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Telephone: W 0133

In reply please

quote A. 93

Department of Social Services,

Churchill Building,

61 Gawler Place, Adelaide

15th October, 1959.



The Director,
Department of Health,
DARWIN, N.T.

Entitlement of Inmates of East Arm
Leprosarium, Darwin, to Pensions and Allowances.

During my visit to Darwin in June, 1959, I discussed the abovementioned matter with yourself and Dr. Hargrave. I promised to give the details of pensions and allowances paid to the inmates of the East Arm Leprosarium upon receipt of a nominal roll.

During his visit to Darwin last month, Mr. F.J. McMillan of this office obtained a copy of the details of the inmates of the Leprosarium and I am now forwarding the information which was requested. Attached is a summary of the amounts that are being paid to the different patients.

When the Leprosarium was located on Channel Island, it was the policy of this office to pay pensions only to those patients who had families to support on the mainland. The pensions were paid to the wives as warrantee. Nothing was paid to the patient. It was assumed that the persons were being quartered and fed and some clothes were supplied, and that a further pension payment should not be made on their behalf by the Commonwealth, except where they had a family to support. I understand that this policy was supported by the then Director-General of Health who did not favour the patients having spending money.

If it is now the desire of your Department to have the policy changed concerning spending money, it is suggested that application forms for pensions and allowances be completed and submitted to this office. I will then submit the matter to the Director-General and you will be advised of the decision.

I am enclosing some application forms and pamphlets concerning the payment of Social Service benefits. These persons would not receive a pension automatically but would be subjected to the normal means test, and must have the necessary period of residence in Australia, be naturalised, be the correct age and, also, if an invalid pension is being claimed, they must be certified as permanently incapacitated.

Payments may be made to aborigines, other than those included in the Book of Wards of the Northern Territory Welfare Branch. I might also add that as from some date next year, payment of pension will also be made to the Wards, subject to certain conditions. The Officer-in-Charge, Department of Labour and National Service, Darwin, Mr. J.R. Larcombe, is the Departmental Special Magistrate located in Darwin, and his assistance should be sought in having the claims completed.

SAC. Please discuss form 344.

C. G. Atkinson
C. G. ATKINSON,
DIRECTOR.

6
16
COPY

The Director of Welfare,
Welfare Branch,
Northern Territory Administration,
DARWIN, N.T.

59/393 JAL/AH

4th April, 1960

INVALID PENSIONS - PATIENTS EAST ARM SETTLEMENT.

A number of patients at East Arm Settlement who are wards have applied for, and appear likely to receive, invalid pensions.

2. The method of handling such pensions received on behalf of these patients must now be considered. Dr. Hargrave, Medical Officer-in-Charge of East Arm Settlement, has indicated that he favours the following policy:-

- (a) Payment of 10/- per week to each patient (being a ward) in receipt of a pension,
- (b) the payment of balance of money into a Trust Account under the control of the Lay Superintendent and another responsible officer, and,
- (c) further payments to be made from the balance held in the Trust Account on behalf of pensioners on recommendation of the Lay Superintendent and the Mother in charge of the Catholic sisters.

Note: Payments referred to in (c) above would be to enable personal purchases to be made by pensioners.

3. It is understood from Dr. Hargrave that during a discussion on the subject of this memorandum, the Director of Welfare expressed himself to be in general agreement with the broad policy outlined under (a), (b) and (c) above. Dr. Hargrave is at present absent on leave and will not be returning to Darwin until May of this year.

4. Your early comments on the above proposals would be greatly appreciated.

5. It should be understood that this Department is desirous of co-operating with the Welfare Branch, and in particular, does not wish to implement procedures in respect of the handling of pensions which would conflict with the policy of your Branch.

(R. C. WEBB)
Commonwealth Director of Health.

Telephone: W 0133

Department of Social Services,

Churchill Building,

61 Gawler Place, Adelaide

In reply please quote:

P. 13

28th July, 1960

The Superintendent,
East Arm Settlement,
DARWIN
N.T.

