ABORIGINAL WELFARE CONFERENCE
OF COMMONWEALTH AND STATE MINISTERS
PERTH - 1967

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ABORIGINAL WELFARE CONFERENCE - 1967

REPRESENTATIVES

COMMONWEALTH

The Hon. C.E. Barnes, M.P.  Minister for Territories.

NEW SOUTH WALES

The Hon. E.A. Willis, M.L.A.  Chief Secretary, Minister of Labour and Industry and Minister for Tourist Activities.

VICTORIA

The Hon. E.R. Meagher, M.B.E.  Minister of Housing and E.D., M.L.A.  Minister in Charge of Aboriginal Affairs.

QUEENSLAND

The Hon. J. Bjelke-Petersen, M.L.A.  Acting Minister for Education.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

The Hon. R.R. Loveday, M.L.A.  Minister for Aboriginal Affairs.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA


In Attendance:

COMMONWEALTH

Mr. R.S. Swift, O.B.E.  Deputy Secretary, Department of Territories.

Mr. L.F. Hennessy  Welfare Section, Department of Territories.

Mr. F.H. Moy, M.B.E.  Welfare Section, Department of Territories.

Mr. H.C. Giese, M.B.E.  Director of Social Welfare, Northern Territory.

Mr. A.C. Sellwood  Director Policy, Department Social Services.

Dr. R.H.C. Wells  
Assistant Director-General, Commonwealth Department of Health.

Mr. W.L. Perry  
Private Secretary to the Minister for Territories.

**STATES**

Mr. A.G. Kingsmill  
Chairman Aborigines' Welfare Board, New South Wales.

Mr. H.J. Green  
Superintendent of Aborigines' Welfare, New South Wales.

Mr. J.H. Davey  
Chairman Aborigines' Welfare Board, Victoria.

Mr. J.P. Gaskin  
Director of Housing and Member of Aborigines' Welfare Board, Victoria.

Mr. P.E. Felton  
Superintendent of Aborigines' Welfare, Victoria.

Mr. P.J. Killoran  
Director of Aboriginal and Island Affairs, Queensland.

Mr. B.M. Combe  
Secretary to Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, South Australia.

Mr. C.J. Millar  
Director of Aboriginal Affairs, South Australia.

Mr. P.E. Gare  
Commissioner of Native Welfare, Western Australia.

Mr. G.A. Albutt  
Secretary.
ABORIGINAL WELFARE CONFERENCE
OF COMMONWEALTH AND STATE MINISTERS
AT PARLIAMENT HOUSE, PERTH,
ON FRIDAY, 21ST JULY, 1967

Item No.1. Opening by The Hon. E.H.M. Lewis,
Minister for Native Welfare and Education

MR. LEWIS: When we had our last conference on aboriginal welfare in Adelaide two years ago it was agreed that the next conference would be held in Perth, and therefore as the local Minister for Aboriginal Welfare -- or Native Welfare as we call it in Western Australia -- it was my responsibility to arrange the holding of this conference and to advise you all of the arrangements which would be mutually acceptable to all Ministers attending. Officially, that is the end of my responsibility up to this point. I believe it will be your first duty to elect a chairman to preside over the proceedings, but before doing that might I, on behalf of the Government of Western Australia, extend a very warm welcome to all of you to this sunny State of Western Australia. I understand it will be sunny for at least part of the day because rain has been forecast for later in the day. However, you will appreciate, if it does rain, that this is our rainy season and if we did not get rain this month it would be a very poor outlook for the State. Nevertheless, this year, seasonally, looks like being a good one for this State.

I extend a welcome to you all, particularly the Commonwealth Minister, the Minister for Territories, The Hon. C.E. Barnes, and his officers. We have also the Minister for Social Services, The Hon. Ian Sinclair, who has indicated that his colleagues are busily engaged in drawing up the Budget. No doubt the amount they are going to channel off for aboriginal welfare to all the States.
of Australia, including the Northern Territory, is engaging their most serious attention at the moment.

Then I want to welcome, in order of State seniority, The Hon. E.A. Willis, Chief Secretary and Minister of Labour and Industry and Tourist Activities in New South Wales; The Hon. E.R. Meagher, M.B.E., E.D., Minister of Housing and Minister in Charge of Aboriginal Affairs in Victoria; The Hon. J. Bjelke-Peterson, Acting Minister for Education and Aboriginal Affairs in Queensland, and who is the Minister for Housing and Works, I think it is; The Hon. R.R. Loveday, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Education in South Australia, and we have also apologies from The Hon. J.C.A. Pizzey, Minister for Education and Aboriginal Welfare in Queensland who is overseas and has not yet returned, and Mr. Miller, Chief Secretary of Tasmania who found that owing to his legislative programme at the last moment was not able to attend. I also want to record an apology for Mr. Roger Dean. I know I am a little out of order in mentioning these apologies because there is an item in the proceedings for these at a later stage. Professor P. Elkin is also not here. He has been an old friend for aboriginal welfare for many years. He was present at my first conference at Darwin in 1963 and I know he had attended conferences before then.

Before you you will find agendas and the deliberations of the Officers' Conference which preceded this one. In the blue sheet you will find the agenda for today, and on the green sheet which appears a little overleaf you will find the agenda of the Officers' Conference and their deliberations which appear right through.
I think you will find it quite easy to refer to the deliberations they have made.

There are one or two points about today's arrangements. First of all we will adjourn for luncheon about 12.30 p.m. and liquid refreshments will be made available in the ministerial room just below this one on the floor below. We will then adjourn to the Cabinet Room for luncheon and I hope that the officers as well as the Ministers will join me at lunch.

We will have morning tea in the corridor just outside this room at 10.30 a.m. and afternoon tea at 3.30 p.m. After the conference concludes this afternoon -- I say "concludes" hopefully -- liquid refreshments will be served in the main corridor outside the Cabinet dining room. Telephone facilities are available for those who need them a little further along this corridor, and toilet facilities are straight across the corridor, first door to the left.

I think that is all that need be mentioned in regard to the formal arrangements for today. I also want to extend a very cordial welcome to the officers who are attending on their respective Ministers. We are always very appreciative of the ground work the officers put in on the eve of these conferences and so prepare the ground and make it easy for the Ministers to arrive at their deliberations on the day of their conference.

I believe that Major General Sir William Refshauge wishes to extend an apology for his Minister today. Before we proceed I will call on Sir William and then I will leave it to you to elect your Chairman.

SIR WILLIAM REFSHAUGE: The Commonwealth Minister for Health, the Hon. A.J.F. Forbes, asked me to...
convey to you, Sir, and the members of the conference, his apologies for not being able to attend here today. As late as yesterday afternoon he was unable to defer some rather important negotiations he had to undertake today. In asking me to convey to this conference his sincere regrets, he wanted me to express his disappointment in not being able to attend because of his particular interest in aboriginal welfare and, in particular, aboriginal health, for which he is responsible in the Northern Territory.

MR. BARNES: I also apologise for my colleague, Mr Ian Sinclair, the Minister for Social Services. Likewise, Mr. Sinclair regretted very much that he was unable to attend with Dr. Forbes and all of us. We were concluding our annual budget discussion, and I think all Ministers realise the importance of these things, and at least for the moment, he found he was unable to come which he very much regrets.

MR. BJELKE-PETERSEN: As you mentioned, Mr. Lewis, Mr Pizzey, whom I represent today, is unable to attend, and I think we can blame the Middle East crisis for this. The ship on which he was travelling had to go round Africa and he extends his apologies as you have mentioned.

MR. LEWIS: As all apologies have been received and recorded, it is now your duty to elect your Chairman to preside at this conference.

MR. WILLIS: I think we would all be delighted and honoured if you would accept that office, Mr. Lewis.

MR. LEWIS: If there are no other nominations I accept the appointment and thank you for conferring that honour upon me and I will do my best to chair the

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proceedings.

I do not want to be too formal, but I feel constrained to say that this could be one of the most momentous conferences we have held over the years. As you know, the results of the recent referendum have cleared the way for greater Commonwealth-State co-operation. This is not to infer we have not had co-operation from the Commonwealth in the past, but at least the Prime Minister has announced that the results of the referendum would lead, he hoped, to greater co-operation and a more effective policy in aboriginal welfare throughout the Commonwealth. We are one people, whether we belong to a State or whether we happen to be living in Commonwealth territory, and this is a problem common to all of us.

I do not know what Mr. Barnes might have to announce to us today. Probably it is too early to expect any definite announcement from the Commonwealth, but I know that on our agenda there is plenty of scope for us to consider what further help the Commonwealth might be able to give to the States.
THE CHAIRMAN (continuing): I think this is probably the most important item on our agenda. I dare-say the discussions will be of an exploratory nature, but at least I hope they pave the way to a new dawn so far as aborigines in Australia are concerned.

Without wasting any more time, we will proceed to agenda item No. 3. I would ask the Press to leave because this is a closed conference. A joint statement will be prepared and handed to them later.

Item No. 3: Reports from the State and Commonwealth authorities (Officers' Standing Committee Agenda Item 5).

THE CHAIRMAN: You will find in front of you the deliberations of the officers' conference. First there are the two blue sheets comprising the agenda for this meeting; and then there is the white sheet immediately under it. You will notice that agenda item No. 3 is taken from the officers' agenda item No. 5. The full report of the officers is in this part of the agenda, and the recommendations made to this meeting are shown on the white sheet. We have the following submission from the officers' standing committee:

The conference of officers considered the reports from each of the States, the Northern Territory, the Commonwealth Health Department and the National Health and Medical Research Council and submits the reports to the Ministers.

I do not know how many Ministers have read through the reports, but I did some homework last night, and having read through them it was interesting and refreshing to note that the progress towards assimilation is moving forward in all States. From my reading of the reports there is something new to be learned from all the States. I have been in this game long enough - certainly for a period of five years - not to be dogmatic and say that...
our State or any State is treading the perfect path towards assimilation. It is largely a case of trial and error. We follow our respective policies, because we believe them to be right, but we cannot always be sure.

With this question of assimilation I am always conscious that it is a long time between seeding and harvest. We will have the results that prove the wisdom of one policy against another, but in other aspects the harvest is not yet with us. I would offer my congratulations to the various States for the progress made in this period.

I believe each State is doing the best it can with the limited resources at its disposal. I am sure that this biennial get-together highlights the mistakes made and the problems that confront the various States to an extent which stimulates competition between the States to do better. We can all be proud of what has been done, but we should not be complacent. Let us strive for something better, because there is always something to be done.

MR. BARNES: Are you calling for individual reports by the Ministers? I mention this because I think it will be valuable for our records.

THE CHAIRMAN: The reports of the State Standing Committees on this are fairly lengthy.

MR. WILLIS: Although I have been a Minister for a little over two years, because of the varied responsibilities I have, I have attended a number of interstate Ministers' conferences.

I have noted the most successful of these are those which have a definite pattern of organisation in...
getting their reports to the other members attending some considerable time ahead of the date of the conference to be held. This being only my second aborigines conference I noted that the reports were all submitted apparently so late that it was not possible to coordinate them and distribute them prior to the arrival of officers and Ministers in Perth.

This means unless we were as diligent as you, Mr. Chairman, and stayed up until the candle burned down to the base, we would not have much of a chance of studying the reports. They are not only voluminous, but they are also very well worth studying. It is not possible for myself, nor anyone else, to go into them to the extent we would like. I would suggest in the circumstances apart from any queries we might have off the cuff that we take the reports away, study them, and communicate with each other on any queries we have. At the same time we should resolve that at any future conference where reports are to be submitted that they should be submitted say four or five weeks prior to the conference to allow them to be studied.

MR. BARNES: I had in mind the highlights rather than the detail of the reports.

MR. BJELKE-PETERSEN: I think each State could summarise the contents of this report and in that way acquaint ourselves of the details to some extent at least.

THE CHAIRMAN: I must apologise for the noise. It is one of those inescapable things that come with a switch-road.

MR. BARNES: The result of a developing State.

THE CHAIRMAN: I was about to say that but my natural modesty prevented my doing so.

El/Bly/A3 8. Item No.3. 21/1/67
MR. WILLIS (CONTINUING): The third highlight appears in paragraph 8 of our report. We have done a great deal in the field of education, in trying to assess the problems, particularly those relating to the high drop-out rate of aboriginal children who all seem to leave school at about the second year of the secondary level. We are taking steps to do what we can to ensure their continuation at secondary school for longer periods. These efforts have not come to fruition, but are just about.

In paragraph 12 reference is made to what has been a relative -- not a change in policy -- but a change in emphasis in the last year or two which started to give greater encouragement to voluntary organisations in the form of subsidies and other forms of advice and assistance, because we found they were able to discharge certain functions. They have the confidence of the aborigines in some cases to a greater extent than some of the Government bodies.

The other matter I want to highlight is referred to in paragraph 16. The Joint Parliamentary Select Committee, according to the grape vine, will submit its report to Parliament in the first week of August. I hope out of this will come sufficient to give homework for myself and my officers for quite a long time. Perhaps from it will come what has been referred to as a new deal for aborigines. Those are the major points which ought to be emphasised in the report. There has been a steady progress in general, and we are pleased with the amount of work we have done, but of course we are aware that very much more has still to be done.

MR. MEAGHER: Victoria has only about 3,500 aborigines. I doubt whether we have a full-blood in the
State. There are two settlements -- Lake Tyres and Framlingham -- and each has only a handful of people on it. Our expenditure last year was $351,000 which did not include the expenditure by the Housing Commission, social services authority, and so on.

Lake Tyres, which has been the source of criticism of much of our activities, until recently had about 2 per cent. of the population but now only about .2 of the population of the State. We have set up a committee of 10 to submit a report on the establishment of a rehabilitation and training centre for aborigines, rather than have it as a mere dumping place for the indigent and the hopeless. The approach includes the establishment of an aboriginal council which will be given certain functions, and those functions will be increased as they show they can handle the functions. The project also includes a farming scheme which will carry with it farm training; a spot timber mill, and other facilities. We have about 4,000 acres of land which is covered by rather scrubby timber. The Forestry Commission thinks this can be converted into a timber project, and this will be the means of teaching the aborigines something about milling timber. After clearing the land we will reafforest it with soft woods. The project includes a training-for-employment scheme and renovations and rebuilding.

Over the last nine months we spent $60,000 on the project. The main point of controversy is that when it is established into a training centre instead of a settlement, certain people in the community will complain that anybody that does not want to work will have to be fed.

At the Framlingham settlement, near Warrnambool
we have a number of these people on a reserve which is administered by a local committee. We are spending a considerable sum in improving its use. We have a couple of people there who have been running a dairy farm for some time and have been spending money to improve the facilities.

At Rumbalara we took a lot of people from Riverbank in 1956 and put them into solid concrete buildings with few doors and fewer other amenities. We built 10 with the idea of getting those people out of their humpies and placing them into accommodation better than the humpies can provide. That place has now been taken over. We spent $35,000 in the last few months on improving this place, and we plan to use it as a rehabilitation centre for the better type of aborigine. There are a number of these people living in the towns as normal citizens.

On the general housing programme we have an arrangement between the Housing Commission and the Aboriginal Welfare Board which enables the Housing Commission to treat aborigines as normal housing applicants. The Commission has housed 130 aboriginal families.

There is also a scheme/sponsorship for housing under which the board recommends to the Housing Commission that a house be made available to an aboriginal family, and the board undertakes to subsidise the undertaking. This seems to be working pretty satisfactorily at the moment. A total of 133 families have been housed by the Commission in this way. The board owns 94 town houses, and it has another 10 in course of construction. We have made a very considerable impact on the housing situation, despite the fact there are still 168 families in need.

DRY/MC/3B 11, Item No. 3 21/7/67.
The rentals charged range from $2 to $5 a week based on the family size and its financial position. Of the 133 families provided with houses by the Commission, 117 are receiving subsidies from the board.

We have started a housekeeping advisory service at the Latrobe district for the more depressed families. This is an experiment to teach the buyers how to handle houses. In some cases we find quite a decent house is provided but the occupants do not know how to handle it. This housekeeping advisory service will be the means of assisting in that respect.

On the question of health we have just completed an anti-tuberculosis campaign among the aborigines of Victoria. That was conducted by the Public Health Department. We are having a health survey conducted by the Monash Centre for Research into Aboriginal Affairs.

In respect of education the board has increased its allowance to a maximum of $85 per annum to assist in the provision of uniforms and books. This assistance is provided to 204 out of the 243 children at secondary schools. We also have 14 pupils who are receiving assistance at a higher rate, because they are required to board away from home to receive their education.

Those seem to be the main features in our report. We are planning new legislation to bring the Act up to date, but I cannot give any clear idea what is in it at the moment. We are attempting to bring the Act up to date in accordance with current thinking on the problem. We look forward to co-operation from the Commonwealth and the other States in making our policies work.
MR. MEAGHER (Continuing): Our particular problem in Victoria is that over the Murray River we have the city of Swan Hill on one side and an aboriginal settlement on the other. We put half a dozen families into houses and a dozen more walked over from New South Wales. However, that is something for co-operation between Mr. Willis and myself.

THE CHAIRMAN: Mr. Peterson will you give your report for Queensland please?

MR. BJELKE-PETERSON: In Queensland we have something like 50,000 part-aboriginal people over the State and last year we spent some $2,700,000 on welfare for these people, which gives an idea of the general problem we have overall. The Act which we proclaimed in 1965 removed most of the restrictive measures we had, but it still retains certain protective measures which we considered necessary for the well being and continued progress of these people. Perhaps I could outline the differences that exist under the old Act and the present Act. Previously, all persons with a predominance of aboriginal blood not holding a certificate of exemption were considered wards of the State. However, the new legislation provides the opposite or the reverse of this in that a certificate entitlement is issued to the people in groups now residing on our reserves. There was no provision existing previously for exemption. For the Torres Strait Islanders north of our State it is more of a managerial responsibility rather than as it was in the past a matter of superintendency. Now parents accept the full responsibility for guardianship of the children whereas previously under the old legislation the Director had complete control over the children. This has now gone back to the parents.
The rights of movements is no longer there. They have a free right to move as also with other things such as liquor, and so on. The only restriction in that regard is in relation to particular areas. There is a restriction in relation to where liquor can be taken or consumed. No rights were included for electoral enrolment, but since then there have been amendments to the State Electoral Act which provides for voluntary enrolment. However, once they are enrolled it is compulsory for them to vote.

There is also provision for the election of aboriginal councillors to assist in local Government of their community. This is an important step so far as we are concerned. In addition, they also have the right to stand in local authority elections. We have provisions for the establishment of Aboriginal Courts and this is working satisfactorily. Both these Aboriginal Courts and Councils are at present functioning in Queensland.

Amendments to the regulation also made provision for payments to pastoral workers as far as a minimum wage is concerned. In some cases they are paid more than the minimum rate which is $21.00 for farmhands and houseboys and up to $25.00 for station hands. This is for keep for themselves and families. District Officers, who are the clerks of the Court can claim a higher rate for these people if they are satisfied their ability warrants it. Conversely, they can also agree to a lower rate of pay if they consider the person to be incompetent, slow, or a retarded worker. However, this low rate of pay must be referred to the Director before it is paid or acceptable. In this way we try to protect these people and I think the rates are fairly satisfactory as compared to the standards of other States. The protection given there is, I think, fairly satisfactory.

