 on a new hostel rather than use an existing building where there would only be native children. We bring the native children into association with white children. This does cause some trouble in some instances, but I emphasize that once the natives accept our living standards and observe white hygiene, the average Australian is not very colour conscious. I know this from our own children who have attended country schools and been seated next to native children. As long as the natives are clean, they are very well accepted in many instances, and they can be extremely well accepted. I think wherever possible we should avoid special schools. We must have them on missions, I know, but on the other hand I would like to emphasize the point that we have a special school in Western Australia only where there is no alternative.

MR. PEARSON. - Perhaps I might help Mr. Perkins in the interpretation of the word "special". This does not relate to colour at all. It refers more to what we in South Australia call opportunity classes. The "special" is directed more to the level of intelligence of a child who may be older than others in his class. It is not intended to be special in the sense that it is a segregated school.

MR. HILLS. - Why keep the word? Why not refer to "any school"?

MR. PEARSON. - They are not normal schools. They have to be provided to help those people.

MR. PERKINS. - If the word "special" is used, the man in the street will call it a black school.

MR. HASLUCK. - The matter can be illustrated by the situation in the Northern Territory. There are certain inland localities and areas in Arnhem Land where there are no Europeans

at all. You might have a congregation of 150, 200 or more children in a place which is perhaps 100 miles or more from any other settlement.

MR. HILLS. - It is still a school.

MR. HASLUCK. - A school is established. It is not an Education Department school but a Welfare Department school. The word "special" has no real significance. It is a school where, as it happens, all the pupils are aboriginal children and the curriculum is designed to meet their needs because they do not have English as their native language.

MR. PERKINS. - We would rather have some other word such as "suitable" or "selected".

MR. PORTER. - All we need do is drop the last three words.

MR. HASLUCK. - I think we could drop them. We will cut them out.

DR. NOBLE. - I may have given Mr. Perkins a wrong impression about settlements. They serve a wonderful purpose, in some respects. The type of house we are building for our natives in the cities are like those shown in these photographs.

MR. SMITH. - I think I can say that the item as it stands satisfies Tasmania.

MR. HILLS. - I wish to refer to the statement that "in effect then, a person placed under the provision of State and Territorial Native Welfare Acts has certain restrictions placed on him in respect of consumption of liquor, control of property, franchise, employment, etc., but that does not in any way take away from him his status as an Australian citizen". I think we must be realistic enough to realize that it does have some effect on his status in the community. We should make that clear; otherwise this is just a pious resolution. We are happy about the comments on methods of advancing the policy. We believe in the liberal approach. I could go into details

of what we are doing in New South Wales and what we propose to do, but a statement of the progress we have made is included in the papers.

I turn to further measures required to be taken and deal first with housing. As stated in our statement, we have spent a considerable amount of money on housing - almost £300,000. During this financial year, we will spend £73,000. Besides this, we have a floating fund under which these people can obtain loans from the board to construct their homes or purchase them. I was interested in the matter of special funds for the housing of aboriginals, which was raised by Dr. Noble. Naturally, as the Minister representing New South Wales, I would have to be concerned to ensure that this did not have some effect on the funds already provided for housing generally. I would not want Mr. Landa saying that a certain sum was taken from his allocation for housing. If the special fund is in addition to what is already being done, I am happy about it.

Mr. PORTER. - That goes for me too.

Mr. HILLS. - I think the matter should be clarified. We agree with the view expressed about transitional housing. I know the board is already considering the matter, particularly as it relates to the transfer of aborigines from centres to the large cities and towns so that they may be quickly assimilated. The board is interested in doing what it can to bring them into the larger communities and have them assimilated. On the question of supervision of welfare staff, we feel that we have gone a long way in that regard. We have increased our staff of people doing welfare work by approximately 60 per cent. Some of the other matters are dealt with in other items which appear later, and I will refer to them when they are reached.

MR. HASLUCK.- There seems to be a measure of agreement. If we can arrive at a final text on this item we will have achieved something, particularly if we put it out as a public declaration. I think Mr. Hills made a good point about citizenship. I suggest that we re-draft the last paragraph in (a) by adding the words -

.....although it may limit for the time being his exercise of some of the rights enjoyed by other citizens and may afford him assistance not given to other citizens.

That restricts him in certain respects and gives him access to certain forms of assistance that other citizens neither need nor receive.

MR. PEARSON.- I suggest that we simply say that a person has certain restrictions placed upon him. Leave out all reference to consumption of liquor.

PROFESSOR ELKIN.- I would like to see the word "status" qualified in some way. I am concerned with the interpretation that may be placed on the word by the public. For years the argument has been that we do not give these people sufficient status. Would it be of assistance to qualify the word by the word "legal"?

MR. HASLUCK.- His legal status would cover things such as right to dispose of property, which is limited. I suggest that we re-draft (a) in the form I have suggested.

Now let us turn to (b) - Methods of Advancing the Policy. Western Australia has some reservations about applying the policy adopted in Queensland and the Northern Territory. It must be remembered that Western Australia has a number of nomadic aborigines. Western Australia has said that it does not want to accelerate the assimilation of its 2,000 nomads. Western Australia prefers to leave those people in the desert free to come in whenever they wish. I think the addition of the words "where applicable" should satisfy Western Australia.

Nothing further arises until we come to point (x) of (b). South Australia wanted that point made more emphatically.

It wants the public clearly informed that it is not enough to accept the policy of assimilation; the community generally must do something about it. I wonder whether we should strengthen point (x). I wonder whether we should accept another point in these terms -

Co-operation between governments and the community by such means as the official recognition of approved Native Welfare Councils and organizations and bodies similar to the Good Neighbour Council.

That is merely a suggestion.

MR. PEARSON.- I would not approach this matter along those lines. What I had in mind was real co-operation on the part of the community in general to accept aborigines as normal people. I have lived amongst aborigines but most people do not regard them as normal people.

MR. HASLUCK.- Well, we will simply state point (x) more emphatically and place a little more of the burden on the community.

Two other points may need to be taken into account. One point was made by Mr. Porter and it may be covered by an addendum in these terms -

It is recognized that some of these methods may not be applicable in all States of the Commonwealth and that methods may vary from State to State.

The point was made that in the Northern Territory we may use all of these methods but in Victoria it may be necessary to use only three or four of them. I assume that in Tasmania only one of those methods is necessary. All Ministers being in agreement, we will add those words.

Now we come to (d) - Further measures required to be taken either severally or in co-operation to advance the policy. I wish to make a comment about housing. From our experience in the Northern Territory we subscribe completely to what has been said by Ministers about the importance of housing, the need for transitional housing and the need for oversight and training of some kind in the use of houses. Regarding the availability of money for houses, the Commonwealth view is quite

clear. As we see it this is a matter that is inseparable from the annual loan programme. The procedure at the Loan Council is that in discussion between the Commonwealth and the States agreement is reached as to the total amount of the loan programme for the year. The processes by which agreement is reached as to the total amount are two-fold. On the one hand there is the Commonwealth judgment of what loan programme can be financed, either by borrowings or by provision from Commonwealth revenue. The other argument, presented mainly by the States, is related to the need for money under various headings. So far as the Commonwealth is concerned, I am authorized to state that if any State in presenting its case wishes to hypothecate in the total amount for housing an item for aboriginal housing, the Commonwealth will be very happy about that.

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We would not attempt to say that there should not be an item for aborisingal housing but I think it rests with the States. If one State had a large demand for aboriginal housing there might be some reaction from States with a small demand which felt that it might affect their funds for other purposes if the State with the large demand received money for that prupose.

MR. PERKINS. - That will be the attitude taken on the Loan Council by all our ministerial colleagues. Unless we treat this as a need over and above the ordinary financial needs of the States I am afraid that, because of the special implication of caring for the aboriginals, nothing will happen.

DR. NOBLE. - I agree with Mr. Perkins. Of the money which comes to the States by way of loan, some is raised and some comes from Commonwealth revenue, on which the States pay interest. I think this is one field where the Commonwealth should say that from loan money or revenue it will give a certain amount for aboriginal housing.

MR. HASLUCK. - We could not, and no State Premier would permit the Commonwealth to attach strings to the loan programme unless the States were willing to have those strings attached. Our main concern is fixing the total amount of the loan programme.

DR. NOBLE. - Could you not do it by a special grant? Every year you say the loan programme is to be perhaps £200,000,000, with £150,000,000 by way of loan and you lend perhaps £50,000,000 to the States out of revenue.

MR. HASLUCK. - I do not think Commonwealth-State financial relations would work in that way. There are occasions at Loan Council meetings where a case has been put up and accepted by the Commonwealth and where, in addition to the main provision made a special provision is made in recognition of some special circumstance. However, that sort of thing is done only if the States themselves seek it and are in agreement about it.

We are all politicians. Are we to encounter the political difficulty of telling the Government of New South Wales that in spite of its objections we are going to give so many millions of pounds of the loan programme to Queensland? As a matter of political practice it could only come about if the State Premiers, at the Loan Council, are agreed on the presentation of the case and agree that certain funds are to go for certain purposes. We need not labour the point but I can assure you that if the States presented that sort of case there would be no objection by the Commonwealth to hypothecating some portion of the loan programme, as requested by the States, for aboriginal housing.

DR. NOBLE. - At the present time, owing to the larger white population, there is a bigger demand for housing for white people and so we are unable to do what is necessary for the people we are trying to help.

MR. PERKINS. - None of us is Minister for Housing and so each of us must push his barrow for the needs of his department. If I go to the Minister for Housing in my State and say I want 100 houses for natives he will simply say "Put up your case", and it will then take its turn with all the other applications before the Housing Commission. If there was a special allocation by the Commonwealth, altogether outside the loan funds, to deal with native housing, it would be in our hands to allocate it. I think the point you have made, Mr. Chairman, is an argument for some special allocation of this kind, because those States which have a great number of natives have a big responsibility in this regard. In the eastern States the big cities have practically no natives adjacent to them but there are about 1,000 around Perth, who cause a lot of trouble. I do not think we would get much of an allocation from the State Minister for Housing for this purpose.

MR. HASLUCK. - My chance of persuading the Commonwealth Government to intervene in an argument between you and your State colleague, the Minister for Housing, is nil.

MR. PERKINS. - You would not have to, if you allocated the money as a grant from the Commonwealth as you do in other fields.

MR. HASLUCK. - I am not authorized to make any promise on behalf of the Commonwealth. If any State wants additional loan money for aboriginal housing I think its main hope or its only hope of success is to make out a case at a Loan Council meeting for some special provision for that purpose. There are precedents for special provisions for a State in the loan works programme, in recognition of special circumstances which exist in that particular State.

DR. NOBLE. - There might be a possibility of getting it through, because a number of States have a fairly large coloured population. Such a request might get through a Loan Council meeting.

MR. PERKINS. - It might be possible if the Minister for Territories pushes it very hard with the Prime Minister and the Treasurer.

MR. HASLUCK. - That would not do as much good as you talking to your Premier. You can make out a case but it will necessarily have to be a case which persuades not only us but the other State Premiers also, because it is inseparably associated with the total loan programme. We do not fix that total in isolation from the States, because we have to discuss it with them.

MR. HILLS. - I want to correct what may be a wrong impression, because we have about 1,500 coloured people living around Sydney.

MR. HASLUCK. - I have no objection to your stating that housing item as emphatically as you wish to. Here we have quoted the Queensland example to illustrate the problem. I wonder whether in the final context we should isolate one State. If you feel that that item can be given more emphasis I will be happy

about it. We might ask the officers to see whether they can put more stress on that. In fairness to ourselves I think we might place in the public document on housing something to say that a great deal has already been done, although much more is needed. New South Wales has quoted some figures and we could quote figures from the Northern Territory, while Mr. Perkins could quote figures from Western Australia. This could be re-drafted to indicate that although a good deal has been done much more needs to be done and that this is one of the central problems. We come now to transitional housing.

MR. HILLS. - Our Welfare Board thinks that we have enough and has not made any recommendation for any more. I think it should be stated generally.

MR. HASLUCK. - We will take account of that point. We might also take account, in paragraph (iii), of a point which Mr. Porter made, that there is great need to regard so many cases as calling for individual attention. I think that could well come into paragraph (iii). I think we could emphasize that personal contact and guidance is essential and emphasize that these cases have to be treated individually. On paragraph (iv), welfare work, I think we should take into account the points made by several Ministers about getting these people off the settlements. Mention is made of encouraging aborigines, who are deemed fit to take their place in the community, to leave the settlements and reserves. Perhaps we should emphasize that it is necessary not only to encourage them but also to provide them with the opportunity. They must have something to go to and their opportunity is largely a matter of employment and housing.

MR. PEARSON. - We find that there is often a reluctance on their part to leave the settlements and reserves.

MR. HASLUCK. - I have told my officers that the settlements in the Northern Territory are necessary tools of trade at the present time. But what if they still exist in

30 years time their work will have failed. The test of a good settlement is that it ceases to exist.

Mr. PERKINS. - They are hard to get rid of because there are always indolent natives who do not want to shift.

Mr. HASLUCK. - With those additions and omitting the words "special schools" in paragraph (v) I think we could tentatively agree to item No. 1.

Mr. PEARSON. - Paragraph (v) is the only one which touches on that point and I do not think sufficient attention is paid to that aspect. I feel that education gets scant treatment in this part of the document and I believe it should be built up substantially. I repeat that I rate it as number one priority.

Mr. HASLUCK. - We too give it a high priority. I think we could give education more emphasis.

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incidents reported in Australian newspapers have been quoted at international gatherings to the discredit of Australia. There is a growing interest in India and South-East Asian countries in the subject, not all of it an unfavourable interest but a good deal of it fed on information transmitted from partisan or ill-informed Australian sources. European and American papers and journals have tended to give undue emphasis to the "stone age" aspect of aboriginal culture. This attention to primitive aboriginal life has recently been countered to some extent by articles syndicated overseas by the Australian News and Information Bureau which have attempted to set the question in proper perspective by outlining the present policy of assimilation. Australian overseas posts have also distributed copies of the Aborigines' Day booklets. The film relating to assimilation of aborigines in the Northern Territory has been available for screening in London and New York. In general, however, more that is unfair to Australia than that which is well-founded and balanced is at present being published overseas. To counter the misconception found in South-East Asia it may be possible to present accurately and factually the work being done and the progress made, to overseas students studying in Australia.

5. One apparent difficulty is that any unfair or distorted story or any deliberate misrepresentation may concern only one of the many governments in Australia engaged in native welfare administration and the other governments either do not have the information on which to base a correction or are loth to trespass on the affairs of another government.

Conclusions

6. The committee of officers suggests the following arrangements -

- (a) The separate work of each State and Territory should be continued and special attention should be given to informing teachers and senior pupils. Each State authority should discuss with its education department the revision of the Social Studies Syllabus to bring up to date material on native welfare programmes throughout Australia; and the production of suitable material and arrangements for school magazines, broadcasts and television programmes.
- (b) In the event of any sensational or adverse publicity in any State the Director of the State native welfare authority should send to each of the other State Directors and to the Department of Territories in Canberra a statement of the facts of the case. The Department of Territories should be responsible for passing this information promptly to the Department of External Affairs and the Australian News and Information Bureau for communication to Australian Diplomatic Posts and information centres overseas. If the incident occurs in the Northern Territory the Administrator should inform the Department of Territories which will inform the other States.

- (c) An arrangement should be sought with the Department of External Affairs so that any unfavourable overseas publicity is referred to the Department of Territories which should inform the Director of native welfare in States affected and seek information from them for passing where desirable to overseas posts.

7. The Department of Territories should arrange for the booklet "Our Aborigines" to be brought up to date and copies be available to all of the State authorities for distribution. (A suggestion was made that the title "Our Aborigines" might be regarded as patronizing and might be changed).

8. In addition to the co-operative work between the Commonwealth and the States for the production of material for National Aborigines' Day each year the Commonwealth should be asked to organize two combined Commonwealth/States publicity projects each year - one mainly directed at informing Australian opinion and one at informing overseas opinion. These might take the form of -

- (a) a booklet,
- (b) a film, particularly for showing on television,
- (c) teaching aids for distribution to schools throughout the Commonwealth and for use by Adult Education groups,
- (d) an Australia wide tour of welfare establishments by groups of editorial writers either of Australian journals or resident representatives of overseas news services,
- (e) a lecture tour overseas of a suitable State or Commonwealth Officer experienced in the native welfare field.

9. Generally it was felt that the Commonwealth should take the initiative in these projects with the States co-operating by supplying information and facilities as needed. Methods of financing these projects were not discussed. Consideration might be given to whether it would be desirable for the purpose of deciding on the nature of the projects for overseas publicity to seek the advice of the Department of External Affairs on the state of opinion and publicity on this question.

DR. NOBLE.- We in Queensland quite agree with the statement that public interest, both in Australia and overseas, in native welfare and the need for promoting better understanding and better public relations in respect of native welfare work is important. This public interest is probably long overdue. As I said earlier, we, too, believe, that as has been said in this report, the press often paints a very wrong picture of what is happening in Australia. I think that our departments sometimes

give the press a lead to do this. I shall give you an example, Mr. Chairman. We are to have an Australia Day procession in Queensland shortly. As usual, we shall have a display of semi-nude aborigines in paint standing on the backs of trucks as they go through the city. We are still giving the impression that this is the way of life of these people, although probably some of those in the display will come from the suburbs of Brisbane where they lead normal lives, or from the settlement at Cherbourg. I think that we should be particularly careful about allowing such displays. We in the department in Queensland will not raise any objection this year, but we intend in the future to object and not give our sanction when we are asked to allow our natives to give corroborees and other displays which are not now part of their way of life. I think that by allowing these displays we have sometimes permitted the press to depict the Australian aborigines to overseas people as still being in a very primitive state, whereas the majority, especially in the more closely settled States, are approaching very near to complete assimilation and complete citizenship.

We have said a good deal here about what we should do - about aboriginal customs and arts and what we should do to give a good impression overseas. But as I see it, actions speak louder than words, and all this talk that we have heard is only words. We shall produce a booklet and do something else in order to tell other people what we are doing. But we are still not taking full positive action. We are only giving lip service to the ideal. I may tie this up with what I said this morning about housing. As we were being entertained at luncheon, Mr. Chairman, I thought to myself, "Australia gives a lot of money every year to the Colombo Plan. Why do we do that? We say that it is to help the coloured people of South-East Asia and elsewhere." But there are millions of those people and the little bit of money that we can give them for propaganda purposes

will not go very far. We have in Australia a limited number of coloured people who need a lot of assistance, and even a proportion of the money given in aid of the Colombo Plan by way of a grant - I do not know how much it is - would do far more in public relations if it were devoted to our own coloured people in Australia in order to house them. This would do more for our public relations with coloured people elsewhere in the world. They would say, "There is tangible proof that the Australian people are doing something for their aboriginal natives". I tie this up with the statement that the Commonwealth should do something. It seems to me that you will not get much out of the Australian Loan Council by way of loan moneys, and there will be arguments. But you should do something by way of grant and provide money, even if it is only for propaganda purposes.

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That same amount of money would go much further in Australia with our limited number of natives than it would go overseas through the Colombo Plan. Then you could have T.V. cameras taking pictures of what we are doing, send them overseas for exhibition and so do much more worthwhile work in conjunction with what we are doing by our contribution to the Colombo Plan.

As I said this morning, the protective legislation of the States is often misinterpreted. For example, in Queensland we control the moneys of aboriginals. They run bank balances of something like £1,000,000 but their drawings are approximately what they deposit. We do that only because we feel that those who are still under protection need protection, and we want to ensure that they use the moneys they earn to the best effect.

We agree completely with the idea that the separate work of each State and Territory should be continued and special attention should be given to informing teachers and senior pupils. Perhaps each State could do some work on this through its Native Affairs Department and circulate the information to the other States. Probably in that way we could get something into the social studies syllabus in our schools.

I agree that in the event of any sensational or adverse publicity the matter should be counteracted through the right channels - at some central point - to correct any false impression that might have been given. I think I was speaking to you, Mr. Chairman, about the trouble they had in Western Australia following poisoning of the water, and I mentioned that the whole of the publicity given to that matter was originally confined to the eastern States whilst nothing was said in Western Australia where the incident took place. With proper liaison between the States in connection with propaganda and publicity such difficulties could be overcome.

I am not so happy about the booklet. I think you have to be very careful about who produces the booklet and what it

contains. Before any booklet is produced, if any of the work of the States is to be dealt with, I think the better course to adopt would be that the State director should be informed as to what it is intended to publish and a contribution sought, with perhaps an over-riding commentary by the Commonwealth Government. The television idea would be good if we had something to show. I have not seen the television film referred to but one person well known in television in Queensland took a film of what is being done at Palm Island, and Mr. O'Leary informs me that it is a good production. He managed to get it down to Canberra and it is available for viewing if anyone wishes to see it.

The suggestion as to teaching aids is a good one. The suggestion as to an Australia-wide tour of welfare establishments by groups of editorial writers is excellent. Whenever I go to our settlements or missions I take the same reporter from the "Courier-Mail". This chap has now become an authority so far as the "Courier-Mail" is concerned on native welfare in Queensland and we get a particularly good spin from that newspaper because he knows what is going on and is quite pleased about it. When anything controversial comes to the "Courier-Mail" they refer it to him and the Queensland newspapers very rarely contain anything that is detrimental to our work in connection with native affairs. I have been very happy to support a suggestion of the kind made in paragraph (d). I do not know about the tour overseas. I think that is a rather long shot and perhaps it is a matter more for the Commonwealth Government than for the States.

On the whole, we agree with the submissions but I stress again that you do far more by actions than words; and we could do more with the housing scheme. I can see no reason why grants should not be made in Australia for our coloured people. We would thus get far more propaganda of the right kind throughout the world.

Mr. PEARSON. - I agree substantially with the conclusions as placed before us. I agree also with what Dr. Noble has said about paragraphs (a), (b), (c), (d) and (e). I think there is a lot to be said for active assistance from the Commonwealth Government through the avenues which it has for publicity to get over something which is helpful to us. Unfortunately, because commendation is never news and criticism always is, neither our actions nor our words are fairly reported on occasions. Therefore, anything that we can do in that direction would be useful.

I welcome the suggestion that in overseas circles factual information should be circulated to Communist agencies and other responsible people. I remember very vividly and very bitterly the shocking misrepresentations made in connection with the Stuart case in South Australia. In spite of the libellous propaganda that was engaged in, when the Royal Commission's findings really elucidated the facts they were given scant attention in the public press. The press did not in any way attempt to state the true position either at home or abroad. The machinery outlined for an exchange of information between Commonwealth and State authorities would be an excellent tie up here. I have not much criticism to make of the proposals as set out.

I agree with what Dr. Noble says about the compilation of a booklet and I am sure it would be the intention of the authorities, through your department, Mr. Chairman, to check up with the States. I think there is a good deal to be said in favour of distribution to schools. These two things together, with the channeling of information and authentic publicity through Commonwealth channels both here and overseas, would be most helpful.

Mr. PERKINS. - I accept the opinions of other speakers. I accept the proposals down as far as the end of

paragraph (t). Paragraphs 7, 8 and 9 cause me very great misgivings. As I have said, the differences between State and State are great and it is entirely unrealistic to think that either one State or the Commonwealth can speak for the other party. Conditions vary so much that if you are to have a worthwhile booklet you must have one of your officers in each State for a considerable period to learn authoritatively what is going on or you will be liable to have misrepresentations. I think, too, that there could be a good deal of duplication. I am inclined to agree with Dr. Noble that actions speak much louder than words - that a worthwhile housing project would go a long way further towards correcting the impression which has got around in many people's minds that we are neglecting our aborigines. For that reason, I think that concentration on this other angle is more important.

So far as publicity is concerned, I do not know how much you can do with a booklet. I have not much faith in booklets. People who are not well disposed towards a particular cause take snippets out to suit themselves and you get gross misrepresentation. We had an unfortunate example in that respect when absolutely wrong statements were made about poisoning natives in the north-west. Dr. Christophers, who is a well-known Communist, and another chap called McLeod, who is a well-known Communist in the north-west of Western Australia, were responsible for that. We have had a lot of trouble in the north-west with McLeod for a long while. All this sort of malicious lying was published as the result of an innocent advertisement in one of the Agricultural Department's proclamations about the poisoning of kangaroos. I do not suggest that the proposed publication will contain anything of that nature, but if we are going to have a worthwhile publication it is inevitable that some sections will be taken out of their proper context in order to give an incorrect picture of what is happening as between State and State.

