

1956

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

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# REPORT

OF THE

# SELECT COMMITTEE

APPOINTED TO INQUIRE INTO

## NATIVE WELFARE CONDITIONS IN THE LAVERTON-WARBURTON RANGE AREA

Presented by Mr. W. L. Grayden  
on 12th December, 1956

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ORDERED TO BE PRINTED  
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FIRST SESSION OF THE TWENTY-SECOND  
PARLIAMENT

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## EXTRACTS FROM VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS.

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WEDNESDAY, 17th OCTOBER, 1956.

**29.—Native Welfare—Select Committee to Inquire into Laverton-Warburton Range Area Conditions.**

The Order of the Day having been read for the resumption of the debate on the motion moved by Mr. Grayden, That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into all matters appertaining to the health and general welfare of, and future plans for, the aborigines in the Laverton-Warburton Range area,

Debate continued.

Question—put and passed.

Mr. Grayden moved, That the following members be appointed to serve on the Select Committee, together with the mover:—The Member for Vasse (Mr. Bovell), the Member for Mt. Lawley (Mr. Oldfield), the Member for North Perth (Mr. Lapham), and the Member for Kimberley (Mr. Rhatigan).

Question—put and passed.

Ordered—That the Committee have power to call for persons and papers, to sit on days over which the House stands adjourned, to move from place to place, and to report this day five weeks.

WEDNESDAY, 21st NOVEMBER, 1956.

**13.—Native Welfare—Select Committee to Inquire into Laverton-Warburton Range Area Conditions.**

The time for bringing up the report of the Select Committee on Conditions of Natives in the Laverton-Warburton Range Area was extended for two weeks.

WEDNESDAY, 5th DECEMBER, 1956.

**10.—Native Welfare—Select Committee to Inquire into Laverton-Warburton Range Area Conditions.**

The time for bringing up the report of the Select Committee on Conditions of Natives in the Laverton-Warburton Range Area was extended for one week.

WEDNESDAY, 12th DECEMBER, 1956.

**15.—Native Welfare—Select Committee to Inquire into Laverton-Warburton Range Area Conditions.**

Mr. Grayden brought up the report and evidence of the Select Committee appointed to inquire into the Conditions of Natives in the Laverton-Warburton Range Area, and moved, That it be received.

Question—put and passed.

Mr. Grayden moved, That the report be printed and its consideration be made an Order of the Day for the next sitting of the House.

Question—put and passed.

## MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS OF SELECT COMMITTEE.

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TUESDAY, 23rd OCTOBER, 1956.

The Committee met at 7 p.m.

*Present.*—Mr. W. S. Bovell, Mr. W. L. Grayden, Mr. S. E. Lapham, Mr. E. P. Oldfield and Mr. J. J. Rhatigan.

*Chairman.*—Mr. W. L. Grayden was elected Chairman on the motion of Mr. Bovell, seconded by Mr. Rhatigan.

*Business.*—Discussion ensued as to the scope of the evidence to be covered, and the witnesses to be called. Transport and other administrative arrangements for the visit to the Warburton Range area were outlined.

The Committee adjourned.

WEDNESDAY, 31st OCTOBER, 1956.

The Committee met at 10 a.m.

*Present.*—Mr. Grayden, Chairman; Messrs. Bovell, Lapham, Oldfield and Rhatigan.

*Witnesses.*—The following witnesses were examined:—Mr. S. G. Middleton, Commissioner for Native Welfare; Mr. B. A. McLarty, District Officer, Department of Native Welfare; Mr. G. F. Thornbury, Special Section, Education Department; Dr. R. M. Berndt, Senior Lecturer in Anthropology, University of W.A.; Dr. C. H. Berndt, Research Worker in Anthropology.

The Committee adjourned.

MONDAY, 5th NOVEMBER, 1956.

The Committee met at 10 a.m.

*Present.*—Mr. Grayden, Chairman; Messrs. Lapham, Oldfield and Rhatigan.

*Witness.*—The following witness was further examined:—Mr. B. A. McLarty, Department of Native Welfare.

The Committee adjourned.

TUESDAY, 13th NOVEMBER, 1956.

The Committee met at the United Aborigines' Mission Station, at Warburton Ranges.

*Present.*—Mr. Grayden, Chairman; Messrs. Bovell, Lapham, Oldfield and Rhatigan.

*Witnesses.*—The following witnesses were examined:—Mr. H. E. Green, Superintendent, United Aborigines' Mission Station; Mr. K. E. Siggs, Missionary; Mr. W. H. Douglas, Special Section, Education Department; Mr. J. S. G. Munro, School Teacher; Mr. J. W. Graham, Head Teacher; Mr. H. E. Green (recalled); Mrs. I. M. Wade, Resident; Mr. W. C. Wade, Missionary; and Mrs. O. D. Graham, Matron.

The Committee adjourned.

FRIDAY, 16th NOVEMBER, 1956.

The Committee met at Cosmo Newbery.

*Present.*—Mr. Grayden, Chairman; Messrs. Bovell and Lapham.

*Witness.*—The following witness was examined:—Mr. H. C. E. Lupton, Superintendent, United Aborigines' Mission Station.

The Committee adjourned.

SATURDAY, 17th NOVEMBER, 1956.

The Committee met at Laverton.

*Present.*—Mr. Grayden, Chairman; Messrs. Bovell and Lapham.

*Witness.*—The following witness was examined:—Constable 2083 J. T. Peters.

The Committee adjourned.

The Committee met at Mt. Margaret Mission.

*Present.*—Mr. Grayden, Chairman; Messrs. Bovell and Lapham.

*Witnesses.*—The following witnesses were examined:—Mr. H. R. Nash, Superintendent, United Aborigines' Mission Station; Mr. D. C. Milnes, Head Teacher; and Mr. R. H. Nash (recalled).

The Committee adjourned.

MONDAY, 23rd NOVEMBER, 1956.