Dear Sir,

A batch of ninety-six invalid pension applications has recently been lodged by Mr. Larcombe, our Darwin representative, on behalf of patients in the leprosarium. It appears that all claimants are wards and thus it seems desirable that some responsible person be nominated to act as warrantee to collect pension moneys for them and to disburse these moneys as and when required.

As discussed previously, it seems that the best method of payment would be by bulk cheque forwarded fortnightly to cover the total amount of pension due to all pensioners at the leprosarium. You could then perhaps maintain trust accounts for the individual pensioners, to which could be credited each fortnightly pension instalment as it was received, and against which could be debited all payments made to or for the pensioner.

With your concurrence, it is proposed that pension cheques will be made payable to the Superintendent, East Arm Settlement, Darwin, and, as a result, the persons occupying this position from time to time will be eligible to negotiate the cheques. Under this procedure, a cheque covering the total amount due in respect of the pensioner inmates concerned will be drawn in your favour. The cheque will be accompanied by a schedule, setting out the amount due to each pensioner, and a certificate which you will be required to sign, as an acknowledgment of receipt of the pension money, and return to this office as soon as possible. Before returning this certificate, it will be necessary for you to indicate thereon whether any of the pensioners named in the schedule have died or left the settlement. The amount paid to you in respect of such pensioners is to be retained by you and an adjustment will then be made by the Department to the subsequent fortnightly cheque. Under this arrangement, any amount which you hold on hand for a deceased or discharged pensioner will be offset by a corresponding reduction in the amount of the subsequent cheque.

Before pension payments commence in respect of your recent claimants, it would be appreciated if you would advise whether you approve of the scheme outlined above or whether you wish to suggest some modifications. So that determination of these claims may not be delayed unduly, I shall be glad to receive your reply as soon as possible.

Perhaps, for the sake of convenience, it might be as well to transfer those already receiving pensions at the settlement to the proposed new method of payment. If you consider that some of the present pensioners or claimants are capable of handling their own pensions and should be paid by cheque forwarded directly to them, would you kindly advise their names.

Yours faithfully,

C.G. Atkinson
(C.G. Atkinson)
Director

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

12 n/8

TELEPHONE 519
P.O. BOX 95
TELEGRAPHIC ADDRESS :
"QUARANTINE, DARWIN"

The Director-General of Health,
Commonwealth Department of Health,
CANBERRA, A.C.T.



Department of Health,
Darwin,
Northern Territory.

YOUR REFERENCE 756/11/1	OF: 25th March, 1960	OUR REFERENCE: 59/393	DATE: 19th August, 1960
SUBJECT: Invalid Pensions - Patients at East Arm Settlement.			

Urgent Attention - Mr. V. S. Ryan.

Attached, please find copies of:-

- (a) Social Services memo of 15th October, 1959
- (b) Copy of memo 59/393 of 4th April, 1960, to the Director of Welfare
- (c) Copy of file note
- (d) Copy of memo from Social Services, Adelaide, of 28th July, 1960
- (e) Copy of our reply of 8th August, 1960
- (f) Copy of memo from Social Services of 15th August, 1960

2. It is understood that discussions have taken place from time to time between officers of this and other departments (Welfare, Social Services) but, unfortunately, there are no file minutes to indicate the decisions arising from those discussions.

3. Discussions were held today between Mr. James and Mr. Larcombe, Social Services Representative in Northern Territory Administration. These discussions may be summarised, briefly, as:-

- (a) Pensions are controlled by Social Services and are generally payable to persons personally.
- (b) In all cases where aborigines are living in a controlled community, e.g. Church Mission, Government Settlement, etc., and pensions are paid on an institutional basis, the pensioners are wards of the institution.
- (c) The inmates of East Arm are not necessarily wards. There are full bloods, some of whom have citizenship rights, Europeans and part-coloured persons. There are a number of these persons who are already receiving a pension direct. (Social Services are to supply details at a later date vide advice A93/P.13 of 15th August, 1960).
- (d) Social Service attitude appears to be that ^{at East Arm} it would not be equitable to discriminate, say, between Europeans, who are already receiving a direct pension and wards. (In this regard, it is pointed out that the controlling authority of pensions in the Northern Territory is Social Services, Adelaide).
- (e) There are certain State Government Settlements in Western Australia and Queensland where the inhabitants receive a full pension without any content payable to the Settlement authority.