The only other point I want to mention in regard to publicity is that all States have their own organization for developing publicity. Maybe we have been falling down on the job in the past. In Western Australia, we are trying to correct the position. At present, the Visual Education Branch of the Education Department, which has excellent colour cameras and capable officers, is producing a colour film to cover the position as widely as possible. As a matter of fact, when Mr. Middleton and I go to Onslow next week to open the new native hostel, we are taking the photographer with us and he will take a big footage of film in the area. It seems to me unrealistic simply to put an officer on the job and expect him to produce something worthwhile out of very diverse conditions throughout Australia. I have considerable misgivings about what may be done as a result of recommendation No. 8. I am inclined to think that the States have a responsibility to do a good deal more. I think the people closely connected with the work are the only people who can really put the story over. Rather than spend a good deal of money from Commonwealth sources on this line, I would very much prefer to have it spent on something more concrete in the way that Dr. Noble suggests.

Mr. SMITH. - I think this action is acceptable as far as we are concerned, and I would not comment further.

Mr. HILLS. - Item 1 deals with public interest in Australia and overseas. I think we should all take heart from the fact there is much more public interest in Australia now than there was in the past. We in New South Wales are very happy about the fact that a considerable number of organizations have been formed to help the assimilation of aborigines. For example, there have been established in ten areas of the State organizations which have been set up for the purpose of improving assimilation in such places as Armidale, Coff's Harbour, Condobolin, Coonamble, Kempsey, Maclean, Moree, Tamworth and Griffith and where they are actively working to help the aborigines become part of the community. Similarly, organizations such as Lions, Rotary, Apex,

the Soroptomists and C.W.A. are really doing worthwhile work. For instance, Apex at Moree supplied the funds to build a swimming pool for aborigines at the station. Members of the Christian Youth Council came not only from parts of New South Wales but even from Victoria to work during their Christmas holidays constructing a home for an aborigine and his family at Kempsey. The year before a similar thing was done at Coff's Harbour. The materials and necessary funds were supplied by the Aborigines Welfare Board. We can see the active participation of these groups of people in promoting assimilation. We are very happy about the attitude of the general community.

On the question of overseas publicity, I think we will all readily appreciate that the best means of distributing overseas information is through Commonwealth agencies. If information could be supplied to the Commonwealth and to the State officers in their various fields, it should be made available generally as quickly as possible to prevent the uninformed discussions which arise from time to time. If the real facts were known, people would not go off the track. I am inclined to agree with the criticism in paragraph 8. In New South Wales, we produce our own monthly magazine, "Dawn", which has a wide distribution, being received by more than 4,000 people. Through the pages of this pamphlet, information is conveyed to the aborigines themselves, telling them of their rights in applying for exemption, and of health and hygiene matters and the advantages available to them if they only seek them. They are told that assistance is available to them from the Aborigines Welfare Board. By this means, we not only inform the community generally of what is being done but provide information for aborigines.

Mr. PORTER. - It is true that public interest in Australian natives is growing. This is becoming evident in many ways. Victorians are anxious to know what is going on in other States. One of our major difficulties is that most of the publicity that finds its way into the daily press is of an adverse nature. The remarks of the officers in paragraph 5 are most pertinent.

I believe that it would be of tremendous help to all of us if we were able readily and quickly to ascertain the true facts whenever some story appears in one of the newspapers, so that we can counter-act any adverse publicity. One of the problems is that a number of our interested or quasi-interested organizations sometimes have an axe to grind and quite deliberately misrepresent the facts. On occasions in Victoria, following action in another State or by the Commonwealth, we have been flooded with letters from people in Victoria who believe that that is the situation in our State. Not being aware of the true facts, we find it difficult to refute the suggestions. I do not mean that all voluntary organizations deliberately misrepresent the facts. With Mr. Hills, I find that a great deal of assistance comes to us from voluntary organizations. He has given specific instances of this help, and the organizations help equally in Victoria. But it will be our failures that will receive most publicity. For instance, if I was to place a family in a home in the middle of a community and the family proved to be a failure, that failure would hit the headlines throughout Australia. I think we can combat adverse publicity only if each State and the Commonwealth maintains the utmost vigilance.

The first conclusion of the Committee of Officers is I think fundamental. I believe that each of us can and should do something to ensure through our education authorities that at least the Social Studies syllabus, etc., is brought up to date and our young people made aware of what is happening. I have already covered the second point. I think it is most important that all of us should be in a position immediately to put the true facts before the public wherever there is any adverse publicity. Some misgivings have been expressed about paragraphs 7 and 8. I do not share those misgivings. I know that when you produced your last booklet you consulted the States and relied on the States to provide the information for the booklet. I would envisage a system of very close co-operation and consultation being maintained. If this is done, I do not see any danger at all in the recommendations contained in paragraphs 7 and 8.

MR. HASLUCK.- On this item, I probably see things from a slightly different angle to the rest of you. It is true that in relation to the Northern Territory I see matters relating only to criticism or achievement in the Northern Territory, in much the same way as you see matters relating to criticism or achievement in your respective States. But in addition to that, I have the opportunity of receiving a great deal of correspondence and representations from people who either do not think of the existence of separate States or, in the case of overseas people, are unaware of the existence of separate States. Within our own country we have people who think of Australia as a unit, and I suppose the vast majority of people overseas who express criticism or form views about aborigines think only of Australia. They do not think of Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania, Western Australia and South Australia; they think of Australia.

A great many of the reports or representations that are made come to my notice. In a State like Victoria where there are quite a number of active bodies campaigning on aborigine matters, I have the experience that quite apart from whatever representations they may make to Mr. Porter, they make the same or even stronger representations to me, wanting me to clean it up. Often the item to which they refer is something that happened in part of Australia other than the Northern Territory. We must be conscious of the fact that although the administration is divided amongst governments, it is broadly speaking in the eyes of a great number of Australians and in the eyes of nearly everyone overseas an Australian problem with no distinction made between the governments.

On this question of public relations, I think there are two entirely distinct tasks. One is the job of presenting our achievements. All of us know in our separate spheres that there is a considerable amount of work being done, and done successfully, in all parts of Australia. There is achievement in Australia, and neither in Australia nor overseas is that achievement, that

work, that effort, receiving any notice. So we in Australia have the job on our hands of telling both our own Australian people and those in the world outside, particularly in the world that is becoming keenly interested in colour, that we are tackling this problem and that we have achievement and an enlightened approach. Up to date we have made some very good colour films of the Northern Territory which create an extremely favourable impression. We have produced booklets which relate only to the Northern Territory. It is not enough for us to put those things out. All of us have to tell this story of achievement in a complete Australian setting and say, "It is not the achievement of the Northern Territory or of a State; it is the achievement of Australia". There is that positive side and I think both in Australia and overseas there is a very real need for us to present our achievement, because the organs of public opinion, by and large the press, radio and television, do not present that story. We must present it ourselves.

(Continued on page 67)

Part of the object of this proposal is that each State instrumentality should go ahead with the methods it is using at present, just as we will go ahead publicising what we are doing in the Northern Territory. But above that we must get together and present to the people of Australia, as well as to people overseas, a clear picture of what Australia is doing. If we decide to publish a booklet there would need to be the closest liaison with the States. The News and Information Bureau could do this work. It has been able to overcome difficulties with regard to State boundaries on other occasions. I do not think anybody suggests that the bureau presented a Canberra view of the wool industry when it produced a film on that industry. It could work in close collaboration with the States on the aboriginal problem. There is a great need to make our story a good one for the people of the world to read. We cannot rely solely on the ordinary channels of communication. We must get our story across to the world.

Another aspect of this problem relates to unfavourable stories. As a Federal Minister on occasions I have been criticised, both within Australia and abroad, for things over which I have had no control. For example, my friend from Queensland will be aware of the propaganda conducted by the Lockhart River Co-operatives. During the Stuart trial in South Australia I received a lot of correspondence. Then there was the case of the alleged poisoning of water in Western Australia. Long before that story came to the notice of the Western Australian Government, it had been publicised in the east. We must combine in some way to meet this distortion and misrepresentation, which affects all of us. Many stories are unfavourable to our administration in the Northern Territory. Other stories are unfavourable to administration elsewhere. All of those stories are the concern of all of us. One unfortunate aspect of these stories is that they are given prominence in Australian newspapers but little or no prominence is given to an official contradiction. I know that these matters have been raised in the United Nations General Assembly and

reliance has been placed on the fact that the story is circulated in an Australian newspaper. We must find a way to get the truth of these matters to our representatives overseas so that they will be fully aware of all the facts. Let me refer again to the alleged poisoning of water in Western Australia. That was a most distorted story. It was published in the eastern States before it ever came to the notice of the Western Australian Government. I think the people concerned with launching that story were careful to see that it was launched in a place where it could not be contradicted quickly. Only after a matter of weeks was it possible for the Western Australian Government to catch up with that story. I hope that as soon as any of us becomes aware of a matter such as that, affecting another State, we would bring it to the attention of that State. The State concerned could then supply us with all the facts. In my case those facts could be sent abroad so that such stories could be countered overseas.

MR. PERKINS.- I assume that if a booklet is published the author will get from each State an account of what those States regard as their most substantial achievements. We would tell a story not of what the Northern Territory has achieved but of what every government in Australia has achieved.

MR. HILLS.- We do not mind bringing all the facts of our dealings with the aborigines before the public. For instance, the New South Wales Government has had to give notice of eviction to an aboriginal who owes the Government £400 in rent. That man is a fisherman and is fully employed, but he owes the New South Wales Government £400 in rent which he will not pay.

MR. HASLUCK.- You will conduct your affairs in the way you wish but it would be an advantage to me if in due course you give me the facts as known to you. I could then send them abroad to our posts.

MR. PORTER.- It would also be a great advantage to the other States to know what is happening.

Mr. PERKINS. - I have some misgivings about this booklet. If we get close collaboration it may be satisfactory but I would not like to agree to something and then find that you have set up an organisation about which we have some reservations. Supposing you set up a film unit which decides to make a film. We will have little control over how that film is made and the Commonwealth could put a different interpretation on what we are trying to do in Western Australia compared with what we are aiming to do.

Dr. NOBLE. - Surely the States concerned would have the right to view any booklet or film before it was published.

Mr. HASLUCK. - That goes without saying. The States could refuse to permit the Commonwealth to take photographs of their reservations or housing schemes.

Mr. PERKINS. - I had an experience recently on television. The Australian Broadcasting Commission wanted to take films of the transitional housing scheme at Narrogin. I decided to go along to avoid any misunderstanding and we arranged for a balanced picture to be made, starting from the reserve and showing the transitional houses, the natives being taken into ordinary houses in the town and the work on the farms. But if we had not been consulted we may have had the experience of being told that something had been shown on television that reacted adversely to the Western Australian Government. We would never have been able to catch up with that. Some things could prove embarrassing if they came to the knowledge of certain left-wing elements.

(Continued on page 70.)

Mr. HASLUCK. - If it will make it any easier for you I will give an explicit undertaking that in any publication in the broad sense covering any printed matter or film any State Government will have the right to ask for the omission of any matter.

Mr. PERKINS. - That would cover it.

Dr. NOBLE. - I agree that the problem is one of world propaganda. We have to protect ourselves, because it is a national matter.

PROFESSOR ELKIN. - Does "taking the initiative" mean that the Commonwealth should carry out these projects? Does the word "initiative" worry anybody?

Mr. HASLUCK. - I do not know whether it does, or not. If the conference agreed to this and the States promised their co-operation I would take the responsibility of trying to obtain from the Commonwealth Treasurer a small sum per year to do this sort of work and hand it over to the News and Information Bureau. In one year they might decide, on the advice of the External Affairs people, as well as the State Governments, to produce a film and in another year they might decide on something else. If every State said "We think this year the approach should be the making of a film", the procedure I would require would be that they would then present the outline or theme of the film and that would be conveyed to our State Ministers for comment and if the general theme of the film was agreed upon I suppose that accompanying it there would be some sort of shooting plan and the Ministers concerned would say "We would like to include this particular thing in Western Australia, or that, in Queensland, Victoria or South Australia" and the shooting plan would also be sent to the States. If there was agreement with that the professional men would be clear about what film they were making. We would make it and produce a quantity of film material and before the final

editing there would be opportunity to look at the screening. Even in matters affecting my own territories I could then say "I do not like that sequence". We cut out a lot of one New Guinea film recently because there was too much nudity in it. After that had been done the professional men could get on to the final editing and produce the film. I think we have to allow the maker of the film some liberty to decide what he makes and reserve to ourselves the right of censorship to decide what he must omit; but we should not put ourselves in the position of saying that something has to go into the film.

MR. PERKINS. - You might ruin the news value.

MR. HASLUCK. - That is so. If we reserve to ourselves the right to say that such and such a thing shall be omitted on request our interests will be protected.

MR. PERKINS. - I am happy to give it a trial, but it is better to have this kind of discussion now rather than subsequently have complaints made about misrepresentation, or something of that sort. I am happy to give it a trial and I have no doubt that we will find ways and means of working it out.

DR. NOBLE. - Would it be a good idea for each State to give suggestions as to what might be of propaganda value for that State?

MR. HASLUCK. - That might be a useful consequence of this conference. Each State could put forward ideas as to what it needs.

MR. PORTER. - Yes, you could ask us for our ideas before publishing a booklet or anything of that sort.

MR. HASLUCK. - That is so. Can we agree on this subject to the stipulation that any government has the right to ensure the omission of any material to which it objects, and in the production of a booklet each State has the right to examine the references made to it?

MR. PERKINS. - Yes.

MR. PEARSON. - Although under your proposal the States would have the right to require the deletion of anything to which they objected, I am anxious to be assured that every State will get its fair share of the publicity, because otherwise some State might feel that although the whole film or publication portrayed matters that were commendable it did not get a fair mention. I want to ensure that everyone gets fair access to the publicity.

MR. HASLUCK. - I think that is fair enough.

MR. HILLS. - Is the Commonwealth Government going to provide the finance?

MR. HASLUCK. - I said that if this were approved I would approach the Treasurer about it. I will approach my own Government to obtain a sum for this work. I can give you an assurance that we will not be asking for a financial contribution from the States. The sort of contribution which might come from the States would be the loan of an officer or the provision of facilities, but no financial contribution.

DR. NOBLE. - I think we have got away from the item dealing with housing. Will you approach your colleagues in the Government to see whether a special grant along the lines of a Colombo Plan grant could be made for housing?

MR. HASLUCK. - I would not mix that up with public relations questions. My attitude regarding extra money for aboriginal housing was expressed this morning when we were dealing with item No. 1. I said that if such a proposal were put forward at a Loan Council meeting the Commonwealth Government would be receptive and would not obstruct it. It is essentially something which involves the relationship between the States as well as that between the States and the Commonwealth.

MR. PERKINS. - I understood that it was revenue money to which Dr. Noble referred. The argument about Loan Council allocations would not come into this.

MR. HASLUCK. - If "Loan Council" is not the right term the Premiers' Conference plus the Loan Council would be. The money made available to the States is granted in accordance with the formula agreed to by the States.

MR. PERKINS. - This could run into big money in regard to propaganda. If you can get money for that, why can you not get it for housing?

MR. HASLUCK. - I think the logic of it is that public relations, particularly in respect of external affairs, is a Commonwealth function. I think we can agree on this item, subject to the modifications suggested, before we adjourn for afternoon tea.

(Continued on page 74)

MR. HASLUCK.- The officers have amended the paper on item 1, and the draft is as follows:-

(a) Meaning of Policy

First three paragraphs as printed.

Fourth paragraph.- "In effect then, a person placed under the provision of State and Territorial Native Welfare Acts has certain restrictions placed on him in some States but that does not in any way take his Australian citizenship away from him, although it may limit for the time being his exercise of some of the rights enjoyed by other citizens and may afford him assistance not given to other citizens."

(b) Methods of Advancing the Policy

Paragraphs (i) to (ix) as printed.

(x) "Positive steps to ensure awareness in the community that implementation of the policy of assimilation is not possible unless advanced aborigines and part aborigines are received into the community and accepted without prejudice, and to ensure, as far as possible, that the community plays its full part."

(xi) As printed.

Additional paragraph.- "It is recognised that some of these methods may not be applicable in every State of the Commonwealth and that methods may vary from State to State."

(c) Progress made

As printed - Statement from Western Australia to be included when available.

(d) Further measures required to be taken either severally or in co-operation to advance the policy.

The Conference agreed that apart from measures covered by other items on the agenda, particular attention needs to be given to the following:-

(i) Housing

Notwithstanding the considerable progress that has been made, shortage of sufficient houses for aborigines and part aborigines ready to accept employment opportunities which would enable them to take their place in the community is a major factor militating against assimilation. Special attention needs to be given to increasing facilities and resources in order to meet this central problem.

(ii) Transitional Housing

As printed.

(iii) Supervision by Welfare Staff

In all phases of assimilation welfare workers must be available to assist the people in making the necessary adjustments. Personal contact and guidance must be continually available to each individual and family. In some States an increase in the number of welfare workers is necessary.

(iv) Welfare Work

Aborigines who are deemed fit to take their place in the community must be provided with the opportunity by way of employment placement and housing to leave the stultifying security of settlements and reserves. They need to be encouraged to take advantage of these opportunities and stimulated to a greater degree of self-reliance. Welfare policy should be more strongly directed towards creating an interest in the new way of life.

- (v) A major instrument of assimilation is education of aboriginal children. Educational opportunities must be widely available to them and each should be assisted and encouraged to undertake the training for which his capabilities best suit him. There has been a marked increase in the extent and range of facilities available and this trend should be continued. At this stage particular attention could be given to the extension of pre-school training as an essential basis for further educational advancement.

The conference agreed that the draft be verbally amended as follows:-

(d) Further measures required to be taken either severally or in co-operation to advance the policy.

Paragraph (i).- Insert the word "general" in place of the word "central" in the last line.

Paragraph (iv).- In the first sentence, omit the words "leave the stultifying security of settlements and reserves" and insert the words "do so".

Paragraph (v).- Omit the second sentence.

MR. HASLUCK.- There might be some value, in getting the best public relations results from this conference, in putting out a press release for to-morrow morning's papers giving some tangible result of the conference. If we do that, we shall probably get better space than if we give a very long statement at the end of the conference. I suggest that we release as a

statement those parts of the recommendations on item 1 under the following headings:-

- (a) Meaning of Policy
- (b) Methods of Advancing the Policy
- (d) Further measures required to be taken either severally or in co-operation to advance the policy

I suggest that we leave out the reports on progress ~~made~~, because they at present are incomplete. I do not think that there is anything in these recommendations that could not be published immediately, and I take it that we all are agreed on this being released as a press statement at 5 p.m. to-day.

Item 3.

TESTS APPLIED IN VARIOUS STATES
OR TERRITORIES UNDER PROTECTIVE
LEGISLATION.

The tests applied in various States or Territories in deciding whether or not a person comes under special protective or restrictive legislation.

Under this heading consideration might also be given to -

- (a) The various definitions of "native", "aboriginal" or "ward".
- (b) The status of persons of mixed race.

MR. SWIFT.- I read the report of the Committee of Officers, which is as follows:-

A summary of the tests applied in the States and the Northern Territory is as follows:

	<u>Test</u>	<u>Exemption</u>
<u>W.A.</u>	"Native". All full blood descendants of original inhabitants of Australia, and all other persons descended from these except a quadroon or person of less than quadroon blood.	(1) Ex-servicemen, (2) Ministerial certificate, subject to appeal to Magistrate, if in Minister's opinion native ought not to be subject to Act.
<u>Queensland</u>	"Aboriginal". Aboriginal of Australia, person who has preponderance of aboriginal blood, half blood declared by the Court, half blood habitually associating with aboriginals, residents of reserves and children living on reserve with aboriginal mother.	Director of Native Affairs if in his opinion person ought no longer to be subject to Act. May be conditional on money and property continuing to be held in trust until determined by the Director.

	<u>Test</u>	<u>Exemption</u>
<u>New South Wales</u>	"Aborigine". Any full blood or half caste aboriginal who is a native of Australia and temporarily or permanently resident in New South Wales. For supply of liquor and transfer to reserve - an aborigine apparently having an admixture of aboriginal blood.	Aborigines Welfare Board, on application, if Board is of the opinion that aborigine or person apparently having admixture of aboriginal blood ought no longer to be subject to Act.
<u>South Australia</u>	"Aborigine". Full blood, or less than full blood descendant of the original inhabitants of Australia; but descendants of persons who have been exempted born after the exemption are not included. Liquor prohibition - Aboriginal native of Australia or half caste of that race.	Aborigines Protection Board if of the opinion that aborigine by reason of character and standard of intelligence and development should be exempted from Act. May be conditional for three years; is then automatically unconditional. Unconditional exemptions.
<u>Victoria and Tasmania</u>	No protective or restrictive legislation.	
<u>Northern Territory</u>	"Ward". Persons declared wards by Administrator-in-Council if by reason of manner of living, inability without assistance adequately to manage own affairs, standard of social habit and behavior, and personal associations, stands in need of special care or assistance provided by Ordinance. Person entitled to vote cannot be declared ward unless he requests it.	Declaration of ward may be revoked by Administrator-in-Council or Wards' Appeal Tribunal.

2. The application of these different tests produces many differences of status, e.g. -

- (a) In South Australia any person who has any aboriginal ancestry is included unless he is exempted or a parent was before his birth, but only full blood aborigines and half castes are prohibited from drinking.
- (b) In New South Wales the same applies in relation to the only remaining restriction, supply of liquor.
- (c) In Western Australia, a quadroon or person of less than quadroon blood is excluded.
- (d) In Queensland only persons having more than half aboriginal blood are automatically included. In practice, though not in law, children born to parents who have been exempted are regarded as outside the provisions of the Act.

(e) In the Northern Territory, persons brought under the provisions are named individually.

3. Approximate figures for aborigines and part aborigines in the various States (excluding Western Australia) are -

	<u>Ø Under special legislation</u>	<u>Others</u>	<u>Total</u>
N.S.W.	12,000	-	12,000
Vic.	-	2,200	2,200
Qld.	18,200	20,800	39,000
S.A.	6,000	Unknown	Unknown
N.T.	17,000	2,500	19,500
Tas.	-	150	150

Ø See table in paper on agenda item 4.

4. The discussion of these differences revealed a fundamental difference of approach.

5. The approach in the Northern Territory and in Queensland, which is considering amending its provisions to provide mainly that only persons on settlements and missions will be under control, is that people should be removed from protective legislation and from special aboriginal welfare measures at an earlier stage in their advancement than is the case in South Australia. In South Australia the approach is that the general welfare agencies would not in practice provide adequate assistance to people at this stage of advancement. Because public opinion regards any person of aboriginal descent as a special responsibility of the Government, so that actions on his part or his circumstances attract public notice and criticism when similar actions and circumstances on the part of a white person pass unnoticed or attract far less criticism, it has been felt that special supervision and a special welfare agency are needed.

6. Reference to the table included in the paper on Item 4 **shows that the legislation in South Australia** is much less restrictive in its effect on the capacity of the individual brought under it than is the Queensland or Northern Territory legislation.

7. The broad approach of South Australia is somewhat analogous to that in Victoria, which, though it has no restrictive legislation, set up only in 1957 a special welfare agency for aboriginal welfare. The Victorian constituting Act, as in the case of New South Wales, gives the agency authority to assist any person having any aboriginal ancestry.

8. The committee was divided in opinion on whether the existence of a special welfare agency for aboriginal welfare tended to hinder assimilation. New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia think not, being of the opinion that helping part aboriginal people to adjust completely to normal living in the community is a long, slow job, for which a special agency is essential at this stage.

9. It appeared to the committee that while these divergent approaches persist there is little prospect of a uniform approach on the definitions applied in the various States and the Northern Territory.

Mr. PEARSON. - Taking paragraph 2 as my text, an examination of the provisions of the various States shows that, by and large, four States are in general agreement. The Northern Territory has a rather different approach. As I see it, it is extremely difficult for any State to alter its legislation in connection with these matters. Quite frankly, in South Australia we have disparity in definitions in two different acts. Cabinet's approach is not to bring controversial acts into the House unless it is absolutely necessary to do so. We are quite strong in our desire to retain the provisions we have for the assistance of aborigines, and when you take a bill into the House you are not sure about what you are going to get out of it. Seeing that the South Australian provisions restrict aborigines only in connection with alcohol, where they are not exempted, we do not feel that there is any real need to bring legislation into our House. I would not be prepared to recommend that my Government do so. I know it does create some difficulties but I am afraid that, things being as they are, the position as outlined in paragraph 9 is about as far as we can go. Much as I regret the fact that we cannot get uniformity on the matter, I am afraid we will have to accept it.

