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**Subject: REQUESTS FOR DEPARTMENTAL INFORMATION ON ABORIGINES**

EACH OFFICER TO ENTER INITIALS WHEN CLEARING FOLIO  
SENDING OFFICER MUST NOT INITIAL HIS OUTWARD ENTRY

Folio No. (1)	Referred to and Date (2)	Clearing Officer's Initials and Date (3)	Folio No. (1)	Referred to and Date (2)	Clearing Officer's Initials and Date (3)	Folio No. (1)	Referred to and Date (2)	Clearing Officer's Initials and Date (3)
61/78	FILE EXAMINED	2/12/80	101	FILE EXAMINED	DB			
83	FILE EXAMINED	23/6	R	MR ADAMS 4/7/73	DB			
84-86	Mr. Bellwood	20/5/68	105	Mr Prowse	DB			
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87	Mr Sedwood	27/4/73		Mr Buck	2/2/74			
89	Mr Prowse	27/5	105	POST OFFICE	27/1/74			
89	27/8 27/5	27/5		O'Flaherty	6/10/74			
89	27/5/8							
90/91	MR SELWOOD	28/6/80						
93	Mr. Sedwood	28/6						
95	Mr. Sedwood	28/6						
98	R/S Bellwood	7/7/71						
90	Despatch	11/11/71						
91/98	Mr. Bellwood	6/5/71						
99	Mr Prowse	9/7						
99	R/S 9/7	9/7						
99	Mr Prowse	9/7						
99	Mr. Bellwood	9/7						
100	Mr. Roberts	2/7/73						
101	Despatch	2/11						
101	R/S Director (Pae)	22/3/71						
101	Mr Roberts	31/1/73						
101	FILE EXAMINED	2/1						
102	Despatch	16 FEB 1973						
102	R/S Roberts	27/2/73						

R/P 14/24.2

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- (1) In column (1) above, the folio on which action is required will be indicated. Column (2) will indicate to whom the file is to be referred and the date.
- (2) When the file is cleared, the officer dealing with the file will place his initials in column (3) and indicate on the next vacant line to whom the file is to be referred and the date.
- (3) All entries should be made in ink.

File No. \_\_\_\_\_



## DEPARTMENT OF TERRITORIES

DERWENT HOUSE  
HOBART PLACE  
CANBERRA CITY

YOUR REFERENCE

IN REPLY QUOTE 65/3177

CONFIDENTIAL

59 JUN 1965

The Director-General,  
Department of Social Services,  
CANBERRA. A.C.T.*Received  
+ reply  
1/6/65  
P.*NORTHERN TERRITORY - ARBITRATION HEARING ON ABORIGINAL  
WAGES IN THE CATTLE INDUSTRY

The question of bringing Aboriginal workers in the Northern Territory cattle industry under the normal award applying to the industry is currently the subject of a hearing before the Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Commission. The North Australian Workers' Union has applied to the Commission for deletion of the provisions from the Cattle Station Industry (Northern Territory) Award which define and exclude Aborigines (and domestics) from its operation. The Commonwealth proposes to intervene in the hearing under Section 36(1) of the Conciliation and Arbitration Act.

2. In general, it is thought that the effect of immediate application of award wages to Aborigines could be a substantial reduction in Aboriginal employment. The question could therefore arise of paying normal unemployment benefit to unemployed Aborigines who remain on the cattle station. This matter was discussed with Mr. Prowse in the course of preparing a submission to Cabinet on Aboriginal wage policy and it was advised then that under present provisions of the Social Services Act (Section 107) Aborigines unemployed on cattle stations would not be considered to be taking reasonable steps to obtain work and would consequently not qualify for unemployment benefits. This Department also doubted whether, in the interests of the Aborigines themselves, they should be put in a position to receive unemployment benefit while they remained on a cattle station.