The Department has also embarked on a training programme for its field officers. A course was held in April of this year for assistant managers and aboriginal councillors. This course lasted 19 days. "It was well organised and included lectures and discussion periods. The discussions covered such things as general administration and accounting procedures within the department itself. It also covered an appreciation of the Public Service Administration, rules of law, justice sociology and an outline of Commonwealth Social Service, and things of that nature, as well as health and education. This we claim to be the first intensive programme of its type that has been organised within the Commonwealth. I think we have played an important role in giving confidence and assurance to these people. I am sure this is something which will continue in the years ahead and we will work along this particular line or procedure.

As regards to housing, we have found accommodation on various areas over many years. Recently we embarked on a new programme whereby local authorities make provision in their Loan programme for the erection of homes for these people whereby the Government will guarantee a local authority against any loss that could be incurred in housing these people in country towns or in any of the towns throughout Queensland. Although this is quite a new department, quite a number of local authorities have decided to do this. We guarantee them against loss other than for rates. As far as rates are concerned, they carry this themselves. In this connection, no more than two houses can be built together in the community. They have to be built in various areas in the various towns and no more than two houses can be built on the one site. In my own electorate of Murumba we have three country towns where these houses have been built and the item no. 3.21/7/67.
native families have been accepted by the people.

Last year we had 11 Torres Strait Island teachers who completed several grades at the training college in Brisbane over a course of 12 months. This was to give them an idea into the running of their schools and the management of school children. This year we have 12 such teachers attending training in Brisbane.

Altogether, something like 1,200 native children are attending schools run by the Education Department and we have something like close on 2,000 children attending schools controlled by the department. One-third of the aboriginal children are attending school; and 284 children from assisted families are attending secondary schools. One-fifth of the number of children are attending secondary schools in Queensland and the 284 are from assisted natives. You can see we have a lot of children attending schools and attending secondary schools; and we are making provision for the training of teachers for these particular areas.

Last year we had four young women who completed a kindergarten training course; and this year a similar group is studying the same course in Brisbane.

On the matter of alcohol, I think we can say this has gone on fairly satisfactorily. There has not been one serious misdemeanour so far as I know as far as alcohol is concerned. It has presented some problems, but nothing has occurred of a serious nature.

All aboriginal natives now function under approved by-laws.
MR. BJELKE-PETERSON (continuing): They have their own aboriginal councils functioning in each community and we feel this is a very important step towards self-government. It has fostered a spirit of self-reliance and self-interest. The councils have been extremely successful in the Torres Strait Islands and at Thursday Island, and consequently we are now introducing them into the southern parts of the State. Mr. Killoran is very pleased that this system is working so well within the aboriginals own areas.

I know many of the areas and have been associated with the work for many years. Cherbourg is in my own electorate and I have come to know many of the people. They are on the same basis and same standing as anybody else. Later in this year we are holding an aboriginal councillors' conference at Palm Island at which these councillors and aboriginal executives of the welfare associations on Government-sponsored communities will be present. There will also be representatives from the Torres Strait islands. We expect about 50 people to attend the conference which will take 14 days. There will be discussions on subjects such as community by-laws and reserves; alcohol; traditional skills of aborigines; housing; and education.

There will be also a seminar associated with this conference and the subjects will include the rules of justice, court procedure and administration generally; social services, their availability and administration; and employment avenues and opportunities. The seminars are conducted at a very high standard by competent people. They are the best we can get in the State from the schools and universities. This is another.

CGS/LM/D.1 17. Item No. 3 21/7/67
important avenue for bringing these people into the community to a greater extent, and quite an important step to take.

It was pleasing to note that this year a branch of the Jaycees was formed in Northern Queensland at Yarrabah. The branch consists of a president, vice-president and secretary, and is run in association with the Cairns Jaycees. It is conducted the same as Jaycee branches in other places. It will be interesting to see how they operate. They are efficient, and it is interesting to see the confidence they give these young people. I think that moving along these lines will help us considerably to play a greater part in helping these people to become ordinary members of the community.

MR. LOVEDAY: Liquor restrictions have been removed except on two aboriginal reserves - Coober Pedy and the North West Aboriginal Reserve - and the three remaining missions, Ernabella, Nepabunna and Yalata. We have had a few minor problems but no serious ones. I think a few minor ones were to be expected.

Regarding legislative changes, the Aboriginal and Historic Relics Preservation Act was assented to in December, 1965. This is an Act to be administered by the Minister of Education, who has a board to advise him. The object of the Act is a preservation of aboriginal and historic relics.

The Prohibition of Discrimination Act was assented to on the 1st December, 1966. This Act does not apply specifically to aboriginals as defined in the Aboriginal Affairs Act, but to any person who is discriminated against in certain situations by reason
only of his race or country of origin, or the colour of his skin. The provisions of the Act cover such situations as the refusal of admission to any licensed premises, place of public entertainment, and a number of other places.

The Aboriginal Lands Trust Act was assented to on the 8th December, 1966, and all members of the trust must be aboriginal. There are three aboriginals at present and they can be increased to 12. The trust is not a department of the Government and under the provisions of the Act the Governor may, by proclamation, transfer any Crown lands, or any lands for the time being reserved for aborigines, to the trust. The trust may, with the consent of the Minister, sell, lease, mortgage or otherwise deal with land vested in it, or may develop such land subject to compliance with the provisions of any Act or law relating thereto, as it thinks fit. Since the three members of the Trust were appointed the reserves have been examined and although no land has actually passed to the trust, at the moment several unoccupied aboriginal reserves are the subject of negotiations.

The Aboriginal Affairs Act Amendment Act was assented to on the 6th Apr., 1967. This Act provides for the establishment and constitution of aboriginal reserve councils for and in respect of aboriginal institutions and defining the rights, duties, and powers of the councils. It also provides for the establishment, constitution, etc. for the carrying on of any industries, businesses, or trades upon aboriginal institutions. In other words, it gives an opportunity for co-operative work on the reserves. That Act seems to be working very well indeed.
The Aboriginal Affairs Board has seven members, three of whom are aboriginals.

We are now opening up a new reserve at Indulkana. It will cover 12 square miles of land which was formerly part of the Granite Downs pastoral lease. The land has been purchased. Regarding the North West aboriginal reserves, we have aboriginal men mining Chrysoprase. Although the mining is done in a rudimentary fashion, each individual is still able to earn a good return of about $80 a week. The cutting and polishing of Chrysoprase has been undertaken. We have an officer who is assisting and we are finding that the natural artistic traits are of the aboriginals is coming out. We think there will be no problems at all in marketing at quite a remunerative price. It is becoming quite an industry in that reserve.

A new hospital has been completed at a cost of $24,000 at the headquarters base. Next year we will be opening a school to cater for 80 children. Teachers are being appointed early so that they can become acquainted with the conditions. They will be learning Pitjantjatjara at the university so that in the early stages of schooling lessons will be learned in that language. They will move on to English at a later stage.

There will be a linguistic laboratory set up at the Adelaide University, which will be set up through the Adult Education Department, to provide a course in Pitjantjatjara for the staff members.

Regarding housing, the total funds allocated during the past two years have been $148,000 odd, in both cases in both years. We are pushing ahead with housing as fast as possible. We do need at least another 218 houses, and it is a pretty urgent problem.

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MR. LOVEDAY (Continuing) The student teacher ratio at Musgrave Park will be about 20 to one. Therefore, we think there will be a good opportunity for the teachers there to handle the situation adequately.

One other important point of interest to everybody present is that from the third of July this year we are paying the full basic wage to all aborigines on our reserves, with the exception of the North West reserve where we are paying $18 to the male aboriginal people and $15 for adult females. We have completely done away with the programme of hand-outs. We expect the aboriginal people on the reserves now to work for these wages and to carry on as ordinary citizens by paying for their requirements in the normal way. In other words, we are inculcating a sense of responsibility in all directions with a view to developing self-determination in all respects; that is, aboriginal people who determine their own future as far as possible through their councils and through the trust. In other words, we are endeavouring to get an acceptance of full citizenship with all its responsibility in every way. Although it is only in its early stages, we are finding that it is producing quite good results and is being accepted on all sides with a great deal of pleasure.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Loveday. As far as this State is concerned, the green folder which has been distributed contains our 1966 report, which is the latest of our annual reports; this is for your interest and possible study.

Briefly I would like to add that in this State we have about 22,000 "natives," as they are styled up to the point of this conference at any rate. About 10,000...
of them are full-blooded aborigines and the rest of them are part-aborigines. The position in this State differs somewhat from some of the other States, at least, in that we have no large settlements. There are no Government settlements at all. We have some very large reserves but, in the main, these are administered locally by missions of which there are 29 in Western Australia. These are denominational missions of various kinds and they mainly administer to the natives in the fringe areas who are in their care. I say, "mainly" because they are not solely in the fringe areas of this State. The rest of our natives are reasonably evenly spread throughout the agricultural and pastoral areas. Consequently, we have small reserves of a few acres attached to most of our country towns. These reserves were created many years ago because, at that stage, the natives were erecting their bush humpies on the outskirts of the town which had no hygiene facilities of any sort. Therefore, the Government of the day decided to create the small reserves where we could supply water, and housing was erected for them.

The style of housing which we placed on these reserves was known as the primary transitional housing. In most cases, this was the first house the native had ever lived in. From that point, the policy has been to upgrade the natives to standard transitional houses which are self-contained houses, generally within the boundaries of the township, but generally speaking not integrated among the ordinary houses in the town. There have been a few exceptions on the question of integration.

The next and final step in this progress as far as housing is concerned is for the native to be upgraded
from the standard transitional house to a conventional house, by which stage we consider he has been fully assimilated and is able to take his place both socially and economically with his white neighbours.

We therefore pass through all these stages in Western Australia.

In very recent years we have been meeting with some resistance on the part of some local authorities in giving consent for the standard transitional houses to be built within their townships. As a consequence, this progress has been running to a halt; or at least, it is in danger of doing this. We are faced in Western Australia with the strong possibility that we may have to jump the second stage and take the native direct from a reserve into a conventional house. This will mean that much more capital funds will be required, and it will also mean much more supervision. The natives have to be supervised, up to date, only until they get into conventional houses. At that stage, we find that further supervision is not necessary. However, if we have to bypass one of the transitional stages, we could run into difficulties if we upgrade a native direct from a reserve into a conventional house. This will mean that some supervision is necessary in order to avoid any conflict with his neighbours. This will be a change of policy, and accordingly the emphasis will be changed a little in Western Australia.

We are also reaching the stage where we feel we can no longer consider abandoning reserves. We have indeed been able to abandon reserves where the stream has passed on and left the reserve without any inhabitants.
It has then been given over to the ordinary housing requirements of the community. However, we consider that now is the time to begin to stimulate this move from reserves and, therefore, the building of primary transitional houses will soon come to an end on reserves.

For many years some of the natives in Western Australia have enjoyed the privileges of alcohol through the Citizens Rights Act. It was necessary for the recipients, and the applicants for this right, to appear before a local court which assessed them and, according to their judgment, gave citizenship rights.

In 1964 we passed an amendment to the Licensing Act which gave all natives the legal access to liquor if they were in the South West Land Division of this State. This comprised all of the agricultural areas and the metropolitan areas; broadly speaking, it was the south west corner of the State. The Act was further amended in 1966 to give the same legal rights to a further area of the State. The boundary lines were shifted further eastward and northward. The situation at the present time is that about half of the area of this State has been covered. Probably about 80 per cent. of the native inhabitants now have legal access to liquor. The area not yet given legal access comprises mostly the Kimberleys and the Eastern Goldfields area, the area cast of Kalgoorlie, where there is a preponderance of unsophisticated natives. Consideration will be given to extending these rights progressively to these areas. We have found that the policy of one step at a time has been a wise policy in Western Australia.

Even with the progress stages which we have made, we have met with some resistance, but the overall result
of giving the natives these rights of access to liquor has been satisfactory. It is true that in some cases there has been evidence of over-indulgence and perhaps to some extent neglect of their wives and children. There has not been a great increase in the crime rate and, in fact, the pattern has been an increase, but this is followed a few months later by a steady decrease. Overall, I am sure we can say there are less convictions now due to the incidence of alcoholic liquor than there were before the rights were granted. As members will appreciate, the natives drank alcoholic liquor which was obtained illicitly before the legal rights were granted. Often this was a very inferior liquor. We can fairly say that the position in Western Australia in regard to the granting of rights for the consumption of alcohol has been satisfactory.
THE CHAIRMAN (Continuing): There have been no legislative changes and no marked policy changes in the last two years, but steady progress in the various aspects of the policy have been made.

Housing has been increased. In the two years to June, 1967, we had spent $1,170,403 on housing, and the total expenditure to the 30th June, 1967, on housing, was $2,715,651. We now have 487 primary transitional houses, 261 standard transitional, and 34 conventional houses, and the emphasis in the future will be on conventional houses and rather less - practically none at all - on primary transitional houses. Not every town, of course, resists the construction of standard transitional houses.

As regards education, 5,400 children - estimated about 97 per cent. of those of school age - attend school, and of those 593, or approximately 11 per cent., are in the post-primary field. We assist with bursaries, fairly generously, and 94 bursaries were awarded during the past two years, and 10 scholarships, 139 are at present current. There are no restrictions on the amounts available to each child, and each case is treated on its merits. If the child is boarding in Perth, the bursary could exceed $500. In all, 275 bursaries have been granted since the inception of the scheme. Over the last few years we instituted a scheme of pre-school training on these small reserves, again appreciating that they are small reserves sometimes with only half-a-dozen families on them. In 25 centres we give pre-school education to 360 children, under subsidy.
We also have a scheme for adult education and this is conducted in 30 centres. The classes are held in literacy, dressmaking, cooking, manual training, community obligations, and art. These are conducted in our high schools with tuition being given by Education Department officers. Enrolled students for the adult education now number over 900, and attendances average about 70 per cent.

We have 6 hostels to accommodate children who do not have ready access to schools, and these house 360 children. Vocational training is carried on in the senior and junior high schools and also in three agricultural schools where the emphasis is on agricultural training at Mogumber, Gnowangerup, and Esperance. In all, 50 male agricultural students attend these three schools. A fourth school will commence at Tardun, in the North Midlands, in 1968. This will give an emphasis to pastoral work. In addition, 25 aborigines are currently serving apprenticeships in industry.

We also have hostels for working girls in Perth and Esperance. Originally it was felt that these people should be boarded with the rest of the community, but the girls, particularly, felt they were not fully accepted, and they were not happy, so we decided to set up these working girls in the metropolitan area.

There has been a great emphasis on mining in Western Australia, as you well know, and about 60 mining tenements are being worked by natives - in other words, natives own approximately 60 mining tenements. We also have an arrangement under which mining companies wishing to mine on an aboriginal
reserve must make a deal in regard to any find made by aborigines; and the agreement provides for -

1. A testing and mining period.

2. Payment to the aborigine tenant holder during this period.

3. Profit from mining to be divided equally between the company and tenement holder, if option to purchase tenement is not exercised.

4. Payment of initial cash amount of option exercised.

5. A continuing payment from the proceeds of mining from the tenement after option is exercised, on a sliding scale based on the quality of the ore produced.

This is working out quite satisfactorily.

Three aborigines are being assisted to develop their own farming properties, two of them in the Esperance area.

We have a native trading fund which was set up to arrange the sale of artifacts from reserves - mostly from the fringe areas - and during the last financial year 5,700 items were sold for $10,600.

In conclusion, may I say that we continue to seek to withdraw from operating directly as a separate entity in fields already served by departments; in other words, we co-operate with other departments and we like to shift the responsibility to them as with the ordinary community in such things as social services, housing, education, and so on. We are continuing to encourage aborigines to make use of these bodies to the same degree as other persons. The emphasis is now moving to more positive and concentrated social work, to improved housing, to providing greater educational and economic opportunities, and to encouraging Cox/Bly/F3 29. Item No. 3. 21/7/67
increasing participation in ordinary community life. I think we have heard enough around the table to satisfy us that considerable progress is being made with this problem. After we have had morning tea, I shall invite the Commonwealth Minister for Territories to say a few words about the progress being made in the Territory.
THE CHAIRMAN: Would you like to say something about the Territories, Mr. Barnes?

MR. BARNES: I think, like all Ministers this morning, we tend to concentrate on a day-to-day approach on the problems we have with aborigines, because I do not think anyone has suggested today that we have answers to these problems as we are searching all the time for the answers and I would like to point out that probably -- and other Ministers have emphasised this fact from what I can gather here -- the problems in every State are different. Again, we have a completely different problem in the sense that we have so many full-blood aboriginals and more than any other State and twice the number in Queensland who comes near to us with 20,000.

The other situation is that when we try to advance the aborigines with education, we, in the Northern Territory, have not the job opportunities available. Fortunately, this situation is now changing because of mining operations and of course in the past the pastoral industry was the great employer of aboriginal workers. Today mining operations are affording greater opportunities to them and in this regard we have made great advances towards granting award wages to them.

In many of our administrative areas we have paid award wages to them and we find we get a greater response from the aborigines; not in every case, but in the main this would be true. In the pastoral industry now we have a decision by the Arbitration Commission that we phase-in award wages for aborigines. I think this comes about in December, 1968.

I mentioned mining operations. We have the mining of manganese at Groote Eylandt and this is an
operation which will last for many years. It is one of
the major manganese deposits in the world and, here again,
about 25 per cent. of the work force are aboriginal full-
bloods. These men are doing an excellent job as bulldozer
operators and truck drivers. They receive full award wages
and they are housed with the European community. I have been
there myself and lived under the same roof and eat in the
same mess and everything else. I think this is a great
advance. We have got these sort of benefits and, apart
from Groote Eylandt, we have another large mining operation
coming up at Gove. This is a bauxite mining operation and
will afford considerable employment opportunities and, in
all these mining operations, we have special royalties which
are derived from the tonnage extracted. In fact, double the
royalty that is paid in the rest of the Territory in the
area outside aboriginal reserves and this money is paid into
a trust fund for the benefit of aborigines throughout the
Northern Territory.

We have had major developments in education for
them in the content of courses and the development of pre-
school and post-primary classes with a strong vocational
bias and also there are to be increases in the teaching
staff to ensure a complete coverage of children in the
primary level. I am sure we have all had these problems
in education.

As mentioned by Mr. Loveday we have a language
problem to a marked degree. They have to learn English
before they can move very far. We are meeting this problem.
When I mentioned vocational training, we have had welding
courses in Darwin and Brisbane and they seem to be
particularly adaptable to them. There is an apprenticeship
in building trades in Sydney, and these people have gone
down to Sydney and, generally speaking, they have made a pretty good success in the courses and the general attitude of the community in both Brisbane and Sydney has been splendid.
MR. BARNES (Continuing): It has been a great help to them. We have endeavoured to develop a community life in the settlement which is done by the establishment of social services, retail stores, and so on. New opportunities for aborigines both on and off the reserves is provided for in legislation put to the Northern Territory Legislative Council. We believe in this new move to make use of our Aboriginal reserve land, and we hope when the Bill goes through we will be able to grant pastoral and farming leases to Aboriginals. We will institute a special Land Board to supervise this operation controlled by a majority of Aboriginals on it.

The proposals are that after about seven years an Aboriginal may be able to sell his property. Here again we have a difficult question. Naturally it is an Aboriginal reserve, and if we confine the sale only to Aboriginals we will be limiting the economy of somebody who has made a success of a land venture. We propose, after the transfer is made only to an aborigine that the special land board comprised of a majority of aborigines will be able to meet these problems.

A great deal still has to be done, and we are a long way from having the complete answers to many difficulties. I mention the lack of employment opportunities and the time needed for social adaption. I have not yet mentioned the fact that we have a particular problem in the very arid centre where we have considerable Aboriginal population.