Mr. PERKINS. - I thought that this was just a statement of the factual position in each State. It contains no recommendations. We do not have to justify it here unless it conflicts in any way with something else that has been carried out. The basic thing we are all working on is assimilation, and naturally, because of the differences between States, there will be differences of opinion as to how that is to be achieved. Western Australia is mentioned only in one part. Some of the acts are difficult to follow and certain portions are not used because other portions cover the particular position. Ministerial exemption is not used in Western Australia except in very rare circumstances. The certificate of citizenship is the method of

approach now. For the benefit of the conference, I point out that a court is constituted for the purpose. It consists of the Magistrate, and the Chairman of the local authority who is presumed to know something of the background of the applicant. A native who desires full citizenship makes application and the matter is decided by an independent body. The Minister has nothing to do with it at all. Our officers may oppose the application if there are grounds for doing so, but I do not know of any case in which that has been done. If a native gets to the stage where he would like full citizenship it is almost a certainty that he will get it. It is clear to many of us here today that he gains certain advantages by staying under the Native Welfare Act.

Mr. HASLUCK. - Is there a statutory provision in regard to certificates of citizenship?

Mr. PERKINS. - Yes. It is provided for in a State Act. It is more a domestic matter, and I would not be so presumptuous as to suggest to any other State that our method is the better. I repeat that I only take this as a factual statement of the position so far as the other points are concerned.

Mr. HASLUCK. - Western Australia will help to fill out that table on population?

Mr. PERKINS. - We will do that. We will give you all the required information.

Mr. ROBERTON. - Could you give us a round figure as to population from memory?

Mr. PERKINS. - There are approximately 2,000 nomads, approximately 8,000 odd of what we call full-blooded aboriginals, and just over 8,000 people of mixed blood.

Mr. SMITH. - Tasmania has no restrictive legislation, so this item does not really apply to us.

Mr. HILLS. - Our act is in effect a welfare act. As our officer said, our only restriction is that relating to liquor, which will be dealt with at a later stage of the proceedings.

Mr. PORTER. - Most of this does not apply to Victoria. We have no restrictions whatever, not even in regard to liquor. Our act is a welfare act and that is where Victoria must agree to disagree with some other States and perhaps with the Northern Territory. We believe that there is a need to make provision to assist these people to take their proper place in the community and we can only do that through a welfare board.

Dr. NOBLE. - This is more a statement of fact. In Queensland, there are 18,200 not exempt under legislation and there are 20,000 living in the community as free citizens and enjoying all the rights of citizens. In Torres Strait, there are 6,000 and in the Queensland jurisdiction we have about 45,000 coloured people we have to look after. I did mention earlier today that instead of calling them aboriginals, they are going to become wards of the State.

Mr. PERKINS. - I would like to clarify one point. We have many who are clear of the act, just as Queensland has, but we have no figures in relation to them. Once they are clear of the act, we have no knowledge of them. They are just the same as any other person in the community and there is no machinery for determining how many there are. We could not even make a guess.

Dr. NOBLE. - The Government Statistician would have those figures because a tax reimbursement is involved. You get a reimbursement for those completely out of the act, but in Queensland we do not get a penny for those under the act.

Mr. HASLUCK. - It is a point of some propoganda value that there are so many coloured people of aboriginal descent already living unnoticed in the community. I suppose in every one of our Territories there are thousands of them.

Mr. PERKINS. - We have never made an attempt to find out and I do not see what machinery we would have to find out how many there were.

Mr. ROBERTON. - Dr. Noble, how do you know that you have 39,000?

Dr. NOBLE. - We know the number under the act. We know of those not under the Act from the Commonwealth Statistician in Queensland. During a census and that type of thing, they have to state their descent. He has the number of those outside the act and we know the number for the Torres Strait.

Mr. ROBERTON. - Would not the same source of information be available to others?

Dr. NOBLE. - The Commonwealth Statistician has it in Brisbane, I take it the information would be available in other capital cities.

Mr. HASLUCK. - One of the census tables in the demography bulletin deals with racial origin.

Mr. PEARSON. - That would not be factual because it depends on the answer that is given. A person may choose to say, "I am more white than black" and give his descent as British.

Mr. PERKINS. - Several of our prominent footballers are natives. No one thinks of them as natives. They do not show very much of the native characteristics, and how many more of that type there are I would not know.

Mr. HASLUCK. - Of personal knowledge, I can name literally scores of people in Western Australia living in the ordinary community who may have had a great-grandmother or great-grandfather who was aboriginal. They may not know it themselves.

On this item, it seems to me that it will probably be sufficient to record that we have noted the information. I do not think we could go beyond that unless any Minister wants to make a suggestion that we not only note it but decide to examine it with our own Governments. I think noted would be sufficient.

Item 4 PERSONS MOVING INTERSTATE -- AMENDMENTS OF LEGISLATION OR ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICES.

Amendments of existing legislation or administrative practices that may be required to ensure that a person freed from restrictions in one part of Australia does not become subject to restrictions when he or she moves to another part of Australia.

Under this item consideration might also be given to -

- (a) The varying legal status and capacity of persons who are under protective legislation in one part of Australia but not in another. (This extends to questions such as capacity in respect of property, marriage, freedom of movement and employment. It may also affect the position of the native person who commits an offence.)
- (b) Problems of control of protected natives in border areas.

MR. SWIFT.- The report of the Committee of Officers is as follows:-

A consequence of the varying definitions applied in the States and the Northern Territory for deciding whether a person should be subject to protective legislation is that a person who is outside the definition in one jurisdiction but who moves into another jurisdiction in which he comes within the definition, may come, upon his movement, under protective legislation unless he is exempted in his new place of residence although there has been no change in his personal capacity or condition.

2. Furthermore, a person who comes within the definition in both jurisdictions may nevertheless be subject to different conditions when he passes from one jurisdiction to another. The following table shows the differences in status and capacity arising from protective legislation in the States and the Northern Territory -

	<u>N.T.</u>	<u>Qld.</u>	<u>S.A.</u>	<u>N.S.W.</u>	<u>Vic.</u>
Property Control	X	X	+	-	-
Consent to Marry	X	X	-	-	-
Restriction on Movement	X	X	X	-	-
Special Employment Conditions	X	X	-	-	-
Liquor	X	X	X	X	-
Cohabitation	X	X	X	-	-
Franchise	X	X	-	-	-
Defence in Court	X	X	-	-	-

X - Restricted

+ - With consent or with order of Magistrate

(Tasmania has no legislation relating specially to aborigines.)

3. There is no problem in relation to persons moving into the Northern Territory because a person not subject to control in his own State comes under control in the Northern Territory only if he is declared a ward.

4. The effect of differing application of protective legislation has created the following anomalies:

- (a) A full blood or in some cases a part aborigine not a ward in the Northern Territory would become subject to restrictive legislation upon movement to any other State except Victoria or Tasmania.
- (b) Similarly an aborigine or part aborigine exempted in one State would come under restrictive legislation if he moved to another State and was within the definition applied in that State.
- (c) Children from the Northern Territory who are not wards and who have been placed with foster parents or in institutions in South Australia for special schooling become subject to control on entering South Australia notwithstanding their status in the Territory. Even though the parents of the children or the Director of Welfare, Northern Territory, arranges foster homes for them without notifying the Aborigines' Protection Board of their residence in South Australia these children become according to South Australian law wards of the Protector of Aborigines. Should these children become the object of criticism or if difficulties arise in relation to their living conditions the Protector can be subjected to criticism for events of which he has no knowledge. At present he cannot disclaim any responsibility.

(d) With respect to the consumption of liquor, a person who is not subject to special legislation in the Northern Territory would at present be restricted in this regard on movement to States other than Victoria and Tasmania unless he applied for and was granted an exemption certificate. In Queensland an exemption certificate does not carry the right for a full blood to drink liquor.

5. Officers agreed that the easiest way to prevent these anomalies would be for the States to introduce in their laws provisions having the effect of suspending the operation of certain of their laws against visiting aborigines or part aborigines freed from restrictions in their home State or Territory.

6. It was noted that some initial difficulty may be experienced. If reciprocity is granted it may be found that some administrative arrangements will have to be made to permit a speedy means of communication between States and/or the Northern Territory to confirm or identify a person from another State who claims to be not subject to protective legislation. It is also possible that there will be some initial adverse publicity should an aborigine or part aborigine from one State or the Territory break the laws of another State.

7. Difficulties associated with border towns will only be avoided if there is effective liaison between departmental officers on either side because there is in practice no restriction on inter-state movement.

8. During discussions officers instanced differing minimum wage provisions in respect of drovers and stockmen employed in the Northern Territory and in Queensland. In Queensland a minimum of £8. 10s. per week must be paid and the employee must in turn make certain payments to welfare funds etc. The minimum wage in the Northern Territory is lower than in Queensland and at present there is no requirement that the employee must contribute to welfare funds. Similarly in respect of compensation the compensation payments in Queensland are based on the higher minimum wage. It was agreed that effective action at departmental level needs to be taken to ensure that drovers and stockmen moving inter-state are paid the appropriate State wage once they have crossed the border and that their conditions of employment meet that State's requirements. Similarly with compensation it was agreed that employers should be required to meet the compensation law applying in the State.

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Mr. PERKINS. - This is a very complex problem. The main problems so far as Western Australia is concerned would be movement between Western Australia and the Northern Territory and would relate almost completely to consumption of liquor. The only restrictions that we apply relate to consumption of liquor, cohabitation and franchise. There is no restriction on movement except where matters of health are concerned, such as where leprosy may be prevalent.

The liquor problem is a difficult one. In Western Australia a very big percentage of our troubles stem from the fact that the native population has been able to obtain liquor, particularly in camps. Where they drink in hotels no great harm is done but unfortunately there are always unscrupulous licensed retailers of liquor who are prepared to sell any number of bottles to aborigines, who take the liquor back to their camps and people other than those having a right to consume liquor get hold of it. We have had some very unfortunate happenings in Western Australia. Some of you will remember the case at Meekatharra which caused a lot of trouble. I think this is a matter in which the various administrations should get together to work out an answer. I emphasise that the liquor question is an important one.

I do not think that the restriction of the franchise is very important. Unfortunately many natives who have citizenship rights are not anxious to exercise those rights. Once an aboriginal arrives at the stage where he is anxious to vote there would be no difficulty in granting him citizenship rights in Western Australia.

Mr. SMITH. - This is yet another item that does not affect Tasmania except perhaps insofar as a resident of Tasmania may go to another State where there is a restriction, but that is very unlikely.

Mr. HILLS. - The liquor problem is a very big one. New South Wales has very good arrangements with, for example, Queensland, and expeditious arrangements can be made for the issue of New South Wales certificates of exemption to those aborigines

exempted in another State. The greatest problem is met in those States where there is no control over the consumption of liquor by aborigines. I cannot anticipate what the New South Wales Government will do in the future, but as the law now stands, if an aborigine came from Victoria, obviously he would have to apply to the Board for exemption and his case would have to be fully investigated as though he were a New South Wales aborigine.

Mr. PORTER. - This item does not concern us greatly because we have no restrictions. Some reference is made to the problem that arises in South Australia when children from the Northern Territory, who are not wards, are placed with foster parents in South Australia. I think a similar problem arises in other States. We have had examples of children from other States and from the Northern Territory who have been placed with foster parents in Victoria. The community regards those children as aborigines and if any difficulties arise the Government is expected to take action. The general practice of foster parents who are prepared to take children is to insist on baby girls. This creates a further problem. Some thought should be given to trying to maintain some equality of the sexes. In Victoria we have seen examples of girls being adopted and reaching the university stage. They may work in the nursing profession or elsewhere but when they become old enough to marry they cannot find a male of their own race who is prepared to marry them and they drift back to the river banks. That is regrettable. I do not know how we can overcome that problem, but it is a problem associated with the placing of aboriginal children in foster homes.

Dr. NOBLE. - In Queensland we have about 20,000 aborigines who are completely free citizens, except full-bloods. Our desire is to have all our aborigines become full citizens and the only reason why some of them are not exempt is the fact that we do not consider that they are able to conduct their own affairs. We still need to look after their money matters and their rights in respect of property. They need protection.

While they still come within the ambit of the act I think they should be regarded as wards of the State. We will endeavour to make all aborigines full citizens as soon as possible. The only ones that we will take back under the act are those committed by a court. As far as movement between the States is concerned, at present full-bloods come under the act when they come into Queensland. Our desire is to take no more under the act. When an aboriginal comes from the Northern Territory, as far as we are concerned he is a free citizen. Once the aborigines become free citizens we will forget their colour and treat them as white citizens. Provided they are Queensland citizens, we will not bring any coloured person in Queensland under the act unless we are forced to do so.

Mr. PEARSON. - The first snag in relation to this matter is that a person who is obviously an aboriginal by appearance is an aboriginal no matter what we do about him. If a person gets into trouble and has aboriginal blood in him, as far as the public is concerned he is an aboriginal.

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That creates the problem that if these people come into South Australia and get into trouble the Protector of Aborigines is blamed for the trouble and for not taking care of them. Reciprocity is recognized in the State legislation on all other matters. If the age limit for obtaining a driving licence in one State is perhaps 16 years or 17 years, that licence is good in any State and I think we should apply that principle in this case, We cannot do it in South Australia without legislation, but, as Dr. Noble says, it is for Cabinet to decide. I am prepared to discuss it with my Cabinet. If reciprocity were arranged it would remove that problem which now exists. The difficulty in administration is that some of the States and the Northern Territory do not issue exemption certificates and therefore the person concerned, on coming into South Australia, has nothing to show that he is a free citizen. I do not know how that can be overcome but if it were possible it would assist me in going to my Cabinet and asking for reciprocity to be arranged. If these people could identify themselves as citizens or bona fide residents of the Northern Territory, Victoria or some other State, the matter would be fairly easy for the administration. I think that matter should be canvassed between my department and yours, Mr. Chairman, and to a lesser extent between Victoria and Tasmania. I am prepared at this stage to agree that reciprocity is a principle which we should endeavour to achieve in State relationships if the machinery can be worked out. Could I request that, for the time being, at least, whenever you send children to my State for adoption you notify my Protector of the fact and do not take our welfare officers to look after them?

Mr. ARCHER. - I can give you that assurance.

Mr. HASLUCK. - The Administrator of the Northern Territory can give you that assurance and will notify you of any transfers. I think this problem is more complicated than it has been made out to be and I believe it will be of increasing

importance. Earlier to-day there was raised the question of aborigines who have been educated and perhaps trained for employment in a place such as the Northern Territory, only to find that employment is not available. Inevitably, in such instances, they will go elsewhere in Australia to get employment and will go without any restriction on their movements. Such a person might be trained and competent in his trade yet there may be only half a dozen jobs of that kind in the Northern Territory and he may have to go to South Australia, New South Wales or some other State to practise his trade. That would be regarded as part of the general progress of the policy of assimilation, but his own personal comfort and the satisfaction he gets out of being able to earn his living will be considerably diminished if, having made that transfer, he finds himself the object of care, attention, control and restriction to which he has not previously been subject. On the obverse side I suggest that already, in a State like Victoria, you find people who are free to move being attracted to a State which has no restrictions. On a detailed study, I think one would find that the aboriginal population in Victoria is growing as the result of immigration from other parts of Australia. So long as there are these differences between different parts of Australia in regard to freedom from restriction we will continue to get complex and difficult situations and I think the only approach is to regard them as individual cases. I think the number of such cases will be small enough. Any number below a few hundred is small enough for them to be treated as individual cases.

If we can establish some understanding between the different administrations and some means of ready recourse from one administration to another, so that we can sort these out as individual cases, we might be able to overcome the difficulty. Difficulty arises when a native on one side of a State border cannot drink while, by going across the border, he can. Such things might create a problem for the local police but I do

not think they need engage our attention.

MR. PORTER. - The position is highlighted on the border of Victoria and New South Wales, where natives reside in one State, work in another and drink in both.

MR. HASLUCK. - Perhaps we could reach some sort of understanding along the lines of paragraph (v) and agree that the Ministers whose States are affected will examine the position further in consultation with their own Governments. That is what you call reciprocity.

MR. PEARSON. - Yes.

MR. HILLS. - Can it not be done administratively, without amending the law?

MR. HASLUCK. - In some States it would be necessary to amend or wink at the law.

MR. PERKINS. - It is an important point. I have no doubt that in some States there will be sophisticated natives who, if they came to Western Australia, would be restricted. The problem is what test should be applied. Our main difficulty will be in the north but I do not think there are any problems further down. The type of native who would bother to travel from South Australia to Western Australia would be fairly sophisticated, but there is a difficulty with regard to the Northern Territory. I understand that in the Northern Territory there are many natives that have not been caught up with. They were all declared free citizens but then you made a lot of them, whom you did not think fit to take full responsibility, wards. There must be some that you have not been able to identify.

MR. HASLUCK. - There would be very few - only in the desert areas.

MR. GEISE. - There are 1,900 people whose names do not appear on the register of wards and who have been born since May, 1947, when the census was taken, or who were in transit between various places when the census of aborigines in the

Northern Territory was undertaken. There has been some trouble in having those persons gazetted as wards but I do not think there will be any real difficulty. Apart from two areas in the Northern Territory, one west of Lake Mackay and one in the Caledon-Blue Mud Bay area, practically every aborigine in the Northern Territory is known by name and can be identified. That does not apply in the Pitjendjara area where you get a fairly strong movement between the mission at Mt. Warburton and Ernabella and Areyonga. However, section 15 of the Welfare Ordinance covers that because any person under the jurisdiction of a State act, who moves interstate, is deemed to be a ward.

Mr. PERKINS. - From a practical point of view there is quite an area between Western Australia, South Australia and the Northern Territory and I do not think you know who is there. We do not know and I think we have done more about policing that area than the other States have. You have raised complaints with Mr. Pearson about our natives breaking into the Blackstone Ranges.

Mr. PEARSON. - We know them well enough to know who they are.

Mr. PERKINS. - Then I wish you had told us, because we had to send police there and they did not catch up with them. However, I do not know that it is of major moment, from a practical point of view. With goodwill on both sides I think we will find a way to work it out.

Mr. HASLUCK. - My immediate concern is with the well-conducted individual who manages his own affairs and who may move to permanent and settled residence in another part of Australia. We want to make sure that, by that movement, he does not lose privileges or liberties that he enjoyed somewhere else.

Mr. PORTER. - If Pastor Nicholls of Victoria was given the responsibility of a church in Perth and had to suffer the restrictions of the Western Australian act I do not

think anybody would like it.

MR. HASLUCK. - That is the kind of situation I had in mind.

MR. ARCHER. - The problem is wider than that. It is not only the full blood who is involved. We have about 2,500 part coloured people who have full citizenship rights and privileges and there is an increasing tendency for them to move interstate. I know of several cases where they have gone interstate for employment. A number of them are marrying servicemen at present stationed at Darwin. The real problem at the moment is the effect on those people of State laws which automatically impose certain restrictions on them which can only be removed by possession of an exemption certificate.

MR. PERKINS. - In our case they would have to get a certificate of citizenship. To do that they have to go before a court as it cannot be granted by the Minister.

MR. HASLUCK. - Our argument is that hitherto these people have enjoyed full rights and it would be ignominious for them to have to apply for a status that they already enjoy.

MR. PERKINS. - I see the difficulty and I agree that we will have to do something about it. We will have to confer on this question.

MR. PORTER. - We must agree to examine the question.

MR. PEARSON.- An aboriginal of good repute in the Northern Territory could come to South Australia. If he notified his welfare officer or the appropriate authority in the Territory that he was coming to South Australia, and if he was a person of good repute, we would grant him an exemption certificate.

MR. HASLUCK.- There are two things to consider. First, he is free to move without getting any permission from us and without our having any knowledge of his movements. He can buy a ticket and just go. The second thing is that he would consider it an outrage against himself if he was required to get an exemption certificate.

MR. PEARSON.- Whatever he says or does, he is in trouble when he gets to South Australia. By virtue of our law, all that he has to do is to go along to the Northern Territory authorities and say, "I am going to South Australia." If he is not prepared to do that, it is difficult for us to help him.

MR. HASLUCK.- Our approach was to try to get an amendment of State law, if an amendment were necessary, to provide, in effect, that if a person enjoys full citizenship in some part of Australia, he does not come under restrictive legislation in another part.

MR. PEARSON.- The difficulty occurs when he goes to South Australia and is asked, "Have you an exemption?" He says, "No, I have nothing".

MR. PERKINS.- He could have it.

MR. PEARSON.- No. It would be a defence for him, being accused of drinking liquor illegally, to show that he was a bona fide resident of the Northern Territory. I think the method that I have suggested is better than that. We do not want to drag him to court.

MR. HASLUCK.- That would provide a first-class news item.

MR. PEARSON. - Exactly.

MR. PERKINS.- If he went from the Northern Territory to South Australia, he would not have an exemption. This is a matter that I think merits consideration by the officers of the States concerned.

MR. HASLUCK.- Do I understand that at this stage Ministers are not quite ready to agree to paragraph 5?

DR. NOBLE.- If I can get this through Cabinet, we in Queensland shall not worry who comes in.

MR. HASLUCK.- I take it that if all Ministers are not prepared to agree to paragraph 5, at least they recognize the problem and are prepared to discuss it with their respective governments. I take it, also, that we can record the fact that this item has been noted ^{and} /make particular reference to paragraph 5. That will leave the matter to be taken up by Ministers with their own governments in the States where the problem occurs.

In conclusion, with respect to this item, may I say that I am quite sure that with the process of assimilation, this will be one of our growing problems and a cause of frequent exasperation to the advanced aboriginal people. It will continue to be so until such time as we get complete freedom from restriction throughout Australia. As these people advance more and more, this will become more and more of an exasperation to individuals.

MR. PERKINS.- The trouble is that the position varies in different States. In some States like Victoria, where all the aborigines have come up to a reasonable level, there is not much of a problem, but we in Western Australia have all categories. We have men in our department like Winder, who is a patrol officer, and they are very efficient. We have girls who have qualified and graduated as teachers. I should not like to think that they would be embarrassed in another State. On the other hand, we cannot ask another State to accept them unless we are prepared to do the same for people from that other State. For a long time to come, we are going to have some very primitive types just graduating from the

nomad stage; so it will not be easy. But I agree that we have to do something about it and that this problem will become very embarrassing.

MR. HASLUCK.- One can see the problem that arises where a sufficiently distinguished aboriginal is concerned. Doug Nicholls has been mentioned. We need only to have somebody refuse to give an exemption to him, to Harold Blair or to somebody else who is in the public eye.

MR. HILLS.- Where does Harold Blair live?

MR. HASLUCK.- Originally Queensland, and now Victoria. If people like that became involved in an incident in another State, the publicity would be the worst that we could get.

MR. PORTER.- At one time, we had Harold Blair as a member of our board in Victoria.

DR. NOBLE.- He was never controlled in Queensland.

Item 5.

SOCIAL SERVICE PAYMENTS.

The use and control of Social Service payments particularly for those aboriginal pensioners and beneficiaries residing on -

- (a) settlements and reserves;
- (b) missions; and
- (c) contiguous to areas where settled employment has been available.

MR. SWIFT.- The report of the Committee of Officers is as follows:-

PENSIONS AND MATERNITY ALLOWANCES

1. All aborigines, other than those who are nomadic or primitive, may now qualify for age, invalid and widows pensions and maternity allowances on the same basis as other members of the community. Aborigines other than the nomadic have always been eligible for child endowment and unemployment and sickness benefits.
2. Wherever possible payments are made direct to the individual concerned, although where the pensioner asks, or the Department of Social Services deems it desirable, the whole or part of the pension may be paid to some other person or Authority on behalf of the pensioner. Where aborigines are being cared for in a controlled community, e.g. Church Missions, Government settlements or large pastoral properties, payment is made as to residents of benevolent homes, i.e., part of the pension is payable to

(c) Queensland

Queensland is not experiencing any particular difficulty with the payment of social service benefits in general. Aged aboriginal pensioners are treated in the same way as white people in Eventide Homes, where a portion is paid to the pensioner, and the State retains the balance for maintenance purposes. A similar procedure is followed by the Missions, but the Government has access to the Missions' books.