The Committee met at 10.30 a.m.

*Present.*—Mr. Grayden, Chairman; and Mr. Lapham.

*Witness.*—The following witness was examined:—Sgt. R. H. Anderson, Police Department, Perth.

The Committee adjourned.

TUESDAY, 11th DECEMBER, 1956.

The Committee met at 7 p.m.

*Present.*—Mr. Grayden, Chairman; Messrs. Bovell, Lapham, Oldfield and Rhatigan.

*Report.*—The draft report as previously circulated by the Chairman was, after minor amendment, unanimously adopted on the motion of Mr. Lapham, seconded by Mr. Oldfield.

The Committee adjourned.

# REPORT.

The task of the Committee was simplified because, although the terms of reference were very wide in respect of the natives investigated, they confined the inquiry to a particular area of Western Australia. The native in this area can be divided into two broad groups. The first group are those who in our acceptance of the word are "civilised" in that they are at least to some extent conversant with the Western way of life and by virtue of such experience and/or training, capable of taking their place in our way of life. The second group are tribal natives in every sense. They lead the way of life of their forebears practising in varying degrees their age old customs and adhering to their tribal beliefs. Most of this group have had some contact with whites—mainly missionaries—but some have not yet made such contact. Naturally the problems confronting the two groups vary in some respects, but the fact that the Committee was able to deal with a particular set of problems localised in this manner avoided the confusion usually attendant upon investigations of this nature. When such inquiries are more extensive and embrace natives in various localities the problems affecting each, in all probability, are widely varying. The Committee feels it has been able to examine all aspects of the more important and pressing problems and so give a considered opinion and make recommendations with which there can be no division of informed opinion.

## TERRAIN.

The natives investigated inhabit the area bordered on the west by the Laverton district; on the east by Central Australia; on the north by the Rawlinson Ranges and on the south by the transcontinental railway. Although apparently of the same tribe there are three distinct groups of natives in this area, i.e., those that inhabit the Laverton-Warburton Range area; those that inhabit the Rawlinson Range area; those that inhabit the area east of the Warburton Ranges extending into South Australia.

The country varies between mulga belts and sand dune country and spinifex flats. There is no permanent surface water in the area. The annual average rainfall is between five and eight inches and the evaporation rate approximately ninety-six inches. The country must be regarded as some of the most arid and inhospitable in the world. It would be reasonable to assume that no other people in the world are less favoured in their choice of habitat. In the past natives have been confined to this area by rigorous tribal boundaries. The natives, in common with their kind in this country, are not agriculturists, there being no animals which could have been domesticated and no plants which readily lent themselves to cultivation even if water had been available in Australia. The natives have therefore developed a nomadic form of existence which is regarded by anthropologists as a remarkably intelligent adaptation to circumstances. In their tribal state they live off what game is available to them and rely for the rest of their diet on seeds, roots, grubs and indeed virtually anything that may be edible. For water they are dependent upon the occasional rains and thunderstorms which temporarily fill the small rock holes and gnamma holes of their country and upon the few places where soaks make permanent water (as distinct from permanent surface water) available to them. At the latter the natives frequently dig down to depths of 20 feet or more to reach water. The natives are naturally honest and kindly. They have developed a complex moral social order and their language is also complex and adequate. In respect of their social order and language they could in no way be regarded as primitive.

## RESERVE AND VIOLATIONS THEREOF.

An area adjacent to the junction of the Western Australian and Northern Territory and South Australian borders has been set aside for the tribal and semi-tribal natives which inhabit that area. The reserve extends on the eastern side of the Northern Territory-West Australian and West Australian-South Australian borders into the Central Native Reserve. Recently there has been some violation of this reserve, inasmuch as approximately 250,000 acres in the Sladen Waters area has been or is about to be ceded to the Commonwealth. A Commonwealth weather station has already been built five miles from Sladen Waters and an area in excess of 4,000,000 acres was made available to a mining company for the purpose of prospecting for nickel. The areas referred to involve the portions of the reserve most favourable to the natives in their constant search for food and water. Whilst natives who have had extensive contact with the missionaries or other white men would tend to congregate around any areas where whites were stationed in the hope that they could obtain some handouts of food or clothing, those who had not had such contact would leave the area, probably with acute hardship to themselves. In substantiation of the latter point the Committee have been informed that it is the experience of those who have travelled the area, that in most parts of the reserve it is possible at all times to see the smoke of one or more native hunting fires (the natives burn the spinifex to drive out lizards, snakes and any game that may be available). When the traveller drives to the fires, although tracks and other indication of natives are apparent, natives are never seen. If the party is accompanied by natives from the area they will

call to the other natives. The latter, reassured, emerge from behind sand dunes, shrubs or wherever they may be hiding. It is stated that it would be possible to travel the length of the reserve and although native fires would be frequently seen no natives would be encountered unless the means referred to were resorted to to make contact.

#### DISPOSITION AND NUMBER OF NATIVES IN AREA.

It is estimated that there is in the vicinity of four hundred natives in the Laverton area and a further three or four hundred or more on the Warburton reserve. In addition the Warburton group is augmented by another two or three hundred or so natives who periodically visit the Warburton Range from across the South Australia border. Although the Warburton Mission at the Warburton Ranges is the focal point at which the groups congregate for the purpose of making contact with the missionaries, there are dialectical differences in the language of the groups and they do not mingle to any real extent. The Rawlinson Range natives come in from that range which is approximately 150 miles to the north of the mission and range the country between the mission and that point. The natives from the east forage in the country between the mission and their more permanent grounds on the other side of the border and the Warburton-Laverton natives congregate at the Warburton Range and at Laverton. Greatest contact with whites has been made by the Warburton-Laverton group and by the natives from the east who are mainly from the Earnabella Mission area in South Australia. The natives from the Warburton group who have made the break to Laverton tend to hang around the mining township, periodically visiting the two other missions in that area and other points at which they have some chance of begging food and clothing.