There has been no mining development, but we are hoping for the best. The problem of cattle raising is very difficult because of the number of droughts. We have just come out of a 10-year drought. The administration is

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endeavouring every year to find employment opportunities for aborigines in the States, such as fruit picking in the Murrumbidgee area and grape picking in the Barossa Valley.

Last year a group of about 75 aborigines went down to these areas and made a splendid reputation for themselves. They were well supervised. We felt it was necessary for us to build up a reputation for them. There was a tremendous response from their employers, and last year we had about 300 go down altogether, and they went even further into Victoria. With the larger number we did have a few failures, but not sufficient to make us pessimistic in our outlook. I believe we will do better next year, and after all this is an opportunity which we cannot miss. The nature of the employment suits aborigines. The operation starts at the end of November and concludes in April, and when they return to the Northern Territory the pastoral operations are about to start again. So here is a situation that will give them a great opportunity.

No doubt there are major misconceptions in the public mind -- the current public mind -- associated with the referendum which shows both an inadequate appreciation of the effort being put into the job Australia-wide and the real progress being achieved. There is also an inadequate understanding of what is possible in this field.

Here again I cannot help believing that the States and the Commonwealth in their efforts to advance the Aboriginal people find that the failures are always so obvious, but the difficulties are not regarded at all by the general community. I do not think people realise what a very difficult situation this is. We cannot remove all these problems overnight. Some aspects are not within the...
power of any Government and we must rely on the attitude of the general community as to whether we succeed or fail in these operations. It is very difficult when some part-aborigines have no will to do anything but to accept hand-outs and stay as they are. It will be a slow job to supply the necessary answers to this situation. The tendency with the depressed family is for conditions to be bad for the children leading to a lack of education and a lack of incentive. I think everyone is faced with this problem.
MR. BARNES (continuing): The problem is to bridge the gap by taking a child out of its particularly poor environment into a better one. In the home field if we succeed in doing this by giving a better home background to a child we will go a long way in our efforts to improve the situation. If you give a family a new house but without social guidance and support you will find it likely to be knocked about in a short time, and you will not help them at all. Efforts to overcome this situation must continue primarily for the sake of the people concerned, but also because the racial aspect makes it so easy a target for reflection against Australia, both inside and outside Australia. Everyone we hear from overseas seems to write about the factors where we fail, but not of the situations where we have made considerable progress. The importance of continuing in every way possible to bring about a better informed public and a better perspective of these issues and limitations is understood by all around this table. The valuable contributions to better understanding of current issues and current opinion of effort, which undoubtedly will result from discussions among the Ministers, suggest that the published report of the conference will provide a better understanding. This should be kept well in mind when the conclusions of the conference are being recorded. What we put out from this conference will be a very important document.

THE CHAIRMAN: Will you, Sir William Refshauge, like to say something about the health aspect?

SIR WILLIAM REFSHAUGE: In agenda item No. 5 of the officers' agenda three reports have been circulated by us; namely 5.7, 5.8 and 5.9. The first deals with DRY/IM.4.1 37. Item No.3 21/7/67
aboriginal health in the Northern Territory. This is a very full report showing the problems we have. It emphasises the greater efforts we are putting on rural health activities, and since the last conference we have in the last two years reorganised the department in the Northern Territory to give greater emphasis to this aspect. We have acquired another aircraft making four in all for our Northern Territory medical rural service, with a view to stepping up these activities as well as rural health activities. I do not want to labour this point which is purely a Northern Territory matter.

Item 5.8 contains two reports. They are in fact one report in two parts setting out the activities of one of the committees of the National Health and Medical Research Council. At the meeting of this conference in 1961 a request was made to the National Health and Medical Research Council through the Health Department to undertake screening for medical research projects where desired to be performed on or with aborigines. Since then this committee has become more and more active. This report gives the activities in the last two years since that conference met. The services of this committee will continue to be offered to all States in the interests of better research and of safeguarding the welfare of the aboriginals.

Item 5.9 contains a three page report on the National Health and Medical Research Council's recommendations which affect aboriginal health. There are two points I would stress. The first is under the heading of "Vital Statistics". Over the years we have had difficulty in producing factual information on the morbidity and other health statistics of the population.

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of Australia, especially in respect of aboriginal health. This will be altered. In conjunction with the Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics and our medical statistics committee, the statistics will be coming out as a routine matter as from about 1970, breaking down the population into three major categories concerning health; that is, full blood aborigines, part-aborigines, and Europeans. Certain States want other breakdowns; for instance, one territory wants the Asian figures, and this will also be available.

The point I make is this: Although these statistics will not be freely available to the public they will be available to any reputable institution, such as a State Government, a university, and so on. In the first publication of these statistics, if they are to get into certain hands the position might be embarrassing, because this will be the first time a full scale breakdown of health into the three categories mentioned will occur. Thereafter I hope the figures will show to our advantage because the position will illustrate an increasing healthiness among the various groups, especially the first two. I bring this forward to inform the members of the conference what will happen in future, so that they will understand the position.

The other point to which I draw the attention of conference is mentioned in item No.5.9 relating to leprosy. There appears to be a reducing incidence of leprosy throughout Australia, and I think the greatest reduction has occurred in Queensland. Over the last few years there has been quite a dramatic reduction, but this is due mostly to the reduction in the Queensland figures.
I would like to warn against complacency, because our activities in the Northern Territory - with greater emphasis on rural activities - may result in a greater incidence in the next 12 months or so, after which it will be reduced. Concerning leprosy it is now fairly evident that B.C.G. vaccination may protect against leprosy in the same way as it does against tuberculosis. The National Health and Medical Research Council has advocated a vaccination campaign of B.C.G. in the Northern Territory. I hope this will also have a great effect in reducing leprosy in the long term.

One point about leprosy I would like to mention is that it militates against rehabilitation. There is a stigma despite the fact that the sufferers have been cured. Cure is becoming more and more common, and discharges from the East Arm Leprosarium in the Northern Territory are great. There are more and more discharges each year. This stigma affects the employment of people who have been cured. I should point out that the vast majority who have suffered from leprosy are aboriginals. The only way to overcome this is to inaugurate a constant health education programme. The stigma does militate against the rehabilitation of those who have suffered but are now cured. They are the only points I wish to raise on this matter.
THE CHAIRMAN: Is this militating against the notification of this disease?

SIR WILLIAM REFSHAUGE: It could militate against people in the outback areas coming in; and it would also militate against the rehabilitation of a person who cannot obtain employment. Other natives see this and it is rather tragic.

THE CHAIRMAN: Do you wish to do anything other than note the statements made by the Officers' Conference in relation to the Northern Territory, the Commonwealth Health Department, and the National Health and Medical Research Council?

MR. WILLIS: As I said earlier, I assume we are at liberty to contact each other in order to learn more.

THE CHAIRMAN: Exactly. I think this should be going on all the time. These reports which are distributed among the various States are of great value and I trust they are not just put away. We are busy people and my difficulty—and I suppose this applies to all of us—is to keep abreast of the reports placed before me. These reports are valuable as we can learn what is going on in the State spheres and, as Sir William has reported, in the health sphere. Perhaps we could note them and then study them for further action in our own States.

Agreed -- reports noted.

Item No.4. Report from Central Reserves Committee
(Officers' Standing Committee Agenda Item 6)

THE CHAIRMAN: The report of the Central Reserves Committee does not affect all States. You will find it in the Officers' Report, Agenda Item No.6. The submission from the Officers' Standing Committee is as follows:

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The attention of the Ministers is invited to the following points of the Central Reserves Committee meeting at Giles in April, 1967:

(a) Review of the principles and conditions for entry to Reserves.

(b) The inclusion of Aboriginal observers at future meetings.

(c) The need for research in migratory trends of Aborigines in the Central Reserve area.

In reference to paragraph (a), this involves the larger central reserve and other reserves. In the main, there has been a restrictive entry to these reserves on application, each one being considered on its merits, but of recent months there has been increasing pressure to throw these reserves open, together with the roads that lead through the reserves, to organised commercial tourist agencies. However, acting on the report and recommendations of the Central Reserves Committee, we have resisted this for several reasons; firstly, that the roads in these areas are not yet sufficiently improved to safely take tourist traffic. The road authorities at least in this State—and probably other States, too—have such a programme in front of them that the development of these roads would not have a high priority. They have other more urgent work to do and they do not want to be embarrassed by additional pressures to improve these roads for comparatively few tourists and buses that might travel over them. To date we have felt it desirable to restrict permits to individuals using a road in order to travel from point A to point B through the reserves; and even these applicants have to satisfy the several departments concerned that their vehicles are in efficient order and that they have means of communication by radio, and so on. They have to have four-wheel drive vehicles and that sort...
of thing, and that they are able to carry sufficient petrol and water in order to safeguard against very costly rescue operations.

As regards the inclusion of aboriginal observers, I do not know just how practical this is going to be. I think this is very desirable. If you have the aboriginals with sufficient standards that could contribute something towards the deliberations of the Reserve Committees, I think it is a good ideal, but I do not know how soon it could be implemented. I think this would be a matter for assessment from time to time.

Gentlemen, do you wish to add anything to the Reserve Committee's report, which is on the Officers' Agenda, Item No.6?

MR. BARNES: I would like to know the attitude of Ministers on this. Does each of the States and the Commonwealth nominate somebody?

THE CHAIRMAN: Perhaps Mr. Gare might report on the Committee's thinking.

MR. GARE: The idea on this was that each of the three authorities involved—Northern Territory, South Australia, and Western Australia—each bring with them to the committee an aboriginal observer—someone who could represent the views of his own people to this committee, not as a delegate, but as an observer. He could hear what was going on, perhaps give advice, and report back to his own people on the deliberations that took place at the committee meeting.

THE CHAIRMAN: Do you wish to just note this report?

Agreed - report noted.
AGENDA ITEM 5

EFFECTS OF THE REFERENDUM ON PROPOSED ALTERATION TO THE CONSTITUTION (OFFICERS' STANDING COMMITTEE ITEM 7.)

(Officers' Standing Committee Report)

Constitutional Amendments Relating to Aborigines

 Officers considered the effects of the recent referendum proposal, endorsed by a very substantial majority of electors, to delete the exclusion of Aborigines from the Commonwealth's power to legislate for the people of any race for whom it was deemed necessary to make special laws. It was noted that the exclusion of Aborigines was widely regarded as discriminatory. The Prime Minister had stated in the Commonwealth Parliament that if the proposal were approved by referendum, the Commonwealth Government would regard it as desirable to hold discussions with the States to secure the widest measure of agreement with respect to Aboriginal Advancement.

Officers of the various State administrations regard this meeting and conference as a valuable opportunity to see what measure of agreement there was in respect of Aboriginal policies and what further measures should be taken following the approval of the Constitutional change. Papers submitted by the Victorian and South Australian administrations directed attention to possible courses of action.

Conclusions reached by the State Officers were that:

1. As a consequence of the referendum result, the Commonwealth's interests in Aboriginal affairs should now be seen as having been expanded into a national responsibility; the problems of the Aboriginal and part-Aboriginal people from State to State and within each State were however so diverse that for so long as could be seen, the interests of Aborigines and part-Aborigines would be best served by programmes administered by State authorities within the context of overall national policies;

2. There was scope for further development of Aboriginal policies and for improved Commonwealth/State machinery to co-ordinate them;

3. A review should be made by each State of its overall effort so as to pinpoint the measures which would ensure the most effective advance.

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Officers noted that proposals for financial assistance from the Commonwealth to the States to carry out these measures would necessarily be considered in the context of overall Commonwealth/State financial relationships.

The State officers submit for the consideration of Ministers that the above conclusions be endorsed and the following particular measures be taken to carry them forward,

(a) This conference of Commonwealth and State Ministers be reconstituted as the Australian Aboriginal Affairs Council and the meeting of officers be designated their Standing Committee to meet in each case as necessary, but the Council not less than biennially and the Standing Committee not less than annually;

(b) A small permanent secretariat be established by the Commonwealth to service the Council and the Standing Committee;

(c) The review proposed in (3) above be commenced immediately to formulate for each State an overall programme of the highest priority measures related to specific advancement targets;

(d) The programmes should be prepared in consultation between the State concerned and the Commonwealth Secretariat, with each State undertaking consultation with representative Aborigines to the fullest extent appropriate. The programmes of highest priority measures should be discussed by the Standing Committee and the Council with a view to co-ordinating them into a phased programme having regard to:

(i) the capacity of the State authorities in terms of staff availability, etc. to carry out the programmes.

(ii) the upper limits of finance that can reasonably be expected to be available from State and Commonwealth sources.

(iii) the speed at which the Aboriginal people will respond to social change.

The co-ordinated programmes should then be submitted to the Commonwealth and State Governments for consideration in the context of overall Commonwealth/State financial relationships.
THE CHAIRMAN: I think this item is important and has some bearing on what Mr. Barnes has already stated.

MR. BARNES: The Commonwealth, as yet, has not had time to give any great consideration to this situation. I think Ministers will realise the referendum has not long been concluded and that the Prime Minister has been overseas for a considerable time and the Ministers in the Departments have been occupied over the last month or so on getting the Estimates out for the coming Budget and we have just not had time to deal with the very important subject of this matter.

I think very considerable thought will have to be given to it. Therefore, I am sorry I am not in a position to bring any Commonwealth thinking to this meeting. I note in the reports and on the copies of documents we have here that some views have been given by Victoria and South Australia and, undoubtedly, I should imagine the views will be important from the point of view of the Commonwealth when we are formulating policy. I think I remarked earlier that we have some very diverse problems in Australia.
MR. BARNES (continuing): I think it has been indicated by the reports of the Ministers today that we are tackling this in different ways. To me, none of us can claim that we are right and have found the answer. It is success by trial and error. I believe your views will be important in any consideration that may be given. Beyond that, Mr. Chairman, I feel that this is not much of a contribution to this title, but those are the facts of the situation. The Commonwealth has not yet had time to evolve any policy on this proposal.

MR. WILLIS: Perhaps I could start with a controversial comment and say that I am astonished to hear what Mr. Barnes has said. In essence, he has said that the Commonwealth sought and obtained the approval of the Australian electors to do something, but they do not know what it is that they want to do. They have done no preliminary thinking on this matter.

MR. BARNES: I do not think the assessment can be that we do not know what we want to do. The situation is that we have not yet attempted to form a policy.

MR. WILLIS: You asked the people to give you a power and you do not know in which way you want to implement it. Perhaps I could wax warm on this whole question. I recall that in 1963 at the Native Welfare Ministers' Conference - which I did not attend, but which report I read - Mr. Hasluck indicated that the Commonwealth did not desire to have either a uniform system or a change in the Constitution to take this matter over. At the 1965 conference no mention whatever was made of this subject, so one could assume the status quo would remain. But in 1966, consequent on a private member's motion in the House of Representatives, I had Cgs/Bly/Ll

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discussions with two members of the Federal Cabinet. Both of those members assured me the whole matter could be disregarded because the private member's motion was not to receive any Government support. Then, out of the blue, the Government indicated that it was going to take the private member's motion over and would seek the approval of the people to amend section 51 of the Commonwealth Constitution at the same time as a referendum it was holding on other matters.

Earlier this year when the matter came up before the people, so far as I can ascertain, there was no consultation whatever by the Commonwealth Government with the States. Perhaps it is an appropriate time to mention that my own Government protested to the Commonwealth on taking this action without any consultation with the States, and without seeking the views of the States either at a conference such as this or by individual approach.

At this conference we find that the Commonwealth still has no proposal as to what powers it desires and what functions it intends to fulfil, and what it expects of the States. A whole lot of assumptions have been made by the people of Australia and by the various bodies throughout the length and breadth of the Commonwealth who are interested in this question. But at no time has the Commonwealth indicated its intentions, and the only documents we have before us are two which have been prepared by State Ministers. I do not know whether they are an expression of their own Government's opinion, or just that of the Ministers. In any event, it is difficult to discuss even these two documents without having the slightest idea of what the Commonwealth is aiming to do.

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I feel we are in a most difficult situation because there are so many people throughout Australia who believe that something wonderful is going to happen as a result of the referendum. They believe this will happen with such dazzling speed that it will be wonderful to behold. In actual fact, we find that no one quite knows what they want or where they are going. I personally feel that the Commonwealth should give us some indication of what it requires. I would be asking my own officers to do a tremendous amount of work and for all I know the Commonwealth has no desire for that information, or to make use of that information.

With respect to Mr. Barnes personally, and the Commonwealth Ministers generally, I feel that until they give us a lead to what they seek then it is terribly difficult for us to decide to do anything. The recommendation is that we should undertake a full-scale review and we should prepare a report. I do not know how detailed or what that report should cover. I do not know what assumption I can make in compiling the report: Whether I am to assume that there is to be additional finance in the total available between the Commonwealth and the States. I just feel that I need a little more help from the Commonwealth before I can do anything. I am very disappointed indeed to think we have come here today without anything being given to us by the Commonwealth. Indeed, the reason why we did not make a submission like Victoria and South Australia was because we assumed that since the Commonwealth had sought this power at the referendum it would have something to place before this conference by way at least of a preliminary proposal setting out principles. We do not know what it
was they wanted. Perhaps I have said more than I should have, but perhaps what I have said will start general discussion.

MR. LOVEDAY: I feel we have to define between getting details and getting general statements of policy. On looking at the report I feel we have recommendations which are sufficiently general in character for us to be able, from a Commonwealth and State point of view, to make statements of a general character. I do not think it is possible for us to make a firm decision on matters of detail. In view of what has taken place with the referendum, and the discussions over the past few years in relation to aboriginal affairs, the recommendations we have before us are sufficiently general in character for us to adopt something of a concrete nature in this regard.

Mr. Barnes said earlier today it was most important what came out of this conference in the public view. Unless this conference decides something reasonably definite with regard to the general principles which the States and the Commonwealth are prepared to adopt, the public will think we have done virtually nothing. I appreciate that we cannot come to detail with regard to finance which the Commonwealth may be prepared to make available, but I feel we should not only decide something definite on general character as recommended by our officers, but also decide some of the detail as far as the machinery is concerned. I feel that discussion on Item 5 is the real meat of this conference.
MR. LOVEDAY (CONTINUING): We do have to establish machinery in a structure which will carry us forward to a further situation. I regard this as the crux of the whole matter of this conference. I do believe we can come down with definite statements of a general character.

MR. BJELKE-PETERSEN: I would like to say that in fairness to the Federal Government, I think we cannot expect altogether/Mr. Barnes, as Minister, to come here and outline exactly what the Commonwealth and the Federal Government intended to do. I think this should follow from this conference.

The other point I wish to make is that I think it was made abundantly clear by the Commonwealth at the time of the referendum that they intended to take over from the States the responsibility of implementing a programme. Of course, one of the features of the referendum was of an international aspect in regard to removing any discrimination that did exist through the Constitution. They were some of the purposes of it.

On the other hand, it is quite clear that we, as Ministers -- and the people, I suppose, as a whole -- do hope that as a result of the referendum, the Commonwealth will come in now on the recommendations, or at least part of the recommendations, made by our officers at their conference. I think No. 3 which reads in part --

Officers noted that the proposals for financial assistance from the Commonwealth to the States to carry out these measures, and so on is quite important. I think Mr. Loveday said that we hope something concrete along these lines will be the basis under which the relationship of the States and the Commonwealth will follow and we expect this to take place. I think Mr. Barnes has indicated that this will happen,

MGR/MC/M1 49. Item No. 5 21/7/67.
but I do not personally expect — and I do not think we can expect — it to come out with some concrete proposals at this stage. However, we hope they will follow.