3. Mr. A.E. Woodward, Counsel engaged for the Commonwealth in connection with the Cattle Station Industry (Northern Territory) Award hearing, has asked for a statement on the payment of social service benefits to Aborigines with particular reference to the payment of unemployment benefit to Aborigines disemployed on cattle stations as the result of the application of award rates. It would be appreciated if you could arrange for the preparation of such a statement which could, if necessary, be placed before the Commission for its information. It is suggested that the statement might cover, inter alia,

- (i) the extension of social services benefits to Aborigines in 1960;
- (ii) any qualifications or exceptions to this extension and manner of implementing them;
- (iii) the conditions of payment of benefits to persons in institutions including the basis and manner of institutional payments to Aborigines on missions, settlements and pastoral properties;

42/16 58

- (iv) payment of child endowment, including the prospective situation as Government maintenance reimbursement payments cease (paragraph (2)(c) of Cabinet Decision No. 948 of 11th May, 1965 refers);
- (v) payment of unemployment benefits to disemployed Aborigines on cattle stations and the situation in general with unemployed persons in outback areas where Commonwealth Employment Service offices or agencies are a considerable distance from the point of residence. What administrative discretions are involved e.g. would a distinction be made between single persons and married men with families in requiring movement to alternative employment?

4. As this information is required in the first instance, to brief Counsel for the hearing, it would be appreciated if it could be provided by Tuesday 8th June for passing to Counsel in the same week.

*C. E. Reseigh*  
 (C. E. Reseigh)  
 for Secretary

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CONFIDENTIAL

A.55(21)/4316

4 JUN 1965

The Secretary,  
Department of Territories,  
CANBERRA. A.C.T.

Subject : Northern Territory - Arbitration  
Hearing on Aboriginal Wages in  
the Cattle Industry.

Reference : Your memorandum 65/3177 of 1st June,  
1965.

*N.T.  
30 copies of  
statement given  
to Mr. Murray  
of Territories  
yesterday  
P4/6*

Attached is a statement setting out the eligibility of Aborigines for Social Service benefits following the amendments to the Social Service Act in 1959. The statement also explains the methods of payment adopted for the various categories of aboriginal pensioners and beneficiaries and covers the information requested in (i), (ii) and (iii) of your paragraph 3.

Child endowment is payable to aboriginal mothers on cattle stations. For the convenience of the endowees and to facilitate administration, payment is made through the pastoral management. The cessation of maintenance payments would not affect this position.

As to unemployment benefit, this Department does not wish to pre-determine any individual claims that may be made but the general position is that unemployed Aborigines on cattle stations would be unable to satisfy the conditions of section 107 of the Social Services Act while they remained on the properties - i.e. they would not be regarded as having taken reasonable steps to obtain work.

In the event of the unemployed Aborigines leaving the station properties and coming into townships where there are reasonable work opportunities, they would be required to register for employment with the District Agent of the Commonwealth Employment Service and also to seek work themselves. If no suitable work was available and they were qualified in other respects, i.e. capable of and willing to work, they would, on a strict interpretation of the Act, be eligible for unemployment benefit.

An influx of unemployed Aborigines into the townships of the Territory would no doubt be a matter of concern to the N.T. Administration. This Department questions whether unemployment benefit should be used to meet (or perpetuate) situations of this kind.

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If the unemployed Aborigines were transferred to Government Settlements or to Missions they would be in a similar position to Aborigines who remained on the Cattle Stations - i.e., they would be remote from employment opportunities and could not be accepted as having taken reasonable steps to obtain work. In the States, able-bodied Aborigines in similar situations are the responsibility of the State Governments and it may be considered that in the Northern Territory they should be the responsibility of the N.T. Administration.

(Sgd.) H. J. GOODES

~~(Sgd.) H. J. GOODES~~

(H. J. GOODES)  
Director-General.

NOTE

A copy of this correspondence has been forwarded to the Secretary, Adelaide, for his information. P. J. G.