Mr V. Ryan
& Well doubts if
there are any of these.
As discuss. bc. n/8.

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4. Attention is drawn to Section 7 (e) of the Hospitals and Medical Services Ordinance 1953-1957. As Leprosy is an Infectious Disease within the meaning of the Infectious Diseases Regulations made under the Health Ordinance, charges for medical services are not recoverable as the matter now stands. X

5. Dr. Webb also raised the question of payment of portion of the pension to the Health Department on an institutional basis with an Adelaide representative of Social Services during a visit of the latter to Darwin.

Ian Byrne

(IAN BYRNE)
Acting Director.

COPY

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

P.13

15
Department of Social Services,
Churchill Building,
61 Gawler Place,
ADELAIDE.

9th. December, 1960.

The Director,
Commonwealth Department of Health,
Box 95, Post Office
DARWIN

Dear Sir,

Reference your 59/393 of 23rd. August, 1960.

Over one hundred invalid pension applications from inmates of East Arm Settlement have now been assessed but payment is being withheld until advice is received from you concerning the desired method of payment.

Would you kindly inform me what progress has been made to date towards arriving at a suitable method of payment.

Yours faithfully,

(SGD) (C. G. Atkinson)
DIRECTOR.

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

TELEPHONE 519
 P.O. BOX 95
 TELEGRAPHIC ADDRESS:
 "QUARANTINE, DARWIN"

Department of Health,
 Darwin,
 Northern Territory.



The Director-General of Health,
 Dept. of Health,
 CANBERRA, A.C.T.

YOUR REFERENCE		OUR REFERENCE	DATE
756/11/1	OF: 25/3/60	59/393 of 19/8/60	22nd December, 1960.
SUBJECT: <u>Invalid Pensions - Patients of East Arm Settlement</u>			

Attached hereto is a copy of a communication received from the Department of Social Services.

2. This matter has been delayed for a long period and it has become a source of embarrassment between this Division and the Department of Social Services.
3. It is also felt that the payment of a bulk sum of money representing accrued pensions due to a large number of patients may cause a great deal of trouble on the Settlement.
4. It would be appreciated if the question of payment of pensions could be given urgent attention.

*Mr. Prouse
 Dept. of Social Services
 Melbourne.*

R. C. Weer
 (R. C. WEER)
 Director

Encl.

*620341
 Ext 223*

Pensions - East Arm Settlement.

Mr. Prowse, Department of Social Services made a telephone enquiry regarding payment of pensions to patients at East Arm Settlement.

2. He was concerned that his Department was involved in a back payment of approximately £12000 to about 100 approved Pensioners at the Leprosarium. He was anxious to learn this Department's views in relation to this question and indicated that Social Services would welcome an application from Health to place East Arm on an Institutional basis.

3. In retrospect some of the salient points of this case are:-

(a) The Director of Health, Darwin made arrangements with the Social Services Representative for lodgement of applications for pensions by patients at East Arm Settlement.

(b) The basis for determination in Darwin was

- 10/- p.w. to Pensioner
- 42/4 p.w. placed in trust but available for essential needs for the patient.
- 42/6 p.w. placed in trust and paid to patient on discharge.

£4/15/- p.w.

(c) In August, 1960 application was made to Central Office for setting up a special Trust Fund (file 16/9/1 Section 2 Folio 211) for receipt and disbursement of Pensioners.

(d) Mr. Prowse advised that approximately 100 pensions are involved amounting to about £12,000 back pay.

(e) In September last there was a preliminary move to have the weekly payments to patients raised. This was deferred in view of the Pension question.