MR. MEACHER: Victoria considered this question prior to the referendum and we came to the conclusion — as I think this conference has — that there is such a diversity of situation in the aboriginal context that it would be impossible to take an effective overall uniform policy for the whole of Australia. Therefore, Victoria concluded that the most effective way to continue with the operation of an overall national policy would be to leave the local administration as local as possible. In other words, each State would deal with its own particular problems, but within the context of a co-ordinated policy as agreed upon by this type of conference. Therefore, we prepared a statement which members will find under item 7 in which we summarised the possibilities as we saw them. We concluded that the most effective way of getting a degree of co-ordination which we sought was to continue the meeting of Ministers on at least a biennial programme with intermediate meetings of officers to work out details and proposals for the various Ministers.

We therefore suggested in terms of the recommendation which I will probably be prepared to move in a few moments, and which is contained on page 5 of our submission, that we propose:

1. That this Conference of Ministers of the Commonwealth and States responsible for Aboriginal Affairs recommends the establishment of an Australian Aboriginal Affairs Council to act as a clearing house in all matters relating to Aborigines and part-Aborigines in Australia;

2. That the objectives of the Council include, inter alia —

- the establishment of the need for legislative reforms,

MGR/MC/M2 50. Item No. 5 21/7/67.
the correlation of State and Commonwealth policies;
the liaison between Aboriginal administrations;
the rationalisation of services by other Federal and State departments and agencies;
the rationalisation of educational grants and scholarships;
the establishment of a bureau of reference and information;
the training and recruitment of officers;
and any other matters consistent with the implementation of agreed policies;

3. That the Council comprise one Minister from each of :
The Commonwealth
New South Wales
Victoria
Queensland
South Australia
Western Australia
Tasmania.

4. That the Council meet annually;
This is instead of biennial meetings. To continue --

5. That any proposed legislation by the Commonwealth be only with the approval of the majority of the States represented;
This, of course, is in line with the original proposal that this was so diverse that it would be necessary to have some degree of agreement before implementing a policy in any particular area. To continue --

6. That each State may seek financial assistance from the Commonwealth for specific projects, provided that the requesting State expends the grant for the purpose for which it is given;
This was based on the assumption which the Commonwealth had in mind in supporting a policy financially. To continue --

7. That the Council be assisted by a Conference of Officers, comprising two delegates from the Commonwealth and two from each of the States represented;

8. That the Conference of Officers meet quarterly;
Perhaps a quarterly meeting is a little ambitious. The final recommendation is --

MGR/MC/M3 51. Item No. 5 21/7/67.
9. That the Commonwealth Government provide the secretariat for the Council and Conference.

This is all based on the same conclusions which the officers arrived at in agenda item 5.

We believe that, if this conference is to achieve anything worth while, it should be recommending to the Commonwealth the type of organisation which we think the Commonwealth should adopt. When I say the Commonwealth, I mean that the Commonwealth in conjunction with the States should adopt.

From Victoria's point of view, we feel that the Commonwealth could be extremely helpful in the field of research, and in the field of publications. Several publications have already been made available and one of the published books is a book on aborigines. We also consider that the Commonwealth could also be helpful in the field of providing the necessary skilled staffs for the various organisations around the country. Sometimes we have had extreme difficulty in getting the type of staff which we were looking for. We consider it may be possible that the Commonwealth, in a co-ordinated role, could assist in finding the type of staff which is required.

The Commonwealth has already established a school in Sydney for the study of this type of problem.

I believe that if we are going to achieve anything worth while, we need some sort of positive action. I suggest this would be along the lines of the motion which I now formally move; that is, that we set up this conference as a council, that our officers meet, and that the degree of co-operation suggested is along the lines submitted in this paper. In doing this we are at least allowing the conference to get its teeth into something positive for the Commonwealth and the other States.

MGR/MG/M4 52. Item No. 5 21/7/67.
THE CHAIRMAN: Before I call for a formal seconder to that resolution, I would like to say that I think possibly we might have been a little rough on the Commonwealth in this discussion. I can understand that had the Commonwealth come over here, with Mr. Barnes as its representative, and said, "The Commonwealth proposes to do this; the Commonwealth proposes to do that;" that possibly the States may have reacted and expressed the view that they felt this was a problem which clashes to a degree with the autonomy of the States.

We have had this aboriginal welfare problem to deal with and, indeed, so has the Commonwealth in its own sphere in the Northern Territory. I personally, and I am sure other States would like to have a very close look at this before the Commonwealth reached the proposal stage.

I would like to draw the same analogy which existed with regard to educational problems which affect all the States. For many many years the States were wrestling with the problem of education to the ordinary community and it was only when the States found that education was getting beyond them financially, that they sought assistance -- and welcomed assistance -- from the Commonwealth. This assistance has been forthcoming.

In this field of aboriginal welfare, I think I can go along with Mr. Barnes on this question. I hope I am interpreting the views of the Commonwealth correctly when I say that it is true that the people, through their vote on the referendum, have agreed to give the Commonwealth the authority to pass special laws for aborigines, as with the rest of the community. Before we go ahead and pass any laws -- or give consideration to any such laws -- we would like to know what the several States are thinking in
this field. We would like to know whether there is any aspect in which some assistance is sought, and the amount of that assistance; then the Commonwealth Government could give consideration to this matter. I do not know whether I misinterpreted the Commonwealth's views on this. I do not interpret Mr. Barnes' remarks to mean that the Commonwealth has adopted a shut-door on this and is not prepared to do any more than it is doing up to date. I did not interpret his remarks in that context,
THE CHAIRMAN (Continuing): He said everything was going along very nicely and let us keep it that way; because I think we are all very conscious of the need to accelerate this. We are conscious from three points of view -- humanitarian, economically -- this affects these people because by no means are they economically independent -- and also because of the international or political aspect. As Mr. Barnes said, the people outside of the country, and even perhaps within the country, or the nation, to a degree are more conscious of the failings of the progress towards assimilation than they are towards the achievements.

This is something we have to overcome and one way to do that is to give an acceleration to the programme. The States themselves -- or at least Western Australia does and I do not know whether the same thing is felt in the Eastern States -- feel that the greatest impediment to this is finance, particularly in regard to certain aspects. I appreciate very much that some States will feel the need in one direction more than in another. We in Western Australia -- and I think I suggested this in my earlier remarks today -- feel a great need for conventional housing and this is beyond the financial resources of the State at the moment. There are other fields in which we would appreciate assistance, as well, and Mr. Meagher has touched on these -- the field of research and the field of propaganda -- and we appreciate what the Commonwealth is doing in these things. However, I am not so sanguine about the officers -- the extra staffing. I think this would be within the resources of the State if we had the money to embark on training programmes, and so on. I think these are fields that should be left to the States, and in that regard I am expressing a personal opinion.

COX/Dys/nl. 55. Item No.5. 21/7/67.
MR. MEAGHER: I was not suggesting that the Commonwealth should provide us with staff but assist us in providing the right type of staff.

THE CHAIRMAN: This all points -- or at least it does so far as Western Australia is concerned and I have yet to learn that the other States are not affected in the same way -- to increasing Commonwealth financial assistance in other fields as well as research which has already been conducted. If Mr. Barnes could indicate to us that the Commonwealth is not unsympathetic, at least to considering this aspect, then I think it gives the States the green light to put their own houses in order and make a reference to our own individual requirements. I would hope that the Commonwealth will not say, "Unless you are all agreed on a common policy, or common implementation towards this programme we are not interested."

If the Commonwealth will recognise that some States want assistance in regard to one aspect and other States in regard to some other aspect, and is prepared to look at each aspect separately, and help each State as far as possible, I think it leaves the way clear for the States to make further research into the problems confronting those States. Having done that what we need is to be able to go to the Commonwealth and say, "This is beyond our own resources; can you help us?" I do not know whether I have summed up the position but that is as we in Western Australia see it -- or at least as I see it.

MR. MEAGHER: I have been looking at the resolution and I wondered if you had any objection, Mr. Chairman, to my amending it slightly. Item 8, at the bottom of page 6, refers to the Conference of Officers meeting quarterly and I would like to delete the word "quarterly" and substitute the words "as required".

COX/Dys/n2. 56. Item No.5. 21/7/67.
THE CHAIRMAN: Is there a seconder? As there is no seconder I have no option but to declare the motion lapsed.

MR. BJELKE-PETERSEN: I was just going to make the point whether this motion did not bring the whole question too much within the ambit of the Commonwealth so far as control is concerned. I agree with the thoughts outlined by you, Mr. Chairman.

THE CHAIRMAN: Are you speaking to the resolution which has just lapsed?

MR. BJELKE-PETERSEN: There is no need, but I just made that observation.

MR. WILLIS: 's a personal suggestion, if someone moved in regard to the officers' recommendation it would give us a basis for discussion.

THE CHAIRMAN: Would you agree to do that?

MR. WILLIS: No.

MR. LOVEDAY: I am prepared to move in regard to the first item of the officers' recommendation to indicate how we feel generally about this question of the States administering their own affairs within the context of overall national policy. I think this establishes a point which is necessary before we move to another point in our discussions. I believe if we carry part (1) of our officers' recommendations we establish that point, and that is valuable.

MR. WILLIS: With great respect to our colleague from South Australia this, to my mind, is completely unnecessary because the 1963 conference resolved just that, and it is therefore established policy of this Aboriginal Ministers' conference. Therefore I do not see the need for us to repeat something which we have
already agreed upon as a fixed and permanent policy. I am not disagreeing with it; I agree with it entirely.

MR. LOVEDAY: This will come out in the form of a published statement after this conference and we can say we are reaffirming this policy. I think it is worth doing at this stage.

MR. BJELKE-PETERSEN: I think it is in fact reaffirming it, which I think would be a good thing in the light of the referendum, and I am happy to second it.

THE CHAIRMAN: It is moved and seconded that we agree to Item 1 of the conclusions reached by the State Officers. Is there any further discussion on this matter?

MR. MEAGHER: Mr. Bjelke-Petersen referred to placing things too heavily in the hands of the Commonwealth; yet he is prepared to reiterate Part 1 of the recommendation which states:

That the interests of all Aborigines and part-Aborigines would be best served by programmes administered by State authorities within the context of overall national policies.

That seems to me to be a clear statement that the Commonwealth in fact directs policy, too, and I cannot understand the objection to one and the support of the other. Could he elaborate on that?

THE CHAIRMAN: We cannot go back to the resolution which lapsed. There can be no further discussion on that.

MR. BARNES: I was interested in the comments and on the assumptions that have been drawn from this referendum. When we consider assumptions we must consider the basis for those assumptions and I can only refer to what the Prime Minister said in his second reading speech on the 1st March. Referring to this particular section the Prime Minister stated that if proposals relating to Aborigines were approved COX/Dys/n4. 58. Item No.5. 21/7/67.
by the people the Government would regard it as desirable to hold discussions with the States to secure the widest measure of agreement with respect to Aboriginal advancement. Assumptions have been drawn from the Press and experts on Aboriginal affairs and if we are to be governed by these sorts of people I do not like the look of the future. That is what the Prime Minister stated ---

MR. MEAGHER: And my resolution was completely in line with that statement, I thought.
THE CHAIRMAN: I do not know that the officers' recommendation has been greatly inconsistent with your own, Mr. Meagher, either, because the officers' recommendation points to greater co-operation in setting up the machinery.

MR. WILLIS: Perhaps we could add, in the fourth line, after the words "national responsibility", the words, "concurrent with that of the States."

MR. MEAGHER: On looking at the recommendation by the officers, I was under the impression that with my motion I was providing the machinery to implement that recommendation.

THE CHAIRMAN: At page 2 of the officers' recommendation, of course, the machinery is stated.

MR. WILLIS: Could I move an amendment --

That after the word "responsibility" in the fourth line, the words, "concurrent with that of the States" be added.

This, I think, would overcome Mr. Meagher's problem. If the amendment were agreed to it would thereby not suggest that it is the sole responsibility of the Commonwealth, but it is the responsibility of both the Commonwealth and the States.

THE CHAIRMAN: I can see no objection to the addition of those few words. It certainly is a State responsibility.

MR. MEAGHER: I do not think the word "concurrent" means anything following the recent constitutional decision by the High Court. The Prime Minister said he is prepared to discuss these things with State administrations. If we inserted the word "agreed" I think it would cover the situation.
MR. WILLIS: I would like both. As Mr. Barnes said the Commonwealth comes in with a concurrent power and it is not many years before it becomes the sole power.

MR. BARNES: We could have an argument on this.

MR. WILLIS: You will be outnumbered here, I can tell you. In this field I could not express it more sincerely than to say that this is a matter that must be administered on a State by State basis because of the tremendous differences that occur. I shudder to think what might happen with one overall administration in this field for the whole of the Commonwealth. I would like to lay it right on the line at the beginning that we should emphasise that this is a concurrent power and a concurrent responsibility.

MR. MEAGHER: I agree with you that a concurrent responsibility will mean a Commonwealth responsibility in practice and therefore I reiterate that my approach to the position was that we should accept this proposition by inserting the word "agreed" to make it read "agreed policies", and then go back to the wording I suggested so that it would mean that these policies are adopted and are agreed to by the Commonwealth because this is exactly what we should do. In this way we would avoid most of the pitfalls.

THE CHAIRMAN: I think there might be some danger in referring to it as a national responsibility. With the use of those words, many people will interpret the meaning as being that the power is to be taken away from the States and conferring it on the Commonwealth. I thought if we said something to the effect that we were expanding it into joint Commonwealth and State responsibility it would bring the Commonwealth into it,
and generally speaking, that is the interpretation that might be placed on the referendum. It is the expectation of the people as a whole that the result of the referendum will lead to greater Commonwealth responsibility. I would suggest that instead of using the words "national responsibility" we use the words "joint responsibility."

MR. WILLIS: Could I suggest alternative wording to the effect that the national responsibility will be shared by the Commonwealth and the States?

THE CHAIRMAN: I do not like that either.

MR. LOVEDAY: I do not think we should eliminate the words "national responsibility" because the attitude of the outside world is that it is a national responsibility, and people always talk about the Australian responsibility in this regard and do not think of it as a State responsibility.

THE CHAIRMAN: Is your State prepared to hand it over to the Commonwealth?

MR. LOVEDAY: No, I did not say that, but the words, "national responsibility" are important because of the attitude of the outside world to this important question. I am quite happy with the addition of the words, "concurrent with that of the States" which makes it quite clear that both the Commonwealth and the States have responsibility in this particular matter.

THE CHAIRMAN: As well as a State responsibility.

MR. LOVEDAY: "Concurrent with that of the States" are the words suggested.

MR. BJELKE-PETERSEN: Overall we do have reference to the great national policy of assimilation, but it is not, of course, clear in the way it is set out

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THE CHAIRMAN: Have you any further comment, Mr. Barnes?

MR. BARNES: No, I have no attitude on this; I have said my piece.

THE CHAIRMAN: Do you all agree to add the words, "concurrent with that of the States" after the word "responsibility"?

MR. MEAGHER: No, I am against it, Mr. Chairman, because of the interpretation that has been placed on the word "concurrent" in the past. You will definitely find in the Constitution that where the word "concurrent" appears the Commonwealth law will prevail. I think if we use these words you will, in fact, force the public into the acceptance of the idea that the States are merely acting as agents for the Commonwealth. What we are trying to make clear is that this problem is so diverse that it must be handled on a local basis. It would be just as absurd for me to tell Mr. Barnes how to handle the situation in the Northern Territory.

Therefore, I believe that anything we say which suggests to the public mind and to some of the propagandists that, in fact, we are handing over all our responsibility to the Commonwealth will give a wrong slant to the operations.

Here we have a recommendation which, in fact, says that this is to continue as a diverse problem and yet we are proposing to put in words which will imply that we do not regard it as a diverse problem, but as a universal problem. It is dangerous to put the suggested words in.
THE CHAIRMAN: You do not like the words, "national responsibility"?

MR. MEAGHER: Not particularly.

THE CHAIRMAN: Can you suggest any substitute words?

MR. MEAGHER: I would prefer it to read, "joint Commonwealth-State responsibility" in place of "national responsibility", and then at the bottom, "the context of overall agreed policies."
THE CHAIRMAN: We have the words in the fourth line, "should now be seen as having been expanded into a joint Commonwealth-State responsibility." Will anyone move to that effect?

MR. MEAGHER: I move to that effect.

THE CHAIRMAN: Are we agreed on paragraph 2?

MR. BJELKE-PETERSEN: I am prepared to accept that, and I second it.

MR. WILLIS: I would like to delete the word "National" and insert the words "joint Commonwealth-State."

THE CHAIRMAN: And what would we have following on that?

MR. MEAGHER: After the word "everybody" in the second last line, put in the word "agreed" and delete the word "national" in the last line.

MR. LOVEDAY: It will read then, "policies agreed between the States and the Commonwealth."

MR. WILLIS: The policy of assimilation is a national policy which has been agreed between the Commonwealth and the States, and therefore it is surely correctly described as a national policy.

MR. MEAGHER: My objection to the word "national" is the propaganda use that is made of it. Everyone comes along and criticises it and says, "What we need is a national policy." This could be used even in the collection of garbage. The word is much abused.

THE CHAIRMAN: I think this is consistent with what we have agreed to further up in the same paragraph. Are we agreed to the words, "policies agreed between the States and the Commonwealth?"

MR. BARNES: Is it the Commonwealth's interest only or the Commonwealth and States' interests being
expanded into this.

THE CHAIRMAN: I think this will open the door for the Commonwealth to come into it. Mr. Barnes is referring to the first one—"as a consequence of the referendum result, etc."

MR. MEEAGHER: If you use Commonwealth as meaning the whole of Australia it is all right, but if you use it as a Government it is all wrong.

MR. LOVEDAY: I think that all we need do is strike out the words "the Commonwealth interest in."

THE CHAIRMAN: I take it everybody agrees to that. I think this is quite clear and it is not necessary to read out the corrected version.

MR. WILLIS: My only other suggestion is a grammatical one. Instead of "for so long as could be seen," I would like to insert the words, "for so long as can be seen." I would rather say their interests will be best served" rather than their interests "would be best served."

THE CHAIRMAN: So now we are all agreed that the first paragraph in No.1 be accepted as amended. We will now pass to paragraph 2 which reads, "There was scope for further development of aboriginal policies, etc."

MR. WILLIS: What does it mean? To me it sounds like a platitudinous statement.

THE CHAIRMAN: It would not matter if it were deleted altogether. Do you want to delete it?

MR. MCGHER: It does say we should improve our methods of consultation.

MR. WILLIS: Is not that a reflection on our work to date?
THE CHAIRMAN: I think the improvement is surely dealt with over the page.

MR. BJELKE-PETERSEN: I think it is a lead-up to what is to follow.

THE CHAIRMAN: I am in your hands.

MR. WILLIS: I would like to change "was" to "is."

MR. MEAGHER: I will move that the word "was" be deleted and the word "is" be substituted in lieu.

THE CHAIRMAN: Are we now agreed on paragraph 2?

MR. LOVEDAY: I feel this is a statement of the obvious and that we should be more positive.

THE CHAIRMAN: Do you feel the word should be taken out?
MR. LOVEDAY: I move accordingly that paragraph 2 be deleted.

MR. WILLIS: I would rather see it substantially altered along the lines that conference approve the first paragraph in which we say there is a changed situation in view of the referendum. The second paragraph says the same thing in that there has been a large measure of cooperation between the Commonwealth and the State authorities in this field, and there is room for greater information and improvement. I would like time to draft the appropriate words, because as the paragraph stands it is a meaningless point.

