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Point Pearce.
Port Victoria
27.5.47

Mr. Edgar H. Russel.
Parliament House
Canberra.

Dear Sir.

Enclosed you will find a petition signed by the Aborigines of the Point Pearce Mission Station I trust same will assist you to state our case on the Social Bill now before Parliament.

As stated in our telephone conversation today our aged persons is not provided with a home but has to board with either friends or relatives. Speaking to an official of this Station on this matter he tells me that for rations supplied and clothing supplied to aged & ~~sick~~ invalid & Widows ~~persons~~ would amount to 12/6 to 15/- per week and that Sir is a very conservative ~~amount~~ estimate.

Men on these Stations receive wages of £2-10-0 to £3-0-0 per week and have to provide every thing in the way of food & clothing for families ranging from three to eight in number. Can you wonder Sir when we pray that we be included in the provisions of this Bill we share what

(2)

(130)

little we have with our (aged) with our
(widowed) & (invalid) persons.
This Sir is the truth I swear before
God & Man.

Then again Sir we have men who seek
employment elsewhere and in course of such
employment their ~~own~~ income is such
that they pay income tax and is still a
resident of the Point Pearce Aboriginal Station
Why then Sir should we be deprived of the
provisions of this Bill simply because we
reside on a Aboriginal Station

Our Aged and Widows and Invalid persons
is quite prepared to give up the
rates supplied by the Dept in this State
Should provisions of Social Service Bill be
made available to us.

I trust Sir that what I have written will
assist you

I am
Yours Faithfully

Rob Langman

We the undersigned Aborigines descendents
of the first inhabitants of this country,
Humbly petition His Majesty's Government
Praying that all Aborigines, irrespective
of cast, or where we live, should
be eligible to enjoy all Social benefits

That is enjoyed by all Australians

We respectfully ask,
that all Aboriginal Mothers according to a
standard of intelligence and character, and
irrespective of cast, be granted the
Maternity allowance.

That according a standard of intelligence and
character (The Widows) (The Age) The sick and
invalid pensions be granted
irrespective of (where we live)

(We respectfully say)

That men of our race has fought in world wars
one or two as soldiers of His Majesty's Armies
On the Home front women of our race has worked
in munitions factories during war period.

as (stockmen as) (Station hands) (as shears) we have ^{helped} the
wool industry which is vitally important to
Australia.

We do not ask for any special legislation, but the
right to enjoy the same privilege that is
enjoyed today by all Australians

Your Petitioners will we pray.

R. M. Tangansen
H J Weetra



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THE PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
CANBERRA, A.C.T.

29th May, 1947.

Dear Senator,

I am enclosing herewith letter I have received from R. M. Wanganeen, Point Pearce Mission Station of South Australia, together with a petition.

These enclosures are self-explanatory and I know you will give all the matters contained therein your usual kindly consideration. I shall appreciate hearing from you relative thereto as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,


EDGAR H. D. RUSSELL

Senator the Hon. N. E. McKenna,
Minister for Health and Social Services,
Parliament House,
CANBERRA. A.C.T.

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
'Government'

9 - JUN 1947

RECEIVED

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Parliament House,
CANBERRA.

5th June, 1947

Dear Mr. Russell,

I acknowledge your representations of 29th May in presenting a petition forwarded to you by Mr. R. M. Wanganeen, and signed by aborigines of the Point Pearce Mission Station, dealing with their eligibility for social service benefits.

I shall give consideration to the matters raised by Mr. Wanganeen, and will communicate with you further at a later date.

Yours faithfully,

(Sgd.) N. E. MCKENNA

E.H.D. Russell Esq., M.P.,
Parliament House,
CANBERRA. A.C.T.

(N. E. MCKENNA)

THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF SOCIAL SERVICES:

Referred for preparation of appropriate reply.



Private Secretary,
5.6.47

223/G.42/590

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
"Social Services"

10 JUL 1947

RECEIVED

9 JUL 1947

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E.H.D. Russell, Esq., M.P.,
PORT PIKE.
South Australia.

Dear Mr. Russell,

I refer to my letter of 5th June, 1947, acknowledging your representations in presenting a petition from aboriginal natives residing on the Point Pearce Mission Station regarding their eligibility for pensions.

Under the Social Services Consolidation Act pensions are payable to aboriginal natives of Australia who -

- (i) are for the time being exempt from the provisions of the law of the State or Territory of the Commonwealth in which they reside relating to the control of aboriginal natives, or
- (ii) reside in a State or Territory of the Commonwealth, the law of which does not make provision for such exemption but with respect to whom the administration is satisfied that by reason of character, standard of intelligence and social development of the aboriginal native it is reasonable that a benefit should be granted.

The laws relating to the control and welfare of aborigines other than those in the Northern Territory are administered by the Governments of the various States. Pensions have not been granted to persons of aboriginal blood who are residing on aboriginal stations, reserves or settlements for the reason that in those States where provision is made for the issue of Certificates of Exemption, a certificate would not be granted to an aboriginal so residing.

Half castes and other persons with aboriginal blood are not, by reason thereof, ineligible for pension, but where they elect to reside on an aboriginal station, reserve or settlement they are deemed to be ineligible.

It will thus be seen that in respect of aboriginals who reside on the Point Pearce Mission Station, it is not possible to authorise the payment of pensions even if the persons concerned were eligible outside the Reserve as any Certificate of Exemption then issued would lapse on commencement of residence on the Reserve.

Whilst I am sympathetically disposed to the amelioration of the provisions of the Social Services laws as they apply to the aboriginal population, the matter is one of Government policy and there are other and wider aspects involved. The whole question has been considered on several occasions but it has not yet been possible to reach finality.

Yours sincerely,

(Sgd.) N. E. McKENNA

(N. E. McKenna)

37 JUL 1947

DEPARTMENTAL COPY.