(f) A few pensions are already being paid. These were outside the scope of the present discussions.

4. A problem of security and control of the patients already exists and if a large amount of money is placed in Pensioner's hands then this problem would be much greater than it already is.

5. Medical service to patients is free.

6. Patients receive small but regular amounts of money for work performed at the Settlement - the amount ranges from 15/- to £4. 10. 0. per week (as against standard wage of £3. 10. 0. p.w.) - depending on the skill involved.

This arrangement has been the means of:-

- (a) Overcoming the difficulty of bringing "Outsiders" into work on the Settlement.
- (b) Providing training and useful occupations for inmates when eventually discharged.
- (c) Keeping the patients occupied and living together more amicably.
- (d) Improving the physical condition of the patient kept in employment.

7. The payment mentioned in Paragraph 6 above raises the following:-

- i. Is Social Services aware of these payments? Pension rate could be effected at upper level of weekly payment.
- ii. The receipt of pension monies could have a marked influence on the attitude of patients to the Settlement's pattern of organization and rehabilitation measures. In other words would the patient still be willing to work?

8. The Welfare Branch of the Northern Territory Administration has reached agreement with Social Services on pensions to their Wards. A proportion - minimum of 10/- - is paid to the Pensioner, a fluctuating proportion into Welfare Operational Account for food and clothing supplied and the balance is paid into a Welfare Building Fund. (In personal discussions with Welfare Officers they advocated similar policy for Health).

9. In October, 1959 (folio 5) Social Services pointed out to the Director of Health, Darwin that when the Leprosarium was located on Channel Island it was the policy of his Office to pay pensions only to those patients who had families to support on the main land. Pensions were paid to the wives as warrantee. Nothing was paid to the patient. It was assumed that the persons were being quartered and fed and some clothes were supplied and that a further pension payment should not be made on their behalf by the Commonwealth except where they have a family to support. At that time Social Services sought advice as to whether Health wished to change their policy. There is no record of direct advice but it is felt that the submission of applications for pensions is implied acceptance of a policy change.

10. It is doubtful whether payment of these new pensions to patients at East Arm Settlement would in the ultimate be to their betterment. However, a glut of money in patients hands would have repercussions:-

- (a) Socially
- (b) For management
- (c) On rehabilitation.

11. In the circumstances it is recommended that an approach be made to the Director-General of Social Services to have the current application for Funds paid on an Institutional basis. It is not intended that any alteration be sought in regard to ^{Assets} Funds already standing. A draft memorandum is attached for consideration.



(C.R. JAMES)

24/1/61.

62-0341

TEL. MU 8271

ALL COMMUNICATIONS SHOULD BE
ADDRESSED TO—
THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL,
BOX 503 H, MELBOURNE.



31/11/61

756/11/1

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES,
RELIANCE HOUSE, 301 FLINDERS LANE,
MELBOURNE.

IN YOUR REPLY PLEASE QUOTE
NO. C. 261/30

CJ



23 MAY 1961

The Director-General,
Department of Health,
CANBERRA. A. C. T.

Subject: (1) Medical examination of pensioners
discharged from East Arm Leprosarium.
(2) Method of payment of pensions in
respect of inmates of East Arm
Leprosarium.

Wherever possible the Department of Social Services obtains a medical opinion on the question whether a claimant for invalid pension is permanently incapacitated for work to the extent of at least 85 per cent. This course is followed in respect of claimant inmates of East Arm Leprosarium.

It is understood it is usual for the examining doctors to certify claimants in the Leprosarium as permanently incapacitated for work, subject to review on discharge from the institution. Consequently it is the practice of the Department of Social Services to request a medical examination on the discharge of a pensioner, in order to determine his eligibility for further pension.

Recently the Department's representative in Darwin advised the Director of Social Services in Adelaide as follows :-

"Recently I received a memorandum from the Director, Department of Health, Darwin, who stated that his Central Office had obtained a ruling from the Director-General, Department of Social Services, on the payment of this type of pension.