THE CHAIRMAN: I do not know that there is a great need for paragraph 2 because I cannot anticipate what might transpire in respect of what is said on page 2. We would not adopt the machinery on page 2 unless we agreed with the principles in paragraph 2.

MR. WILLIS: Could we ask the officers to rephrase this paragraph along the lines I have suggested?

THE CHAIRMAN: I suggest that is our responsibility. Perhaps we could look at this during lunch time and come back to it. Mr. Meagher might be able to draft out something for us.

MR. MEAGHER: This paragraph is largely redundant, because on the next page we have a series of recommendations as to how this machinery should be implemented. I propose that this paragraph be deleted.

THE CHAIRMAN: Could we defer further consideration until after lunch? Paragraph 3 is quite independent of paragraph 2. What is stated in paragraph 3 is being done by the States all the time.

Dry/Ely/Ql 68. Item No.5. 21/7/67
MR. WILLIS: This is the point on which I balked when I first read through the document and made some caustic comments about the Commonwealth not having asked us for our views. This is a tremendous field of endeavour. In speaking of a review I do not know whether it ought to be one of three lines or of three heavy volumes, with emphasis on this or that aspect. Until we have some lead from the Commonwealth as to the directions it is interested we could do a lot of work for no purpose whatever. The Commonwealth has many research officers, but in our State we work hard and we have no time for research unless we know its purpose. Until we know the purpose we are at a loss to know the directions in which the research should take.

MR. BJELKE-PETERSEN: In our State we have a much clearer picture of the pressure points and the requirements. If we review these pressure points in the light of the new approach by the Commonwealth we will submit it to the Commonwealth. We could utilise the purpose embraced by paragraph 3.

MR. LOVEDAY: I interpret this that each State will examine its whole work on aboriginal affairs and will inform the Commonwealth where it requires assistance. There are priorities and these are the matters which should be advised.

THE CHAIRMAN: If we left it entirely to the Commonwealth then the Commonwealth could interpret our wishes in quite a different way.

MR. LOVEDAY: This goes back to the diverse situations which exist in each State, where the priorities are different.

Dry/Bly/Q2 69. Item No.5. 21/7/67
MR. LOVEDAY: This means each State should advise the Commonwealth of its highest priorities. I do not think this paragraph expresses the situation as clearly as that, but that was my interpretation.

THE CHAIRMAN: I suggest that each State does this now, despite the understanding up to the present that each State conducts its own affairs and finds its own resources for the work. Surely each State considers what it likes to do, and it has done that over the years.

MR. WILLIS: I do not dispute that and do not disagree with anything that has been said. There seems to be an underlying misunderstanding that the Commonwealth will have to protect extra money, but nowhere at any time has the Prime Minister or Mr. Barnes said there will be more money available to the States for this purpose. If the Commonwealth says in general terms that it will spend a certain amount of extra money I would know what research to undertake to give the Commonwealth a list of priorities for the expenditure of that money; otherwise I would be giving the officers more work to do without getting more money for the purpose. Mr. Barnes does not know whether more money is forthcoming, because his Government has not made a decision.

MR. BARNES: Referring to the Prime Minister's speech we will obtain from the States their ideas and we will confer with the States. If there is money to give we will decide how much is required; but are we to give it before we know the problems which lie ahead? The Prime Minister has made no mention of this, but he has said that the Commonwealth will discuss this matter with the States.

Dry/Bly/Q3 70. Item No. 5. 21/7/67
MR. MEAGHER: Having agreed to the first paragraph and laid down the general approach, the other two paragraphs become worthless. If we do as the first paragraph suggests the other matters will follow automatically. If we have a problem and require assistance we will say so. We do not need to add many words to what is obvious. To test the feelings of conference I move that paragraphs 2 and 3 be deleted.

THE CHAIRMAN: If that is done then something will have to be done about the following portion of the document which contains a reference to paragraph 3.
MR. BJELKE-PETERSEN: I did not catch the reasons for this.

MR. MEAGHER: The paragraphs are stating the obvious. We have agreed to the general principle of the thing and within that general principle it is obvious we will have to do these things.

THE CHAIRMAN: You think the position is covered by that overall approach?

MR. MEAGHER: The position is covered in paragraph 1, to which we have already agreed and when we get down to the detail we can cover it then.

THE CHAIRMAN: Is there a seconder to the motion that paragraphs 2 and 3 be deleted?

Seconded Mr. Bjelke-Petersen

AGREED

AT 12.32 P.M. CONFERENCE ADJOURNED FOR LUNCH

AND RESUMED AT 2.16 P.M.
THE CHAIRMAN: Before lunch we had deleted paragraphs 2 and 3.

MR. LOVEDAY: Before we pass on to page 2 I want to say that there is an assumption in the final paragraph on page 1 with which I would not agree at all.

MR. WILLIS: Hear hear!

MR. LOVEDAY: I feel it necessary to raise the objection to the assumption at this stage so that people will not go away thinking we all agree. Frankly, I believe the question of financial assistance to the States by the Commonwealth, if it is decided upon eventually, has nothing whatever to do with Commonwealth/State financial relations in the sense of its being tied to the present formula. I think it has nothing to do with that at all and if assistance is to be given it should be given in relation to the particular problems of the States. We have already said that these problems were diverse and had nothing to do with State populations and other details of the formula.

THE CHAIRMAN: What we are considering, of course, is a report made by the officers. What we do is our own business. In effect, we have noted the report of the officers and have decided on No.1. We have agreed to that if we do not adopt anything else on that page.

MR. LOVEDAY: What I have objected to would necessarily be considered in the context.

THE CHAIRMAN: The paragraph to which you object reads, "Officers' noted proposals for financial assistance" and so on.

MR. LOVEDAY: I would like to move that it be deleted so that there is no doubt in our minds as to what is intended in the future.

OGS/Dys/s1. 73. Item No.5. 21/7/67.
THE CHAIRMAN: It is an expression of opinion by the officers. Whether you wish to express some contrary opinion or just more or less ignore the opinion of the officers is your own business.

MR. LOVEDAY: I feel my objection should be noted.

MR. BJELKE-PETERSEN: I would like to mention an amendment which I have in mind. I would like to add after the words, "State financial relationship" the words, "on the basis of the Aboriginal and part-Aboriginal population of each State". I do not want it to apply as set out here but if it were applied to the financial problems of each State it would then be satisfactory.

MR. WILLIS: I interpret this paragraph as being a statement of fact. It mentions what the officers noted. We can disagree with what the officers noted, and I do not think this section is part of the resolution. It is purely a statement of fact. Personally, I feel they have noted incorrectly.

MR. MEAGHER: The result of the referendum and the request for the carrying of the referendum suggested that it should not be part of that. It should be a separate thing.

MR. SWIFT: Let me explain on behalf of the officers. The point is that the officers saw it as a matter of machinery not as a matter of formula. They were not meaning to imply that any assistance would be given as part of the normal Commonwealth/State grants under formulae. It was a question of machinery as the officers saw it. It would not be satisfactory to any of the Governments concerned if there were to be a channel of finance as a result of a meeting of Commonwealth and State Ministers concerned with Aboriginal welfare only. In other words, we do think that
each State would want whatever was agreed upon amongst the Ministers for Aboriginal welfare to be considered in context with the State Government finances.
MR. BJELKE-PETERSEN: I appreciate that fact and that is as I understand the position. Naturally each State would, in effect, have to consider this on the Commonwealth-State financial basis. However, if we include this on this basis, this particular issue should be on the basis of aboriginal and part-aboriginal population. Then we would be satisfied that it would be dealt with, not as an individual State going with an individual matter to the Commonwealth, but rather that it would be dealt with on the complete Commonwealth-State financial basis. This is how I understand the position and is why I wanted this amendment included. If it is dealt with on the Commonwealth-State financial basis as all other matters are dealt with, then it would be satisfactory I imagine, to any of the States. We know it would be satisfactory without going into the detail as to the reasons.

MR. BARNES: I would just like to make an observation. All our other financial arrangements are dealt with at the Premiers' Conference, with the Prime Minister and the Loan Council. I do not think we can take this out of that context.

MR. MEAGHER: I do not think there is any point in saying it at all. It is rather irrelevant to the consideration here. What we are considering is how we can get the best results out of the Constitution result. We are considering the aboriginal problems and diving into the realm of Commonwealth-State relationships is a completely different subject. My suggestion is that we should delete that paragraph as being irrelevant.
MR. BJELKE-PETERSEN: Before we delete anything further, I think we should consider the other items on the agenda, that is, items (a), (b), (c), and (d). If we delete item 3 on the first page, there will not be very much left by the time some of the other deletions are made. We ought to consider some of these things.

THE CHAIRMAN: We have not deleted very much yet of course.

MR. BJELKE-PETERSEN: I refer to item 3 in relation to (c) on page 2.

THE CHAIRMAN: If you wish we can look further on this, but we will have to come back to this item, because it is not sufficient to record that the officers noted this. We want the decision of this meeting.

The item was deferred.

THE CHAIRMAN: The next item to be considered is --

(a) This conference of Commonwealth and State Ministers be reconstituted as the Australian Aboriginal Affairs Council and the meeting of the officers be designated their Standing Committee to meet in each case as necessary but the Council not less than biennially and the Standing Committee not less than annually.

MR. WILLIS: I should like to ask through the Chair one of the officers who presided at the officers' meeting to explain why we have changed aboriginal welfare into aboriginal affairs. Is there any particular significance in this, or is it a change for the sake of change?

MR. GARE: I do not think there is any particular significance intended here except perhaps that "affairs" can be construed to cover a broader field than "welfare." I think it was intended to cover each and every aspect of aboriginal advancement; at least this was my own
thinking on the matter.

MR. MEAGHER: In Victoria, in the rewriting of our Act we are omitting the word "welfare" wherever it appears in the Act, because over the years we have had a history of degradation brought about by the community philosophy and we are substituting the term "aboriginal affairs" instead of "aboriginal welfare." From this point of view alone it is well worth doing. If we are going to convince these people of their responsibility, we have to get rid of a hand-out organisation.

MR. BJELKE-PETERSEN: We support it for the same reason.

MR. LOVEDAY: We do, too.

THE CHAIRMAN: Is there any objection to the wording --

.... and the meeting of officers be designated their Standing Committee to meet in each case as necessary, but the Council not less than biennially and the Standing Committee not less than annually;

MR. WILLIS: I should imagine that saying, "not less than biennially" would mean that there would be an interval of at least two years between meetings. Am I correct?

MR. SWIFT: That is the present situation.

MR. WILLIS: It is every two years at the present time, and I do not know whether it is correct to say that we have decided, now that things are coming to a head, that we are going to meet less frequently than we have in the past. This is how some of our critics will interpret this decision if we agree with these words.

MR. MEAGHER: I suggest that the council of Ministers should meet at least annually with the right
to convene special meetings, if necessary.

THE CHAIRMAN: Obviously it does not mean that it is to meet at any greater interval than two years.

MR. WILLIS: It says the opposite.

THE CHAIRMAN: It could be interpreted that way, and I consider we should make it more positive by saying, "with the Council to meet annually and the Standing Committee at least annually" Does the Standing Committee consider there is a need for it to meet more than annually?

MR. MEAGHER: I suggest the wording should be --

This conference of Commonwealth and State Ministers be reconstituted as the Australian Aboriginal Affairs Council to meet annually, and the meeting of officers be designated their Standing Committee to meet in each case as necessary.
MR. WILLIS: I will second that motion.

MR. MEAGHER: In other words, we have a Ministers' Conference, designated as the council, and an officers' conference to be designated as the Standing Committee; the officers' conference meets as often as necessary, and the Ministers' conference meets annually.

THE CHAIRMAN: The wording now will be --

A conference of Commonwealth-State Ministers be constituted as the Australian Aboriginal Affairs Council, to meet annually. There be a Standing Committee of officers to meet as necessary.

Are we all agreed on this?

MR. LOVEDAY: The point that does concern me a little in this overall question is getting some aboriginal representation. I appreciate the difficulties of this but in (d) we have it with each State undertaking consultation with representative aboriginals to the fullest extent appropriate." However, I am in the same difficulty as other Ministers here today and that is that we have not had a chance to think about these things for long enough. I am thinking of the question of the meeting of officers. They will be departmental officers and there will be no aboriginal representation there. I do not think we could expect it at ministerial level but if we wish to have the full confidence of the public in what we do in this regard I think it must be shown that aboriginal representation and consultation is at a pretty high level.

I am concerned about this aspect, too, from the point of view of the recommendations in regard to the apportioning of finance. I have in mind that the Commonwealth relies on bodies like the A.U.C. in regard to recommendations for universities and so on to get independent recommendations, getting away from State
comment on the question of financial assistance. I think those are considerations that deserve quite a bit of thought.

I cannot put up a solution at the moment, but I do feel we are at a bit of a disadvantage in regard to what is a very important question—having aboriginal representation and consultation at the highest level possible on this question.

THE CHAIRMAN: But are we not jumping ahead a little fast? I think your remarks would be a little more appropriate when we get down to (d).

MR. LOVEDAY: I appreciate that but I just mention it at this stage. I cannot offer a solution at the moment on the motion that we are considering but I think it does need a lot of thought.

THE CHAIRMAN: I do not think we can get away from the Standing Committee as at present constituted with the principal officers. Whether they, in the passage of time, are replaced by aborigines is another story, but at least we have a Standing Committee at the moment. Therefore I would suggest we discuss paragraph (a). Do you all agree with what I have read in that regard?

DELEGATES: Yes.

THE CHAIRMAN: (b) reads --

A small permanent secretariat be established by the Commonwealth to service the council and the Standing Committee.

This is banging it on to the Commonwealth. Well, Mr. Barnes?

MR. BARNES: I am listening.

THE CHAIRMAN: Would you care to have any comment on this?
MR. BARNES: No, it is the views of the States in which I am interested.

THE CHAIRMAN: But the unanimous views of the States do not necessarily bring this about.

MR. BARNES: Policies have to be worked out and I do not make decisions on those.

MR. MEACHER: This is our recommendation, in any case.

THE CHAIRMAN: Can we decide this as a recommendation?

MR. WILLIS: There are two facets to this: The first one we have to decide is whether it is desirable to have some permanent sort of secretariat. If we agree there is such a desire and need then we have to decide whether it should be done by the States, conjointly, or by the Commonwealth, on behalf of the Commonwealth and the States. I think the question is as simple as that.

THE CHAIRMAN: I do not think that is something for us to decide. It requires Commonwealth consideration.

MR. WILLIS: Mr. Barnes wants to hear our views and I think the first thing we have to decide is whether we want a secretariat or muddle along as we have done in the past. If we do want a secretariat we have to decide whether to do it ourselves or ask the Commonwealth to set it up.

MR. BARNES: If it would be of any assistance to the States I would point out that we have many Commonwealth-State bodies, such as the Australian Agricultural Council, the Australian Transport Advisory Council, the Fisheries Conference, and so on, and in all these cases the Commonwealth has a secretariat. I just point this out for information.
MR. MEAGHER: We assume this would work in much the same way.

MR. WILLIS: I think this is a very commonsense decision to make where the Commonwealth has a department that does this work. If the Commonwealth has no such department then, of course, it does not have the facilities to perform that function. In this instance we have a Commonwealth department which is concerned with aboriginal affairs and therefore it seems no great task to ask the Commonwealth to do this and, quite obviously, it could do it better than any individual State or certainly better than a congregation of States, for want of a better word.

THE CHAIRMAN: Yes. I do not think we want to shy at the first hurdle.
THE CHAIRMAN (continuing): What about the principle of this permanent secretariat? Is there any question about the wisdom of this?

MR. BJELKE-PETERSEN: For continuity it would be an ideal way of doing it, rather than each State setting up a secretariat each time.

MR. WILLIS: Without rubbing sore spots again, I would like to point out that we are again assuming the Commonwealth will co-operate with the States in the field of State aboriginal affairs. Hitherto it has been concerned with aboriginal matters only in the Territories, and we are assuming, as a result of the referendum, it will be co-operating with the States in resolving State problems. I would point out that in the field of matrimonial relations, the Commonwealth had concurrent powers with the States for 60 years, but we did not find the need for a secretariat to arrive at any degree of uniformity. However, if we feel there is a need for this secretariat, obviously this is the way to do it. First of all, we must assume there is a need for it.

THE CHAIRMAN: Can we accept a re-wording on the lines of, "The Commonwealth be requested to establish a small permanent secretariat to service the Council and the Standing Committee?"

MR. MEAGHER: May I suggest there should be a small permanent secretariat to service the needs of the Council and the Standing Committee, and then it is a matter for discussion on how we should go about it. We are not then giving anyone direction, but simply stating there is a need for a secretariat to convene the meetings, distribute the papers, and so on. It might Pks/Hly/Vl 84. Item No. 5. 21.7.67.
also deal with reports from conferences and papers from various States. It would be one single body to which we could refer these matters and it would be helpful to all States.

THE CHAIRMAN: Is anyone prepared to move a motion?

MR. WILLIS: I disagree with my friend from Victoria. If we are to have a secretariat and we think it is desirable - and I gather we all do - we should give some lead as to who should establish that secretariat. It is no use us saying on the one hand that the Commonwealth is looking to us for guidance, and then on the other hand, refusing that guidance. If we agree that the Commonwealth should establish a secretariat, let us say so.

THE CHAIRMAN: I suggest we leave it at, "That the Commonwealth is requested to establish a permanent secretariat..." and if the Commonwealth declines to do this it is up to the States to decide whether a secretariat is required and how it will be established. We should not quibble over this. If we are satisfied a secretariat is desired we should request the Commonwealth to set it up and await the events. Is anyone prepared to move?

MR. WILLIS: I move -

That the Commonwealth be requested to establish a small secretariat to service the Council and the Standing Committee.

Seconded by Mr. Bjelke-Petersen.

Carried unanimously.

MR. BJELKE-PETERSEN: If conference eliminates (c) and brings back, in effect, the words contained in paragraph 3 on the first page, and then go into the first paragraph on the next line and start with a capital "T"
and then after the words "financial assistance from the Commonwealth to the States to carry out these measures" insert "to be considered in the context of over-all Commonwealth-State relationship on the basis of the part-aboriginal population in each State." Then from there we could go back over to (d) and bring in the programmes referring to what we have outlined in paragraph 3; that is, where it reads, "the programmes should be prepared in consultation between the States concerned...." We could then eliminate the rest of the page which does not convey very much so far as I can see.
MR. BJELKE-PETERSEN (CONTINUING): Then you have the purpose as to what the council is to do, and the part we expect the Commonwealth will play in relation to its measure of financial responsibility. You then bring in the consultation with the representative aborigines to the fullest extent appropriate.

THE CHAIRMAN: That is a little involved. It is chopping around a bit. I suggest we commence with 3.

MR. MEAGHER: I suggest this can be done much more simply. Perhaps we could add the words "Each State to formulate an overall programme of the highest priority measures related to specific advancement targets with each State undertaking consultation with representative aborigines to the fullest extent appropriate."

MR. BJELKE-PETERSEN: The one I would like to raise concerns a matter of Commonwealth responsibility, and we ought to add to this by another paragraph perhaps along the following lines: -

The financial assistance from the Commonwealth to the States to carry out these measures to be considered in the context of overall Commonwealth-State relationships on the basis of aboriginal and part-aboriginal population in each State.

THE CHAIRMAN: Perhaps it would be a good idea if I got my stenographer in so that she could take these amendments down and give us a typed resolution which we can then consider.