#### WARBURTON, MT. MARGARET AND COSMO NEWBERY MISSIONS.

There are three missions in the area. Mt. Margaret, which is approximately 20 miles from Laverton, Cosmo Newbery, approximately 60 miles from Laverton and the Warburton Mission, situated near the Warburton Ranges approximately 400 miles by road north-east of Laverton. The missions have done excellent work on behalf of the natives and in the case of the Warburton Mission and the Mt. Margaret Mission, over a long period of years. Prior to the war the Warburton Mission received no assistance of any kind from the Government, but since the present Administrator took over they have received principally rations for the indigent natives and rations for the children of school age. They also received half the cost of their truck. The cost of this truck was £3,379, the Government contributing half this amount. The mission is grateful for the assistance given by the present Administrator, but naturally feels that more Government assistance should be forthcoming notwithstanding the fact that when the mission was established 20 years ago a condition of the permit was that the mission would not require Government aid. The missions confine their work to the teaching of the Gospel, the study and translation of the native language for the purpose of translating the Bible, the care in a home of native children attending the Government school at the mission, the care of indigent natives and any odd children that may for some reason or other be in the custody or care of the mission and the provision of medical facilities. No assistance is given to the adult able-bodied natives in the area, although occasionally some are employed and given rations for doing work for the mission.

The Government provides teachers and supplies for the running of a school at the mission and also medical supplies which are used by the missionaries in a building which serves as a hospital and which was also supplied by the Government, although erected by the missionaries.

#### BASIC REQUIREMENTS.

The basic requirements of the natives can be summed up under the following headings:—

##### Water.

The natives who frequent the Warburton reserve suffer from lack of water. Although there are on the reserve two or three soaks which can be regarded as permanent, these supply, because of the lack of adequate means for tapping the supply, only small quantities of water. The natives are confined to the areas surrounding these sources of supply during the times when, owing to the lack of rain, the supplies in the small rock holes and gnamma holes scattered throughout the reserve, have not been replenished. Since the country will not support many natives when they are concentrated in small areas, hunger and malnutrition result.

What water is available is available from three principal sources—

- (a) Rock holes in granite and other rock formations. These vary in size and hold anything from a few gallons to several thousand gallons.

- (b) Gnamma holes. These are a peculiar type of hole which occur in the outcrops distributed throughout the reserve. They usually have a small opening on the surface of the rock with a larger bowl shaped cavity beneath. They are usually small, holding anything from a few to a thousand gallons or more, although the larger holes are rare.
- (c) Soaks. There are a number of these on the reserve, but only two or three of them can be regarded as permanent. The natives, having located water at these points, have followed it down in some cases to 20 or more feet. The soaks usually make a few gallons a day which is sufficient for the natives drinking requirements, when they are in the area of the soak involved.

No permanent surface water exists on the reserve and therefore there is little bird or animal life. What water collects in the gnamma holes or small rock holes is protected from evaporation and from birds and animals by the natives who fill in the holes with spinifex for that purpose. No water is available in the soaks for birds or animals since the holes are too deep. The water in many of the holes is polluted by animals and birds which, from time to time, fall into them and drown in their attempts to reach the water.

Except in the very dry times, such as summer, when they tend to congregate at the soaks, the natives move from water hole to water hole, remaining at each only until the reserve is nearly depleted. Clouds on the horizon will cause them to move in that direction in the hope that rain will have replenished the supplies of water in the rock and gnamma holes in that area.

It is difficult to conceive fully the implications of the natives' constant struggle to obtain sufficient water for drinking purposes. It must be remembered that the natives usually move about the area in family groups, since the country and water available will not support large numbers. The natives struggle in such groups from water hole to water hole, which holes are frequently 20 or more miles apart. On these journeys the natives must carry the younger children, while the older ones are required to walk, in some cases, carrying a younger child. They carry all their possessions—spears, biddi's (wooden containers which sometimes hold a few pints of water) and any clothing or blankets which they may have obtained. In addition they must obtain sufficient food for themselves and their children en route. Since the country traversed is either mulga scrub, sand dunes or spinifex, and the weather—particularly during the summer—extremely hot (temperatures of 120 degrees in the shade not being uncommon) the suffering and hardships entailed will be readily imagined.

It is stated by informed persons that a human being will survive in that country for only two days without water, although in special cases, depending on the constitution of the person concerned the period may be of slightly greater duration. The supplies of water available, on the route which they traverse, for the drinking requirements of the natives who have made or make the journey from the Warburton Ranges to Cosmo Newbery are inadequate and natives have perished of thirst while attempting the journey. Sgt. Anderson's evidence in respect of the water holes on the route will serve to emphasise this aspect—

After leaving the Cosmo Newbery homestead you go about 40 miles to what they call Limestone Well, which is only about 8ft. deep with an unlimited supply of water. That is in the middle of spinifex country. I should say it might be 20 miles from Cosmo Newbery. Brown's Well is about 25ft. to 30ft. deep and is 15 miles further on. Then you go on to Rutter's Soak which is another 10 miles. This is a good soak, covered in by the Water Supply Department and would water a mob of cattle. About another eight miles further on is Thatches' Soak, which is also covered in. It would also water a mob of cattle. It is about 16 miles on to Minnie Creek and then another 16 miles to a rock hole called Billbitt. It is only full after rain and is very unreliable. At that place Lovick has taken up a piece of land and is sinking wells. About 35 miles further on is a rock hole called Gnarrnul. This rock hole only holds a small supply of water after rain. It is about 35 to 40 miles on to Bulja Soak on the north end of Lake Throssell, which is a good soak, but has never been developed. If it were cleaned out and timbered it would water a mob of cattle. It is only a hole in the ground now, but there is a good supply there. About 10 miles on is Nullye Soak. It is only a seepage in the sand and I would not say it would develop into anything. It is about 20 miles to Dterrinn Rock Hole. This is unreliable and only a small catchment. It might hold 1,000 gallons of water when filled. The next is about 16 miles on to Bubble, which comprises two very small rock holes which are only filled with recent rains. The next is about 12 miles to Wahlgu which is only a small rock hole which is filled with rain. It is about 18 miles on to Narratha which is very poor and not reliable. It is only a catchment. It is