The instructions received by the Department of Health are :-

1. That Medical Officers should not recommend Invalid Pensions for natives suffering from Leprosy unless -
 - (a) They are over 16 years of age and,
 - (b) they are detained in a Leprosarium.
2. That Invalid Pensions may be recommended for three months after discharge, but must then cease."

Unfortunately we have been unable to trace the correspondence in which the advice purported to have been received by your Department was given, and it would be appreciated if you kindly supply us with the date and reference number of the correspondence in which it was contained. The reason for the request is that the "instructions" do not fully cover the situation and require amplification.

Would you also kindly advise whether any conclusion has been reached as to the method to be adopted in the payment of pensions to inmates of the Leprosarium. It is understood this question was referred to you by the Director of Health, Darwin, following negotiations with the Director of Social Services, Adelaide.

N. J. Gaddes

39
756/11/1.MEMORANDUM TO:

3 JAN 1961

The Director-General of Social Services,
Department of Social Services,
Box 503 H,
MELBOURNE VIC.

ATTENTION MR. PROWSE.

Entitlement of Inmates of East Arm Leprosarium
Darwin to Pensions and Allowances.

Reference is made to the recent telephoned enquiry by Mr. Prowse concerning payment of pensions to patients at the East Arm Leprosarium at Darwin.

This Department feels that the extension of full scale social service benefits to the inmates of East Arm would create a number of problems and in the long run would not be in the best interests of the pensioner himself.

These persons are provided with a free medical service and they are being quartered, fed and supplied with some clothing. The average cost of this service in 1959/60 was approximately £6 per week per head. Equally important is that the majority of patients, other than children, perform work for which they receive regular weekly payments ranging from 15/- for a female domestic to £4. 10. 0 p.w. a skilled male supervisor.

Monetary considerations aside, this system is of real value as a rehabilitation measure. It is a means of providing training in useful occupations; it keeps patients occupied and living together amicably and it improves their physical condition. Additionally, the task of those who are charged with the care of these people is made less onerous in that discipline is easier to maintain, there are fewer absconders and less civil offences.

It is understood that something like £12000 in retrospective payment to about 100 approved pensioners is involved. It is difficult to imagine the impact such a large sum of money would have on this "closed" community whose needs are relatively simple. This Department is of the opinion that the payment of such a large sum of money might well result in large scale absconding with an inevitable crop of civil offences in Darwin Township.

It has been our experience that the system of employment with its related form of payment, has proved beneficial mentally and physically to the patient. If the whole of the pension is paid to the inmate it is doubtful whether he would continue to be interested in being usefully employed which would disrupt the system to the disadvantage of this department and the patient himself.

The scheme favoured is the retention of the existing system augmented by the payment of the personal component of the pension up to the full institutional rate of 33s. per week depending upon the circumstances of the individual. It is felt that this would be in the interest of the patient and at the same time facilitate the administration of the Settlement.

It is also felt that it would be reasonable to take into consideration the fact that the patient is already being treated, quartered, fed, clothed and provided with some amenities at Commonwealth expense when assessing any further pension payment.

In view of the above, this Department would strongly recommend that the current applications for pensions by inmates of East Arm Leprosarium be approved on an institutional basis with restricted retrospective payment. At this stage it is not intended that the odd pensions already being paid at East Arm be brought into the institutional scheme nor is it intended to interfere with the rights of families as warrantees.

(W.D.REFSHAUGE) *AC*
Director-General of Health.

756/11/1

MEMORANDUM TO:Commonwealth Director of Health,
DARWIN, N.T.

21 JUL 1961

East Arm Settlement Pensions.Reference 59/393 of 31st January, 1961.

Attached is a copy of memorandum 756/11/1 of 13th July, 1961 addressed to the Director-General of Social Services.

2. It is understood that Mr. Prowse is currently visiting Darwin in connection with another matter, and may possibly contact you on this subject for the purpose of ironing out any anomalies which may exist.

