

DOLE TAKEN FROM JOBLESS ABORIGINES

SYDNEY: Twenty-three Aborigines, the fathers of 34 children between them, on Cabbage Tree Island, near Lismore, NSW, have been denied unemployment benefits even though there is not one job open to them on the island.

IN June this year they received a callous notice from the Department of Social Services which said: "... you are advised that unemployment benefits paid to you have been terminated from June 11, 1964, on the grounds that you have not taken reasonable steps to obtain employment".

An Aborigine girl of 17 received the insulting request with her notice, that she supply information to the Department as to how she had been financially supported since June 4, 1964.

Her father, one of the for-

Her father, one of the fortunate workers with a job had been her sole means of support.

The assistant Federal secretary of the Building Workers' Industrial Workers' Union, has sent an urgent request to the Minister for Social Services, Mr. H. S. Robertson, for an investi-

gation into reasons for withholding payments.

He has had a reply from the Minister that this will be done.

Cane-cutters

Aborigine workers on the Island have for years been employed in the sugar cane fields. There is a seasonal cannery there and a small fishing industry, but the basic industry is sugar cane.

The farmers have decided to employ only European workers and the Aborigines have no jobs and now no Social Service.

They were recently taken in a truck to all the farms on the island, to the cannery and to the fishing boats in search of work.

Result — One man was given one day's work on a farm and another two men got one day's work on another farm.

They are existing on rations supplied to them from the local co-operative store, which was forced to borrow money to purchase the supplies.