(Stenographer took down amendments to produce typed copy).

MR. BJELKE-PETERSEN: I think there should be some reference as to how these measures we have been speaking about will be passed on to the Commonwealth and the basis on which it should have the responsibility. If we go away from here without recording whether any State
will deal directly with the Commonwealth particularly in relation to their individual problems or whether we are going to deal with it on the basis of Commonwealth-State relationship it will serve no useful purpose.

MR. WILLIS: Mr. Meagher's amendment would be a new (c) and Mr. Bjelke-Petersen's a new (d). If we discuss them together we will not only get into a wrangle, but will soon get out of our depth. They should be discussed separately.

THE CHAIRMAN: We will perhaps postpone this item and discuss it when we receive the typed copy of the amended resolution.

Item No. 5 postponed.

Item No. 6. Uniform Nomenclature - Officers' Standing Committee Agenda Item 8)

OFFICERS' STANDING COMMITTEE REPORT

The conference discussed the nomenclature in the use in the various States and in the Northern Territory in the light of that agreed at the 1963 Conference and the later publication produced by the Commonwealth Government Printing Office titled "Style Manual", namely -

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1963 Conference</th>
<th>&quot;Style Manual&quot;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Singular Noun</td>
<td>Aboriginal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plural Noun</td>
<td>Aborigines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjective</td>
<td>Aboriginal</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Aboriginals</td>
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The present practices were found to be:

New South Wales: Adhering to 1963 Conference usage.

Victoria: Adhering to 1963 Conference.

Queensland: Singular noun "Aborigine". Otherwise as at 1963 Conference.

South Australia: Adhering to 1963 Conference.

Northern Territory: Because of the common usage in the Northern Territory, "Aboriginals" as plural noun, otherwise as in the 1963 Conference.

HALL/MC/W2 88. Item No. 6 21/7/67.
Department of Territories
Publications : As in 1963 Conference.

Western Australia : In legislation adheres to "native" for time being.
In general usage coming to comply with 1963 Conference.

Social Services Department : Follows "Style Manual".

No agreement could be reached on a standard nomenclature. The subject is referred to the Ministers for consideration whether a standard nomenclature is desirable and can be achieved.

The Conference observed that one disadvantage in the 1963 recommendation in practice is that the singular and plural nouns are in a different form.

MR. BJELKE-PETERSEN: We are content to note the officers' recommendation in this regard.

THE CHAIRMAN: If we all just note it we will not get any further towards uniformity.

MR. WILLIS: May I throw my customary spanner in the works and say that the 1963 Conference revealed no such agreement as contained in the first paragraph of the officers' submission. It reveals a comment to this effect by Mr. Hasluck but no agreement by those present at the meeting. We will commence on a completely false premise by stating that this was decided on and intended to be done in 1963. The second error is that the officers' submission states that the present practice in New South Wales adheres to the 1963 Conference usage. I have always used aborigine as the singular noun and aborigines as the plural noun.
MR. WILLIS (Continuing): Checking last night with my secretary and the Superintendent of Aborigines I found they did the same. I assume that is the practice in New South Wales. I am wondering how much more wrong it is to accept the officers' report as a true basis for discussion. It might be wiser to refer this back to the States to get the matter straight and then to discuss it more intelligently at the next conference.

THE CHAIRMAN: We could confine our attention to the second paragraph from the bottom.

MR. MEAGHER: I move that the matter be referred to the next conference.

MR. BARNES: I would like to add this for consideration by State Ministers: I mentioned earlier the confusion which existed in the community in our efforts to define Aborigines. We in the Northern Territory consider the Aborigine to be a full-blood, and a part-coloured is not recognised as one but as part of the general community.

This varies from State to State. Very often we see very prominent people who claim to be Aborigines who had achieved academic qualifications and important positions in the community, and who are classed as Aborigines. These are not Aborigines but are only part-coloured. A very prominent so-called Aborigine came to Darwin recently but was not recognised by the local Aborigine community.

Reading from the reports of the officers' meeting and particularly on employment statistics, I read the reference to employment of Aborigines and so on in Western Australia. To my mind these are part-coloured and not full-blood Aborigines. Obviously there is a very great deal of confusion. I would like the State to consider the matters I have just mentioned, because it puts us at a great
disadvantage. If we are not clear here how can the general community be clear as to what is an Aborigine?

THE CHAIRMAN: The part-coloured is a part-Aborigine.

MR. WILLIS: Do you want a new word for the part-coloured, like that used in America?

MR. BARNES: I would favour our own terms.

MR. WILLIS: What would you call a part-coloured?

MR. BARNES: A member of the general community.

MR. MEAGHER: If Victoria accepted this proposition we would not have any Aborigines.

MR. WILLIS: New South Wales would only have 100.

MR. BARNES: All this adds to confusion and could be used against us.

THE CHAIRMAN: If a person was nine-tenths Aboriginal how do you classify him?

MR. BARNES: That is going to the extreme.

MR. WILLIS: We should each undertake to study this problem and discuss it at the next conference. This is an example of what arises when delegates do not see the agenda until they get to the conference. If we had time and knew this was coming up we would have put forward concrete suggestions.

THE CHAIRMAN: Probably Western Australia has been one of the biggest offenders in this regard, because we refer to them as natives or part-natives, but that is very much out of line with what is done in the other States.

MR. WILLIS: That term will not do any good in our State, because we have the Australian Natives Association.

THE CHAIRMAN: It has been moved that we note the submission of the officers and defer further consideration until the next conference.

AGREED.

DRY/Dys/x2. 91. Item No.6. 21/7/67.
AGENDA ITEM 7
SOCIAL SERVICES

Submission from Officers Standing Committee

Officers noted the considerable advance made in the recent past in paying pensions direct to Aborigines rather than through some other person or authority on behalf of the Pensioner.

The process was almost complete in South Australia and Queensland and there was a distinct trend towards direct payment in other areas. Pensioners in New South Wales and Victoria have received their pensions direct since 1960.

The position is kept under review by the Department of Social Services with the object of hastening the transition to direct payment wherever practicable.

THE CHAIRMAN: This is more or less just for noting.

MR. WILLIS: I move that the submission be noted.

AGREED.

AGENDA ITEM 8
PUBLICITY

Submission from Officers Standing Committee

Officers noted the considerable amount of publicity material including films prepared and distributed by the Commonwealth and in particular the new publication "The Australian Aborigines" which shows a concise account of the efforts of Governments and progress achieved in Aboriginal welfare throughout Australia.

The officers recommend that the Conference expresses appreciation to the Department of Territories and acknowledges the value of the impact that this material has in Australia and overseas.

MR. WILLIS: I move that the officers' recommendation be agreed to by conference.

MR. BARNES: I would register an apology to the Minister in Queensland, Mr. Loveday, on the filming of the premiere. By some miscarriage of arrangement this particular film on Aborigines was televised on the A.B.C. before the premiere, but how this occurred I have not found out. In DRY/Dys/x3.

92. Items Nos. 7 & 8. 21/7/67.
the two States that this happened I apologise to the Ministers.

AGREED.

AGENDA ITEM 9
EDUCATION

(Submission from Officers Standing Committee)

Officers drew attention to the greatly intensified efforts which have been made in recent years to provide full educational opportunities for Aborigines.

Increasing provision is being made for preschools and adult education.

Special note was made of the increasing number of Aborigines and part-Aborigines progressing to secondary education and staying at school longer. Authoritative figures to document this progress were not available because more and more Aboriginal children were merging with the general educational stream and were not counted separately.

Where necessary special schools have been established to ensure that Aborigines have equal opportunities. All administrations have programmes for financial assistance, scholarships or bursaries for this purpose.

It was clear that no Aboriginal or part-Aboriginal child had to forego educational opportunities because of his family's financial position.

THE CHAIRMAN: This is only for noting.

MR. WILLIS: I move accordingly.

AGREED.

AGENDA ITEM 10
TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT

(Submission from Officers Standing Committee)

Officers reviewed progress being achieved in training and employment objectives and submit the following statement for consideration by Ministers:–

Conference recognises the key importance of adequate training and employment opportunities for the advancement of Aborigines and supports special programmes to these ends where existing programmes have not been fully effective. Advancement in other fields needs to be matched

DRY/Dys/x4. 93. Iter Nos. 9 & 10. 21/7/67.
by the economic advancement of Aborigines. In remote areas real problems are being encountered in providing suitable or enough employment opportunities for Aborigines and it is not easy for the Aborigines to move or adjust to areas of greater opportunity. More work is needed to assess employment potentials and stimulate employment opportunities.

Conference also supports equality under awards and equality of wages and employment conditions for Aborigines and would regard it as proper for welfare administrations where necessary to take an active role in assisting Aborigines to obtain those conditions. In many cases there will be a need for the welfare administration to advise young people on job opportunities, assist them in obtaining proper placement and keep in touch with them when they have been placed.

Employment conditions appropriate to normal industry should not necessarily apply to areas where Aborigines are in a training or relief situation.

THE CHAIRMAN: This is only for noting.

AGREED.

AGENDA ITEM 11
BUSINESS UNDERTAKINGS

(Submission from Officers Standing Committee)

Officers propose that the Conference recognise that the advancement of Aborigines should be considered not only in the terms of their becoming wage and salary earners in the community but also in their taking up avenues of self-employment or business undertakings. These developments should be fostered wherever possible.

Conference might draw attention to the value of the continuing development of individual business and corporate enterprises conducted by Aborigines and affirms that the further development of such projects will continue to be encouraged by advice and financial assistance where appropriate. As well as special arrangements, such enterprises have access to the normal banking and financial arrangements and where applicable, incentives for industrial development.

DRY/Dys/x5. 94. Item Nos.10 & 11. 21/7/67.
THE CHAIRMAN: Are you prepared to support this?

Agreed.

AGENDA ITEM NO: 12

Land Matters.

(Officers Standing Committee Report)

Officers noted that considerable attention was devoted during the referendum campaign to the question of 'land rights' for Aborigines. A major concern appeared to be that Aborigines should have the opportunity to own or lease land on reserves and they should be given assistance to establish themselves on the land.

To make more effective use of Reserve Lands South Australia has recently established an Aboriginal Lands Trust consisting wholly of Aboriginal members "to sell, lease, mortgage or otherwise deal with" lands vested in it. Legislation providing for the lease of land in Aboriginal reserves to Aborigines, Aboriginal co-operative societies and predominantly Aboriginal companies and the creation of an Aboriginal Reserves Land Board with an Aboriginal majority is currently being considered by the Legislative Council for the Northern Territory. Aborigines in the Northern Territory can already obtain leases on reserves or elsewhere by the normal processes or leases outside Reserves of up to 150 acres. In the legislation referred to it is proposed that the latter provision be retained but without limitation of area.

In Queensland any Aboriginal can own or hold land in his own right or obtain leases in Aboriginal Reserves. Many do. In Western Australia assistance is provided to suitable applicants in establishing farms. Two applications have been granted in respect of reserves set aside for land settlement.

Officers recommended that the conference recognises that in most States and the Northern Territory Aboriginal reserve lands constitute a resource for advancing Aborigines and supports measures to make effective use of this resource. The actual measures to be taken would vary according to local land law and potential usage and the views of the local legislature. Such proposals should not however restrict other developments, e.g. by mining, forestry or other industries which could be of considerable direct and indirect benefit to the Aborigines by providing them with employment opportunities, the opportunity to benefit from improved community facilities and to participate in wider community affairs.

95. Item No.12 21/7 /67
MR. WILLIS: I do not want to cause an argument, but I wonder if the Ministers in the States concerned would mind if the word "most" in the second line were deleted from the last paragraph and the word "some" substituted in lieu. Although there are six States in Australia I think there are three where this applies and three where it scarcely applies. Therefore, the use of the word "most" is poetic exaggeration. I do not think this applies in New South Wales, Victoria or Tasmania and, if it does, it is only to a minor degree and it scarcely matters.

MR. LOVEDAY: I would like to move the following addendum:—

After the words "local legislature" insert the words, "and the aboriginal people."

THE CHAIRMAN: I do not think there is anything wrong with that in principle. Is the meeting of the opinion that the amendment and the words be added?

Agreed.

Agenda Item
AGENDA ITEM 13
AGENDA ITEM 13.
HOUSING

(Officers Standing Committee Report)

Officers drew attention to factors apart from finance in the resolution of Aboriginal housing problems. These include the capacity of the Aborigines themselves to manage a new housing situation or the acceptance of Aboriginal housing by the community. Precipitate action to locate Aborigines in houses for which they are not suited or in areas where undue social stresses can occur, might do damage to long term programmes.

Many part-Aborigines and Aborigines can be provided for by normal Housing Commission programmes, or by normal home-financing schemes. Although sometimes unavoidable, it is generally undesirable that they should be grouped in houses which are designated as Aboriginal housing. For those unaccustomed to the concept of modern housing or its use, transitional-type
housing is needed to enable progression from stage to stage. In both cases it is necessary to provide suitable housing adapted to their stage of development and capacity to pay.

For both Aborigines and part-Aborigines special assistance from welfare authorities and agencies is frequently necessary to enable them to adjust satisfactorily to a new environment. This could involve ensuring that they understand their new obligations and supporting them when in difficulties.

Officers recommend that Conference notes the considerable expenditure by welfare administrations on housing for Aborigines and part-Aborigines totalling $6,294,000 in the last five years by Aboriginal welfare authorities and that in addition, houses allotted to Aborigines by the various State and Territory housing authorities were in excess of one thousand.

THE CHAIRMAN: It is recommended that we note the submission. I think the words "by welfare administrations" are not necessary and could be cut out.

MR. MEAGHER: I think this more adequately describes the position from the Victorian point of view because we have an Aboriginal Welfare Board which is building houses and in addition applicants are granted houses by the State Housing Commission. It is proposed in Victoria that ultimately the State Housing Commission will be building all houses and in that case, it would be then appropriate to take out the reference to "by welfare administrations."

THE CHAIRMAN: In Western Australia these houses are provided by both the authorities and the administrations. Are we agreed that this submission merely be noted.

Noted.

AGENDA ITEM 5.

Effects of the Referendum on Proposed Alteration to the Constitution.

THE CHAIRMAN: Before we proceed to item 14 I think we should go back to item 5 as this was the item for which we had a statement drafted.
MR. MEAGHER: I move -

That the first paragraph which reads, -

Each State to formulate an overall programme of the highest priority measures related to specific advancement targets, with each State undertaking consultation with representative Aborigines to the fullest extent appropriate.

be adopted.

MR. WILLIS: I would suggest that the word "highest" be taken out, if only for the sake of what the critics may make of it. It does not alter the intention of the resolution. I think it might be interpreted by the troublemakers, with whom we are all bothered from time to time, that we are only going to look at the highest priority.
MR. WILLIS (Continuing) I think it would therefore be more desirable just to say "overall programme of priority measures."

THE CHAIRMAN: Do we all agree?

AGREED.

MR. BJELKE-PETERSEN: The last paragraph will now read as follows:

The financial assistance from the Commonwealth to the States to carry out these measures to be considered in the context of overall Commonwealth-State financial relationships on the basis of Aboriginal and part Aboriginal population in each State.

The main purpose is to have the recognised channel of Commonwealth-State relationship continued rather than each State going to the Commonwealth individually, as it were, I think that generally it would probably be on this basis otherwise different schemes and different suggestions will be put to the Commonwealth by the individual States.

THE CHAIRMAN: This would be paragraph (d). There is only one difficulty that I can see, and I might be shying at shadows here. How do we arrive at the population numbers in each State? There is to be a census and the natives will be included, but I think Sir William said this would not have effect until about 1970.

SIR WILLIAM REFSHAUGE: That was for health statistics, not the other statistics.

THE CHAIRMAN: There will probably be no others available until then. Are we agreed on paragraph (d)?

SEVERAL DELEGATES: No.

MR. WILLIS: In saying no I would like to add suggestion that I regard this as quite ill-timed. At the beginning of the meeting Mr. Barnes clearly indicated he had no instructions whatever. He did not know where the Common-
wealth was heading, or what financial or other arrangements for the future would be. Therefore, for us to make a decision on a subject of this nature would not only be outside the scope of Ministers whose responsibilities are restricted to native welfare, but it would also be getting away ahead of things as far as the Commonwealth is concerned.

From what has emerged today, each State should work out a programme of priority measures and then have those programmes looked at collectively. This would form a basis for Commonwealth consideration. To tell the Commonwealth what it should do before it looks at our proposal is presumptuous to say the least. Therefore, I think it would be better to resolve today that we meet again in 12 months. We should come back with our respective plans well and truly prepared. All of us would be able to have a look at the problem, including the Commonwealth, and the Commonwealth would be able to come to the next conference and say what it is prepared to do. We could then discuss it. To try to tell the Commonwealth how to finance something we have not planned is to put the cart before the horse. Therefore, I would oppose anything to back do with paragraph (d). I think that when we come with the programme referred to in paragraph (c) is the time to ask the Commonwealth to indicate whether it is going to help.

MR. LOVEDAY: I would like to support those remarks and go a little further. I would point out that a diversity in many States, among other aspects, is the question of aboriginal population. This is a most important point, because I come from a State where there are mostly sophisticated aborigines. Other States have quite
a number of unsophisticated aborigines where the require-
ments are different and bear more relationship to the
population.

This brings us to the point I mentioned earlier; that is, the question of the Commonwealth making a decision as to how far needs shall be assessed in terms of the highest priority. I think that decision will make the Commonwealth dependent on independent advice, and not dependent on what the States will say. We have a rather similar situation with universities. The Commonwealth does not rely on what the States say; it relies on A.U.C. recommendations. That is an independent body which assesses needs. Because the needs, in this case, are so diverse and of a rather peculiar character I feel they will have to be assessed by an independent valuer in order to get satisfaction. Each State will be pressing its own claims for particular advantages.

MR. MEAGHER: I agree with what Mr. Willis has said and some of what Mr. Loveday said. However, I do not agree that there should be an independent body if this matter is to be handled on the basis of the diversity between various parts of Australia. It can only be assessed by the people administering the problem in the various areas. Therefore, I would not agree with the idea of the A.U.C. set-up.

I am totally opposed to the suggested proposition on the same grounds as expressed by Mr. Willis and Mr. Loveday. Western Australia covers 1,000,000 square miles with aborigines in various stages of development scattered over it. In Victoria we have a pocket handkerchief sized area with reasonably sophisticated aborigines. For Western
Australia to bear the burden alone would be ridiculous. I think that in this field we need to remain flexible to deal with situations as they arise. For that reason I am totally opposed to the proposition.

MR. BJELKE-PETERSEN: I have been interested to hear the remarks of other Ministers. I will be interested to hear what suggestions they might have to replace the proposition, which is fair enough. I was surprised to hear Mr. Willis, after castigating the Federal Minister for coming here without any fixed idea, now defending him and saying we do not want to imply that the Commonwealth accept more responsibility. I think he was rather contradictory in that regard. It is quite obvious that Ministers want to leave this question open. I appreciate that a number of factors apart from population have to be taken into account.
MR. BJELKE-PETERSEN (continuing): In some of the States - and Mr. Meagher quoted the instance of Western Australia - there are immense distances and different types of people. Of course we have immense distances in Queensland, but I feel that generally they are not perhaps quite to the same extent as in Western Australia, but we do have people right throughout the length and breadth of Queensland. There are all types of people. As I said, I appreciate the fact that Ministers do not want to accept this and it will be defeated. However, I will be interested in the suggestions they have to replace it. I consider that we, as Ministers, must produce something in relation to this aspect as we wish to guide the Commonwealth in our thinking on this matter. As Mr. Barnes said, that is the purpose of this conference. Therefore, I think we should have something.