Child endowment is paid to the institutions but as a general rule the money goes direct to the mother.

Queensland feels that the Commonwealth should agree to the payment of unemployment benefits to Torres Strait Islanders engaged in the pearling industry. These people live up to 100 miles from Thursday Island where they are employed, and during the off season they cannot report each week to register for unemployment benefits.

(d) South Australia

South Australia is facing a number of problems in the payment of social service benefits to aborigines on missions and on pastoral properties.

(i) Missions

Benefits are paid direct to the Missions, who believe that they are not required to account for the money or answer to any follow-up from the Department of Social Services or the State Government. Because the State issues rations in bulk for the whole settlement it still issues rations for the pensioners at some missions. This means that the State is still maintaining the aborigines although the missions are receiving social service benefits on their behalf.

(ii) Pastoral Properties

The pastoralists are also under the impression that they do not have to account for social service payments, so there is no check that the money goes direct to the aborigines or is used for their benefit. Very few pastoralists are prepared to handle social service benefits for aborigines, and some say that it is impossible to spend the amounts granted for the benefit of the aborigines concerned.

The Social Services representative pointed out that prior to the payment of pensions all Mission authorities were asked for, and gave, a written undertaking that the maintenance portion of the pension would be kept in a separate fund and that they would have no objection to on the spot inspections by departmental officers. As new claims are being received from pastoralists they are being asked to give a similar undertaking.

(c) Tasmania

The social service benefits for part-aboriginals in Tasmania will continue to be administered in accordance with the provisions of the Social Services Act.

(f) Northern Territory

The Territory is experiencing no particular problems in dealing with payments of social service benefits. Payments to part-coloured people are handled in accordance with the provisions of the Social Services Act and benefits for full blood aboriginals are paid either direct to the applicant or to the appropriate settlement, mission or pastoralist. Officers of the Welfare Branch may inspect aborigines on Mission stations. The Northern Territory Administration has been responsible for the supervision of payments to pastoralists and missions for the maintenance of aboriginals since 1949 and supervision of social service benefits is but a continuation of this. There would be some cases where the beneficiary was not receiving the full benefit of the payment, but the position is broadly satisfactory, and should be improved as a result of more frequent inspections.

The Missions in the Territory are concerned about the possibility of obtaining some form of unemployment and sickness benefits for aborigines who are fully employed on Missions and Settlements. Itinerant workers, e.g. drovers, also could be assisted by some unemployment benefit during the stand-down period.

8. It was stated that where a native normally engaged in full-time employment on a Government settlement or a Church Mission and became temporarily incapacitated for work and thereby suffered a loss of income a claim could be made. The claim would have to be supported by a certificate from a qualified doctor or nursing sister. Benefit, if payable, could not exceed the weekly rate of wages or other income lost by reason of the incapacity.

9. The necessity for an applicant for unemployment benefit to register for work and to take active steps to seek employment presents almost insuperable difficulties in remote areas and it would be almost impossible for the Department of Social Services to administer these provisions.

10. In the case of unemployment and sickness benefits for natives on government settlements and Church Missions in remote areas, the best solution would probably be for the State or Church concerned to accept responsibility for the short period involved.

11. CONCLUSION

- (1) The difficulties in South Australia warrant a re-examination of the position by the Department of Social Services, the State Government authorities, the Mission officials and the managers of pastoral properties employing aborigines.
- (2) The problem of providing unemployment benefits to aborigines engaged in seasonal employment in remote areas, e.g. Queensland, Northern Territory, might be taken up with the Department of Social Services separately from this Conference, if Queensland and the Northern Territory consider this warranted.

Mr. PORTER. - The reason for the exception at Lake Tyers is that it is virtually a State institution. It follows the general practice for social services in other spheres.

Mr. SMITH. - The position in Tasmania is that no real problems arise out of this, with the possible minor exception that some of the folk on the Bass Strait islands are not eligible for unemployment benefit because they live too far away to do the things that they have to do in order to get it. Other States have referred to this. In the course of this conference, I have realized how I can turn this to the advantage of the people on the Bass Strait islands. I have tried to persuade one particular family to move to Tasmania in order that we may do something and do some more effective case work in the interests of the wife and the children. The man has one supreme ambition in life, and that is to get on to social services. I now propose to tell him that if he will move to Tasmania he may line up and apply for social service benefits and get them.

Mr. HILLS. - We have no problems.

Mr. PORTER. - We have no problems in Victoria. I have already thanked Mr. Robertson for his assistance before.

Dr. NOBLE. - We were very pleased when pensions and the like were given to native people recently, and we have no problems with respect to those who get benefits. But there is an anomaly that I can bring up with respect to people who do not come under the Aboriginals Protection Act. They are Torres Strait islanders. These are a wonderful race of people. They all are fully employed for most of the year and they all lead active and normal lives. There are two anomalies. During the war, the Torres Strait islanders formed a very useful contingent in the Australian armed forces - the Torres Strait Battalion. They were an essential element of the armed forces in the north, and they made very good soldiers. At the beginning of the war, they were paid a very small amount - about 2s. a day. They had a sit-down strike on one occasion, and I believe that Mr. O'Leary made a

quick trip to Victoria Barracks in Melbourne and confronted General Blamey or somebody else high up. The pay of these islanders in the regiment was advanced to two-thirds of that of the normal Australian digger.

Some of these islanders were incapacitated and the like during the war and were given pensions. But, strangely enough, these pensions are much smaller than those of normal Australian diggers. It seems to me that we are only giving lip service to the policy of assimilation if we distinguish between two classes - one coloured and one not coloured.

(Continued on page 102.)

Both classes gave equal service to the country at the time of its need. Let me quote T.P.I. pensions as an example of what I mean. In 1957, the rate for a white Australian Digger was £51 a month, but that for a totally incapacitated member of the Torres Strait Battalion, who gave equal service to his country with that given by the white man was only £10.5.0 a month. The proportion is the same right down the list. For instance, his wife gets £3.15.0 as against £22 for the wife of the white Digger. Similarly, the rate for the first child of the Torres Strait islander is £1.10.0 as against £2.15.0 for the first child of the white Digger. To my mind it is grossly unfair that the coloured Torres Strait Digger should get less than the white Digger. Again, if he were living in Queensland, with full rights as a citizen he would get full pension. Because he lives on the Torres Strait islands he gets infinitely less. It is time that equal benefits were given to the two classes. At least the Torres Strait islander should get a pension commensurate with the salary he was getting as a Digger - two-thirds of the rate paid to the white Digger in Australia. Such differentiation could create a scandal. If it were reported in the world press, the world could point the finger of scorn at us, and rightly so.

Then we come to the question of unemployment benefit. If he were in Queensland and were returned to his settlement upon becoming unemployed he would be entitled to unemployment benefit while so unemployed. These Torres Strait islanders are a great body of people. They rule their own local affairs through councillors. Each island elects its own councillors. The councils meet every three years and make by-laws for the good government of their islands. The only white person on the islands is the school teacher who acts as liaison officer between the islanders and the Government. No white magistrate ever goes

to the islands. These people are a very intelligent race. The chaps up there do very well in the pearling industry. I suppose the overseas income returned to Australia from the sale of pearl shell by the Island Industries Board amounts to £120,000 a year. So, their contribution to this country's economy is no small thing. Some of these men have done very well. A stern diver up there can earn up to £2,000 or £3,000 a year. One of the stern divers saved his money and bought his own luggers. To-day he owns six luggers and has an income of many thousands of pounds a year. He pays full taxes. Everyone on the Torres Strait islands pays full taxes. They are a wonderful race.

Again, these people are seasonal workers. For three months of the year there is no employment in the Torres Strait in the pearling industry. In Queensland we have seasonal workers in a great many callings. The sugar industry is one. When the mills close down there is a great deal of unemployment in towns such as Cairns and Mackay. The meatworks is also a seasonal industry. These Queensland seasonal workers are paid a special rate awarded by the Queensland Industrial Court because of the seasonal nature of their work. It cannot be argued that these men are employed in the slack season because they are not. They do not work because they get well paid while they are working and, with the unemployment benefit paid to them, they prefer to have the two or three months' holiday.

The men in the Torres Strait islands are playing their part in the economy of Australia. They are the bulwark between Australia and New Guinea and might well prove to be an essential bulwark in the years to come. Heaven knows what is going to happen up there; and it would be nice to know that we have a loyal group of people up there, as we have now. They are engaged in seasonal work. There is no work for two or three months in the pearling industry because the weather prevents the luggers going out at certain season. Again, when working, these men

take far greater risks than does the average man in Australia; and, I repeat, they earn for Australia £120,000 a year by way of overseas income. They are suffering a great injustice at the hands of the Australian people.

The argument used by the Social Services Department is that because they are not living on Thursday Island and seeking employment on Thursday Island, they are not entitled to unemployment benefit. As I see it, it would be a social injustice to these people to keep them on Thursday Island. I can imagine the state of Thursday Island with 500 husky Torres Strait islanders sitting about for two or three months twiddling their thumbs and drawing social service benefits - which they would be entitled to draw if they stayed on the island. Goodness knows what would happen to the island when they got bored with life. Again it would not be fair to their families. You could not expect them to bring their families to the island, and they are away from their families for six or seven months of the year getting the pearl shell. I repeat it is a gross injustice that the Australians do not do the right thing by these Torres Strait islanders and give them their just rights - unemployment benefit during the time of their unemployment.

Sitting suspended from 5.25 to 8 p.m.

(Continued on page 105)

Dr. NOBLE. - I would like to add one comment to my earlier remarks about Torres Strait islanders. They are not picked up on Thursday Island for employment; they are picked up on their own islands for employment. That is very important.

Mr. PEARSON. - I do not want to develop this at any length. I notice that in the conclusions on page 4 of this item, sub-paragraph (1) sets out that there will be in effect a re-examination of the position by the Department of Social Services, the State authorities, mission officials and the managers of pastoral properties employing aborigines. South Australia commends the attitude of the Commonwealth for the action taken in initiating legislation to provide for the payment of social services to aborigines. Any difficulties that have arisen in regard to the distribution of the benefits are purely machinery and I think of a passing nature. With further experience, these problems will be ironed out. The matters that we have raised are, however, real problems. They are not imaginary or even of small moment, but they are matters of administration and I think they can be satisfactorily resolved. I am prepared to rest on the understanding that there will be a re-examination made by the department, the State authorities, mission officials and others concerned. I have no doubt that in due course the problems will be overcome.

Mr. PERKINS. - With the payment of social service benefits, I would like to emphasise that in a big proportion of cases in Western Australia it is very important that warrantees should be appointed. I suppose it will be natural that as the natives become more sophisticated they will be able to handle their own finances, but without the warantee system at present grave abuses could develop. It is also very important to use the warrantee system as a means of keeping those, who have been living at some out of the way place, where they normally belong. If that is not done, and some of these people drift into city life, around Kalgoorlie

for instance, they may become a problem. I would like to emphasise with Mr. Robertson that the warranty system is working well. We are using our welfare officers wherever we can and in other instances we use independent responsible persons. If we run into difficulties, we would like to feel that we could approach Mr. Robertson or his senior officers.

Great care would need to be exercised if the suggestion to pay unemployment benefits were adopted. I could imagine that many natives would never do any more work for the rest of their lives and by one means or another would make themselves unattractive to employers.

DR. NOBLE.- They would not be paid unemployment benefit.

MR. PERKINS.- But it is very easy to get yourself into a position where nobody wants you. I appreciate the difficulties that you are in, Dr. Noble, and I am not suggesting that in genuine cases something like that may not be developed and could be a big help. However, I suggest that if the Commonwealth Government is contemplating that extension, particularly to meet needs such as Dr. Noble has mentioned, there would be need to arrange for discussion with our departmental officers to ensure that abuses are not likely to develop in other cases where perhaps the position is not exactly parallel.

DR. NOBLE.- The Torres Strait islanders are completely assimilated. They have pride of race. You never see a part-coloured Torres Strait islander because they do not want to live with white people.

MR. HASLUCK.- I think I am right in saying that under your State laws the Torres Strait islanders are not aboriginals. I do not want to take a technical point, but they are not really within the purview of this conference.

DR. NOBLE.- It does not cost one penny to keep the Torres Strait islanders. They keep themselves by pearl diving and other activities. They have shown that they are doing a real job in the economy of this country and they are worthy of receiving unemployment benefit, just as sugar cane workers do.

MR. PERKINS.- I thought Dr. Noble contemplated the payment of social service benefits in certain circumstances to actual Australian natives.

DR. NOBLE.- I am talking about Torres Strait islanders.

MR. PERKINS.- Did you not cover the others as well?

DR. NOBLE.- No. The natives on our settlements would be entitled to unemployment benefit when they came back from employment, but we do not want it for them. When they come back on to the settlement they are paid a wage to work part-time on the settlement. In the Torres Strait, it is a different thing altogether. They are independent. It does not cost us a penny to keep them. They are picked up on their own islands. They go to work and they pay taxes, just like others, but for some reason they do not receive unemployment benefit during the period of one or two months of the year that they are unemployed.

MR. PERKINS.- I think my point would be covered if Mr. Robertson could arrange that whenever any alteration in the arrangements for payment of social services to natives is envisaged, senior officers of his department discuss it with our senior officers. I think it is very much better to have that discussion early in the piece than to start something and then find that difficulties are arising. I would like to assure you that we are most anxious to give you our fullest co-operation.

Mr. ROBERTON. - The introduction of social service benefits to the aboriginal natives of our country on the same basis as other people has given me great satisfaction. The scheme, now that it has been in operation for twelve months, seems to have met with the complete satisfaction of all States, with certain minor reservations. In New South Wales, Victoria and Tasmania a state of perfection has been reached where social service benefits are paid direct to the aborigines in precisely the same way as they are paid to European residents in this country. That is the intention of the Commonwealth Government. That was the intention of my department when I introduced the amendment to the Social Services Act. My intention was that as soon as possible all semblance of discrimination against the aboriginal natives should disappear. It is very satisfying to me that that has taken place in so many States.

It is not easy to amend a Federal act any more than it is easy for any State Minister to amend a State act. The only way that I was able to effect this amendment was that I could assure the Federal Cabinet that I would get the whole-hearted co-operation of the States and an unqualified assurance from the Premiers that there would be no retraction from the traditional State responsibility with regard to native welfare. That, as far as I can judge, has been carried out in the letter and in the spirit. For those reasons, if for no other reason, the amendment to the act has been justified.

I would like to refer to some of the difficulties that have been encountered. The major difficulty seems to be in South Australia, where there has been a degree of misunderstanding. Apparently it is not clearly understood in South Australia that the intention was to pay social service benefits to the aboriginal natives who qualified for them in precisely the same way as they are paid to other people within the limits of the physical capacity of the people concerned to manage their own affairs. In some of the missions in South Australia I am informed

that the impression is held that the moneys that are paid on behalf of particular individual aborigines can be used for a variety of general purposes. That is not so. Similarly, some people imagine that if these funds could be used for the general promotion of aboriginal native welfare without regard to the particular individuals to whom they rightly belong, the amendment would be quite justified on those grounds. That is not so. The social service benefits are made available to the aboriginal natives with the clear and precise intention that as soon as possible those benefits should go to the individuals who qualify for them. In all States and in the Northern Territory my officers have been instructed that they should keep in close touch with people associated with native welfare and that they should be guided by their advice and recommendations to achieve that end.

I hope that as a result of this conference these minor confusions will disappear very rapidly and that social service benefits will be paid to the individuals who qualify for them and who are capable of managing their own affairs.

I should like to refer to the general observations made by Dr. Noble regarding natives of the Torres Strait, who at the moment are excluded from unemployment and sickness benefits. If the criticisms of Dr. Noble were valid, they would provide ample justification for a tightening of the administration of the act in Queensland. Dr. Noble alleges that tens of thousands of people habitually receive unemployment benefits. He referred to seasonal workers engaged in the sugar and other industries in Queensland.

Dr. NOBLE. - They are entitled to those benefits if the Commonwealth cannot find other employment for them.

Mr. ROBERTON. - Dr. Noble's criticisms are not strictly valid. If we have a work force of 5,500,000, and I believe that our work force must exceed that figure if we have a population of 10,300,000 and if only 3,250,000 are children under 16 years of age, only a proportion can qualify for unemployment and sickness benefits in the strict terms of the act. Those people are industrial workers in the concentration points of population.

Unemployment and sickness benefits were introduced in 1947 for the
2.2 109.

purpose of allowing those people in those industrial communities to maintain their social circumstances for a comparatively short space of time in order that they could be re-absorbed in industry as soon as possible.

(Continued on page 110)

At no stage was unemployment benefit or sickness benefit designed by this or any previous government as a permanent and enduring social service benefit. It is a complete delusion to imagine that today tens of thousands of people - seasonal workers and those engaged in itinerant industries such as the sugar, meat and other industries - are constantly receiving unemployment benefits for long periods each year. That is simply not true. Today, for example, there are some 14,000 people, in a work force of 5,500,000, receiving unemployment benefits. Unemployment benefits were introduced purely for industrial purposes to tide the industrial worker over a brief period of unemployment in the hope that he would be reabsorbed into industry as rapidly as possible. With a work force of the dimensions I have mentioned, the fact that we have only 14,000 people in receipt of unemployment benefits in the six States of the Commonwealth and the Territories, demonstrates the fatal flaw in Doctor Noble's argument. The people who qualify for unemployment benefits are those who can conform with the terms of the act.

To conform with the terms of the act and qualify for unemployment benefits people must, in the first place, be unemployed. They must register; they must be ready and willing to accept employment anywhere and they must produce evidence from time to time, at regular intervals, that they have themselves tried to find employment. Indeed, it is said almost every week by my own department and by the Department of Labour and National Service that it is not the function of the Government to find jobs. It is the function of the governments - and I speak in the plural - to assist people to find jobs but the initiative lies with the people themselves. They must constantly produce evidence that almost from day to day, in the concentration points of population, they are trying to find employment and are anxious and willing to accept it. That is the provision placed in the act and it was done, wisely, by a previous government.

It was done for the very reason - I think it was Mr. Pearson or Mr. Perkins who emphasized the point - that unemployment benefit is not a permanent social service benefit which can be enjoyed by the community at large for indefinite periods. That sociologically, would do incalculable harm to the industrial character of our people and our country. For that reason the benefits were restricted to those who can qualify in these simple ways; registration, in the first place, and readiness and willingness to accept employment anywhere.

Dr. NOBLE. - Where it is found for them.

Mr. ROBERTON. - No, they have to find it themselves.

Dr. NOBLE. - But what if they do not look for it?

On your own figures the unemployment figures in Queensland have risen by 1,500 in the last month. You are paying those people at Mackay and Cairns, who work in the sugar fields and in the meat industry at Gladstone, where unemployment is rampant today - and if you do not know that you should, as Minister for Social Services - unemployment benefits, so why in God's name can you not pay it to the other people of Australia such as the Torres Strait Islanders, who do very good work for nine months of the year and would do more, if the work was available? Some of these parsonic arguments make me sick.

Mr. ROBERTON. - I cannot cope with these emotional outbursts.

Dr. NOBLE. - You come to Canberra and live in your ivory tower and it makes me sick to hear you air your lack of knowledge of what is happening in other parts of Australia.

Mr. ROBERTON. - I do not live in Canberra; I never have, and, by God's grace I never shall. I live in Riverina, which is equally remote -

Dr. NOBLE. - You have said it.

Mr. ROBERTON. - It is equally as remote as is north Queensland, and the circumstances are the same. I want

you to understand the Social Services Act and the position of the Minister, no matter who he may be. As soon as a person qualifies for any kind of social service benefit it is paid forthwith consistently and without question by the department throughout the period during which that person is qualified. It is beyond my power as Minister or the power of the department to grant social service benefits of any kind to people who do not qualify. If the department, by some error of judgment or some defalcation on the part of the applicant pays a social service benefit to a person who is not qualified the department, under the act, must recover the overpayment and prosecute forthwith. The act is clear and distinct in that regard. It is not possible for any Minister for Social Services, no matter who he might be, to ease the circumstances with regard to certain people or certain localities within the country.

Dr. NOBLE. - Why do not these Torres Strait islanders qualify? Where do they not qualify, under the act?

Mr. ROBERTON. - I have explained to the Prime Minister and he has explained to the Premier of Queensland what the precise circumstances are.

Dr. NOBLE. - In your letter to the Premier of Queensland the precise circumstances were that if they lived on Thursday Island you would give them unemployment benefits.

Mr. ROBERTON. - Never, at any stage, have I said that. However, we do not want to argue about this.

Dr. NOBLE. - Then all I have to do in Queensland is to give these people full citizenship rights. Then it will be a public scandal if they do not get unemployment benefits.

Mr. HASLUCK. - Is this the proper place for this particular phase of the argument? This is a native welfare conference.

Dr. NOBLE. - And this is a matter of native welfare.

Mr. HASLUCK. - Under your Queensland legislation the Torres Strait Islanders are a distinct class. They are not

aborigines.

DR. NOBLE.- That is only playing with words.

MR. HASLUCK.- They are regarded as a distinct class.

As I understand the position that you have been putting recently it is not that you want these people to get any particular benefit or assistance because they happen to be coloured people, but the whole trend of your argument is that they are a special group in the ordinary community. Surely that is not a problem for this conference. This conference is dealing with a special group of aboriginal people who in some respects are a bit different from the rest of the community. If the Queensland Government has a case to present in respect of this special minority group of the ordinary community, I think it is an argument that you have between the Premier of Queensland and the Prime Minister and I do not think it is an argument which we can thrash out here. To take it to its conclusion, what could we do at this conference of State Ministers? What opinion could we express on that question?

DR. NOBLE.- Here are these blokes who have fought in the war and they have repatriation benefits, I know, but I will make a public statement on this matter in Queensland.

MR. ROBERTON.- I want to come to that point. The Repatriation Act is administered by the Minister for Repatriation and he, like the Minister for Social Services and every other Commonwealth and State Minister, is bound by the strict terms of his act. It would be a great pleasure for me and for most other ministers if we could sometimes step outside the limits of our acts.

DR. NOBLE.- But you have not told me why they cannot qualify under your act.

MR. ROBERTON.- **As regards** the terms and conditions of the Repatriation Act, we must remember that they were evolved at a time when the nation was in an emotional stage and was generous to those in the services, within certain limits. Dr. Noble has forgotten that there were at least two armies in Australia during the last war and the conditions which applied

to each of them were entirely different.

DR. NOBLE.- You would not go on the public platform with that kind of statement.

MR. ROBERTSON.- I have here a copy of the letter of the Prime Minister, addressed to the Premier of Queensland and it might be of some interest.

MR. HASLUCK.- Before we get on to that I think this conference, as a native welfare conference, might consider how far it wants to carry this particular argument. As Chairman, I do not want to lay down any rulings and say that this is outside the scope of the conference. If the conference wants to discuss something I will not raise technical points and stand in its way. But I put it to the conference that this question regarding the repatriation benefits of the Torres Strait Islanders - a subject which has been discussed extensively by the Queensland Government with the Minister for Repatriation - and the question of the position of the Torres Strait Islanders as ordinary members of the community, has also been discussed between the Queensland Government and the Commonwealth Government. If the Ministers present here want to continue discussing this question I will not use my authority as chairman to stop them. But I wonder whether it is the sort of question which can be brought to a conclusion at this conference. As practical politicians each of us should ask ourselves whether we can arrive at a conclusion. What you want is something from the Commonwealth Government which will answer your question.

DR. NOBLE.- All I want is proper rights for these people in their field of endeavour. I do not care a damn whether I get back into Parliament or not and I will make a public issue of this.

MR. HASLUCK.- The point I am putting for your consideration is whether you can get the issue you want resolved resolved at this conference.

DR. NOBLE.- The Minister for Social Services has not told me why these people cannot get the benefits.

MR. HASLUCK.- He is here to discuss social service benefits for aborigines and these people are not aborigines.

DR. NOBLE.- You are missing the point.

MR. HASLUCK.- I am not.

DR. NOBLE.- Your point is that we must overcome the propaganda from overseas against what we are doing for our coloured people. Here is something where we can prove that we are not just giving lip service.

MR. HASLUCK.- If you, as Ministers, want to express your opinions on this I will not take technical points and stand in your way, but in my view it is the sort of thing which is more likely to be brought to a satisfactory conclusion by direct discussion between the Queensland Government and the Commonwealth Government.