then 20 miles on to Yowalga. This is only a catchment rock hole, but holds a bit better than 1,000 gallons. It is unreliable. The next is about 20 miles to Gumba. It is only a rock hole which holds 4,000 or 5,000 gallons when full and is dependent on recent rain. It is about 24 miles on to Bubbagola. This comprises two small rock holes which might hold 800 to 1,000 gallons. There is nothing else but a very poor soak about three miles from Bubbagola. They call it Gnalbert. I have never been able to water horses there at all. It is then 35 miles on to the mission.

#### FOOD.

As has been stated under the previous heading, because of the lack of permanent water on the reserve and between the reserve and the settled area of Laverton, there is little bird or animal life on the reserve. The natives are successful in spearing a few kangaroos which they highly prize. They also spear a considerable number of dingoes and catch the pups in the rocky caves where they are whelped. The natives eat the dingo just as they would any other form of meat. The natives also eat cats, which are the domesticated variety gone wild and which exist principally on the marsupial spinifex mice and other small game. Goannas are perhaps the principal form of meat obtained by the natives and, of course, rabbits, which are prevalent in good seasons during the winter months. The latter are able in those times to exist on the green vegetation available but they rapidly perish with the advent of hot weather, although a few survive until better seasons again enable them to breed and flourish. For these reasons rabbits cannot be regarded as a permanent food for the natives but they provide welcome meat when they are available.

Since the meat supply, apart from lizards and wood grubs, is hazardous, the principal food of the natives is seeds and roots and the fruits of edible wild plants and trees. They make a variety of flour from the seeds of various plants and trees, crushing the seeds between grinding stones especially kept for the purpose and baking the product, after mixing it to a paste with water, in hot ashes. The women must be regarded as the principal food gatherers since they provide the latter more dependable type of food. The men devote themselves to hunting for what game is available. Any game obtained is consumed almost in its entirety, the skin, entrails, etc., being eaten and prized, and the natives share what food is obtained.

#### MEDICAL ATTENTION.

Natives in their natural state suffer considerably from lack of medical attention. The most simple ailments by our standards are sufficient to cause prolonged pain and even death.

For instance, a native child suffering from an abscess on the jaw may eventually die of starvation since the condition precludes the child eating the hard native foods which are obtainable. Burns are very prevalent. Whilst at the mission the Committee members saw a child of about nine months suffering from a burn which covered the whole of its buttock from the waist to the base of its leg. The burn had been dressed by the mission, but the child had no bandage on the burn and was alternatively sitting on its mother's knee and in the red dust. The burn was in direct contact with whatever it touched and was covered in flies. Without question it must have caused the child considerable distress.

A few days before the Committee reached the mission a party of about 19 natives from the area east of the Rawlinson Range reached the mission. It was the first time that they had been into the mission and the first time that many of them had seen white people. They had arrived in a starving condition and were extremely emaciated when seen by members of the Committee. Two at least of the children, although possibly seven and nine years old, had arms which on the upper portions were no more than an inch in diameter and their thighs would be little thicker, there being practically only skin and bone at these points. One child weighed not much more than a stone and a half and the other was possibly even lighter.

The mother of the two children mentioned was in the same condition. In addition, she was suffering from an advanced condition of yaws and her right arm was practically rotting off above the wrist. She responded to treatment at the mission hospital and her hand was saved though it was in a withered and stiff condition and would always be virtually useless to her. One old woman who managed to reach the mission, died two or three nights after her arrival. All the natives came in suffering from colds, and one had pneumonia. It was obvious from the condition of the natives, even when the Committee saw them, that they had only just managed to reach the mission. Obviously they would have taken a considerable time to reach it as their condition was such that they must have made the journey from the sand dune country to the north very slowly and over a period of weeks. It was not ascertained if any of the party died en route.

The majority of the work at the Warburton Mission Hospital is in regard to out-patients which average 30 to 40 daily. This number varies greatly with the number of people in the camp near the mission and the time of the year. During the past twelve months approximately 60 in-patients have been treated in the hospital. Most of the latter comprised maternity cases and victims of spear fights and epidemics. The most prevalent trouble is trachoma, the matron of the Warburton Mission Hospital being of the opinion that the incidence of active trachoma amongst mission home and camp children was about 80 per cent. The percentage in women was about 75 per cent., and the men 65 per cent. A large number of women are blind in one eye at least and the other eye is suffering from the trachoma. The matron finds it difficult to treat since those who are cured mix with others who have the disease and are reinfected. Infected ears among the children is common, due principally to flies and insects in the area. A short while before the Committee visited the area the matron took 20 flies from the ear of a baby.

The incidence of syphilis and yaws is high, but it is difficult for the matron to separate the two diseases as the symptoms are very much alike and it is apparently impossible to diagnose for certain without a blood culture. The matron is not qualified to take such a culture.

Broken limbs occur on occasions. All such cases, of course, can only be successfully treated at the mission. Any that occur in the more distant parts of the reserve would result in the death of the native concerned unless the fracture was of a minor nature.

All common ailments, such as toothache, etc., are experienced by the natives but, as with almost all of the other ills which beset them, they simply have to endure the pain and have little means of doing anything to cure or alleviate such ills and pain.

Pneumonia and other chest complaints are common, most of these cases occurring in natives living in the bush. The bush natives particularly suffer from colds. Last year natives who came into the mission from an outlying area of the reserve brought an epidemic.