(C. R. JAMES) *[Signature]*
for Director-General.

[Handwritten mark]

TEL. 62-0341
ALL COMMUNICATIONS SHOULD BE
ADDRESSED TO— 35/MK
THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL,
BOX 503 H, MELBOURNE.



39/247
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES,
RELIANCE HOUSE, 301 FLINDERS LANE,
MELBOURNE.

CT
IN YOUR REPLY PLEASE QUOTE
NO. C.261/34

25 JUL 1961

The Director-General,
Department of Health,
CANBERRA. A.C.T.



SUBJECT: Payment of pensions to inmates of
East Arm Leprosarium, Darwin.

REFERENCE: Your memorandum 756/11/1 of 13th
July, 1961. ← *files 34-5*

Thank you for the suggestions contained in your memorandum. These are in accord with the arrangements already in force for the payment of pensions to aborigines on Government Settlements and Missions in the Northern Territory.

The Director of Social Services, Adelaide, has accordingly been asked to arrange for payment as early as possible.

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

47 24/10

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

CS



TELEPHONE 2821
P.O. BOX 147
TELEGRAPHIC ADDRESS:
"QUARANTINE, DARWIN"

Department of Health,
Darwin,
Northern Territory.

Director-General of Health,
Department of Health,
CANBERRA A.C.T.

YOUR REFERENCE	OUR REFERENCE:	DATE:
<u>756/11/1</u> OF:	61/283/49	13th October, 1961
SUBJECT:		
<u>PENSION PAYMENTS TO PATIENTS AT EAST ARM LEPROSARIUM</u>		

It is advised that the Department of Social Services, has commenced payment of pensions as from 5th October, 1961.

The amount due to each pensioner is £10.10.0. per fortnight, which consists of two components-

- (a) £3.14.0. Personal or pocket money portion,
- (b) £6.16.0. Maintenance portion

The sum of £1. per fortnight is being paid to each pensioner and the balance of the personal portion, namely £2.14.0. will, by arrangement with the Northern Territory Administration, be placed in individual accounts of the Aboriginals Trust Account.

It is proposed to credit the maintenance portion of £6.16.0. per fortnight to Revenue Health Miscellaneous unless otherwise directed and in this connection your early advice would be appreciated.

Ian Byrne
(IAN BYRNE)
Director of Health

I concur - credits should go to Revenue. 18/11.
See reply f. 52



TELEPHONE NO. CANBERRA 7 0411
TELEGRAPHIC ADDRESS "TERRITORIES" CANBERRA

Your reference
In reply quote No.

61/6747.

DEPARTMENT OF TERRITORIES
CANBERRA



7 NOV 1961

The Director-General of Health,
Administration Building,
CANBERRA, A.C.T.

ALLOWANCES FOR ABORIGINES RECEIVING
TREATMENT FOR LEPROSY AT NORTHERN
TERRITORY MISSIONS AND SETTLEMENTS.

The biennial conference of the Northern Territory Missions and the Administration, which was held in Darwin earlier this year, passed a resolution requesting "that the Minister for Health be asked to consider extending the present provision for payment of invalid pensions to patients discharged from the leprosarium to cover the period when they remain under treatment on Missions or Settlements and cannot therefore be gainfully employed."

2. His Honour the Administrator has informed me that there was considerable discussion on this matter during which the representative of the Department of Social Services expressed the views of his Department. The general opinion of the Mission representatives was that persons with leprosy undertaking treatment on Missions and Settlements are not capable of full employment.

3. It is understood that under the existing arrangements assistance will be given by the Department of Social Services for a period of three months but that persons receiving treatment on Missions and Settlements are not considered eligible for an invalid pension. In these circumstances the Mission representatives suggested that provision might be made, along the lines of the T.B. Allowance Scheme, to cover such cases. Mention was made at the Conference of the therapeutic value of having the people undergo treatment in their own areas. At the same time, because treatment had to be regularly given, there were serious limitations placed on their employment possibilities.