DR. NOBLE.- I will stump the country on this.

MR. HASLUCK.- I am not trying to stop the discussion and the way is still open to the Queensland Government to make as emphatic a case as it chooses to make to the Commonwealth Government. The argument can be ^{conducted} government to government, but is it one in which other ministers want to participate?

MR. HILLS.- We are hearing discussion and suggestions by Dr. Noble about the difficulties surrounding coloured peoples and it is unfortunate that a controversy like this was begun even between the Queensland Government and the Commonwealth Government.

DR. NOBLE.- If I could hear one tangible reason why the Minister cannot give the normal unemployment benefits to unemployed people who risk their lives for nine months of the year to make £120,000 in overseas funds for the Commonwealth Government the position would be different. I want to hear why they cannot get the benefits like the sugar cane workers receive.

Mr. ROBERTON. - I have given you two million reasons.

There are two million people who are excluded by their circumstances from ever qualifying for unemployment benefits. There are all the self-employed people and those who work on farms and in remote localities. Let me give you the reasons, which you do not seem to understand. They don't register with the Department of Labour and National Service as unemployed, they are in no position to accept employment anywhere, they are in no position to seek employment anywhere and, as a consequence, they are in no position to satisfy the work test. These are the reasons why they cannot qualify in the terms of the Social Services Act. If they could qualify or could come within a hair's breadth of qualifying under the Social Services Act these benefits would be paid to them. It will do your soul good, if nothing else, if I say that the only reason why people are not paid unemployment benefits is that they cannot qualify in the terms of the Social Services Act.

(Continued on page 118.)

The terms and conditions for the payment of unemployment benefit are laid down by the Department of Labour and National Service. When that department informs me that a person or group of persons is unemployed, that person or group qualifies forthwith without a moment's delay. But when the Department of Labour and National Service says that people are not available for employment or are doing nothing to obtain employment for themselves and therefore do not qualify, they are disqualified from unemployment benefit whether they live on the Torres Strait islands, in the Northern Territory, in the Riverina or anywhere else, and there are millions of them all over the Commonwealth.

DR. NOBLE.- I did not know that there were so many unemployed in the Commonwealth. You are not giving me your normal figures. There were hundreds unemployed in Queensland last month in the sugar and meat industries. The only analogy with the Torres Strait islanders that you can make concerns those who work in the seasonal industries - the meat and sugar industries and the like. The Torres Strait islanders are in exactly the same position, but because they live on the islands of Torres Strait and have not a vote at the present time, they do not qualify.

MR. ROBERTON.- What you are suggesting is that the unemployed workers in Queensland / ^{should} not receive Commonwealth unemployment benefit.

DR. NOBLE.- If they did not, not one federal Liberal member would be returned.

MR. HASLUCK.- As chairman of this conference, I am concerned about confining the discussion to the relevant matter. These island people are coloured and Dr. Noble suggests that one of the reasons for their disqualification is the fact that they are coloured.

MR. ROBERTON.- That could never be a reason.

DR. NOBLE.- One case is dealt with in the following letter from the Office of the Director of Native Affairs at Thursday Island to the Director of Native Affairs in Brisbane.

The letter is dated 17th January, 1959, and states -

Re Unemployment Benefit - Your file IF/369

The following copy of communication addressed to Islander Ses Whap, Hammond Island, C/- Deputy Director of Native Affairs, Thursday Island, has been forwarded to this office by the Registrar, Social Services Department, Cairns:

" Re Unemployment Benefit

I wish to advise that you have been granted unemployment benefit from 22nd December, 1958, whilst you reside at Hammond Island or Thursday Island, and subject to the requirements as shown on the attached notice of grant.

It is necessary that you report personally each week at the Court House, Thursday Island.

When completing your weekly statement please list on the back of the statement the name and address of each employer contacted by you in your search for work.

Payment of benefit will be suspended or cancelled if a list of employers contacted is not given. "

Dr. NOBLE. - Where are we going in this country?

Mr. HASLUCK. - If this man were a white man living on one of these islands, would he suffer the same disqualification?

Dr. NOBLE. - No. He would get the benefit. Only one white man lives on the island. He is the school teacher. Would you bring a white man in to Thursday Island every week?

Mr. HASLUCK. - We must discuss this matter in an orderly fashion. Assuming that there is a case here, it does not relate to the fact that these people are coloured. It relates to the fact that they live in an isolated place.

Dr. NOBLE. - What about the man who lives at Marble Bar and who receives unemployment benefit?

Mr. HASLUCK. - As I understand the matter, it is not a question of colour. I suggest that unless other Ministers wish to pursue this matter, it is a matter of argument between the Queensland Government and the Commonwealth Government. The question primarily concerns not the colour of the applicant but his location. That being so, I suggest that we pass on to the next phase of the

matter.

MR. PERKINS.- Before we leave this matter of social services, I should like to emphasise to Mr. Robertson that although he is able to pay benefits direct in three States, it will be a long time before that can safely be done in Western Australia. We have a large number of primitive natives and are likely to have them for a long time. You, Mr. Chairman, know Western Australia well, of course. You know the small centre of Laverton, for instance. A few old pensioners are camped on the reserve there, and we are using our warrantee there to make sure that whatever payment is made on their behalf passes into their hands. There are hundreds of natives behind Laverton, and you can imagine what would happen if the money were passed over to these old pensioners. The other natives know the pension day, even though they are pretty primitive. They will hang round and you will find that the person whom the Social Services Act is designed to help - the age or invalid pensioner - will not have the money, which will pass into other hands. I am grateful for the discussions that officers of the Department of Social Services have had with our officers. It was as a result of those discussions and the guarantee that we gave that the money would be spent on those for whom the pension is meant that this thing has been made possible.

MR. ROBERTON.- That is so.

MR. PERKINS.- I think you place too much emphasis, Mr. Robertson, on the point that you aim at paying it to the individuals concerned. I think your anxiety should be to see that the pensioner gets the benefit of the pension. The only way to do that when we are dealing with some of these primitive types which we will have for quite a long time in some of the remote areas of Western Australia in particular, and elsewhere, is to use the warrantee system. You may make any check you like in Western Australia, and I am sure you will find that that system is not being abused. We are being very, very careful. Mr. Middleton can tell you of cases in which we have had to use country storekeepers for a short time and we have made very strenuous efforts

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and have eventually found someone who was an entirely independent party with no interest whatever in the expenditure of the money other than for the benefit of the particular pensioner concerned.

I feel that I should emphasise this, because without this system, we could have something of a scandal develop, and perhaps charges would be made that the payment of the pension to some of these people really was not justified.

DR. NOBLE.- We see just how hay-wire these things can get. As I have said, these Torres Strait islanders are doing a mighty job. They are producing pearl shell. This is very difficult to sell on the world market, but we are able to sell it. The Commonwealth Government charges 50 per cent. duty on imported pearl-shell, making the difficulty all the greater. One just cannot believe some of these things.

MR. HASLUCK.- I wonder whether the point made by Mr. Perkins should be taken up by any other Minister. On our experience in the Northern Territory, we would certainly endorse the picture, because we have similar difficulties.

MR. PEARSON.- I am glad that Mr. Perkins raised the point. I did not develop it deliberately. Mr. Robertson made reference to various aspects of the matter, and I am glad that Mr. Perkins raised it, because it was a real problem. I am sure that Mr. Robertson's remark that perfection had been achieved in three States was not meant as a reflection on the administration of any other State, because that would be merely a matter of the circumstances in the particular States.

MR. ROBERTON.- That is so.

MR. PEARSON.- We agree that wherever primitive natives or a wide range of types reside the problem is not easy to solve and will need careful handling on a developmental basis from time to time. We agree with the point of view put by Mr. Perkins. We are concerned that the matter be put right. That is why I said in passing that our problems are not illusory and imagined. They are very real. I believe that the experience of our State

officers, together with that of the Commonwealth's officers, will help us to evolve a satisfactory means of overcoming the problem.

Mr. HASLUCK. - I take it that the meaning of that is that in States which have special problems because of large numbers of tribalized or partly-tribalized natives in remote areas, we as administrations take on ourselves the duty of inspection and taking other steps through our own officers in co-operation with the Department of Social Services in order to see that abuses do not occur and that the benefit goes to those who we intend should receive it.

Mr. PERKINS. - We accept the responsibilities of the warrantee system. I think that is the right way to put it. We realise that this is a great responsibility. Our officers appreciate that very well. On the other hand, it is a responsibility that somebody has to accept, and we are very happy to do so as the native welfare authorities in the interests of the natives.

Mr. ROBERTON. - I think I may be permitted to say two important things on the points raised by Mr. Perkins and Mr. Pearson. The first is in respect of the problem of paying social service benefits of any kind to people who for any reason are incapable of managing their own affairs. The situation is not peculiar to the aboriginal natives of Australia, it is common to all people in similar circumstances. That is the most important thing I have to say. The same restrictions and variations are applicable to people of other races. Where someone in authority in the Department of Social Services is advised that a person is incapable of handling a social service benefit, other arrangements are made for the payment of the benefit to a warrantee or some other authority. These are my specific instructions, and they will be carried out. We want to work as closely as is physically possible with the welfare officers in all the States, and this applies also to the Northern Territory, because, so far as the Department of Social Services is concerned - and, I am quite certain, so far as the Commonwealth Government is concerned - there is no difference between the people of any race and the aboriginal natives who qualify for social service benefits of any kind.

M.R. HASLUCK.- I take it that the first of the two conclusions on page 4 is acceptable to the South Australian Government, and I assume that if that is so, the rest of us also can accept it.

(Continued on page 124.).

The second point envisages direct consultation between certain State departments and the Department of Social Services separately from this conference. From the discussion that has just taken place, I should like to know whether you would wish to add a third statement that you are satisfied with the position as put forward by Mr. Perkins, Mr. Pearson and myself regarding the need for continued consultation and co-operation between State and territorial administrations and the Department of Social Services to ensure that the benefits paid are dispensed for the benefit of the individual concerned. The point I want to bring out is that this applies to those States and Territories which have natives who are still living a nomadic or semi-nomadic life and does not apply to those States where the natives are living a more settled life.

MR. PERKINS. - I think it applies in other places because we have instances in which the pensioners have male relatives who are rather poor types and are wasting the beneficiary's pension. If our officers at any of these places advise the Social Services Department that in a particular case the pension is being wasted or not being spent for the benefit of the pensioner, that should justify some action. As Mr. Robertson has said, it is no different from any other case in the community. Do not restrict it to remote areas because it is likely to happen anywhere.

MR. HASLUCK. - Perhaps we can make a general statement that we recognise the necessity for officers of the State and territorial administrations to keep in close consultation and co-operate with officers of the Department of Social Services to ensure that the benefits paid go into and remain in the hands of the people they are intended to benefit. Then, if Dr. Noble will accept it, I suggest that we note the points he has raised about the Torres Strait islanders and suggest that it is a matter for direct discussion between the Queensland and Commonwealth governments.

MR. HILLS. - If we have reached a conclusion that it is a matter for the two governments I think it should be recorded because, if something does come up later on and it is stated that it was discussed here there will be a record that this conference felt that it was a matter between the two governments.

MR. HASLUCK. - I think it should be noted that Dr. Noble raised the matter of the Torres Strait islanders and it was agreed that this was a matter which the Queensland Government should raise with the Commonwealth Government separately from this conference.

Conference agreed.

Item 6.

CENTRAL AUSTRALIAN RESERVES.

Administrative arrangements necessary to provide welfare services and training programmes for those semi-nomadic natives in the contiguous Western Australian, South Australian and Northern Territory reserves particularly in the Long-Range Weapons Research Establishment area.

reads - MR. SWIFT. - The report of the Committee of Officers

1. In these Reserves are some 1,500 nomadic and semi-nomadic aborigines of common culture, language and society. In the main they are often migratory within this Reserve area, the main settling points being the Ernabella Mission in South Australia, Warburton Mission in Western Australia, and the Areyonga and Papunya Government Settlements in the Northern Territory.

2. They present a problem because they tend to drift occasionally to slums on the outskirts of towns such as Oodnadatta and Finke, and also to congregate at times at the Giles Weather Station and Ayers Rock. It is difficult to help them with nutrition, health and hygiene and to give them the first training towards assimilation. The chief need at present is to encourage them to settle in one place and accept employment.

3. The Committee considers that proposals which have been made for a combined pastoral training project in the area should not be proceeded with, but that the following principles should be adopted -

(a) There should be no revocation of any of the Reserves in this area,

(b) The South Australian, Western Australian and Northern Territory authorities should each direct their efforts towards the extension and development of facilities which would encourage groups of the people to settle in a place chosen by them, within the general area. In this connection, South Australia is proceeding with the establishment of a cattle project at Musgrave Park Cattle Station, and has plans to assist the Ernabella Mission to expand its work.

(c) A consultative committee should be established of senior representatives of the South Australia, Western Australia and Northern Territory welfare authorities and a patrol officer of the Long Range Weapons Research Establishment.

(d) This Committee should meet at least twice each year and should -

(i) Review progress in the general aim and exchange information about population movements.

(ii) Endeavour to reach uniform practices on matters of common concern, such as the issue of permits to enter the Reserves.

Mr. HILLS. - I have no comment to offer.

Mr. PORTER. - No comment.

Dr. NOBLE. - No comment.

Mr. PEARSON. - The findings of the Committee are generally acceptable to us, but we would hope that Western Australia and the Commonwealth would endeavour to make some progress in this area to balance the efforts we are making. In saying that, I want it to be clearly understood that I am not criticizing either Western Australia or the Commonwealth. After considering the matter for some time, we have now taken steps to establish a station. Houses have been built and we will be in action there very shortly. One problem we have is whether we will be swamped by natives from Warburton and Areyonga who will see the good things available at our station. We cannot hope to provide employment for any considerable number of natives at the station. We hope to develop further stations out west later on, but even then it will be difficult to utilize the labour of all the natives. At the start, we propose to give priority of employment to those natives who have a stake in that country, not because we want to give them prior rights to the exclusion of others but because it is

physically impossible to include the others at the moment.

I agree with the second point. We are most determined about this matter in South Australia and I should say that the other governments who have reserves in that area **should be as firm** as we are on this matter of permits for people to travel through. The Weapons Research organization has provided very good traffickable roads over thousands of miles through that country, with the inevitable result that all sorts of people have suddenly developed a passionate desire to travel through it. We have had to resist their approaches. Although we are firm in our desire to proceed with assimilation, we believe that natives in the nomadic and primitive state should not be subjected to the scrutinies and inducements of people travelling through the area. We would hope that unilateral action could be taken by all three governments and that only those people who have a genuine right to travel through the area are granted permits.

I agree with the findings of the Committee. We are going on with the project, and I hope we will be successful enough to justify an extension of the policy because I think it will do some good.

MR. PERKINS. - I am very interested in what Mr. Pearson has said. As to people travelling through the area, I mention that the Minister must sign the permit and that matter can be tightened if any trouble is arising. We will consult with Mr. Pearson and make sure that our policy does not conflict with his. One way out of it would be to agree not to sign permits unless Mr. Pearson agrees to sign them. That would be an easy way out from under, but I point out that Mr. Pearson is a long way away from the scene.

MR. PEARSON. - As an illustration of what we want to prevent, I might mention that one person whom one of Mr. Perkins' officers was conducting through the area on a tour boasted in my hearing that he had been trying without success to get a permit from me for eighteen months and had eventually got one

from Mr. Perkins.

MR. PERKINS. - The individual to whom you refer happened to be a man who went out on patrol to take our policemen out. I was in a difficult position so far as refusing a permit was concerned because he had been very kind to us. I am sure we can resolve this problem quite easily because Mr. Pearson and I think alike on the matter.

The question of finding employment for these people was discussed earlier by the conference. We do not see much virtue in that suggestion at all. These people who have lived a nomadic life out there have been living off the land from time immemorial. While I know that sooner or later they will attach themselves to civilization if we take the steps suggested, I point out that we will then merely have another group of very primitive natives on our hands. I should like to see how the cattle station goes because they were tried out in the outback areas of Western Australia years ago and there was considerable trouble with everyone of them. I think it is virtually impossible for a government to run a cattle station successfully, and I do not see much chance of the missions making a success of it. We are trying to step up the efficiency of the missions in various ways, but the difficulty when you get that kind of welfare set-up trying to run a commercial proposition is that the missions know very well that you cannot push them and I am afraid that eventually there will be a lot of natives on these places not doing very much work.

I would not like to take the responsibility, on behalf of the Western Australian Government, of saying that we would co-operate to bring these people into civilization. We will care for them when they are in need. We will go to endless trouble to do that. We will send out patrols, if necessary, to help them, but to say that we would provide a set-up similar to that which Mr. Pearson envisages, such as a cattle station, and bring them in to find them employment, is a different matter. I am afraid that there would be a lot of difficulty. I cannot think of any kind of employment for which these people would be suitable. They certainly would not be suitable as stockmen on ordinary stations. They have never done any stock work.

MR. PEARSON. - I did not suggest that.

MR. PERKINS. - You would have to start on the children, and it would be a long and difficult process. They are gradually coming into the mission stations. I have not been out to the Warburton station personally, but I will be going there soon.

We are spending a good deal of money to help that mission. The mission people take care of the children and help the indigent cases that are not capable of standing the rigours of the desert. They congregate around the mission, and we use it as a feeding centre. Generally, we are doing the maximum welfare work there. I really think it would be unrealistic to try to go much farther than we are going at the present time. However, I have no objection to Mr. Pearson having a go over on his side. We might finish by not having a problem. We will not be unsympathetic. Unless this matter affects the Territory, it might be better to let South Australia and Western Australia keep in fairly close touch on it. We in Western Australia will see that our welfare officers keep in touch with those in South Australia, but to try to lay down something concrete at this conference would be very difficult to work out in detail.

MR. HASLUCK. - I would like the Administrator of the Northern Territory to say something on this matter.

MR. ARCHER. - This is a problem with which we are concerned. There is no question of whether we want to be concerned with it or not - we are concerned. There is a rather unusual set-up, in that you have fairly large numbers of fairly primitive people who are still really in their nomadic state moving around that area, and it so happens that the area takes in two States and the Northern Territory. Whether we want it or whether we do not, they will come over the border and move into Western Australia and South Australia. The problem has given us a great deal of concern and we have given it a lot of thought. Quite a number of suggestions have been put forward as to how it might be solved. Frankly, I think that co-operation and consultation between the two States and the Northern Territory will result in the problem being solved within our present Northern Territory policy in relation to this welfare task.

Mr. Perkins mentioned that all you can do is to get at the children. Really, that is the basis of our policy in the Northern Territory. We realize that with many of the present generation there is not a great deal you can do except look after them. The prospects of fully assimilating the present generation into the Australian community are not very rosy. They are not ready to come into the community, but we have strong hopes that their children can be made ready to come into the community. There you have the very basis of our policy in the Northern Territory.

I think that you, Sir, put your finger on the point when you said that a successful settlement is one that eventually disappears. But unless you have those settlements, unless you can get at the children, unless you can prepare the children to be assimilated, you put back your prospects of assimilation for quite a number of years. Our approach to this particular problem

is to put the facilities there and to break down, if we can, the present nomadic structure that exists in the Territory. Some may settle at Ernabella, some at Warburton and some at Areyonga. Eventually they will settle somewhere, if only because of the fact that due to the impact of our development in that area, their normal way of life is disrupted. That is the history of the whole of the Northern Territory. By putting those facilities there, we may induce them eventually to settle, and we can have access to the children. With access to the children, we can start to prepare them for ultimate assimilation. It might take one generation, it might take two.

You may have a settlement in the form of a pastoral project, or you may have a settlement with a pastoral project attached to it for the purposes of training some of them and encouraging some of the present generation to be absorbed into the pastoral industry. However you do it, I think that the ultimate object has to be the children. For that reason, I think that these recommendations here present to me - and I am speaking quite personally now - the best solution I have seen so far of this particular problem. Each State, each Territory, can tackle it in its own way. As far as we are concerned, it will be on the basis of trying to get to a position where you have access to the children and go on with your task of essential training and preparation for ultimate assimilation.

The only other point I would like to stress, Sir, is that I support - speaking personally again - very strongly this idea of a consultative committee. From our point of view, and I think from that of yours, too, gentlemen, it is most important that with these natives moving around the area at will, we should know what is going on over the border. I think it is very important that you know what is going on in our territory. We can achieve that through this consultative committee the members of which will

meet regularly, and each will inform the other of what is going on and of particular problems. It may be possible for them jointly to work out solutions for any trends that they dislike.

DR. NOBLE. - Through your courtesy, Mr. Chairman, I was able to see the work being done in the Northern Territory, right from the very early stages of training. I saw the cattle properties, Areyonga, and everything else. I would like to compliment you on the tremendous job you are doing in that area and the wonderful results that are being achieved. Reference has been made to the cattle properties of South Australia. I have seen such properties starting up in areas which would correspond to the South Australian areas. I thought that the results in the Territory were very good. You were teaching the young lads stock work and getting wonderful results.

Some of these properties can be quite profitable. We have a cattle station in Queensland. The financial return from Foleyville last year was well over £40,000, from cattle sales. Looking at the Territories and the way that you are running them, I would say that you would have a good return also. From the point of view of Queensland, I want to congratulate you on the work you are doing in the Territory.

MR. PERKINS. - I think we can agree quite readily on (c) and on the setting up of a committee. We have spent quite a lot of money on the Warburton mission and I think we will have to regard the mission as doing the job which both Mr. Archer and Mr. Pearson have spoken about. A mission school is run at Warburton, but the children do not attend the school with absolute regularity. They are held there as long as possible, but it is not unusual for the natives to come in there, to stay about the place for a while and then to leave the children, or some of them, while they go walkabout and leading their traditional life. The old people tend to live at the mission, too. We have the mission established there and we cannot interfere with it. We

will give them every encouragement to develop along the lines you have spoken about. I think that it can do much the same job, in a different kind of way, as that which we have been speaking about. If we go as far as that and also agree to the other points, I think that perhaps the problem will become more easily solved. If we are wrong, we will go further your way, and if you are wrong, no doubt you will come our way.

MR. HASLUCK. - There is nothing in what you say, Mr. Perkins, which would prevent you from accepting (b).

MR. PERKINS. - Not really, except that I do not want to indicate that we are going to set up a cattle station. We have not much love for the native cattle station.

MR. PEARSON. - I would like to amend some of the words of (b). After the words "Musgrave Park Cattle Station", insert "and is considering further assistance to the Ernabella Mission to expand its work." I would like to thank Mr. Archer for his words of encouragement and also Mr. Perkins for his faint praise which, I am afraid, rather damns our project. I want to assure him that we have not lightheartedly gone into this matter. I made a trip personally through the whole of that country, and I am satisfied that the country is all right. The natives in that area are nomadic, probably not because they want to be but because they have to be. That is the only way they can live. If we can provide them with a self-generating means of sustenance in the form of a cattle station, at least they will not have to be nomadic. We can deal effectively with the children in that area because we will provide them with proper education. We shall therefore be shooting with two barrels.

MR. PERKINS. - Mr. Middleton does not agree with your point that they are nomadic from necessity.

MR. PEARSON. - It is perfectly obvious that they are.

MR. HASLUCK. - That is a matter on which I think the anthropologists would argue quite a lot.

PROFESSOR ELKIN. - Am I right in thinking that Ernabella Mission is outside the reserve?

MR. HASLUCK. - Yes.

PROFESSOR ELKIN. - I think there should be a change in the wording of the third line of No. 1, so that it will read, "are often migratory within and adjacent to this reserve." That would put it right.

MR. HASLUCK. - These people have to work very hard for their tucker. In the report of the last patrol we had out into the desert, there was a photograph taken by the patrol officer of the total results of a hard day's fossicking for food by a couple of men. It was a bit of spinifex, a lizard, a snake, and some frog-like animal. It would not be very belly-filling for two men, but apparently they had spent a hard day's work and walked miles and miles to get it.

MR. PERKINS. - They do that from choice. We have a feeding centre at Warburton. If these natives choose to stay at the mission we will look after them, but they go on walkabouts from choice, not from necessity.

MR. HASLUCK. - That disposes of Item 6.

(Continued on page 135.)

Item 7.

TRAINING AND RECRUITMENT OF TEACHERS FOR ABORIGINAL SCHOOLS.