In the past a number of children have been sent to Perth for treatment, but the mission is concerned at the length of time they are kept away. Usually the patients remain away for months at a time and this has a disturbing effect on the remaining natives on the reserve. An instance cited by the matron at the Warburton Mission Hospital will illustrate this. A young mother came into the mission with a baby which had a very bad harelip and cleft palate. In the matron's opinion the case was an ideal one for the operation and the child was of the right age. The mother, however, refused to be parted from her child because other children sent away had been away for months and have not yet returned. To avoid the separation the mother took the child and left the mission. At the time of the visit of the Select Committee she was camped in the bush some miles from the mission.

#### CLOTHING.

Although the climate of this region is extremely hot in summer, it can be equally cold in winter. The nights in the winter months are particularly cold and frosts and ice on the water in the mornings are not uncommon. Whites in the area in winter time suffer severely from the cold.

The Committee were informed of the experience of a party which traversed the reserve in recent years. The party stayed for some days at Sladen Waters in the northern portion of the reserve. The members of the party slept at night with all their clothes on and, in addition, wore half-inch-thick kapok flying suits. Over all this they had several blankets, yet each night they awoke in the early hours of the morning far too cold to sleep. Nearby there were a number of natives camped. The natives at that hour of the morning were huddled, naked, over their fires. The children cried throughout the night and all the natives had colds and sniffed constantly while being spoken to.

The natives in the area do not make huts—"gunyahs"—unless in the vicinity of the mission or except when remaining at a particular camping site for a long period—the latter being most unusual. To make a "gunyah" they heap a few boughs into a rough and by no means rain-proof shelter about three or four feet high. They rely for warmth on dogs, of which each family group usually has several, though the dogs are invariably in extremely poor condition and sometimes have to be carried by the natives because of their weakened condition, and their fires. The natives when travelling carry fire sticks. In cold weather they pass these constantly across their bodies to keep warm.

At night the natives huddle between small fires. For a bed they scoop a small depression in the ground and soften the earth by breaking it up with a pointed digging stick. When a wind is blowing they construct a small windbreak. In the early evening it is not uncommon to see native women basking their sleeping children. They sit with



their legs crooked over the babies and turn them constantly, in each case exposing the back and then the front of the sleeping child to the fire. The babies and adults frequently roll into the fires in their sleep as they press closer for warmth. The missionaries instance an occasion when they found an old blind woman who had crawled into the fire. The flesh had been completely burnt from her elbows and knees and the bones were protruding. They stated that although they did what they could for her, she subsequently died.

Native children at the Mission, when unclad, shiver violently in cold weather.

Whether natives living in their natural state should be issued with clothing or not is a controversial question. The main objection raised against it is that it is unhygienic, since the natives do not wash as no water is available for that purpose. Another objection is that it gives them colds and other chest complaints. Since all the evidence indicates that natives without clothes suffer from colds and chest complaints at least to the same extent as those that have some form of clothing it is difficult to see how the latter argument can be sustained. In regard to the other objection, it is difficult to know whether the fact that the clothes are not washed is necessarily unhygienic. The natives live and sleep in the red dust of their country and it could well be that the dust may have a cleansing effect to the same extent as the dust that serves to rid fowls of lice, etc. The fact that the air is extremely hot and dry, with the exception of a few days in the year, would result in the clothing drying rapidly. It is inescapable that the natives cherish clothes in this region and wear them until they become so tattered that they fall from their backs. They require the clothing in winter, principally to protect them from the biting cold winds which sweep the area, although the clothing may not permit them to obtain as much warmth from their fires as would otherwise be the case.

It may be of interest to record that when water and soap are available to them the natives for the most part use them zealously for washing purposes.

#### SECONDARY REQUIREMENTS.

Since ultimately the natives in this region must be given the benefits of civilisation, and this will unquestionably be to their advantage, it would seem that such benefits should be made available to these people as quickly as practicable.

#### RELIGION.

It is not sufficient to break down many of the practices and beliefs which have sustained the natives in the past, notwithstanding that many of their practices are barbaric to the extreme, unless an alternative philosophy of life is presented to them. To do so would be to deprive them of that which, possibly more than anything else, has served to sustain them in the past and been responsible for the establishment and maintenance of their social code of morals and ethics and enabled them to survive as a society. The missionaries, of course, are well suited to teach such an alternative philosophy.

This aspect is being adequately dealt with.

#### EDUCATION.

Primary education is already available to the children through a Government school at the Warburton Mission, although in the present circumstances it is by no means adequate.

Many of the children do not commence their education until they are ten or so years old. When the children have completed their term of schooling their standard is only about Grade IV.

The unsatisfactory state of affairs is caused by a number of factors. Since no attempt is made to assist the parents and adult natives the only incentive for the natives to place their children in the Mission school is the fact that at least the children will be fed while the parents continue to try and eke out a living on the natural food on the reserve. The parents frequently allow their children to be placed in the care of the missionaries only when the seasons are particularly dry and therefore bad and when for the latter reason they feel that the child will unduly suffer from having to exist under natural conditions on the reserve or will handicap them in their search for food and water. The parents may well support the child until he is long past school age before such a set of conditions arises. Similarly, if a good season occurs the parents are likely to take the child away from the Mission and keep him away for long periods of one or two years or more. Since the child has been reared in the bush environment until it has reached school age it is usually anxious to rejoin its parents in their wanderings.

## SECONDARY EDUCATION AND TECHNICAL TRAINING.

There are no facilities at the Warburton Mission for post-primary education or training in work to fit the native children for subsequent employment. The same position applies at Cosmo Newbery and Mt. Margaret Missions. This is the fundamental weakness of the present educational system and is recognised as such by all who are conversant with the position. It is one of the salient impressions of members of this Committee. A second, and in every way equally important, feature is that there is little scope for natives even if they are trained.

