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Notes on meeting held 19th February, 1965 between officers of Department of Territories (Messrs. Reseigh and May) Director, Welfare (N.T.), Mr. Giese and Messrs. Prowse and Sellwood.

1. Opportunity was taken during Mr. Giese's visit to discuss position generally regarding disbursement of pensions in Northern Territory and in particular to discuss ways and means of securing reductions in sums of accumulated maintenance held by some pastoralists and missions. Mr. Reseigh considered these accumulations to be an area within which the Commonwealth could be criticized.

2. Main points discussed -

a-(1) Amount of Pocket Money

2(i) Mr. Giese strongly of view that rate of progress in increasing pocket money to benevolent home standard (now 42/- a week) too slow. Pensioners cannot learn to use money without experience of it. Referred to decision to increase pocket money to pensioners on Settlements to benevolent home rate and mentioned this was a preliminary to the point where pensions would be paid in full to eligible pensioners. Explained that pensioners on Settlements now required to pay for certain items - no clothing issued free. Stores are adequately stocked to provide pensioner's needs. Direct payment cases required to maintain themselves.

3. 2(ii) Mr. Giese welcomed the recent arbitrary raising of pocket money by 5/- on stations and welcomed the information that pocket money was not now less than 30/- a week. Was impressed with information that 41 pastoralists had adopted individual accounting. Still he looked for more rapid increases in pocket money and suggested efforts be made to raise pocket money to standard benevolent home rate by end of year.

2 (ii) Referring to position on Missions Mr. Giese suggested some real pushing was necessary to get improvement. Intended to urge Missions to recommend pocket money increases when Missions Conference held mid-year and to this end sought representation and support from Department of Social Services. At all except three Catholic Missions the pocket money is at least 25/- a week.

2 (iA) Proposal agreed by Social Services representatives that pocket money should be raised as quickly as possible by regular increments to the standard benevolent home pension rate.

The question of what was a fair "charge" for pastoralists to make against the maintenance component for the pensioners' support.

3 (i) Mr. Giese said maintenance costs were claimed to range from £2.10.0. - £3.0.0. a week to £5 - £6. He suggested it would be reasonable to allow as a claim by pastoralists against the maintenance position of the pension the cost of providing food and goods to the value of items listed in the approved Department of Health Diet Scale. What is a fair value for these items is being negotiated.

3 (ii) In the past the cost was fixed at 32/9 for an adult dependant, 13/- for the first child and 8/- for other children in an aboriginal worker's family. (The 5/- difference was accounted for by the differing endowment rates. The proposal now under review is that 34/6 be paid for adults, 24/9 for the first child and 29/9 for other children. The payments proposed in respect of children would include an element for clothing - the payments for adults would not.

Cont.....



3 (iii) Acceptance of a standard value in respect of the maintenance of pensioners would enable a tighter check on pastoralists. Of course, allowances would be made for items and services provided by pastoralists over and above what would be supplied under the diet scale.

3 (iv) Social Services representatives agreed that a firm basis was desirable for calculating what was a reasonable charge by pastoralists for the maintenance of pensioners and, in the absence of a more suitable measure, felt that the proposal could be adopted.

Accumulated funds held by pastoralists on account of pensioners who die or move to another property - how to be accounted for.

4 (1) Comment made that higher rates of pocket money would mean the less the maintenance that would be available for accumulation.

4 (ii) Mr. Giese feared that pastoralists tended to retain moneys paid to them as pension maintenance in respect of pensioners who subsequently died or left the property.

4 (iii) Pointed out that where individual accounts for pensioners were not kept it would be difficult to say in respect of an individual pensioner just what his "share" of accumulated maintenance was derived from his pension. Mr. Giese felt that his Branch could provide assistance from records which would enable calculation of the "share" of accumulated maintenance which could be regarded as belonging to any particular pensioner. He felt that in the case of transfer of a pensioner from one station to another the value of the pensioner's share in the collective maintenance fund (or in the case where individual accounts were kept - his credit) should be transferred with him.

4. (iv) Mr. Giese also felt that arrangements could be made to strengthen the liaison between his Branch and the Curator so that the latter would be in a position to call on pastoralists for an accounting when a pensioner died.

5. At this point the writer retired from the meeting and returned shortly before its conclusion. At that point discussion was ending on the position under which Treasury required that the maintenance component of pensions be paid to Revenue whereas, it was gathered, the Director considered that the maintenance should be available to him to enable the provision of housing and amenities for pensioners. There was some discussion during which it was suggested that the Director might make a cost review in respect of Settlements and make out a case to Treasury for a review of their decision that all of the "maintenance" component of pensions received should be paid to revenue.



DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

96 (19)

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In reply please quote :

A55/4255

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

(For Attention Mr. May)

Meeting between officers of Department of  
Territories, Director of Welfare and officers  
of Department of Social Services on 19th  
February, 1965.

As discussed by telephone, forwarded herewith are  
two copies of notes of discussions at this meeting.

If the record is found to be in error in any respect  
your advice as to the discrepancies would be appreciated.

*recd by hand 5/4*

*H. J. Goodes*  
(H. J. GOODES)  
Director-General



9.53

31.3.65

234/C838



TO ADMIN DARWIN  
FROM TERRITORIES

YOUR D665

WILL SEND SUMMARIES DISCUSSIONS TREASURY AND SOCIAL SERVICES  
WHEN TO HAND. THOSE WITH SOCIAL SERVICES ARE AS CONTAINED MY  
63/3602 17TH MARCH

~~M~~ TERR ~~FM~~ FILE 63/3602

ENDS HC

DEPT. OF  
TELEPRINT MESSAGE



4.04 29.3.65 HCG481/D655

TO TERRITORIES CANBERRA  
FROM ADMIN DARWIN

I SHOULD BE GLAD IF YOU WOULD FORWARD COPIES OF MINUTES OF MEETINGS HELD IN CANBERRA RECENTLY CONCERNING SOCIAL SERVICE BENEFIT PAYMENTS TO ABORIGINALS, IN PARTICULAR THE COPY OF MINUTES OF MEETING WITH TREASURY WOULD BE APPRECIATED

ADMIN FILE 62/2240  
ENDS HT

*Folio 91 summarizes  
Social Services discussions  
the value of my will forward  
summary of discussions  
On 30/3*

*Mr May*

*Mr Reseigh*



63/3602

His Honour the Administrator  
of the Northern Territory,  
DARWIN. N.T.

17 MAR 1963

*Social*  
SECURE SERVICE BENEFITS FOR ABORIGINES

During the last visit of the Director of Social Welfare to Canberra opportunity was taken to discuss the following matters with officers of the Department of Social Services:

- (a) Increase in the pocket money component for pensioners. The Department of Social Services explained that the Adelaide Director was pressing for higher pocket money payments. The aim was to increase from 30/- weekly by 5/- after 30 June, 1965, and 7/- after 1 January, 1966. This would mean all pensioners would be receiving £2.2.0 weekly in cash. Pressure will also be brought on missions to have them pay higher pocket money with the aim of their reaching the same rates as those applying on settlements. Missions would be pressed also to make a more rapid disbursement of accumulated funds for the benefit of pensioners.
- (b) Reimbursement rates to pastoralists for the maintenance of pensioners. The varying claims were noted. It was agreed that the Department of Social Services would endeavour to have the pastoralists limit their claims to those applying to the maintenance of other dependants on their properties. The Adelaide Director proposes to adopt this line.
- (c) Accumulation of amounts on behalf of individual pensioners. The gradual tendency of pastoralists to keep individual accounts was noted. Social Service officers are to keep pressing for individual accounts in all cases.
- (d) Repayment to revenue of all but the pocket money component for pensioners on settlements. The Director of Social Welfare proposed to look at this matter again and put forward recommendations for a suitable amount to cover the maintenance of settlement pensioners thus leaving a proportion to be funded for use for pensioner housing and amenities.

2. Enquiry is now made as to whether you wish to take up again the matter of repayment to revenue of the balance of pensions.



G.W.S  
(G. Warwick Smith)  
Secretary.



63/3602

His Honour the Administrator  
of the Northern Territory,  
DARWIN. N.T.

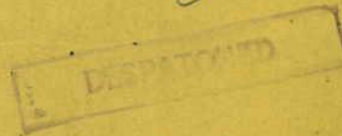
17 APR 1965

SOCIAL SERVICE BENEFITS FOR ABORIGINES

As requested by your telex D655 I am attaching copies of notes of discussions held with officers of the Department of Social Services in Canberra on 19th February, 1965.

2. The Department of Social Services has asked for advice of any errors in the records.
3. Notes of the earlier meeting with Treasury, Departments of Health and Social Services officials have not yet been received.

G.W.S.  
(G. Warwick Smith)  
Secretary.



Encl.