MR. SWIFT.- The report of the Committee of Officers is as follows:-

The following position obtains in the various States and the Northern Territory:-

(a) New South Wales

Education of part aboriginal children in New South Wales is handled entirely by the New South Wales Department of Education. No special training is given to teachers and the standard curriculum used in all State schools is followed. Education is compulsory.

(b) Victoria

Education of part aboriginal children in Victoria is the responsibility of the State Department of Education. The main problem with the children is one of retardation. It was suggested that the five teachers who have recently returned to Victoria after a period of secondment in aboriginal schools in the Northern Territory might appropriately be placed in the two special schools in an attempt to overcome this problem.

(c) Queensland

In Queensland there are schools specifically for aborigines and part aborigines on four Government settlements and mission stations. Education is compulsory. The schools are staffed by teachers seconded from the Department of Education to the Department of Native Affairs. There is every possibility that the Department of Education will

take over these schools and their staff in the near future. Teachers of the State Education Department may work for a mission for a period without loss of status or rights in their department.

The University of Queensland has recently introduced a special training course for teachers in these schools, and it is expected that no other special training course will need to be established.

The Department of Education does not at present inspect all mission schools.

(d) South Australia

All aboriginal children are acceptable at all State Education Department schools; the only condition being that the children are clean and tidy as applies to all children. Education is compulsory.

There are special aboriginal schools on two Government settlements which are staffed by the Department of Education. The standard of mission schools is uneven and unsatisfactory resulting in many mission children leaving school at a low educational standard.

(e) Northern Territory

Special schools and pre-schools for aborigines are conducted by the Welfare Branch of the Northern Territory Administration. These schools are located on Government settlements and larger pastoral properties; in addition, the Government subsidises schools on pastoral properties where there are less than 20 children of school age. Teachers in Government schools are recruited

through press advertisements; by secondment from certain State Departments of Education; and from the teacher training course which is conducted by the Australian School of Pacific Administration in conjunction with the New South Wales Department of Education.

Under supervision and inspection of professional officers of the Welfare Branch the missions conduct schools for aborigines on their stations, and are responsible for employing their own teachers.

They are assisted financially by a Commonwealth subsidy of £925 per annum for each fully qualified teacher employed; in addition the Commonwealth provides school equipment and furniture in mission schools.

Every opportunity is given for the training and employment of aborigines who have an aptitude for teaching, and a special training course is conducted annually to enable these teachers to gain additional experience. The Commonwealth pays to missions a subsidy of £100 per annum on behalf of approved native teaching assistants, which may be increased to £150 per annum if the teaching assistant gains a Certificate of Competence at the special course.

Within the next three years it is expected that at least 90 % of the aboriginal children in the Territory will be attending school regularly, and a target date has been set for 100% attendance at the end of five years.

It is believed that teachers in aboriginal schools in the Territory require special training, e.g.

in teaching English as a foreign language, to enable them to meet and understand the cultural and social environment in which the aborigine still lives.

Conclusions

The committee considers:

- (i) that where practicable aboriginal and part aboriginal children should be educated in normal schools rather than special schools, either wholly or at least in higher grades;
- (ii) that where special schools are needed they should be either conducted or supervised by the authority responsible for aboriginal education;
- (iii) that mission schools should be inspected regularly by the authority and should work on a curriculum approved by the authority; and
- (iv) that missions should be encouraged to employ only qualified teachers, and assisted, where applicable, by the adoption of the provision introduced in Queensland in 1960 under which teachers of the State Education Department may work for a mission for a period without loss of status or rights in their department.

MR. PORTER.- Mr. Chairman, I think that perhaps the whole crux of our self-imposed or publicly-imposed task of attempting to assimilate could stand or fall by the educational policies of the various governments. I think it is true to say that you cannot properly educate them at the top, but that any success we might have now or in the future must of necessity come from the way in which we reach the children. I believe that the committee's conclusions are fairly sound. I say "fairly sound" because I have no knowledge in relation to conclusions (iii) and (iv). They do not apply in Victoria;

we have no missions, and therefore we have no mission schools. I think that much greater emphasis must be placed on the problems associated with educating the children of aboriginal people. Our major difficulty seems to be that we can enforce the compulsory attendance of children of part aboriginal parents to some degree only, usually to a stage two or three years lower than the normal school leaving age - I mean in the standard of work. At that stage, the children seem to reach the educational attainments of their parents and they are no longer encouraged to go to school; in fact, they are actively discouraged by their parents, who cannot see the necessity or the need for it or that there is any advantage to be gained by their children receiving a better education than they themselves received. It is for that reason that the public in general seem to have the idea that it is impossible to educate children of aboriginal blood to the same degree as white children are educated. I think that if the aboriginal children could be kept at school they are capable of exactly the same educational attainments as white children. I am not disagreeing at all with any of the committee's conclusions; I agree with them entirely. I think that education is vitally important. I do not think that we can place too much emphasis on it. As I have said, conclusions (iii) and (iv) do not apply to Victoria.

DR. NOBLE.- I quite agree with the committee's four conclusions, Mr. Chairman. We think it necessary that there should be full education. The whole thing was canvassed this morning in regard to the general policy of education. But there is one aspect that I should like to mention. We find that the aboriginal kiddies are not doing their homework as it is done in a normal house. In order to overcome this difficulty, we are starting to employ people at night time. The kiddies will be told to go back to school at night for probably an hour or an hour and a half, as necessary, to do this work.

I believe that education should not stop with the kiddies but that if possible we should give trade training to the younger adults. I might say that as far as the Northern Territory is concerned I was struck with the fact that night schools are being conducted for adult education. We are now doing the same thing in Queensland and we hope to get good results.

Mr. PEARSON. - I concur generally with the recommendations, Mr. Chairman. As I said earlier, in South Australia we are working towards the objective of the education of aboriginal children being conducted by the Education Department of South Australia. In regard to recommendation (iv), I want to say that I personally have a very high regard for the work that the missions do. I have been interested in mission activities outside Australia for many years. I think that the missions have limitations. I think we will be ready within a very short time to say to missions who claim that they cannot carry on through physical or financial limitations that we will handle the problem through the Education Department. In other words, we will not force the missions out of their spheres of activity, but will buy them out. I think that is a much more satisfactory way of doing it.

Dr. NOBLE. - The time must come when the missions will have to move out because they cannot be both church and State. When that time comes, the State will take over the missions and give them all the advantages of State settlements, as has been done at the Yarrabah Mission in Queensland.

Mr. PERKINS. - I have not prepared material in relation to Western Australia, but it will be submitted. The education of both whites and natives in Western Australia is under the control of the Education Department and it is carried out by the Department's trained teachers. Whenever it is feasible to do so encouragement is given to taking the native children into the schools where there are white children. We find that this has the valuable effect of achieving better assimilation. In any case, it

prevents the kind of dual standard that is liable to arise in a school that does not quite make white standard. A school must make white standard if there are white children at it. I think this is wholly desirable.

The schools at the missions are provided by the Education Department; they are staffed by trained teachers of the department. Wherever possible, teachers of the same faith as the Mission are selected, but we insist that they be departmentally trained. There are two teachers at Jigalong, who run the mission school just as any other government school is run.

As to the new approach of giving training in addition to the ordinary three R's, I might mention that we are applying the same standards. In the Education Department in Western Australia - I suppose this is common to all States - we are very fortunate to have a number of teachers who have gone through the Teachers Training College. Purely by accident, they were tradesmen before they became teachers. They are mostly young men. I recall a couple of instances in which these men have been really outstanding - where we are building up hostel-type schools. They have teaching know-how in addition to the skill with their hands which it is necessary to pass on to the native children. In other instances where it is not so easy to start a mission school, slight variations have to be made. A recent instance of this was at the Forrest River Mission at Wyndham alongside the Cambridge Gulf. This is a fairly remote area. Recently, on the advice of the people who are running the mission - one is a very prominent builder in Perth - we obtained the services of a man and his wife, who are outstanding. The man is a good tradesman in a number of trades, and the woman trains the girls well. To make sure that they had teaching know-how, the special branch of the Education Department arranged for them to attend agricultural classes, where they were given an intensive course in teaching know-how for a couple of months. Anyone who has been

connected with the teaching profession knows how important this is.

I agree wholeheartedly with the recommendations, Mr. Chairman.

MR. SMITH. - The practice and policy in Tasmania are as set out in conclusion (i). The **other recommendations** do not, of course, apply to that State.

MR. HILLS. - As I have previously indicated, Mr. Chairman, the whole of the education of aborigines in New South Wales is dealt with by the Department of Education. Up to the present, discussions are proceeding between the board and the department concerning adult education. In New South Wales, the school leaving age applies to aboriginal as well as white children. I presume this is the case in other States also. Although we have no mission schools, it occurs to me that as we are saying they should do this and that, it might be opportune to commend the people who are running them for the work they have done over the years. I think Mr. Pearson said that he appreciates the work the missions have done.

MR. PERKINS. - We appreciate them although they have dipped so deeply into our Budget.

MR. HILLS. - I do not think it does any harm to commend people who have worked well. I believe that we should thank the people who are helping us in the assimilation of aborigines.

DR. NOBLE. - In Queensland we thank them. They have got the nomadic people together and are providing them with community living. They have provided these people with a new faith in place of the faith they have lost. I think, Mr. Minister, that this is lacking in the new settlements in the Northern Territory.

MR. HASLUCK. - I appreciate that point.

MR. PEARSON. - We are attempting to provide spiritual oversight for the people in the **Musgrave Park** development area.

MR. HASLUCK. - That is a very important point. You can give them material foods but still leave them in a spiritual sense extremely hungry. Two points have occurred to me that do not seem to have been touched by the Committee of Officers. I am rather curious about them. The first is whether compulsory education provisions apply to aborigines in any part of Australia.

MR. HILLS. - Yes.

MR. PORTER. - They do.

MR. PERKINS. - That is one of our responsibilities. Within the 3-mile limit you can compel a kiddie to go to school.

(Continued on page 144.)

MR. HASLUCK.- Is that your rule in Western Australia, that there is compulsion for anyone living within three miles of a school?

MR. PERKINS.- Yes, within three miles of a school or one mile of a bus service.

MR. HASLUCK.- The other question in which I was rather interested was the talk we used to hear a good deal a few years ago suggesting that in the education of primitive peoples or peoples who did not have English as their native tongue, a special technique of education was needed. I can remember the Commonwealth Office of Education doing a certain amount of research and publishing a few papers on the subject, and even devising methods by which people could be taught how to teach primitive people who did not have English as their native tongue. Has that approach been abandoned altogether? The general purport of our conclusion seems to be that if possible we should put these people into the same school as European children. Are we fully satisfied that simply from the viewpoint of technique of teaching they will make as good progress in that way as they would if they had schools which were adapted to their special needs. I raise the point at this stage because we are reaching some conclusion and the trend of our conclusion is to put all aboriginal children into normal schools, if possible. Are we consciously and deliberately dismissing the idea that there may be, from the viewpoint of the technique of teaching, a need for special schools to meet the special conditions of these children?

MR. PORTER.- I do not think we are because in No. 2 we say "where special schools are needed". There could be need in some instances for special schools.

DR. NOBLE.- I took Professor Schonell, Dean of the Faculty of Education, through our missions. He thought that in the areas where children are coming up to assimilation they

should have the ordinary education syllabus, but in the Gulf area, for instance, there would be a difference. He thought it difficult to teach children about trains, snow, reindeer, and so on when they had not seen them. They should have a range of education built around objects that were familiar to them.

Mr. PEARSON. - The teachers at Coober Pedy have adapted themselves to the problem. I saw a group of some 20 youngsters who were in a very raw state. The teachers made remarkable progress with them in English. They had taken care of the problem you raised, Dr. Noble. They do not talk about Father Christmas but use things that they understand. The problem needs teachers who adapt themselves.

Dr. NOBLE. - A teacher at Snake Bay used his own methods and brought the children along wonderfully.

Mr. PERKINS. - In a State like Western Australia, where we have many primitive natives, the Education Department has to specialise to a degree, and there are a lot of teachers who are teaching predominantly native children. A branch of the Education Department watches this very carefully. Mr. Wallace is the superintendent and Mr. Yeates is taking care of the manual side. Before the teachers go out, they have a meeting at the university with anthropologists and others specialising in the aptitudes and characteristics of natives. During the week they are there they pick up many points. In the missions the practice is that the curriculum is sufficiently modified to suit the native children, but they still teach according to Education Department methods. Another problem arises in mixed schools. Two very good examples would be Roebourne and Port Hedland. Some of the natives there would not be able to speak good English. One of the teachers at Port Hedland, Sally Gare, has the primitive children in an old railway barn. It is fairly primitive, but her purpose is to break the children in sufficiently for them to graduate to the mission school. When I

have been at Port Hedland, I have noticed that the teachers at the main school are very anxious to obtain the children as soon as they are sufficiently broken in to go into the ordinary curriculum and there is not resistance from parents. They must also teach the children proper social behaviour in school.

At Roebourne, there would be a lot of native children and there are some four teachers altogether. Two of the teachers have wholly native classes, broken down from the bigger ones to the smaller ones. The same process is going on there of tackling them in two stages. The practice in Western Australia is such that the Education Department is coping with the problem successfully. We take a friendly interest and give whatever help they seek, but we rely on their technical knowledge as to the best way to do the job. It does seem that their methods of training teachers are designed to cope with that kind of emergency situation, if I may so term it.

MR. HASLUCK.- I am no educational theorist and I do not know anything about education in the professional sense; but it does seem to me from what has been said that we ought to state our conclusions here rather more broadly than they have been stated. In my own observation in different places, not only amongst the Australian aborigines but amongst the children of Papua and New Guinea, youngsters can be taught to read and write and to produce impeccable copy books, but I am pretty certain from my own observations, that they were not in the least educated. They had been taught to imitate the European school children. I would think the test as to whether you put every one into the same school as European children is not the test we apply here of "where practicable", which is our convenience. The test ought to be, where it will clearly benefit the child we will put him into that school. Where it will not benefit the child, where giving him a European type of education will only set up confusion and puzzlement in his mind, we should hesitate

to put him into a normal school.

I would not differ from the conclusions, except to alter the words "where practicable" to "where practicable and where the educational interests of the child will be best served". As someone pointed out, later in this series of papers we have a suggestion that there is a need for research on this problem. We do not know the results of that research, but I venture to suggest that there is a fair amount of expert professional opinion to the effect that for children who have not the same body of experience, the same language or the same levels as our children have, a different curriculum and different teaching methods may be necessary; otherwise you teach them to imitate but you do not educate them.

MR. PERKINS.- I do not think you are quite fair in that comment. Work has been done in this field in Western Australia.

MR. HASLUCK.- I am not criticising Western Australia. I suggest that instead of saying "where practicable" we should allow ourselves a bit more latitude, not be quite so rigid, and say "where practicable and where the educational interests of the child will be best served".

MR. PERKINS.- If assimilation means anything, it means accepting our western standards. Sooner or later these children have to learn to live according to our standards, and there is no surer way to do this than to bring them into schools at an early age when they are much more easily trained than later. If you put them into separate schools, I feel that you fall down on assimilation to a large degree. It is not a matter of teaching them only the three R's; it is a matter of introducing them to civilised living.

MR. HASLUCK.- I have not made my point clear. Certain children are still living with their aboriginal parents. They have a limited knowledge of the outside world. They have

a limited knowledge or no knowledge of the English language. In their own homes, a language other than English is spoken. A great number of objects which are familiar to us and a great number of ideas which are familiar to us are completely unknown to them, but in place of this they have a whole range of objects and ideas which are familiar to them but of which we know nothing at all. It is easy enough to teach such a child to read and write but you may not have really changed its basic set of ideas or its outlook. By personal observations over 30 or 40 years, I have seen quite a number of instances of people who have gone through primary schools. They could read and write, but they were still aborigines. The reason was that in a mechanical sort of way they had been given a skill, but they had not been changed. The object of education is not merely to give you the skill to read and write; the object is to do something to the whole man.

MR. PERKINS.- If you are going to do something like this, it will mean that we will have to develop a whole new system.

MR. HASLUCK.- Not necessarily. If your educational advisers say to you that the best result is obtained in a certain way, that is the decision you make. But I do not want to commit my Government, and I do not think any of our governments should be committed to say that just because it is practicable it is preferable to put children into a normal school. I think we should be less rigid than that and allow some of us to have special schools to meet special circumstances.

DR. NOBLE.- I think Mr. Perkins had in mind that he would put them into hostels close to civilisation. These children could be taught in ordinary schools, but I know that Mr. Hasluck is thinking of the child who has no chance at all of coming close to civilisation. A different approach may be needed there.

PROFESSOR ELKIN.- Three or four years ago I went through all the schools in the Northern Territory. I played some part in helping with special reading books. After going through those schools and observing the children I was never sure that the answers they gave to questions were not the result of having a remarkable photographic memory. Back with their people in the evenings they had different ideas of space, time and measurement. Our ideas on these things have no relation to their background. It is too much to expect them to come from a different world and understand what a teacher is saying. If a teacher is to be successful in these schools on the fringes and in the semi-nomadic parts he must understand the systems of values in which those children are trained and in some way he must guide them away from these systems into ours. Wherever possible I think it would be preferable to use the vernacular at first and later adopt English. That is probably the best way of learning English. In the last few years in this country we have had to set to and teach English to people who did not know the language. The aborigines have different sets of values and it is very difficult for teachers to hold the interest of the children. Their memory deludes us. We think they are understanding things that they do not understand.

MR. HASLUCK.- Would there be any objection if that was altered to read -

.....where practical and the educational needs of the children will best be served.

MR. PEARSON.- I would urge caution. I know that in the back of your mind you feel that it is a long and hard road that must be travelled if we are to make an aboriginal into a white man. I understood Professor Elkin to say that we should educate the aboriginal children in their native tongue. I would not agree with that. Quite a few native children are qualifying for secondary education. If we adopt a special programme for them in the primary stages where will they be when they get to the secondary stage?

MR. HASLUCK.- I could not accept the test of "where practical". We would want to apply tests of what would be best for the child. In the case of 60 per cent. or 70 per cent. of children it may be that the best thing would be to put them in a normal school. In the case of 10 per cent. of children it may be that they would benefit from being placed in a special school. In our own community we have what we call retarded children. It is cruel to put those children into an ordinary school with other children because then they begin to think that they are backward. So we put them into special schools. An opportunity class is a special school.

MR. PERAINS.- I am still of the opinion that this is a retrograde step.

MR. HASLUCK.- Perhaps over-night the officers could look at some way of making paragraph 1. a little more elastic. It is the rigidity of paragraph 1. to which I object. The test must be: What suits the child best?

MR. HILLS.- Will you ask them to frame something complimenting the missions on their work?

MR. HASLUCK.- Yes, I think we should make some reference to the fact that the missions have borne a very great burden in respect of education.

(At 10.10 p.m. the conference adjourned until 9.30 a.m. the following day.)

Friday, 27th January, 1961.

The conference met at 9.30 a.m.

MR. HASLUCK.- The first point to clear is this re-draft of the conclusions on education. Before we commence discussion of it I would suggest a slight amendment. I have already discussed this informally with the New South Wales representative. I suggest that in paragraph (1) we delete the words "and part aboriginal" because the aborigines whom I have in mind are only full bloods in the remote parts of the country. I suggest also that there be an addition to the paragraph which would read -

Aboriginal children should be educated in schools with special curricula and special teaching methods only for as long as the educational authority considers....

That would meet my point completely if it were acceptable to the other Ministers. It leaves the responsibility on each educational authority to make its own decision. With that amendment could we look at the whole statement to see whether it is acceptable?

MR. HILLS.- There would have to be a consequential amendment in paragraph (2) by deleting the word "special" and inserting perhaps the word "such".

MR. HASLUCK.- I hesitate to use the word "separate". Could we say, "where schools with special curricula are needed..."

MR. PEARSON.- I would suggest, "where these are needed".

MR. PORTER.- Why not move up the whole of paragraph (2) and insert it before the sub-paragraph in (1)?

PROFESSOR ELKIN.- In the sub-paragraph could we delete the words "rather than in special schools"? That would eliminate the use of the word "special".

MR. HASLUCK.- Yes. The conclusions would then read -

- (1) Aboriginal children should be educated in schools with special curricula and special teaching methods only for as long as the educational authority considers that they will derive greater benefit from a form of education developed to suit their stage of advancement than they would under the normal curriculum.

Where such schools are needed they should be either conducted or supervised by the authority responsible for aboriginal education.

- (2) Unless this applies, the children should, wherever practicable, be educated in normal schools. This is particularly important for children in higher grades.
- (3) Appreciation of the great burden borne over the years by Missions in the field of education should be recorded.

MR. PORTER.- Could we use the words "is recorded" instead of "should be recorded"?

MR. HASLUCK.- Yes. If we are agreed on that, could I submit to you a draft of a further brief press statement?

MR. PERKINS.- Before we deal with that I should like to make it clear that none of this has any application whatever to Western Australia. We do not contemplate using any authority other than the Education Department. We do not want to cramp your elbow room in any way, but you should realise that it does not have application to Western Australia.

MR. HASLUCK.- I think we appreciate that, and I do not think that the words suggest that any State will necessarily adopt it.

MR. PERKINS.- You should be careful not to imply that some change is likely to be made in Western Australia otherwise it would be extremely embarrassing to us because we have established close liaison with the Education Department to the extent of establishing a special department in it due to the great number of aboriginal children that we have in so many schools throughout the State. If you are giving any publicity or interviews to the press about this you should be careful on that point. We have 3,140 native children in primary schools and 234 in secondary schools, so you can see the magnitude of our problem. We would not contemplate anything outside the Education Department.

MR. GEISE.- Are they all full bloods?

MR. PERKINS.- That does not mean anything. If they have the native characteristics they must be treated

as natives. We do not think about the colour of the skin; it is the capacity and the aptitude of the child that matters. In a State that has had a mixture of whites and natives for a long time it is hard to know where the admixture of blood begins and ends. These are children who have an aboriginal background.

MR. HASLUCK.- We can take care of that in any public statement, but our own records indicate that it is quite clear that no State is undertaking to depart from its existing system.

MR. PORTER.- Factually all States use the Education Department to the exclusion of all else.

MR. HASLUCK.- In the Northern Territory in what we would call the normal schools, both primary and secondary, we have several thousands of coloured children but we do not regard them as aborigines. They are not wards. We have given complete citizenship to all the half bloods. But in addition to that, among people who are mainly still tribal we have a few thousand full bloods going to schools specially designed for children who do not have English as their native language and who do not live in circumstances which enable them to profit immediately from normal instruction. As an example, for those children, who are comparable to some of the desert dwelling children in Western Australia, a substantial part of the curriculum is devoted to things like washing, keeping the nose clean, brushing the teeth, brushing away flies, dressing in decent clothes and eating proper foods at a table. That is part of their education, but it is education that is not normally given in schools attended by white children because they get all that in their homes.

MR. PERKINS.- I should make it clear that in Western Australia, where natives are distributed over the whole State

and where there are some white children at almost all the points who require education, you get something like a research station where there would be an Education Department teacher. When I was there last I think there were nine aboriginal children from Ivanhoe station and four or five whites. You go to Camballan rice project where there are five or six white children and perhaps eighteen or twenty natives. Nullagine is another place. We have a small hostel there, and there would be about twenty white children and about the same number of natives. Then there is Cue, an old mining town where we will be putting in a hostel. It is a three-teacher school. We would have probably 25 white children and 50 or 60 natives, practically all full bloods. You can see the different kind of problem that exists where you have white and native population mixed pretty evenly throughout the State. Down in the southern areas you get places like Gnowangerup in the middle of a good agricultural district, as you know, Mr. Chairman, where a great number of the children at the school are white, but there probably would be 20 to 25 native children at that school spread evenly through the classes.

MR. PORTER. - Mr. Perkins seems to be worried about what might be the reaction in his State if these conclusions were publicized. I think that probably applies in most places. As I see it, the worry arises from the wording of what has now become the second part of the first paragraph, where we say that these schools should be either conducted or supervised by the authority responsible for aboriginal education. If you know the States, you know that the authority is the State Education Department, but it might be of some assistance to Mr. Perkins, and perhaps to some of the rest of us, if we added at the end of that paragraph the words "which in most States is the Education Department". I do not think that would do any harm, and I think it would clear the air a bit.

MR. PERKINS. - That would be a help.