THE CHAIRMAN: We will consider this matter over a short adjournment.
THE CHAIRMAN: We were dealing with proposed paragraph (d).

MR. BJELKE-PETERSEN: For obvious reasons, Mr. Chairman, I will withdraw.

THE CHAIRMAN: Are we all agreed that paragraph (d) be withdrawn? There is no dissentient voice so it is withdrawn.

MR. WILLIS: Can I make a suggestion, or move for something that will replace (d) that Mr. Bjelke-Petersen has withdrawn?

THE CHAIRMAN: Carry on, Mr. Willis.

MR. WILLIS: When speaking Mr. Bjelke-Petersen said he hoped someone would suggest an alternative, and I think it was generally agreed around the table that the alternative should not include any reference to finance at this stage. Therefore I would suggest that a second sentence be added to paragraph (c) for the purpose of enlarging upon the point contained therein. This will replace (d) entirely and that sentence reads as follows:–

Such programmes should be prepared as soon as possible and then discussed at a special meeting of the Australian Aboriginal Affairs Council with a view to the formulation of a joint Commonwealth-State programme for advancing the welfare of Australia's aborigines and part-aborigines.

I move accordingly. If we each prepare a programme it sort of leaves the whole thing in the air and it does not say what we are going to do with that programme, to whom we are going to submit it, or who will submit it. After we have prepared our programme I think it could be submitted to this central secretariat that we are asking the Commonwealth to establish for distribution to all members of the council, including the Commonwealth Government, and this will give all of us time to look at the whole question.

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and we can come back together at a meeting similar to this and perhaps arrive at some sort of long-term programme in which the Commonwealth and the States are co-operating in this major task. I would not like to set a timetable at this stage. I think this would be a little unreasonable. It might be possible for the States to prepare the programmes in the course of, say, the next few months, to consider them over several months after that, and perhaps we could have a meeting early in the new year of the Aboriginal Affairs Council so that by early next year -- that is, within 12 months, so to speak, of the referendum date -- we could come up with an overall plan for joint Commonwealth-State co-operation in regard to this whole thing.

MR. BJELKE-PETERSON: I appreciate Mr. Willis' thoughts on this and I think there is quite a deal in what he said. However, the thing that is not clear in my mind is how this will operate. Different Ministers in the different States have different problems -- we have our own problems in Queensland. The point is how can we assess these different problems collectively? If we do not do this the only thing is to have each State dealing with the Commonwealth on its own particular problems in its own way. I am not quite clear as to how we as a group of States or Ministers can determine the effectiveness or otherwise of different State programmes and how we are all together going to arrive at an overall programme with the Commonwealth. It seems rather top heavy to me to try to deal with it in this way. On the other hand I might be thinking wrongly in regard to the whole thing.

THE CHAIRMAN: I can appreciate the difficulties that might present themselves but if we establish the
principle, and we can get around the table after having a look at our own problems, surely we should be able to meet on some sort of common ground. There will be some field which is common to all of us and I think the first thing to do is to establish the principle.

MR. LOVEDAY: We are able to do this with education. For example we present a case to the Commonwealth on teachers' colleges. You will remember that it was a carefully prepared case.

THE CHAIRMAN: But I think you will agree there is not the variation with formal education that there is with the native question.
MR. LOVEDAY: I agree with the differences there, but I do not think it prevents us from bringing our ideas together and saying, "We have this in common". I would also like to ask whether the mover would reconsider his attitude in regard to fixing a date. He merely mentioned that it should be early next year. If anything is to be done on a joint basis between the Commonwealth and the States in the next financial year that meeting should not be later than in the month of February in order to get what we put to the Commonwealth properly considered before the next Budget proposals.

THE CHAIRMAN: I understood Mr. Willis to say, "early".

MR. WILLIS: I did not put any date into the motion because I have long since learned that what one proposes someone else disposes, and usually it takes longer to prepare this type of report. What I had in mind is that when we all prepare our reports the Commonwealth will then have the opportunity to look at them and decide in which arena it could help and it itself would come forward with a proposition for the next meeting, and the proposition would be the basis for discussion at the next meeting of the Council. If that be so, I cannot see it being much earlier than the early part of next year, no matter how we crack the whip in the meantime. I do not mean that we should put a time limit on it, but probably will ask for a deferment.

MR. LOVEDAY: With a definite date we could at least get a target date instead of it drifting on.

MR. MEAGHER: I will not oppose the motion, but I think this is a cumbersome way of doing it. Each State could document its problems and could set out the whole
picture and then for the Commonwealth it is merely a question of finance. When it receives the document from the various States the Commonwealth will have the overall picture sent to it through its next meeting. It could be done directly, but the Chairman may have a point in suggesting we come together to further discuss it, but I cannot really see the need for it. However, I will not oppose the motion.

THE CHAIRMAN: The resolution for the addition to (c) is in the course of being typed and we will deal with it when it is presented.

MR. MEAGHER: In view of the decision we have made in regard to (c) we have to go back to Item 5. As a consequence of what we have already done we will have delete the last paragraph on page one. Accordingly, I move --

That the last paragraph on page one be deleted.

Seconded by Mr. Loveday.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

THE CHAIRMAN: In the meantime we will have a look at Item 10 which we noted. This deals with training and employment. There is a principle here. The first part of the paragraph is important, and it has been suggested to me that it is not sufficient to note the deliberations of the Standing Committee, and that we should either endorse it or do something else.
THE CHAIRMAN (continuing): What are the views of the conference on that? Is it agreed that we should support the principle that the administration where necessary should take an active role in assisting Aborigines to obtain equality under awards, etc.?

MR. WILLIS: It would be improper of me to express a view on this because it does not concern New South Wales where, for many years, there has been no distinction between Aborigines and other people in regard to awards. I could not very well tell the Northern Territory what it should do in regard to fresh awards.

MR. BARNES: One of our objectives is equality of pay for everyone.

MR. LOVEDAY: We support it entirely.

THE CHAIRMAN: We will note it and leave it to individual administrations to give further consideration where they so desire. In other words if Australia or the Commonwealth wished to take more positive action it is up to them.

MR. MEAGHER: We can endorse this because there is a proviso which says it does not necessarily apply in certain circumstances. I would support and endorse it.

THE CHAIRMAN: Very well it will be noted and endorsed.

AGENDA ITEM NO.5.

Effects of the Referendum on Proposed Alteration to the Constitution

(Officers' Standing Committee Agenda Item 7) (Reconsidered.)

THE CHAIRMAN: We will now come back to item 5.

The typescript of the proposed addition to paragraph (c) has come to hand and it reads as follows:-

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Such programmes should be prepared as soon as possible and then discussed at a special meeting of the Australian Aboriginal Affairs Council with a view to the formulation of a joint Commonwealth-State programme for advancing the welfare of Australian Aborigines and part-Aborigines.

Is this agreeable in principle?

MR. BJELKE-PETERSEN: I said this morning that it was perhaps an abortive and unnecessary exercise when we do not know what the Commonwealth is going to do. We will still not know what the Commonwealth is doing. That is why I felt we should tie this meeting up with the part we think the Commonwealth should play, because this is getting us nowhere.

THE CHAIRMAN: Have you any proposed amendment?

MR. BJELKE-PETERSEN: I did move a motion earlier where I tried to set out that we as Ministers felt it was the Commonwealth's responsibility to deal with this on the basis on which I thought it was to be operative. That was, in effect, rejected. I am not sure that there would be any advantage in putting up another amendment; nor can I think of one at the moment. But it should be the Commonwealth's responsibility in some measure to play a part in our Commonwealth-State relationship. By this we still do not know what the Commonwealth will do. I think we can submit our proposals direct to the Commonwealth.

MR. MEAGHER: These papers will be circulated among the Commonwealth and the States six weeks before any such meeting.

MR. BJELKE-PETERSEN: Is it visualised in future that all dealings concerning special undertakings for people throughout the Commonwealth will always be discussed collectively with the Commonwealth before action is taken? I will be interested to know that.
We want a general objective in the first meeting, and next year the Ministers will meet and have discussions on their programmes and the Commonwealth could consider then its action in relation to that programme.

THE CHAIRMAN: I do not think this connotes a uniform programme to be followed by the States. I think we take our problems to the Council meeting and make submissions to the Commonwealth for any areas of special assistance. This might only comprise part of the policy. We must remember that this follows the part we have already agreed to in paragraph (c). After that we have the suggested addendum. I suggest an alteration to read, "with a view to a joint submission to the Commonwealth towards the further implementation of a Commonwealth-State programme for advancing the welfare of Australian Aborigines and part-Aborigines."
THE CHAIRMAN (Continuing) This makes it clear. It is a joint submission to the Commonwealth.

MR. BARNES: Everyone has expressed the view that there is a different problem in each State. This seems to be a joint programme.

THE CHAIRMAN: Some problems will be common.

MR. BARNES: Some will. We have an overall objective, but whether we can have an overall programme is another matter.

MR. WILLIS: I cannot agree with the suggested amendment, because I cannot imagine the States being able to agree on a joint submission which will satisfy them all. It would be virtually saying that the Premiers would agree at a Premiers' Conference what the tax reimbursements ought to be.

THE CHAIRMAN: They all agree on tax reimbursements.

MR. WILLIS: But not how much and in what manner they are to be distributed. Invariably the Commonwealth says it has a certain amount. In practical politics when all the States have submitted their requests the Commonwealth examines them. In turn the Commonwealth goes to the conference with some sort of proposal. We can then discuss each other's programme, the Commonwealth's attitude, and so on. I envisage if we are to get any Commonwealth co-operation then the co-ordinating has to be done by the Commonwealth. You will never get the States to agree what the co-ordinating ought to be and putting up a submission which they all support.

THE CHAIRMAN: Western Australia is thankful for small mercies. It is suggested that each State should make its own submission independently.
MR. WILLIS: We have already agreed to that.

THE CHAIRMAN: What will be the purpose of this council?

MR. MEAGHER: What we have decided to do is that each State should look at its own situation, and return to the next conference prepared to discuss the proposals as to how much the Commonwealth can best supplement the efforts made in the individual States. Until we know exactly what are the States' proposals there is no knowing what area the Commonwealth can assist them. The only way to arrive at a speedy conclusion is to put up the proposals and to see the common areas where assistance is needed, and to see whether the Commonwealth is able to assist. I do not envisage this situation: Here are our programmes requiring $1,000,000; implement them. That is not our objective. The objective is to find the problems common to all and the areas in which the Commonwealth can most adequately supplement and assist our efforts.

MR. LOVEDAY: If we pass this motion we will have to consider the appointment of a secretariat. If we are to have the information before that conference then we will need a secretariat to get the material and distribute it.

MR. WILLIS: It might be appropriate to ask Mr. Barnes whether it would be possible for his department to act as the secretariat pro tem, until one is formally approved by the Commonwealth Government.

MR. BARNES: I am afraid it is policy that I cannot come into it at the moment, although I have sympathy for the suggestion. I hope later to be able to convey to the Commonwealth the views that have been expressed around this table. What comes out of that might...
be along the lines suggested by Mr. Willis.

MR. MEAGHER: All we are asking for is someone to circulate the papers before the conference. If the Commonwealth is not prepared to do that I am prepared to do it.

THE CHAIRMAN: It would not be wise to proceed on the assumption that the Commonwealth will do this; if it can so much the better. This will not affect in any way the co-ordinating of the principles embodied in the resolution as to whether or not we have a joint secretariat. We can still make an assessment of our needs, though it will be much more convenient to have a secretariat to tie up the loose ends. Is everyone satisfied with the wording of the addendum that has been suggested?

AGREED.

THE CHAIRMAN: We must now go back to the same item as a preamble. The submission starts off with, "As a consequence of the referendum," etc. We should tidy that up by saying as a preamble, "The State Ministers considered the submissions of the Standing Committee of officers and agreed (1) as a consequence of the referendum" etc. Then paragraphs (a), (b), and (c) following can be renumbered (2), (3), and (4).

MR. WILLIS: That will exclude Mr. Barnes.

MR. BARNES: When this is agreed to I would like to be able to convey to the Commonwealth that these points have been agreed to as a consensus of opinion among the States.
MR. WILLIS: I do not want to sound pedantic, but we should take another look at No. 2, as it is re-numbered. I think we are writing ourselves down a bit if we say "a conference of Commonwealth and State Ministers be constituted". I think we are a going concern while in effect this is saying that something should be established. Instead of saying, "To meet at least annually", we should say "meet annually" because later we are talking about meeting as soon as possible and someone might up the point that we are saying "annually" and "as soon as possible."

THE CHAIRMAN: Your suggestion is, "This conference of Commonwealth and State Ministers be re-constituted as the Australian Aboriginal Affairs Council to meet at least annually, and that there be a standing committee of officers to meet as necessary."

MR. LOVEDAY: It might be appropriate at that point to define what shall constitute the standing committee of officers. It seems to me there should be an appropriate representation of States and the Commonwealth, and it should be defined.

THE CHAIRMAN: I cannot delve back to the dreamtime as to how this conference was originally constituted.

MR. SWIFT: I think a meeting was called at the meeting of Mr. Hasluck in 1961 which resumed a regular series and it was by agreement between the Commonwealth and the State Ministers concerned that their officers would meet in advance.

THE CHAIRMAN: Was there any constitution of the Council?

MR. SWIFT: None at all. It was a conference
called together and that conference agreed to meet again in two years time and let the officers meet annually.

MR. WILLIS: I think the least formal it is the better. If it is bound with a lot of rules, regulations, procedures, and so on, hold caucus meetings and move amendments, and what have you, we will get quite out of all proportion to what it is. It is an advisory body and does not have executive functions. Therefore it should be left loosely. It would evolve into the type of thing we want. If we anticipate in too much detail we may later on regret having bound ourselves.

THE CHAIRMAN: Admittedly it is an advisory committee, but its deliberations will have far-reaching influences. I refer to the views of the standing committee and the views of the Aboriginal Affairs Council. I think it might be wise to give some thought as to how this is constituted. I am not suggesting that any hard and fast document be drawn up, as I agree this should be as loose a thing as it can be if it is to work, particularly as its purpose is getting around the table in order to make progress.

MR. BARNES: As Mr. Willis has pointed out, this is not binding on each of the respective Governments, it is an expression of opinion.

THE CHAIRMAN: No, it is not binding, but it would have a great influence, we would hope. If we had the Aboriginal Affairs Councils and they are not binding, we will to a degree be wasting our time. However, I do not think this influences the wording, which has been included.

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I take it the whole of the draft concerning this item is accepted.

MR. BARNES: If it is accepted, I would like the following words to be added:-

The Commonwealth Minister for Territories agreed to convey the views of the State Ministers to the Commonwealth Government.

THE CHAIRMAN: Are we all agreed?

Agreed

THE CHAIRMAN: Do you, Mr. Loveday, want to say anything further about the constitution of the council?

MR. LOVEDAY: Not at this juncture, in view of the remarks I have heard here.
Effects of the Referendum on Proposed Alteration to the Constitution.

The State Ministers considered the submission of the Standing Committee of Officers and agreed as follows:

As a consequence of the referendum result, Aboriginal affairs should now be seen as having been expanded into a joint Commonwealth/State responsibility; the problems of the Aboriginal and part-Aboriginal people from State to State and within each State are however so diverse that for so long as can be seen, the interests of Aborigines and part-Aborigines will be best served by programmes administered by State authorities within the context of overall policies as agreed between the States and Commonwealth.

This conference of Commonwealth and State Ministers be reconstituted as the Australian Aboriginal Affairs Council to meet at least annually and that there be a Standing Committee of Officers to meet as necessary.

The Commonwealth be requested to establish a small permanent secretariat to service the Council and the Standing Committee.

Each State to formulate an overall programme of priority measures related to specific advancement targets, with each State undertaking consultation with representative Aborigines to the fullest extent appropriate. Such programmes should be prepared as soon as possible and then discussed at a special meeting of the Australian Aboriginal Affairs Council with a view to the formulation of a joint Commonwealth/State programme for advancing the welfare of Australian Aborigines and part-Aborigines.

The Commonwealth Minister for Territories agreed to convey the views of the State Ministers to the Commonwealth Government.
ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

In many Aboriginal communities which are still traditionally oriented in varying degrees women have an inferior status resulting from systems of marriage promise, marriage at puberty and polygamous unions.

Other factors which may retard their well being and social advancement are early child-bearing and frequent births together with lack of, or inability to make use of infant welfare services.

Even when traditional influences have been largely put aside, Aboriginal women still face difficulties because of educational and social handicaps in following careers or adjusting to a modern home environment.

Remedial measures include education, social training especially in home management, participation in community social activities and, where sought, the availability of family planning advice and facilities.

The officers recommend that conference supports balanced programmes for advancing the status of Aboriginal women to be formulated within the framework of overall welfare programmes.

MR. MEAGHER: I move that the item be agreed to by the conference with the deletion of the word "welfare" in the last line. I move this amendment on the same principle as I mentioned earlier; to get rid of this word "welfare".

THE CHAIRMAN: Is it agreed that Ministers adopt the recommendation?

SIR WILLIAM REFSHAUGE: Referring to the words "where sought, the availability of family planning advice" which appear in line 3 of paragraph 4, what does this mean? Does it mean by the State Government, local authority, or by whom? I think it is a rather dangerous subject if left open. It should be sought by the individual person or family concerned. At present it could be interpreted in many ways. I think we should insert the words "by the individual person or family concerned".

THE CHAIRMAN: That is how I would interpret it.
Advice to a group is given in a general way, but advice to a person is more personalised.

MR. LOVEDAY: I was thinking of an actual case where people on a reserve sought this advice. We informed them where they could get their help in this direction. The application came from a number of people.

THE CHAIRMAN: I think it is pretty well covered by the insertion of the words "by the individual person or family concerned." The submission now reads as follows:

In many Aboriginal communities which are still traditionally oriented in varying degrees women have an inferior status resulting from systems of marriage promise, marriage at puberty and polygamous unions.

Other factors which may retard their well being and social advancement are early child-bearing and frequent births together with lack of, or inability to make use of infant welfare services.

Even when traditional influences have been largely put aside, Aboriginal women still face difficulties because of educational and social handicaps in following careers or adjusting to a modern home environment.

Remedial measures include education, social training especially in home management, participation in community social activities and, where sought by the individual person or family concerned, the availability of family planning advice and facilities.

The officers recommend that conference supports balanced programmes for advancing the status of Aboriginal women to be formulated within the framework of overall programmes.

AGREED.

Item No. 15. Aboriginal Culture - Officers' Standing Committee Agenda Item 18.

ABORIGINAL CULTURE

Traditional Aboriginal culture was inextricably bound up with religion, kinship and areas of ritual or sacred significance. Much of it has inevitably been lost or set aside by necessary adjustments to a new or settled way of life.

Conference recognises the value to Aborigines and to the enrichment of Australian cultural life of encouraging pride and participation in elements of traditional Aboriginal culture in such forms as legend, music, dance and art. It is not the policy of welfare
administrations to seek to destroy such cultural elements, but to encourage them, in promoting the advancement of Aborigines in the general community.

AGREED.

Item No. 16. Consultation with Aborigines - Officers' Standing Committee Agenda Item 19

CONSULTATION WITH ABORIGINALS

There appears to be some misconception that administrations tend to act without consulting Aborigines and part-Aborigines or without regard for their views.