Since there are no industries at the Warburton Ranges with the exception of a small flock of sheep and a herd of cattle at the Mission, there is no future for educated children there at present and their only hope of going on to employment would be to drift into the settled areas of Laverton or beyond.

There are already several hundred natives in the Laverton area and there is not the slightest shadow of doubt that there is not sufficient work in the district for them. Furthermore, there are no developments contemplated in the district, or which can be visualised in the future which would affect this position to any great extent. The natives at present in the Laverton area continue to lead a nomadic form of existence, depending on the game in the area and other natural foods to eke out a living. From time to time those—and there are many of them—who have been trained in stock work and other station pursuits obtain a limited amount of employment, but this, with few exceptions, is purely seasonal. For instance, prior to and during mustering there is a call for a number of natives for mustering purposes.

Another and most objectionable feature of station life in the Laverton area is that little or no facilities are provided by the pastoralists for native workers. Thus there have been many instances of children, raised at the Mt. Margaret Mission who have been, by various means, not available to all the children, given a certain training in stock and station work, or in the case of the women in domestic science, and then going to employment on a nearby station only to find that they were expected to camp around a fire, without facilities of any kind, as was required of the other natives already on the station. In one instance a couple (the woman who had been raised at the Mission since three months of age) who had lived at the Mission all their lives and who had been trained to our standards in every respect, were married at the Mission and sent to a station in response to a pastoralist's call for such a couple. When they arrived they were told where they could make their fire. In this instance the change was too abrupt for the woman and she was found with her husband camped on the outskirts of Kalgoorlie, living the life of a nomadic native. She was weeping bitterly when found by a missionary.

In such circumstances the Committee is of the opinion that there is little point in educating and training natives to fit them for life in our society without ensuring that facilities at their place of employment are in keeping with the standards to which they have been educated.

Since the virtually civilised (in varying degrees) natives in the Laverton area have an almost insurmountable problem in regard to employment and that difficulty is constantly being added to by Mission-trained children from Mt. Margaret it would seem that the Government will either have to move the natives with the required ability and training to areas where employment is available or establish industries in the area to absorb them. If adequate post-primary training facilities were available at Mt. Margaret or Cosmo Newbery there is no doubt that some of the children would find employment in the district but it would seem that such employment would be largely at the expense of natives who are now employed but who have less training.

If children from the Warburton area have to rely on the Laverton district for employment they will only aggravate the situation which already exists there. The necessity for employment for the natives after they have left primary school is well illustrated by the case of a young native mother Margaret at present camped near Warburton Mission. Margaret was taken into the care of the missionaries at the age of three months. She was brought up with the same training as a white child and when of the marriageable age married a young native on the reserve. She is now required to live as a tribal native, there being no alternative for her or her husband. The training she received for 17 years or more at the Mission has only served to leave her hopelessly ill-equipped for the task of playing her part in fending in the native manner for her family.

In regard to lack of training facilities for fitting native children to take their place in the white community, the Committee feels that a technical training school should be established to serve children with the required ability and inclination leaving the Mt. Margaret and Warburton schools and that such a training centre should be, for preference, in the vicinity of a centre such as Kalgoorlie. The children could then make use of the existing training institutions such as the School of Mines for advanced training and in addition would have greater scope for learning the various trades. The

Committee is of the opinion that neither Cosmo Newbery nor Mt. Margaret would adequately meet the requirements of such a training centre. In respect of the Warburton children it is emphasised that they should receive their primary school training at the Warburton Mission school and graduate to a technical training school. The children by virtue of their age after completing their primary school training and the fact that they would have absorbed much of the Western way of life during their schooldays would then be better fitted to withstand any adverse effects of the separation from their parents which such a move would involve. The children, however, should be returned to the Warburton Mission for reunion with their parents at least once yearly. No children should be so separated unless they have completed their primary school training at the Warburton Mission school. Once children have completed their technical training they would be fitted to take their place anywhere in the State but in view of the fact that their people are in the Laverton and Warburton areas it is difficult to imagine many availing themselves of any such opportunities which may offer. However, they should at least be given the opportunity which such training would give them.

#### RESPONSIBILITY TO NATIVES.

The Committee is of the opinion that with the interference with the natives' natural way of life which has already taken place and the fact that that interference must increase with progress in the area and in the light of all the other facts associated with the issue, the people of this State can no longer continue to evade responsibility for the natives as a whole in this area. It is the view of the Committee that the number and plight of these people makes welfare work on their behalf an urgent necessity. Members of the Committee find it hard to visualise that any people, anywhere in the world, could be more in need of such assistance than the natives in the inland area of Western Australia who were investigated. Their immediate requirements are adequate water, food and medical attention. Subsequent welfare work must be carried out on a strictly scientific basis since the society, language and customs of these people are too complex to admit of a fumbling uninformed approach to their problems. The first requirement, it is emphasised, is the acceptance by the people of Western Australia of responsibility for these natives.

The Committee also wishes to draw attention to the fact that large numbers of natives are existing in their nomadic state in the area between a line on the latitude of the Rawlinson Ranges and the southern fringe of the Kimberleys and that many of these natives have made no contact with whites. Since their conditions would be similar to those in the Warburton Range area, or possibly worse, the Committee feels that these natives should be contacted and adequate provision made for their welfare along the lines recommended in this report.

#### SEPARATION OF CHILDREN.

A question which looms largely in any plan for the welfare of natives, where the parents are living in primitive conditions, is whether in the interests of the children separation from their parents is desirable.

At the Warburton and Mt. Margaret Missions the children attending school are housed and fed at the Mission and to that extent are separated from their parents. Their parents, however, are free at any time to return to the Mission and have limited access to the children though the children are not permitted to return to the camps with their parents. It is the experience of the missionaries that if the children are permitted to return to the camps or remain with or go away with their parents for any length of time it has an unsettling influence on the children. In addition the children return from the camps in a dirty condition. On some occasions parents take the opportunity to take their children away and remain away with them for long periods. The Committee is of the opinion that such partial separation from their parents is in the interests of the children while the parents are living in their present state, but the Committee emphasises that the parents must have some access to the children, at least weekly, if desired and suggests that this aspect should be closely watched by the Native Affairs Department, though no evidence or suggestion of abuse of this principle can be or should be inferred in respect of the Mt. Margaret or Warburton Missions.