4. Perhaps your Director of Health in the Northern Territory could give an indication of the number of cases which are being dealt with in this way and who, in the view of your officers under the present terms relating to invalid pensions, cannot be certified as qualifying for such pensions.

5. My Minister has approved that when this information is to hand I am to have the matter considered further to see whether, in these particular cases, there could be some waiving of the conditions relating to invalid pensions, or an extension of the period which is now applied by the Department of Social Services, or the development of a scheme similar to the T.B. Allowance Scheme.

6. I would appreciate your views on the problem which I have referred to the Director-General of Social Services in similar terms.

*Mr. J. ...
P.B. discuss
A.C.T.*

See folios 62-3

[Signature]
H.E.R. Lambert)
Secretary.

63

ADS:JEF

756/11/1

~~17 MAR 1962~~

2 March 1962.

MEMORANDUM to:

The Secretary,
Department of Territories,
CANBERRA.

Allowances for Aborigines receiving Treatment
for Leprosy at Northern Territory Missions
and Settlements

Reference 61/6747 of 7th November, 1961

One of the conditions governing the payment of an Invalid Pension by the Department of Social Services to a person over the age of 16 years is that he is permanently incapacitated to the extent of at least 85%.

Persons in the Northern Territory who have been discharged from the Leprosarium but who are still under treatment and supervision at a Mission or Settlement, are unable to move to employment because it is necessary for them to receive regular treatment. However, such persons cannot meet a criteria of 85% permanent incapacity.

It is agreed that therapeutic advantages would be derived from the treatment of these people within the familiar precincts of their own environment. Doubtless, material advantages would also accrue. However, in this situation, these persons are either precluded from moving to employment or have their opportunities to obtain work considerably reduced, yet they are ineligible for an Invalid Pension.

It would appear that there is a case for application of a special benefit to these persons. Through no fault of their own, they are virtually denied the opportunity of earning a livelihood, yet the existing arrangement whereby the Department of Social Services pays a benefit for three months after discharge from the Leprosarium does not adequately meet the situation.

With regard to the suggestion that provision might be made to cover such cases with a form of assistance along the lines of the Tuberculosis Allowance Scheme, it is considered that the circumstances are different. In the case

....2/

of a tuberculous person, an allowance is payable only whilst that person's condition is infectious. If unfit for work and no longer infectious, such a person may be eligible for an Invalid Pension or sickness benefit.

A person suffering from leprosy is admitted to and remains in the Leprosarium whilst his condition is infectious, and where, subject to the usual conditions, he would be eligible for an Invalid Pension. However, in the case of leprosy the pension ceases three months after discharge from the Leprosarium and at present he is not attracting a sickness benefit although he is not necessarily fit to return to employment.

The number of people outside the Leprosarium who are under medical review is approximately 173. Some of these are already receiving an Invalid Pension because of the residual deformities of leprosy and some because of other unassociated medical conditions. A significant number are not receiving any financial assistance because the degree of their incapacity is less than 85%.

It is understood that in the case of unemployment and sickness benefits, it has been suggested that Government settlements or church missions accept responsibility for their residents in these categories in view of the short time involved. Since a person could be under review and treatment for two years or more after discharge from the Leprosarium, it is suggested that this might not be an equitable method of approach to the problem.

It is believed that under legislation administered by the Department of Social Services, there is provision whereby special benefits which are paid at the same rates as sickness or unemployment benefits, may be granted to persons who are not qualified to receive other social service benefits and who are unable to earn a livelihood. It would seem appropriate to apply these benefits, for which provision already exists, in preference to waiving of conditions relating to invalid pensions or attempting to develop a new scheme along tuberculosis allowance lines, in order to meet the needs of the type of case under discussion. However, the matter of a decision for the payment of special benefits is one which rests with the Department of Social Services.

(W.D. REFSHAUGE) *WR*

Director-General of Health

The Commonwealth Director of Health,
DARWIN.

For your information.

for Director-General *WR*

See folio 57