Conference re-affirms that Aborigines and part-Aborigines should be consulted at all levels in formulating and carrying out policies for their advancement. The need for and value of such consultation has been recognised for some time past and a number of measures taken to obtain it. For example in New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia, Aborigines are members of the welfare boards. The Aboriginal Lands Trust in South Australia is wholly composed of Aborigines. In Queensland and South Australia, councils have been established by law for the management of Aboriginal affairs in particular areas. In all States and the Northern Territory Aborigines participate in councils and committees concerned with advising on and managing Aboriginal affairs at various levels.

THE CHAIRMAN: Ministers endorse the Standing Committee's submission.

Item No. 17. Alcohol and Stimulants - Officers' Standing Committee Agenda Item 20

ALCOHOL

There was a useful exchange of information on the problem of alcoholism among Aborigines, the incidence of drinking among them and particularly on lifting of restrictions where they still exist.

At this stage the meeting was not prepared to recommend any research into these matters or on an Australia-wide basis but noted what is being done in regard to the incidence of drinking in South Australia.

MR. WILLIS: Is what is being done in South Australia set out in their report?

MR. LOVEDAY: It appears on the first page of progress report (B). We are doing a survey of the incidence of drinking in various areas as a result of the new regulations.

CGS/MC/GG3 120. Item No. 17 21/7/67.
MR. BARNES: In view of that, should that information not be inserted in the last paragraph? We could make it to read "survey of the incidence". Also, in line 2 of paragraph 2 I think the word "or" needs to come out. It appears to be a misprint.
THE CHAIRMAN: The item as amended reads as follows—

**ALCOHOL**

**SUBMISSION FROM OFFICERS STANDING COMMITTEE**

There was a useful exchange of information on the problem of alcoholism among Aborigines, the incidence of drinking among them and particularly on lifting of restrictions where they still exist.

At this stage the meeting was not prepared to recommend any research into these matters on an Australia-wide basis but noted what is being done in regard to the survey of the incidence of drinking in South Australia by Aborigines and part-Aborigines.

**AGENDA ITEM 18**

**ENTRY ON TO RESERVES**

(Submission from Officers Standing Committee)

In the interests of the Aboriginal people in States and the Northern Territory where there are still congregations of Aborigines on Reserves a form of permit system should be retained until such time as their communities through their own Councils can handle this matter or until such time as permits are no longer necessary. Conference noted the increasing burden being placed on Aboriginal communities in remote areas by research work and by the demands of TV and film units and suggested that while the permit system is retained the views of Aboriginal communities should be sought.

THE CHAIRMAN: To some extent, I suppose this runs a little contrary to our expressions of appreciation of the work done by the Commonwealth in propaganda and that sort of thing.

MR. MEACHER: These are not Commonwealth units, but are private commercial units.

THE CHAIRMAN: I think we should say so, because the Commonwealth has done some quite good work. Do we agree in principle?

MR. WILLIS: I presume the word, "Aboriginal" in the first line means full-blooded Aboriginal in this context.
THE CHAIRMAN: I think it means both.

MR. WILLIS: I am afraid I cannot agree to it if it means both, because in New South Wales there are no such things as are suggested here. There is complete freedom of movement for all people, and I think the same situation applies in Victoria.

MR. MEAGHER: Not completely, but we do have a permit system although it does not work very well.

THE CHAIRMAN: Would it make it more acceptable if we placed the words, "in remote areas" after the word, "reserves" in the third line?

MR. WILLIS: Wilcannia is extremely remote, but I suppose in the minds of people who live in the Northern Territory it is an outer suburb of Sydney.

MR. BARNES: We have the same problems with Darwin.

MR. WILLIS: If it means full-blooded Aborigines, my query does not arise.

MR. SWIFT: If you look at this report it does say Aborigines and part-Aborigines where it means the two.

MR. WILLIS: As long as it is agreed that it means full-blooded Aborigines, I will withdraw the query.

THE CHAIRMAN: In Western Australia this would apply to part-Aborigines as well, because there are quite a lot of areas where there are part-Aborigines. Accordingly this would be an embarrassment to us.

MR. WILLIS: I will withdraw my objection if the word, "those" could be added at the end of the first line after the word, "in".

THE CHAIRMAN: Is it agreed to endorse this statement? As there is no dissent this motion is carried and Item 18 now reads as follows --

MGR/Dys/hh2. 123. Item No.18. 21/7/67.
AGENDA ITEM 18
ENTRY ON TO RESERVES

(Submission from Officers Standing Committee)

In the interests of the Aboriginal people in those States and the Northern Territory where there are still congregations of Aborigines on Reserves a form of permit system should be retained until such time as their communities through their own Councils can handle this matter or until such time as permits are no longer necessary. Conference noted the increasing burden being placed on Aboriginal communities in remote areas by research work and by the demands of commercial TV and film units and suggested that while the permit system is retained the views of Aboriginal communities should be sought.

THE CHAIRMAN: We move on to Item No.19.

AGENDA ITEM 19
MISSIONS AND VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS

(Submission from Officers Standing Committee)

Conference acknowledges the considerable contribution of Christian missions to Aboriginal advancement over the years.

It re-affirms its recognition of the assistance which can be given by voluntary organisations motivated by a genuine interest in promoting Aboriginal advancement. It looks forward to continued co-operation from such organisations in the advancement of Aborigines and part-Aborigines and in adding to the community's understanding of these matters.

MR. WILLIS: I am not disagreeing with it, but I do have a query and I would be grateful if you, Mr. Chairman, would enlighten me as my query concerns Western Australia. I understand you have a sort of national council of organisations here in Western Australia. We in New South Wales suffer from having too many organisations with the very best of intentions. They do tend to overlap each other and they tend to tread on each other's corns, and thereby create problems because of what, in industrial circles, would be called demarcation disputes. Therefore, I would be very interested to hear of what I understand you have here in Western Australia. I believe it is some sort of

a co-ordinating body.

THE CHAIRMAN: There is a kind of co-ordinating body. The only one which I know of which could be called by name is what is known as the Aboriginal Advancement Council. One could term this a federation of the many native welfare councils. I mentioned earlier today that we had a lot of very small reserves consisting of a few acres. On some of them only half a dozen families are living. Some of these are near towns and at each one of these towns we try to encourage the local people to form a native welfare committee. The Aboriginal Advancement Council consists of representatives from each of these committees, and they form the State body. However, the 29 missions which have the administration of quite big settlements in various parts of the State are not, as far as I know, represented on the Aboriginal Advancement Council. Accordingly, there is no co-ordinating body as far as the missions are concerned.

THE CHAIRMAN: Do we agree on this item?

MR. BARNES: There is a consideration I would like to raise. I do not know whether some of the States have similar problems but we have some of these bodies who are not the slightest bit interested in doing something for the wellbeing of the Aborigines, but they do seem interested in stirring up a degree of militancy. In the second paragraph in line 3 after the word, "organisations" I suggest that we add the words, "which have a record of".

THE CHAIRMAN: I would have thought that the next sentence would have saved the situation when it says --

It looks forward to continued co-operation from such organisations in the advancement of Aborigines and part-Aborigines and in adding to the community's understanding of these matters.

MR. BARNES: Yes, but the question arises as to what organisations.

MR. MEAGHER: Those motivated by a genuine interest. There are a few which are not genuine and which are motivated by other interests.

MR. BARNES: I just mention this because I thought it would be more explicit.

THE CHAIRMAN: It is agreed then that Item 19 now reads as follows --

AGENDA ITEM 19
MISSIONS AND VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS
(Submission from Officers Standing Committee)

Conference acknowledges the considerable contribution of Christian missions to Aboriginal advancement over the years.

It re-affirms its recognition of the assistance which can be given by voluntary organisations which have a record of genuine interest in promoting Aboriginal advancement. It looks forward to continued co-operation from such organisations in the advancement of Aborigines and part-Aborigines and in adding to the community's understanding of these matters.
MR. WILLIS: My Under Secretary has reminded me that in 1963 there was a lengthy discussion on this subject. He is looking it up to see that we do not decide something now that is not in conformity with what we decided then.

THE CHAIRMAN: Is it agreed?

ENDORSED.

Item No. 20 - Training of Staff

(Officers' Standing Committee Agenda Item 24)

MR. LOVEDAY: I would like to take the opportunity of thanking the Minister for Territories for the cooperation we have received in this respect. We have found it very useful indeed.

MR. BARNES: I wish to express my appreciation of those remarks and I will pass that information on to the school concerned.

THE CHAIRMAN: The submission from the Officers Standing Committee reads as follows:

Officers noted that the one year course for patrol officers at A.S.O.P.A. was successful in training field officers and that South Australia had participated in the course and expressed its appreciation of the opportunity to do so. Officers took note of plans to extend the course to two years to provide further training in case and group work.

NOTED.

Item No. 21 - Next Meeting of Officers' Standing Committee.

THE CHAIRMAN: Agenda item 21 reads --

Mr. Green suggested that New South Wales would be host to the next officers meeting about the same time in 1968.

MR. WILLIS: On behalf of New South Wales I would be very happy to confirm the invitation extended by Mr. Green to hold the next meeting there. The only query I raise now is that if we are going to have the next meeting...
of Ministers at an earlier date than this time in the year then obviously the officers' conference would not be at the same time in 1968 but would, I imagine, be coincidental with the Ministers' conference.

MR. MEAGHER: I would suggest that the officers' meeting should be some time ahead of the Ministers' conference so that their submissions can be in the hands of Ministers before we meet. I would suggest therefore that this should be deliberately organised and the officers' meeting should precede the Ministers' meeting by at least a month or six weeks, and that the Ministers' meeting should be timed on that basis. Therefore I extend an invitation for the next council meeting to be in Victoria on the appropriate date.

MR. MEAGHER: It could be held as soon as possible.

THE CHAIRMAN: In 1968.

MR. WILLIS: Leave out all words after the word "meeting" and it will solve the problem.

THE CHAIRMAN: We will leave it to the officers themselves to arrange.

AGREED.

Item No.22 - General Business

MR. BARNES: It is usual, after these conference meetings, to make a report to Parliament and I hope it is in order to draw from the material in the resolutions from items 7 to 20 for this purpose. This is a report I make to Parliament and as is usually the case before I make this report I will submit a copy to all State Ministers for their approval.

THE CHAIRMAN: Why 7 to 20 only? I take it you would like to deal with the reports from the officers of the various States.
MR. WILLIS: Do I take Mr. Barnes's remarks to mean that he does not want to report to the Federal Parliament on items 3, 4, 5 and 6.

THE CHAIRMAN: Item 3 consists of the reports from the various States, and the progress made, and I think this is one he would want.

MR. BARNES: I have agreed to report 5 already and I have no doubt this will also be included.

MR. WILLIS: You agreed to report 5 to the Government, but we are now talking about a report to Parliament.

MR. BARNES: Yes.

THE CHAIRMAN: You can have the whole of it and take out what you like.

MR. SWIFT: If I could explain, this is rather a machinery measure and the intention was to distinguish between items 3, 4 and 5, and particularly item 5, on which there is an officers' paper which has some internal words in it and it has all been amended. In the case of that item the report to Parliament would only include the decision that has been arrived at by this meeting. In regard to items 7 to 20, mentioned by Mr. Barnes, in some cases the officers' paper had a recommendation at the end of it and it also had some material preceding the recommendation paragraph which would be useful public information. The point really was to clear up whether it was in order in items 7 to 20 to use the whole page that has come up from the officers, with appropriate amendments, and not only the final recommendation paragraph.

MR. WILLIS: My only query was that I hope you are not going to exclude references to the more

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controversial ones earlier.

MR. SWIFT: No, there is no intention of that. In this case obviously the whole of the officers' paper would not be included.

MR. WILLIS: On that point, Mr. Barnes was good enough two years ago to send to us all -- you will recall this Mr. Chairman. -- in advance a copy of what he proposed to a table in the Federal Parliament, and I would be grateful if he would do so again. I personally took the opportunity on that occasion to table it the same day in my Parliament as Mr. Barnes had given me advice as to when he was going to table it in Canberra and it served the same purpose in both cases. I do not know whether other Ministers are interested in doing this sort of thing but, in any event, if somebody does the secretarial work of putting the report together in this way it serves a very useful purpose, particularly if the report is circulated beforehand and we all get a chance to have a look at it so that it becomes a report to which we can add our names.

THE CHAIRMAN: There are two points. First of all there is the material that should go into this. I think we can all agree to the request that has been made not only in regard to the information which we have received from the officers and endorsed, or amended, but also the background material that has led up to our decisions. I think we can all agree that the whole of it can be submitted and used. As regards the second point made by Mr. Willis if this is acceptable to you, Mr. Barnes, I think we would all like a copy for tabling in our own Parliament.

MR. BARNES: Definitely I have promised that already.

THE CHAIRMAN: Is that acceptable?
DELEGATES: Yes.

Item 23 - Date and Place of Next Meeting.

MR. MEAGHER: I have pleasure in inviting conference to meet in Melbourne at the time proposed - about February or March next year.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much for that invitation. I think that is acceptable to us all.

MR. LOVEDAY: I would like again to suggest February as a good time. I do not know whether we can fix anything definite but if we are to get things moving in good time the meeting should be early next year.
THE CHAIRMAN: Yes, I would suggest February. We have an election in Western Australia which could be held at any time next year; February, March, April, or even May. There is no date fixed yet.

MR. MEAGHER: We will make it February, 1968, Mr. Chairman?

THE CHAIRMAN: Yes. The Press will be expecting some statement from the conference. I have a draft of a prepared statement before me, but no doubt members of the conference will wish to make some amendments to it. Our deliberations in this respect need not be recorded by Hansard, but when we have concluded them we can hand a copy of the Press statement to Hansard for incorporation in the transcript.
MR. BARNES: While the Press statement is being prepared I wish, on behalf of all those present, to thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the way you have handled this conference, for your judgment and patience as Chairman in quite a difficult operation, and particularly for the hospitality you have extended to us.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Barnes. For my part my reward as Chairman is the satisfaction which I feel in that we have made some progress -- perhaps some greater progress today -- although we cannot point to any tangible result.

At least we have laid the foundation for an acceleration towards this goal for which we are all striving -- the goal of assimilation of our aboriginal people, and making them one with the rest of the community.

It is a long hard road. I am reminded that it was Emerson who once thought about the road that had been trod, and who said this was a thorny road, there were stones and brambles that hurt the feet, but it was the road which lay ahead that concerned us all. These people have come along a long hard road and a cruel one in many ways and in many instances. I believe there is a very much better climate of public opinion, and a greater acceptance towards the ultimate assimilation of these people in our society.
THE CHAIRMAN (Continuing): It is true there are little pockets of resistance, but these are fast dissolving away. Still, in Western Australia, while I am appreciative of the great improvement of public acceptance of this programme, we have one or two who give trouble. I refer to the hotel-keeper who refuses to supply liquor through the week and others who supply only bottles through the week in the back hatch and doorway. However, when it comes to Sunday, though illegal to supply bottles, he will have the Aboriginals in a back room and supply them with glasses. This only applies on Sunday because it is not legal to do anything else. These are things we are doing.

We show a great deal of tolerance on this, because we believe in education rather than compulsion. The Minister for Justice, who has the administration of the Justices Act, has under consideration certain amendments which we hope will tidy up this matter and make it possible for natives to request and be supplied with liquor in the same manner as the rest of the community.

I do not wish to make a long speech now, but I thank you all for the patience you have shown me. This has not been a difficult conference and I believe this has been brought about because of the understanding and forbearance of the people around the table. When we first started I thought this conference would be a difficult one, but it did not work out that way. I want to express my appreciation to you all.

I would remiss if I did not say how appreciative we are of the work put in by all of the departmental officers, not only in the preparation for this conference, but throughout the year. Some of the work with natives

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is not particularly congenial and therefore the work that these officers do could not be regarded as a most congenial occupation. However, they are dedicated to their work or they would not be doing it.

I believe much of the advancement that has now been made in regard to assimilation is due to the dedicated work of these officers and the respective departments. This is not confined to the Native Welfare Departments or the Aborigines Affairs Departments, but also to Advisory Boards associated with the departments, such as education, health, social services, and so on. It is a combined effort and one in which there is a great deal of co-operation.

I want to thank the Hansard staff for attending today and taking down proceedings so meticulously as Hansard does, despite a lot of slow, soft, and rapid speakers

I want to apologise for the undue amount of noise, but this is the sort of thing that is associated with progress. That is my only excuse. I hope when the next conference is held in Western Australia in six years time, instead of hearing noise down there, you will be able to see a nice landscape. However, it will not be my privilege then to preside over the meeting.

I do not think I have left anything out. Invariably when I sit down I think of the things I should have said. Nevertheless, thank you again. I trust you all have a pleasant remainder of your stay in Western Australia. Some will be returning tonight and others tomorrow some time and I hope you all have a safe return.

THE CONFERENCE CONCLUDED.

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PRESS RELEASE.


Mr Lewis said at the conclusion of the meeting that reports to the conference from the State and Commonwealth authorities showed that substantial progress is being achieved:

- Legislative changes to remove discriminatory and protective provisions formerly applicable to Aborigines by reason of their race are virtually complete.
- In the financial year just ended Australian Governments spent just under $15,000,000 directly on Aboriginal Welfare. This total does not include the costs incurred by Education, Health, Housing and Social Service Departments in relation to persons of Aboriginal descent. Something like another $5,000,000 or $6,000,000 should be added to the figure of about $15,000,000 above to give a reasonably adequate idea of the amount spent by Governments on Aboriginal welfare.
- Efforts are continuing further to expand and train welfare staffs.
2.

* Special housing programmes are being extended, both by construction by welfare authorities and an increasing number through the normal community housing scheme.

* Aboriginal and part Aboriginal children are responding to encouragement to stay at school longer.

* Greater emphasis is being placed on vocational training and employment opportunities and on advice and assistance in family living where required to help families to make the difficult transition from "fringe dwelling" to life as part of the community.

Ministers had been greatly encouraged by the expression of sympathetic interest in the Aboriginal citizens of the community represented by the result of the constitutional referendum. The community clearly wants to see an expanded effort in this field. The conference discussed ways of achieving this.

The State Ministers agreed as follows:

1. As a consequence of the referendum result, Aboriginal affairs should now be seen as having been expanded into a joint Commonwealth-State responsibility; the problems of the Aboriginal and part Aboriginal people from State to State and within each State are, however, so diverse that for so long as can be seen the interests of Aborigines and part Aborigines will be best served by programmes administered by State authorities within the context of overall policies as agreed between the States and Commonwealth.

2. This conference of Commonwealth and State Ministers be reconstituted as the Australian Aboriginal Affairs Council to meet at least annually and that there be a Standing Committee of officers to meet as necessary.
3. The Commonwealth be requested to establish a small permanent secretariat to service the Council and the Standing Committee.

4. Each State to formulate an overall programme of priority measures related to specific advancement targets, with each State undertaking consultation with representative Aborigines to the fullest extent appropriate. Such programmes should be prepared as soon as possible and then discussed at a special meeting of the Australian Aboriginal Affairs Council with a view to the formulation of a joint Commonwealth-State programme for advancing the welfare of Australian Aborigines and part Aborigines.

The Commonwealth Minister for Territories agreed to convey the views of State Ministers to the Commonwealth Government.

The conference agreed that though extended and more effective Government action is necessary, acceptance of Aborigines and part Aborigines on the part of the community and personal encouragement to them, as well as response on the part of the Aboriginal people themselves were essential elements of real progress.

Fortunately, there were hopeful signs in respect of all three elements. It was not realistic to think that the social changes involved could be made in a short space of time. Continued and accelerated progress was the requirement and is in prospect.