In respect of any permanent or semi-permanent separation of children with or without their parents' consent to an area far removed from the Mission, the Committee states unequivocally and unanimously that it is opposed to any such practice, unless the parents are taken as well and cared for adequately and in a scientific manner to outweigh any disadvantages to them of such removal from their tribal grounds. Whether the transfer of parents in such circumstances is practical is a matter which would have to be gone into to a much greater extent than was possible in the limited time available to this Committee.

Several all-important factors contributed to make the separation of young children from their parents unthinkable from a humane point of view.

The first is the fact that in most cases it is impracticable to obtain the consent of the parents and if the consent was so obtained it is unlikely that the natives would realise the full import of such consent on their part.

Secondly, the native parents have placed their children in the Mission almost solely because of the lack of adequate food on the reserve. To take children away from their parents in such circumstances and abandon the parents to fend for themselves savours of a form of duress. Similarly, when native parents are enticed to place children in the Mission school by gifts of blankets, clothing and/or food that act must be regarded, having regard to the circumstances under which the natives are living, as a form of duress.

Thirdly, it must be taken into consideration that the natives on the reserve are living in one of the most arid areas in the world and are eking out an existence where even birds and animals find it difficult to survive. No responsibility is taken for the pre-school age children by the Native Welfare Department and to expect native mothers to bear and raise children and be entirely responsible for them under those conditions, only to have them taken away at school age for the reasons outlined earlier and taken to an area where in normal circumstances they could never hope to visit, would in effect mean that in many cases the parent would never see the child again, which would be an unpardonable violation of human rights.

Finally, from the children's point of view, such separation would be intolerable. The children, coming into the Mission from outlying portions of the reserve may make contact with the missionaries only when of school age. Very few, even if they made yearly visits to the Mission with their parents, would be able to speak even a smattering of English or would have absorbed any of the Western way of life. Children of that kind, separated from their parents and transported long distances away from their parents and from their tribal country would be lost souls indeed. They would be perplexed to the extreme and would be without a single stabilising influence on which to orient themselves to the new way of life thrust so inhumanely upon them.

In the circumstances it is essential that there should be at the Mission adequate pre-school training and primary training for the gradual assimilation of these bush children. Then when the children are older they could, if they have the required ability and are willing, go to training centres in other areas. In such case it could well be that the children themselves would be the main instrument in inducing their parents to give them permission for the separation which such would entail.

On this question it should be pointed out that it is the considered view of all authorities that the bond of affection between a native woman and child is at least as great as between a white woman and child. Indeed certain factors militate to make the bond, if anything, stronger. Because of the nature of the country in which they live it is necessary for the native woman to suckle her child until the child is at least three years old. In some cases the child is suckled by its mother until six years of age. This must assist in creating an even greater bond of affection between parent and child than would apply in the case of whites where the child is bottle-fed or weaned at the age of nine months or so. In addition, the native woman is with her child constantly until it is well beyond school age. She carries the child as an infant wherever she goes when travelling or fossicking for food and later the child is with her constantly in her daily pursuits. This aspect must assist in strengthening the intimate relationship between the parent and child. It may also be worth while pointing out that natives display a great deal of affection towards their children, seldom chastising them. Striking a child is extremely rare, notwithstanding this the children appear to be extremely well-behaved and unspoilt.

On the question of the impracticability of obtaining the consent of the parents of children placed in the mission school in respect of separation to a training centre removed from the reserve, it is pointed out that as no assistance is forthcoming either from the mission or the Government for adult able-bodied natives and as the country in the immediate precincts of the mission will not support many natives, the majority of parents perforce have to return to their wandering after placing their children in the care of the missionaries. Frequently the parents do not return for months at a time.

Secondly, on the question of the natives realising the full import of any consent which they might give in respect of the separation of their children, it must be borne in mind that the native language is a very complex one. It contains sounds which the white tongue, untrained in that regard, cannot pronounce and shades of meaning are conveyed by gestures and other means. Since there are no officers in the Native Welfare Department who can speak the language in any way fluently and only one missionary at the Warburton Mission who has made a special study of the language to the extent where he can converse in a manner which could be regarded as adequate the difficulty of communication can be readily imagined. It is likely that the latter missionary is the only person who can speak the language of the natives in this area and he states that after several years of intensive study he still has a great deal to learn. In the circumstances the question of obtaining consent from the parent becomes an extremely difficult one if we are to be assured that the parent in giving consent has a full realisation of all the implications involved.

### SANCTITY OF RESERVES.

If natives are to be left to exist in their natural conditions without assistance from the Government the question of sanctity of the reserves set aside for them would be of paramount importance. It is difficult to imagine in view of the interference with the natives' normal mode of existence that has already taken place and the nature of their existence under natural conditions contrasted with the benefits of civilisation that should be available to all that such a policy in these times could be continued. For that reason the Committee is of the opinion that provided more active measures are taken to assist the natives that certain limited forms of violation of the Warburton reserve are permissible.

### ISOLATION OF MISSION.

The Committee recognises that the isolation of the Warburton Mission is a difficult factor in any welfare work which might be carried out on behalf of the natives who inhabit the area, but considers that any disadvantages of such isolation could be greatly minimised by a logical approach to the problem. The grading of the present mission track from the Cosmo Newbery to the Warburton Mission would greatly assist transport and could be effected comparatively cheaply. Similarly in respect of the difficulty which the Education Department has experienced in inducing teachers to serve a term at the mission school it is pointed out that wages in the area should be commensurate with the isolation and hardships involved. If wages were increased for such a school it is the Committee's opinion that little difficulty would be experienced in obtaining teachers, particularly if the deserving nature of the work was adequately explained.