MR. HASLUCK. - I am quite happy about that. To make our own position clear, I think the problem arises because in the

Northern Territory we have embarked upon the schoolroom education of a great number of children who are still living under native tribal conditions, without bringing them into hostels and before we bring them to live under European-style conditions. I think that is the fundamental reason why we still want some liberty of action in deciding whether or not children in that stage need a special type of curriculum and a special type of school. The need for a special type of curriculum relates both to their limited understanding of the field of ideas they themselves have, and also to little practical things such as personal cleanliness and the need to teach them to wash as well as to teach them to read and write. You do not have to teach children in the normal school to blow their noses or to wash; but you do have to teach those things to desert-dwelling children. You also have to teach them how to eat instead of just grubbing for their food like animals. With that addition suggested by Mr. Porter, that is acceptable.

The conclusions, as approved, read as follows:-

(1) Aboriginal children should be educated in schools with special curricula and special teaching methods only for as long as the educational authority considers that they will derive greater benefit from a form of education developed to suit their stage of advancement than they would under the normal curriculum.

Where such schools are needed they should be either conducted or supervised by the authority responsible for aboriginal education which in most States is the Education Department.

(2) Unless this applies, the children should, wherever practicable, be educated in normal schools. This is particularly important for children in higher grades.

(3) Appreciation of the great burden borne over the years by Missions in the field of education is recorded.

(4) Missions should be encouraged to employ only qualified teachers, and assisted, where applicable, by the adoption of the provision introduced in Queensland in 1960, under which teachers of the State Education Department may work for a mission for a period without loss of status or rights in their department.

(5) Mission schools should work on a curriculum approved by the authority responsible for aboriginal education, and should be inspected regularly by that authority.

Item 8.

THE TRAINING AND RECRUITMENT OF WELFARE,
PATROL AND ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS.

The training and recruitment of welfare, patrol and administrative officers. Where appropriate could use be made by State bodies of the Australian School of Pacific Administration?

MR. SWIFT. - The report of the Committee of

Officers reads as follows:-

- (1) Two aspects of this problem were considered:
 - (a) Recruitment and training of officers who will work with primitive or semi-primitive aborigines who still follow tribal habits and customs; and
 - (b) Recruitment and training of officers who will work with aborigines at various stages of contact with and adjustment to European communities.
- (2) The Australian School of Pacific Administration curriculum for officers from the Northern Territory is designed to meet the requirements of the Northern Territory only and as such could not provide the teaching necessary for the States. The cost of establishing a course of study at A.S.O.P.A. to meet the requirements of States and the expense of maintaining students would be excessive.
- (3) In the Northern Territory during the past six years patrol officers and welfare officers have been required to work in both fields. Emphasis, however, in that period has been on the training of officers in the first category because of the relatively large number of aborigines living in primitive and semi-primitive conditions. The trend now is to orient training towards the second category as more and more aborigines are reaching the stage where they can expect to move out into the European community.
- (4) With respect to the recruitment and training of patrol officers, experience in the Northern Territory over the past six years has demonstrated that the majority of the officers recruited for field work should be mature persons and a period of field experience associated with definite on-the-job training should be a prerequisite to full time theoretical study.

5. In Queensland although a need exists for the employment of welfare workers, financial limitations have prevented the commencement of a training scheme.

6. In South Australia emphasis is placed firstly on selection of suitable people. Character considerations together with personality and physical capability are taken into account. The minimum educational requirement is the Intermediate Certificate required for entry into the State Public Service. From experience it has been found that it takes at least 12 months for a welfare worker to gain sufficient confidence for effective work among aborigines and part aborigines.

7. For officers working to assist aborigines and part aborigines to adjust themselves to the European community, the basic training for a social worker is the prime formal qualification required.

8. Officers agreed that while there are common elements of training associated with welfare work in all States and the Territory the recruitment and training of welfare workers is primarily a matter for each State having regard to its particular requirements.

DR. NOBLE. - I think the final words in paragraph 8 sum up this section; this is primarily a matter for each State having regard to its particular requirements. We have no trained social workers in the sense of people who have done a course in social studies at the university, or anything like that. There may be a place in the department for some of these highly-skilled social workers. They are very hard to find, even for our hospital service, at the moment; but as they become available there is no doubt that we will be able to employ some of them in this field. Although we have no welfare officers trained as such on our settlements, we have officers who do quite a good job. All our settlements have their own general hospitals and maternal and child welfare centres. The sisters there have a very close interest in the general care of all the people on the settlements. I am particularly keen that instead of having only white welfare officers, we should endeavour to train some of the more intelligent coloured people to serve in this field. I think there would be a very much closer contact between the coloured people and our own people. That is an aim we should have.

MR. PEARSON. - Our department in South Australia is essentially a welfare department and is designed as such. That is the major part of our work. We have a very good staff of welfare officers and, as I said yesterday, they are able to keep in very close touch with every native family in the State. We agree with the findings of the Committee in regard to the training of officers. I think everyone recognises that you cannot make a welfare officer out of a person who has not a natural aptitude and inclination for the job. He must be temperamentally suited to it and his ideals must be directed towards doing something for these people. It must be his natural bent. Having that in mind, in the absence of any better or more advanced method of training, we concur in the recommendation in respect of this item.

(Continued on page 159).

MR. PERKINS. - I think No. 8 sums it up fairly adequately. The previous discussion has indicated that conditions vary greatly from one part of Australia to another, and so there must be a flexible approach. In Western Australia, we find that the most suitable way to train these officers is to place them, first of all, as juniors attached to the staff of an experienced officer. It is difficult to work out any special line of training. We have to try to pick the most suitable individuals for the work and, if they measure up during this period of work in a junior capacity, it is possible to give them gradual promotion. Many of them qualify quickly if we are lucky enough to pick the right individuals to begin with.

We insist on minimum standards. I think most of our men have the Leaving Certificate and some of them have the equivalent of the Intermediate. The university and the Education Department are co-operating very well indeed in this and before school is resumed a special course is conducted at the university - as I think you know, Mr. Chairman - which all teachers going out to schools where there is a considerable number of aboriginal children, or children with an aboriginal background, are encouraged to attend. Missionaries are also encouraged to attend and Dr. Berndt and other officers of the anthropology department of the university give all these people the background of the problems which they might find owing to the special difficulties of dealing with aborigines. I think No. 8 sums the position up adequately as far as we are concerned.

MR. SMITH. - I think No. 7 is probably the relevant item where Tasmania is concerned. We are using our ordinary services here and are putting a fair bit of emphasis on the training of these people first of all as social workers. If it becomes necessary to have specialists in the field of part-aboriginal work we will want them trained as social workers

and then given special training. It seems to me that there is a danger if you start, especially at this level of welfare workers working with natives who are approaching European standards. There is a danger of developing a number of specialist services which may ultimately lead to difficulties. I think it is in the interests of social work generally that it should become a career service. I think people selected for this kind of work should have the basic social work training so that they can see something beyond the particular branch in which they are at the time.

MR. HILLS. - We agree with the conclusions.

MR. PORTER. - I have nothing further to add.

MR. HASLUCK. - The Commonwealth agrees with the conclusions. I think we can record our agreement with the report by the committee of officers. We come now to item 9, and I will ask Mr. Swift to deal with it first.

Item 9.

ALCOHOL.

MR. SWIFT. - The report of the committee of officers is as follows:-

The Laws and Practice in respect of
Drinking of Alcohol.

<u>State</u>	<u>Restriction</u>	<u>Authority</u>	<u>Penalty</u> (Supply only)
South Australia	Full-bloods and half-castes (i.e. persons of first cross)	Licensing Act	First offence - not more than six months imprisonment or twelve months for subsequent offence. (Fine may be imposed in lieu)

<u>State</u>	<u>Restriction</u>	<u>Authority</u>	<u>Penalty</u>
New South Wales	Any aborigine or person having apparently an admixture of aboriginal blood, unless exempted. (The only offence is to supply to these persons)	Aborigines Protection Act	Fine not exceeding £20 or imprisonment for one month or both
Queensland	Any aborigines under control (including mixed bloods resident on reserves or settlements) or any aborigine under exemption	Liquor Act	Fine not exceeding £50 or to imprisonment not exceeding three months
Northern Territory	Persons who are wards within the meaning of the Welfare Ordinance.	Licensing Ordinance	Imprisonment for six months and not more than one year for first offence; twelve months and not more than two years for subsequent offences. Appeal may lie to Supreme Court if there are mitigating circumstances.
Victoria)	No restrictions		
Tasmania)			

2. In all States (except Tasmania) and the Northern Territory the possession of or consumption of liquor on reserves or settlements and institutions is an offence under the various special laws relating to aborigines or reserves.

Present conditions:

3. South Australia feels that the greater percentage of serious crime amongst aborigines and part aborigines in that State is attributable to the consumption of alcohol. There is an anomaly in that "half-castes" are the only part aborigines to be restricted. Legally this means "first cross" only. In practice, the application of this provision varies. In some parts of the State no part aborigine is restricted; in others all are restricted.

4. New South Wales is of the opinion that the restrictive provision of the Aborigines Protection Act has failed and that it is better that part aborigines have free access to liquor rather than the present position where indulgence in the poor grades of alcohol is common.

the intention was that any person of mixed blood should be considered a "half-caste". That was the usually understood meaning of the term, but in recent years defending counsel have taken the point that a "half-caste" is a person of first cross and that that is the true "half-caste". Having succeeded in maintaining that position as a defence they have broken down our legislation materially under the provisions of the Licensing Act. I hope that explains the latter part of that paragraph. In practice the application of this provision varies. Where our police feel that they can succeed or where they feel they can run the risk of prosecuting a part aborigine, they have a go; but if they feel that he is sophisticated or is employing capable counsel, it is not worth the risk. We desire still to enforce the law as we feel it was intended to be enforced but because of this technicality we have been thwarted on many points. I mention that to explain why that paragraph is worded as it is. However, it does not affect our attitude to the consumption of alcohol by aborigines. We agree wholeheartedly with conclusion No. (1). In fact, we have gone so far as to amend our regulations last year to provide that even the white staff on our government stations are not permitted to have alcohol in their possession except with the written permission of the superintendent on each occasion. We have decided not only to prevent aborigines having alcohol but for our own staff to set an example in that regard. The superintendents of the settlements themselves requested the amendment of the regulations because they felt it would be an example as far as the natives were concerned. We agree with and subscribe to conclusion No. (2). Any exempted aborigines in South Australia have full citizenship rights, including access to alcohol. We also agree with conclusion No. (3). I have personally made representations to the Police Commissioner and he has concurred in my representations that we should press for the apprehension of people who break the law by supplying alcohol to aborigines,

and for the heaviest penalties where charges are laid. I was pleased to notice that at Woomera recently, where a case was heard of an aborigine supplying liquor to other aborigines - which I think resulted in a murder and a suicide, for which I think alcohol was responsible - a penalty of £100 or six months imprisonment was imposed. Conclusion No. (4) contains one new factor; the consideration of measures necessary to bridge the gap. I could agree with the assumption which is contained in that recommendation; that it is necessary somehow to educate aborigines in the use of alcohol.

After all, one cannot be a citizen of a civilized community without being fortified against the temptations of that society and knowing how to live with them and prosper among them. It is therefore necessary to endeavour to educate aborigines to the point where they can take a complete part in all the doings of our society. Just how to do that is an open question in my mind. My Protector, Mr. Bartlett, dropped this on me the other evening and I had to tell him that, as far as sub-paragraph (b) was concerned, I would have to give it deep thought. I do not necessarily want it deleted from the conclusions. I think it could remain there as a matter for further consideration, but I indicate emphatically that I will have to give it a good deal of consideration before taking it up with my Cabinet colleagues. I am prepared to let it remain there as a matter for further consideration.

MR. PERKINS.- The law in Western Australia is that all persons of more than 25 per cent. aboriginal blood are classed as natives and are subject to the restrictions on the supply of alcohol. If they obtain citizenship rights under the special legislation, they are exempted from the act and they do not really come within the ambit of it in any way except that we still recognize a responsibility towards them with respect to welfare. But they are not subject to any restrictions whatsoever once they have applied to the court and obtained their citizenship rights. I think that we have approximately 1,700 or 1,900 with citizenship rights. At any rate, a very considerable number have gone through the legal form of applying to a magistrate and the chairman of the constituted local authority. In the granting of citizenship rights, regard is given to the ability of the native ^{civilized} to live a normal life and also to the effect of alcohol on him. In practice, it is found that some natives while restricted and classed as natives before they get citizenship rights lead a very orderly life and do quite well. The granting of citizenship rights which has subjected them to the temptations of alcohol and particularly to the pressure of their fellowsto obtain alcohol for them to take down to the camps has been the means of degrading some of them. I think that results in a backward step. Due attention is paid to that, and our native welfare officers help any of these people who are thinking of applying for citizenship rights. We encourage them to apply wherever it seems suitable. In the agricultural areas of the State, it is highly desirable that they should if they are earning good money and mixing with the white community quite freely.

The penalties for the supply of alcohol to natives as such are severe in Western Australia, but they are not so severe as are those in the Northern Territory, which seem to be about the most drastic that I have set eyes on for a long time. We have a minimum fine of £20 for a first offence, and that can be stepped up.

MR. HASLUCK.- We have a prison penalty without the option of a fine. It has had a good effect.

MR. PERKINS.- The trouble with minimum penalties is that at times they result in injustice. There have been cases in which the question of a minimum fine has been rather embarrassing. On the other hand, the shocking effects and the resulting crime and general degradation of the natives where alcohol is supplied illicitly, particularly where it gets into the camps, seem to make it necessary to have very severe penalties, and we have heard what has been said about the need to suppress the traffic wherever possible.

In some of the distant areas of Western Australia such as the Murchison district, which extends to the South Australian border in one direction and to the coast in the other, many complaints have been made in the local communities about disorderly conduct and annoyance to the white community as well as to other natives as a result of liquor being taken onto reserves. Quite often, it is possible to pin-point the source of supply. Sometimes, a small country hotel which has a very poor trade otherwise is tempted to supply liquor, and particularly wine at an exorbitant price. This is a very nefarious practice. As Minister for Police as well as Minister in charge of native welfare, I have suggested to our Commissioner of Police that where the publican - the licensee - is unwilling to co-operate with the Police Department, we may even oppose the renewal of the licence. That is a pretty drastic step to take against the publican, but I think it is justified where he is so irresponsible as to try to make a living by exploiting the weakness of people like the aborigines in this regard.

With respect to the conclusions, Mr. Chairman, some difficulties arise. We have no settlements in Western Australia; so the reference to them does not apply. Liquor is not permitted on reserves or institutions. It is not to be taken there either by natives or by other persons who are authorized to be there.

We can agree with conclusions (2) and (3). As I have said, the minimum fine in Western Australia for a first offence of supplying alcohol to natives is £20.

We have some reservations about conclusion (4). I know that this is a very difficult question, and I think it would be all to the good if we could manage to work out some statement which adequately covered our thoughts on this. But it is very difficult to put into words just what our objectives are, particularly in the areas where there are great variations in the stage of development that the natives have reached. In places in Western Australia, there are great numbers of natives who have arrived at the stage at which they are no different from any white person and they can consume alcohol without making any more of a nuisance of themselves than does any white person. But, on the other hand, great abuses arise where persons who have the right to obtain alcohol obtain it, particularly in the form of cheap wines, and take it down to the reserves. In those circumstances, brawls result from the parties that are held. That is the real thing with which we are troubled, and it is no good not being realistic about it.

As I have said, it is very difficult to put into words just what are our objectives in this regard. I think that we shall have to be particularly careful about this item, because the press is inclined to play it up. It will take the sensational parts out of anything that we say, and I think that what is said about alcohol may easily receive more publicity than is given to anything else that is said at this conference. So I think that we ought to be very careful in what we say. I would rather make what may be passed as a wishy-washy statement and be accused of doing just that than make some other statement which would seem more forthright and which, if publicised in an irresponsible way, might be very embarrassing to us all though we have a responsible approach to this question.

MR. HASLUCK.- I think that Mr. Perkins is absolutely right in uttering a word of caution about what the press might do. In a preliminary announcement to the press that this conference was to be held, I stated that the conference would be attended by so many Ministers, that the main subjects for discussion would cover certain ground and that among other particular problems to be discussed would be certain matters which I mentioned and the drinking of alcohol by natives. Several of the newspapers in Australia reported that the right of natives to drink would be the subject of a conference between Federal and State Ministers. I was even more embarrassed when the local newspaper in Port Moresby, this week, devoted a whole page to a report sent by a correspondent in Canberra which stated that an important conference on the right of natives to drink alcohol, called by Mr. Hasluck in Canberra this week, would foreshadow changes to take place in the right of natives to drink in New Guinea. So there is no doubt that this is a dangerous topic.

I do not want to interrupt the flow of discussion, but conclusion (4) is the one on which there may be some reservations and over which there may be some embarrassment. If I may just inject one thought at this stage, it may help. It seems to me that the Committee of Officers has rather thrown the emphasis on teaching the natives how to drink, whereas the real purpose is to teach the natives temperance. I think that if we re-worded this conclusion to make that clear, some of the embarrassment might be overcome.

MR. SMITH.- This item has no application to **Tasmania**; so I do not need to make any comment.

MR. HILLS.- This matter is certainly of some concern in New South Wales, Mr. Chairman. The report of the Committee of Officers sets out the situation in New South Wales and the fines that apply to those people who supply liquor

to aborigines or persons who have apparently an admixture of aboriginal blood, unless they are exempted. I understand that since about 1944 about 1,200 of these people have received certificates of exemption. A number of people who have applied for exemption certificates have been rejected because they consume too much liquor. Sometimes, a person will apply because he wants to be able to drink his liquor legally. So you can see the problems which the Aborigines Welfare Board has been discussing.

You can imagine my concern, as the acting Minister in the absence of the Chief Secretary abroad, in dealing with a problem like this and being asked to subscribe to a resolution that encompasses this broad problem. Conclusion (1) seems to suggest that we want no supervision over the consumption of liquor by aborigines where there is supervision now, but that would be incorrect from the point of view of New South Wales. So I wonder whether we should not exclude all of that conclusion and do as Mr. Perkins has suggested. You cannot handle it if you try to encompass the difficulties of all the States. I think we shall have to say that the conference discussed this all-important question and that, because the circumstances vary from State to State, the matter is one for each individual government to consider. If we start talking about penalties being increased in a way which suggests that New South Wales will be considering that in the very near future, it will appear as if I am supporting increased penalties and will give the impression that I suggest that the restrictions should continue to apply. There are many difficulties, and I presume that, as has been said, each Minister has a local problem.

Without going into the matter very deeply, I say that that is what I am concerned about. I wonder whether instead of arriving at an all-embracing resolution we should

forget all these particular conclusions and say that the matter is one for each individual State and the Commonwealth in the light of the circumstances that apply and that it should be left to the discretion of each individual government.

MR. HASLUCK.- Would you have any objection to a prefatory statement to the effect that Ministers agree on the serious damage which the uncontrolled drinking of liquor can do to the welfare of the aborigines?

MR. HILLS.- If I agreed to that and the New South Wales Government determined that it should do something else, it would immediately say that I had pre-determined the matter for them. If our Government felt that incalculable damage would be done, we would not be justified in amending the law.

DR. NOBLE.- I could not agree, either. We have approximately 40,000 natives in Queensland, of whom 20,000 have complete drinking rights, and we have no trouble except for a few, and there is always a few in any community who cause trouble, whether they are white or black. I would not be prepared to agree.

MR. PORTER.- I could not agree. I have not much to say, because the second conclusion arrived at by the officers is the only one that can possibly have any effect in Victoria. Our view is that much less harm is done by complete freedom than by restriction. That is the basic principle of our dealing with aborigines in our State, and that is where we stand.

Dr. NOBLE. - Perhaps we could say that the various State laws relating to the consumption of liquor by natives were considered by conference and it was felt that the question of any alteration to such laws was a matter for the State governments themselves. The position in Queensland is that any exempt native other than full-bloods is entitled to drink. This means that 20,000 odd are so entitled but 1,000 full-bloods are not. Any alteration to the Queensland law would be a matter for my colleague, the Attorney-General, who administers the Liquor Act. My department and I have been giving some thought to this matter and we will probably make proposals to Cabinet which might or might not be accepted. We feel that in the absence of an exemption certificate, there is no way on earth by which the public can tell the difference between those who are exempt and those who are not when it comes to those who are not exempt on our settlements and those who are very close to assimilation and who are out working in the general community. The feeling of my department is that there should be no restriction on these people when living in the community. Of course, the full-bloods who live in the more populated areas have been exempt for a number of years, and they are doing well. We feel that there should be no restriction on them in connection with liquor but we do suggest that in such parts of the State as the Gulf country and the Cape York peninsula we should be a little more cautious. If any alteration is made to the law - and I emphasise that I cannot say that there will be - we would suggest that a certain area of the State taking in Cape York peninsula and that part down to below Burketown should be excluded and the restrictions retained. We firmly believe that nobody should be permitted to have liquor on reserves, settlements and so on. I am not so happy with penalties generally. We have not the same problems as you have in the Northern Territory and I can see no way by which Queensland would be induced to alter its present penalties.

We cannot agree to controlled canteens in advanced settlements. If people are living on the settlements we say the liquor should not be put under their noses, nor should they be told

that they can have so many drinks a day.

As for education, we have an alcohol campaign in Queensland now. The Health Education Council is now bringing out booklets and pamphlets which are being sent to school teachers and out for general distribution. About two years ago, an all-party committee was appointed to visit the Torres Strait islands. It recommended to the people of the Torres Strait that Torres Strait islanders be allowed to drink on Thursday Island. We propose suggesting to the next triennial council that it might hold a referendum to give the people of the Torres Strait an opportunity to decide for themselves what they want. I have no doubt that they will desire to be able to drink while on Thursday Island but will not want it on their own islands. Some of these people are very wealthy. One of them is worth about £70,000 or £80,000 and I think he imports rum by the case. We do not worry about him because he is a very sensible and shrewd businessman. The feeling of the all-party committee was that these people be allowed to drink on Thursday Island, but not on their own islands, and I think that if a referendum were put to them they would decide in that way.

I cannot see how any government can give any undertaking here and I suggest that any statement made to the press should be of a general nature.

MR. ARCHER.- I am inclined to agree with Mr. Hills that it is most difficult, if not impossible, to generalise on this problem, as we have such a wide variation in conditions. It is important to stress again, however, that when speaking about aborigines in the Northern Territory we have a different problem from those of the States. All our part-coloured people, of whatever caste, are free of restrictions. They are all free to consume liquor. The decision made in 1953 was an important one. From what I can find out, and from my own experience there, I cannot see that it has done any damage at all. On the contrary, I think it has helped a good deal. There has been no marked

increase in crime and there have been no signs of degradation because of it.

MR. PERKINS.- What proportion of coloured blood must they have before they are classed as part-coloured?

MR. ARCHER.- Any proportion.

MR. PERKINS.- Even if they have only 15 per cent of white blood, they are classed as part-coloured?

MR. ARCHER.- They are classed as ordinary Australians.

MR. PEARSON.- Has it had any side effects such as non-payment of rent and neglect of families?

MR. ARCHER.- Generally speaking, it has not. It is no more true to say that about the Northern Territory than it is to say it about any other white community. Generally speaking, they are standing up to their responsibilities quite well. In my opinion, they have advanced materially during the five years I have been in the Northern Territory. They are very much closer to assimilation now. We are putting them into new houses. They are responding very well indeed and are fitting into^{and} being accepted by the community.

The real problem with them is not so much a social one as one of housing. As we get them out of the sub-standard houses into housing commission homes and other special houses that we are building, we are finding the reaction very good. At this stage, I see no reason at all even to reconsider the decision made in 1953 to allow them full citizenship rights including access to liquor.

As legislation ceases to apply to the full-bloods, they also will have full access to liquor. No one will suggest that we will have 100 per cent success with them, but that is a welfare matter. The job of the welfare officers is to keep in touch with these people during that period when they will get real education on the question of drinking.

By and large, I think these conclusions can be accepted in relation to the Northern Territory where conditions

are as I have described. I would have some reservations about No. 4 which would require a good deal of thought. So far, I have not given it any thought at all. Before any conclusions are reached on that form of education, each State will have to give a great deal of thought to the particular conditions existing in the various areas.

Mr. PERKINS. - Are those persons who are declared wards in the Northern Territory all full-bloods?

Mr. ARCHER. - There is a provision that a part-coloured person can apply to be declared a ward of the State. The Government cannot take the initiative. If a person feels he needs it, he must make application. He can only be declared a ward on his own application and by the Administrator-in-Council.

Mr. PORTER. - Do you get many applications of that nature?

Mr. ARCHER. - Very few. I think we have had three.

Mr. HASLUCK. - Would it be correct to say that the three applications came from chaps who were on missions or closely attached to some place for aborigines and who did not want to go out into the world?

Mr. GIESE. - Two were from men on pastoral properties and one from a native on a mission station.

Mr. HASLUCK. - Having listened to the discussion, it seems to me that there is a division in the council - not a serious one - and it is extremely improbable that we could get the necessary measure of agreement to adopt all these conclusions. To narrow the discussion down, I ask whether any Minister present wants to suggest that these conclusions be adopted, or whether conference is prepared to meet on some central common ground and make a general statement along the lines of the suggestions put forward by Mr. Hills and Dr. Noble. If anyone feels strongly on the subject, and would like to discuss the need to adopt something of the sort before us, we should get that over first. If no one wants to make such advocacy, we can arrive at a quick decision

on an alternative conclusion.

MR. PEARSON.- As I said earlier, nos. 1, 2 and 3 fit into our practice, so it is easy for me to say that they are satisfactory. I did say that I have very serious reservations about No. 4, and I said what I did only because I do not want to convey the impression that my thinking, or that of my Government, is static. I cannot help but agree with Mr. Perkins who has raised the question of the danger of making specific statements because conditions are so different in the various States that they cannot be a true representation of the position and that extracts could be taken out of their context and used unwisely. I am inclined to say that I would certainly agree to the preparation of a general statement for public relations purposes which does not bind anybody and which does not involve the conference in a pronouncement which could be misconstrued.

MR. HASLUCK.- As for the Commonwealth Government, my attitude is similar to that of Mr. Pearson. We would be prepared to subscribe publicly to Nos. 1, 2 and 3, but as that would not suit all Ministers present, we would be quite agreeable to shaping a new text of a more general character.

(Continued on page 176.)

What I suggest is that at this stage we ask a small group of officers - perhaps from New South Wales and Western Australia, with Mr. Swift - to retire and prepare something which might be re-submitted at 11.15, after morning tea, and in the meantime the rest of us could go on with the next item.

DR. NOBLE.- I think it should be of an entirely general nature. Once we give anything specific, we will be asked what else we discussed. It is a very important matter and I think if you want to get something through with public approval, you must take it slowly in your own State to gauge the feeling in the State. Anything specific could do harm.

MR. PORTER.- Having achieved complete freedom in Victoria, I do not want any thought to arise that we may be going backwards.

MR. HASLUCK.- Then we will excuse Mr. Swift for a while to have a first go at drafting a paragraph on the lines indicated by Mr. Hills and Dr. Noble, and perhaps during the morning tea adjournment he could show it to the other officers and bring it back to us at 11.15. In the meantime we will go on with the next item.

Item 10

FUTURE CO-OPERATION AND CONSULTATION BETWEEN THE COMMONWEALTH AND STATE IN NATIVE WELFARE.

Under this item the question whether any permanent machinery of consultation and co-operation is required might be considered.

MR. HASLUCK.- The report of the Committee of Officers is as follows:-

The Conference of Commonwealth and State Ministers on Native Welfare, held in Canberra on the 3rd and 4th September, 1951, agreed to the following resolution -

"In order to promote closer co-operation in the advancement of native welfare in Australia, the Commonwealth and the State Governments will form a Native Welfare Council composed of the Ministers concerned with native welfare. This Council will meet at least once a year and will arrange other consultations or the examination of particular problems of native administration as required. The Commonwealth Department of Territories will provide a Secretariat for this Council."

2. The first meeting of the Native Welfare Council was held at Canberra on the 29th September, 1952. The main items listed for discussion concerned citizenship status, social services benefits, health, education, employment of aborigines, Government and mission stations, and the franchise. Owing to the inability of State Ministers to attend the Conference a meeting of senior officials was held with the Minister for Territories as Chairman and agreed to a series of statements on social services, health and employment.

3. The Council has not met since. Arrangements were made for a meeting in November, 1954, but these were abandoned because of the difficulty of ensuring attendance of all States during State Parliamentary sessions.

4. The Native Welfare Council was formed in an endeavour to develop a common native welfare policy, and to establish closer Commonwealth-State co-operation and mutual assistance to that end. While the executive responsibility in native affairs was to remain with each of the Governments in respect of its own territory, it was hoped that practical and effective proposals for nation-wide action would emerge out of the discussions of the Council. The resolution quoted at paragraph 1 above recognised the need for an organisation to provide for closer co-operation among Australian Governments on all aspects of native welfare and to foster the adoption of national policies.

Conclusions

- (1) The committee notes the recommendation of the 1951 Conference, but considers that an annual conference at this stage is unnecessary.
- (2) The committee considers that there should be a biennial conference of Ministers and officials of the Commonwealth and States, such conferences to be held in each State in turn except Tasmania, and to be of about one week's duration.
- (3) The State acting as host for the Conference will provide the Secretariat for the Conference and will initiate arrangements for such Conference.
- (4) The committee agreed that there was a need for officials from the various States and the Commonwealth to keep each other informed on all matters affecting aboriginal welfare, but that there was no need to set up any particular machinery for co-operation of this nature.

MR. PERKINS.— I think we can accept these recommendations. It is a moot point as to how often these conferences should be held. I understand it is a long time since one was held. I have been Minister for Native Welfare now for almost two years since the change of government in Western Australia, and I think it is a big help to meet the Ministers from the other States and the officers dealing with these

problems. Even if conditions varied considerably and though we may not entirely agree with what is being done in another State, it does broaden the background and help us to deal with our own problem. I think the recommendations are realistic and Western Australia would be willing to co-operate.

MR. SMITH.- From the point of view of the venue of conferences, I am quite sure Tasmania would be glad to have a conference there. However, I think the feeling at the meeting of officers was that there was advantage in going to the State where special facilities could be seen. From that aspect, it would be quite silly to go to Tasmania. However, I would not like it to be thought that Tasmania is not an hospitable State.

MR. HILLS.- We agree with the recommendations. I think all of us appreciate the opportunity we have had to exchange ideas in the last couple of days, and I know the officers during their preliminary discussions found some advantage in meeting together.

MR. PORTER.- I am quite happy to accept the conclusions and recommendations of the officers. I and the officers of my department have been able to learn something from discussions with others interested in these problems in other States.

DR. NOBLE.- Queensland will fall in with the general idea of the conference. We found this conference had very great value in the exchange of ideas. As I see it, these changes in native affairs take place slowly and I am wondering whether biennial conferences would be too frequent to note any change. However, we would be quite happy to fall in with the general idea.

MR. PEARSON.- I agree. I was going to take the other view. I rather think that two years could be too infrequent rather than too frequent. I have two reasons for saying that. The officers do not suffer the occupational hazards of their Ministers, so it may be boring for them to meet frequently.

But with the Ministers, even if we had a conference each year we would probably not see the same faces. A conference of this nature is of inestimable value for new Ministers, and for those returning from time to time there is still value in having a conference reasonably frequently. Although as Dr. Noble said, changes in the past may have taken place rather slowly, I venture the opinion that they will accelerate some from now on, at least for the next few years. We must bear in mind from the public relations point of view, both in Australia and outside, this is becoming a black man's world. Our attention to these matters, even by way of conference, does not do any harm and may help you, Mr. Chairman, with public relations overseas if you were able to make a statement as emanating from a conference. I agree with the conclusions but instead of being every two years I think it should be each year. The Australian Agricultural Council meets more frequently than once a year, and does so quite smoothly because they know that they will meet. The Ministers make provision in their diaries for those occasions.

MR. HASLUCK.- The Commonwealth accepts these conclusions. On the question of whether there should be a conference once a year or every two years, we have no fixed idea. If Ministers thought that a conference once a year was more desirable, we would fall in with that quite readily. One point that Mr. Pearson made does appeal to me, and that is the fact that the conference makes a public demonstration both in Australia and in the world at large of an active and continuing interest in this problem at the highest level. I think it does have some value to have that public demonstration that we think this is something worth meeting about, worth considering and worth co-operating in.

MR. HILLS.- My only concern is that your former decision was to meet annually and you have not been able to get the Ministers together. You would not want the same situation

to develop again.

MR. HASLUCK.- One of the major difficulties that arose over the previous decision has been removed by the action taken by my colleague the Minister for Social Services. At our first conference in 1951, we agreed that we would meet annually. In 1952, when it was proposed that we should meet - I will not tell tales out of school - more than one Minister when I raised the question of meeting said, "If you will promise to do such and such about social services, we will come; otherwise we will not come." It was as blunt as that. That obstacle has been removed, but no doubt there may be other problems that will arise. One difficulty is to find a convenient time which suits all Ministers. It is true that nearly all Ministers have other portfolios besides that relating to native affairs. As Minister for Territories, native affairs is just one of 20 or 30 subjects with which I deal. I think that every one around the table has another portfolio or perhaps two portfolios. That difficulty may be overcome if, as Mr. Pearson suggests, we could say in advance that we would hold a conference at a certain period of the year. Ministers could then plan accordingly. I think the one outstanding matter for decision is whether we meet yearly or every second year.

MR. PERKINS.- It depends on what time you can fix. Next year will be difficult for us; we will be holding an election then, in the normal run of things. I think you will have to pay due regard to that. It would be undesirable for a government, not knowing whether it would be re-elected, to commit its successor. The two years seems a practical approach. Where change is taking place, consultation on some of these matters could be desirable. In Western Australia, there are some very big changes taking place. If something interesting is developing, I would be very happy to invite Ministers and officers from other States to visit us. There would not be

much point in having a conference in Western Australia unless we could arrange for you to see some of the changes and developments that are taking place. You might just as well come to a central point in the eastern States. We do not like travel and I do not suppose other Ministers do. Melbourne, Sydney and Canberra fare so well in arranging these matters because they are central points. I am inclined to think that two years is a realistic time. If you try to hold conferences more frequently than that, you may run into some of the difficulties already referred to and find that some Ministers would refuse to attend.

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I think that if we agree to have a conference we should see that we attend it.

MR. HASLUCK.- Very well, the conclusions presented by the committee are accepted.

Item 11. FURTHER STUDY OR RESEARCH IN RESPECT OF PARTICULAR PROBLEMS THAT MAY ARISE IN SUCH FIELDS AS HEALTH, NUTRITION, EDUCATION, HOUSING, VOCATIONAL TRAINING.

MR. SWIFT.- The report of the Committee of Officers is as follows:-

Health and Nutrition

It was appreciated that while further research into health problems is necessary, the most urgent need in this field is to educate the aborigines and part aborigines in an understanding of the basic requirements of health, e.g. personal hygiene, preparation of meals, feeding of infants, and pre and post natal care.

2. In the Northern Territory it was stated that research is needed into the incidence, control and cure of leprosy, and extension of survey work on anaemia and nutritional disease amongst aboriginal children. The committee noted the statement by Dr. Crick that this and other work was continuing to the limit of available skilled medical personnel.

3. The officers suggest that the National Health and Medical Research Council should be asked to discuss particular fields in which further research in this field may be carried on either separately by the States or in co-operation, and initiate any projects considered to be necessary.

Social Sciences

4. Some fields in which further research work might assist administering authorities are -

Education

- (a) Can the teaching of English to aboriginal children be assisted by teaching in the vernacular in the introductory stages?
- (b) The development of valid measuring instruments as an aid to teaching and curricula.
- (c) The nature of the curriculum for aboriginal children in the process of transfer from settlement schools to normal schools.

Employment and Vocational Training

- (a) The types of jobs in which aborigines are at present engaged, their proficiency at these tasks and their earnings from them.
- (b) The size location and skills of the aboriginal labour force and the extent and diversity of jobs available to provide employment now or in the future.

(The committee noted that some work has recently been done in South Australia on this subject by Mrs. F. Gale and Mrs. J. Inglis, and considered that when available these reports should be seen before any further work is planned on it).

Social Organisation and System of Values

Social Change

- (a) Are the present measures to induce social change among aborigines on settlements and elsewhere designed to give the best results?
- (b) What factors, if any, in present aboriginal customs and tribal life inhibit social change, for example, initiation, marrying of pubescent girls, polygamy?
- (c) What are the factors which inhibit the acceptance by Australian communities of part aboriginal and aboriginal persons?

Demographic Surveys

- (a) The composition of the Australian aboriginal population and the influence which this will have on future health, education, training and employment needs.
- (b) Analysis of infant mortality among aboriginal groups. In this connection it is most important that all native welfare authorities maintain accurate vital statistics that will provide information on the need for and the effect of development of health and infant welfare services for aborigines.

5. The committee considered that this work should be done primarily by University workers. It considered that the Social Science Research Council might be asked to put the suggested topics before appropriate University Authorities, but it was stressed that much more value would be likely to result if the projects were given to senior research workers rather than newly graduated students.

General

6. In the course of the discussions two suggestions were made -

- (a) Directors of the State Authorities and the Northern Territory should inform each other of research projects on subjects related to aboriginal welfare which they learn are being carried out in their State, and of where the results of such research work can be obtained, and
- (b) the Department of Territories should consult the Bureau of Census and Statistics to seek suggestions on the way in which the State Authorities and the Northern Territory might present the statistics in their report to facilitate comparisons, and should pass any suggestions to the State Directors and the Northern Territory Administration.

MR. HASLUCK.- This item deals with further study and research into particular problems. I do not think it calls for any great discussion.

MR. SMITH.- We would fully support any programme along the lines indicated in the report.

MR. HILLS.- We can accept these suggestions. We will have them referred to our officers and to the board.

MR. PORTER.- I am inclined to the view that Victoria is not greatly concerned with many of the problems associated with native welfare. We are concerned with a very small number of part-aborigines and I can see nothing in these recommendations that will not be of assistance to everybody here.

DR. NOBLE.- I think we can accept all of these things. This is a matter for co-operation between the States and Queensland will be quite happy to do her part.

MR. PEARSON.- These are matters of a technical nature and they would best be discussed by departmental officers and people with technical qualifications. I have no quarrel with any of the recommendations. I accept them.

(Continued on page 185)

MR. PERKINS. - These are fairly general matters and I do not think there is anything that need concern us except the thought behind them. The question of census and statistics is an important one, and discussions that we have had here rather highlight the fact that comparisons referred to will inevitably be difficult to make. Whatever you contemplate in that regard you have a mental reservation that what is classed as a coloured person in the Territory, for instance, in another State, particularly in a State like Western Australia, has all the problems of a full-blooded aborigine. It is highlighted by the fact that there are many part coloured people in Western Australia - there could be some with only 40 per cent. native blood - who are a very much greater problem than the full bloods and who live a more depressed kind of life than do the people of practically pure native blood.

We in Western Australia do not look so much at the question of how much native blood they have in their veins but rather at their living conditions and their characteristics. If they are living as natives you have to apply the same technique to them as you do to the person of 100 per cent. native blood.

Then arises the kind of problem which confronts us of the tendency of people in the community to regard the aborigines differently from the way in which we regard them. In the States where there are a lot of natives, a number of them live in sub-standard conditions. The discussions that we have had have highlighted the fact that an improvement in housing is the real way to uplift these people and to bring about real assimilation. I shall not make another speech to thrash you, Mr. Chairman, on the need for special assistance for housing. I am merely stating facts. Because the depressed living conditions of the native people on the outskirts of civilization have for too long been characteristic

of them, the tendency has arisen for people in the community, when they see very poor camp conditions, to adopt the attitude that a native must be living there. There are many undesirable camps on the outskirts of Derby, a Kimberley town. The local authorities circularized all Ministers - all the papers eventually finished up on my table - detailing the very undesirable conditions that exist around Derby, and a full set of photographs was enclosed. The circular implied that it was the responsibility of the Government to do something about the position. When I came to investigate the matter closely and had our officers on the spot report on it, I found that a large percentage of the people who had raised the matter had nothing at all to do with native welfare. Some of the places belong to prominent citizens in the town and the people living in them are employed by others. That is an example of the difficulty that arises, but I use it to illustrate that you will have to exercise considerable care on the question of comparative statistics.

We shall do as has been suggested and shall make the information available, but I think it is necessary to recognize, in the varying conditions which have been mentioned as a result of this conference, that discretion must be exercised in using the statistics otherwise you could fall into very serious errors.

MR. HASLUCK. - Thank you, Mr. Perkins. The Commonwealth is prepared to accept these conclusions. The only comment I make is that they seem to me to be perhaps a little narrow. There has been a tendency - I think it is revealed in this paper perhaps more than in any of the others that have been before us - to think of the problem of assimilation as mainly a problem of assimilating the full bloods and, broadly speaking, the more primitive of the full bloods in Australia.

On reflection, I am quite sure that all of us who are engaged in this job will admit that the really difficult problem and the problem in which you are not quite certain what is the right thing to do is among the groups of people who are just on the fringe of coming into our society. The full blood out in the desert is a comparatively simple matter; you know fairly clearly what you can do and what you should do. But when you come to these groups of people which we all, even Victoria, have - the people who are living in our community or just on the fringe of our community - you have to make a further step possible for them and there you are up against some really difficult problems. I hope that in adopting this proposal for research into social change we have in our minds a conception that a good deal of the research might be made into those people who are the fringe dwellers; they are very close to our community, but not quite of it. I think that applies to all parts of Australia including places like Victoria which do not have any people officially classed as aborigines but have people who have special problems. I think we can all agree to accept the conclusions that have been presented.

PROFESSOR ELKIN.- When I was agreeing in the previous debates on this question of social change, I was thinking mainly of the very people you are talking about. Certain work is going on amongst them now. It seems to be becoming a rather popular occupation to do research work on those very people rather than on the others.

MR. HASLUCK.- Having accepted item 11, we can now go back to the redraft of the conclusions under item 9.

Item 9. ALCOHOL (continued)

MR. HASLUCK.- I shall read this draft and then ask for your comments. It reads -

The Conference considered the laws of those States and the Northern Territory which limit the supply to or consumption of alcohol by aborigines.

The discussion brought out clearly that conditions in the States in which some limitation still applies vary greatly and that therefore a common policy throughout Australia is at this stage not possible and may be undesirable.

The matter is one that should be decided by each Government concerned.

(Draft approved.)

As you have all approved the draft, that concludes item 9.

We have reached the end of our agenda, but there are one or two small points we may need to attend to. First of all, the formal record of the conference, which will be edited by my department in conjunction with the "Hansard" staff, will be sent to every State. It will not be sent until after we receive from Western Australia the additional information which that State has promised to forward in respect of each of the items. I think we might arrange for there to be the opportunity, when the record is first sent, for any State Minister to submit corrections before it is put in its final form. Quite often in editing, remarks may be misreported or misinterpreted. We will send it out to give Ministers the opportunity to correct their remarks, and then put the record in its final form.

MR. PORTER.- Can you give us any indication of when we might receive that record?

MR. HASLUCK.- Mr. Swift informs me that we could send the "Hansard" report within a matter of days and have the speeches corrected, but the complete report incorporating these documents and the extra information from Western Australia may take a little longer to prepare. I suggest that the record, when it is in its final form, should be regarded as a governmental document and not a public document. I mention that because in our own Parliament and possibly in your Parliaments questions will be asked and requests will be made to table it. I think we should have a uniform understanding as to whether it is a public document or a governmental document.

MR. PERKINS.- Perhaps we could decide that it cannot be tabled without the consent of all the other States.

MR. HASLUCK.- Yes, we might record our decision in that way.

MR. PEARSON.- That is the normal procedure of the Agricultural Council and it works very satisfactorily.

MR. HASLUCK.- The next point is that we have decided that there shall be another conference in two years' time; that is, in or about January, 1963. Does any State Minister feel free to issue an invitation to the conference, or is that a matter which we should leave for future discussion at the initiative of the Department of Territories when we come nearer to the time of the holding of the conference?

MR. PERKINS.- As conditions vary very greatly, if the other States and the Commonwealth think that a visit to Western Australia would be of value, we would be only too happy to issue an invitation and to try to organize the conference at that time so that something could be seen of the rather peculiar problems that exist in our area.

MR. HILLS.- We would have been only too happy to extend an invitation, but we defer to Western Australia.

MR. PORTER.- I think all the States would be quite happy to act as host. We thought we could leave it to the senior State first and then take it in some sort of rotation; but we are quite happy.

MR. HASLUCK.- I think we might gratefully acknowledge and accept the invitation from Western Australia to have the next bi-ennial conference in that State. The fixing of the time would be a matter for consultation between the Department of Territories and the Western Australian department.

MR. PERKINS.- Would you like us to circulate our papers to each of the other Ministers? Is it necessary for the other Ministers to see them before you incorporate them in the record?

MR. HASLUCK.- I do not think other Ministers would want to vet them before they were incorporated in the report of the conference. It is a matter of your own convenience whether at the same time as you send them to the Department of Territories for inclusion in the record of the conference you send duplicate copies to the State Ministers.

MR. PERKINS.- I did not think it was really necessary, but as we have caused you some inconvenience by not having them here we are anxious to minimize any further inconvenience, if any action such as that will do so.

MR. HASLUCK.- Perhaps the Ministers would be quite satisfied to receive them when they receive the full report of the conference.

MR. PORTER.- I think so.

MR. HASLUCK.- We have now come to the end of the business with a few minutes to spare. Before we close I think I should, on your behalf, say a word of appreciation to the Committee of Officers for the way they have prepared the material for this conference which has greatly simplified our work. I think our endorsement of so much of what they have done is an indication of our confidence in the standard of their work. I think we should also express our appreciation to the "Hansard" staff who have co-operated in making the record of the conference, and to the other people in Parliament House and other Commonwealth Departments who, although not directly concerned, have helped to make the conference the substantial success that I feel it has been. I really believe the conference has proved itself well worth-while and we will gather the benefits of it more and more as the months go by.

MR. HILIS.- Mr. Chairman, may I, on behalf of all present, move a vote of thanks to you in your capacity of Chairman and convenor of this conference. First, in your capacity of convenor, we appreciate the opportunity to come together. Mention

has been made around this table of the advantages that will accrue to all parts of the Commonwealth and the advantages that have accrued to us delegates and the officers of the various departments who are present. In your capacity as chairman you have shown great tolerance to all of us around the table. You have shown your capacity to handle people with divergent views and resolve them satisfactorily. We sincerely thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. PEARSON.- I do not desire to intrude anything mundane into this very happy atmosphere; but when we get back to our cities we will all be besieged by the local press for reports on this conference. Could you, as soon as is convenient, let us have copies of the press statements that have been released? We could then quite safely hand them to the local pressmen and say, "These are the findings of the conference." I think that would be helpful to all of us. It would overcome any difficulty that might arise from the Sydney press ringing the Adelaide press and asking, "What did you get from the South Australian Minister?" That will happen.

MR. HASLUCK.- It will be necessary to issue a further press statement summarising the matters with which we have dealt this morning.

DR. NOBLE.- I am afraid that I must ask to be excused. I think ^{one of} the great values of these conferences is that one gets to know all the officers from the various States who are concerned with these matters, which makes co-operation all the easier. Thank you very much for the conference.

MR. HASLUCK.- If you are prepared to trust me to issue this press statement, I suggest that I might issue the conclusions on liquor in the form in which we agreed to them and the concluding paragraph of the report on item 8 which states that while there are common elements of training associated with welfare work in all States and the Territory, the recruitment and training of welfare workers is primarily a matter for each State having regard to its particular requirements. On item 10 we could

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issue those conclusions in the form in which they were agreed to in respect of the holding of future conferences. In regard to item 11, there may be some value in issuing that report in extenso. If you agree, I think there might be some value in my adding a few words to the press statement to the effect that the conference had revealed the very large amount of work that is in fact being done throughout Australia on various aspects of aboriginal welfare. I could include a brief extract from the reports given by the various States, with some of the favourable figures, just so that they get the picture that we, as Governments, are really on the job and have made some progress in this field. If you will leave that to me, I will try to do it this afternoon. We can give you immediately full sets of what has been issued to date and we will send you copies of the other statement.

MR. PEARSON.- Some of us will not be leaving until this afternoon, so copies of all the press statements may be available before we leave.

MR. HASLUCK.- We will do what we can in that regard.

MR. PERKINS.- To help you in preparing the press statement, we will make available the material that Mr. Middleton has prepared, which will leave only the material that I have just been talking about to be issued in typewritten form.

MR. HASLUCK.- Thank you, gentlemen;

The conference concluded at 11.45 a.m.