### MARALINGA TESTING GROUND.

The necessity for keeping the Maralinga Testing Ground free from natives has interfered with the normal way of life of the natives who frequented the area east and south of the Warburton Mission, inasmuch as a large area of their tribal grounds is now denied them.

### BAITING FOR DINGOES BY AIR.

The missionaries are of the opinion that the baiting from aircraft for dingoes which has been carried on in the past by the Agricultural Department, has resulted in the poisoning of large numbers of goannas, which are one of the important natural foods of the natives. Since the baits are made of fat, goannas eat them readily. It has also been suggested that nomadic native children unaware of the nature of the pellets of fat, which is always sought after by the natives, could well eat the baits. Since it is the practice to drop the baits near waterholes and defined animal pads, the natives would undoubtedly find them.

The question of myxomatosis depleting the supplies of rabbits has also been raised. The plight of the party of natives who arrived at the mission a few days before the visit of the members of the Committee was attributed largely to the lack of rabbits in an area where they were normally to be found at this time of the year. No evidence, however, was obtained as to whether myxomatosis was responsible for the scarcity in the area concerned.

### DECENTRALISATION.

A factor which should be taken into consideration in any plans affecting the Warburton Mission or the natives in the area is the question of decentralisation. In the natives Australia has a race of people to whom this arid tract of country is home. It is most unlikely that the area will be populated by whites for a considerable time at least, and in the circumstances it would seem that economically and for other reasons it is desirable that steps should be taken to enable these people to establish industries in this area and thus not only provide a living of a higher standard for themselves but also to contribute to the economy of the Commonwealth. To induce them to move to the settled areas by one means or another would seem to be a foolish policy in every respect. It is obvious, for instance, that a pastoral industry could be established on the reserve and the latter could not only provide for any natives who might remain there but also provide primary produce to the gain of Australia.

The undesirability of natives congregating around mining towns and other points of civilisation lends weight to the above argument. When the committee reached Laverton en route to the Mission, over two hundred natives were camped less than half a mile from the town. They lived in small gunyahs, which they had erected as is their custom, and in a most degrading manner. Later the party split up into two or three groups and moved to the Mt. Margaret Mission and to Mulga Queen, a rationing point for indigent natives, north of Laverton. In the past, police in Laverton have found it necessary to bar natives coming into town without police permission. These natives have no hope of work other than of a seasonal nature and then such work is limited. For the remainder of the time the natives have to live on their savings or off the land.

This has been the position throughout the years in the Laverton district and from the committee's observations it is common to many other areas in this State. An added influx from the Warburton reserve would only aggravate an already impossible position. Most of the natives in the above group would be ready and able to work but work is not available for them.

#### ROAD LINK.

The committee is of the opinion that a road link between the Warburton Mission and the new weather station at Giles would be an advantage. Such a link which involves a stretch of only 150 to 200 miles would serve to link the road network in Western Australia with the network of the East. A new graded road has recently been constructed from a point on the Adelaide-Alice Springs Highway with the weather station and it is understood that the road was constructed by a private contractor at a cost of only £20 a mile. In the circumstances, the advantages accruing from such a link would more than compensate for the few thousand pounds involved in the construction of the road. In addition to providing a road which would serve to link Western Australia by a direct route with the Northern Territory and Queensland, such a road would open up new areas of pastoral country which could be utilised for the benefit of the natives and, in addition, facilitate contact with the nomadic aborigines in the area.

#### INFANTICIDE.

In the experience of missionaries, abortion and infanticide is common among the natives on the reserve. The natives have learnt from experience that their country to which they are confined by tribal boundaries will only support a limited population. Various customs which they practise serve as effective birth control measures but, in addition, in their natural conditions, they have no alternative but to practise abortion and infanticide. It is particularly practised where a mother is still nursing a child when another one is born. Since a baby in those conditions apparently requires its mother's milk to supplement its diet until three or more years of age the new baby would deprive the older child of the available supplies of this supplement and probably both children would be adversely affected. Another factor is that the woman is largely responsible for obtaining the staple articles of diet and too many children would handicap her in this task. In addition, the burden of carrying two children in the long marches which are so much part of the natives' struggle for survival makes the spacing of their children a necessity and in the circumstances the course which they take is, in all probability, the kindest one though repulsive to our way of thinking.

The solution to the problem, of course, is to provide for the natives a standard of living which will enable them to support all the children born to them and this can be the only course of any civilised Government. Until such time as such a standard is provided for the natives steps should be taken to further emphasise to the natives that any unwanted children will be adequately cared for by the Government. This of course would mean that the natural reluctance on the part of the natives to part with their children would have to be overcome. It would seem that not having experience with the outside world they are to some extent fearful or uncertain of the babies' ultimate fate and in the circumstances would prefer to kill the baby in the belief that this was the kindest thing for it.

In addition, of course, the natives' beliefs must be taken into consideration because they believe the spirit of any baby thus killed would be freed to rejoin the souls of other deceased natives in their tribal country. The reluctance of the native mothers to kill their children for the reasons outlined earlier is illustrated by the fact that native mothers who have been trained at the Mission and have confidence in the missionaries come to them frequently and implore them to save their children since they have heard that they are to be killed according to custom. This adds to the assumption that with better standards of living and the gaining of the natives' confidence this practice would be eliminated altogether. Until recently one of all sets of twins born at the Mission have been killed. Since then three sets of twins have been saved, although in one instance it was necessary for the missionaries to send the mother and children to another Mission.

#### RATIONS.

At the present time Missions in the Eastern Goldfields area, which includes Mt. Margaret and Cosmo Newbery, are reimbursed on a cash basis of 25s. per head for indigent natives supported by them. Natives in the latter category are those who by reason of age or physical incapacity are really destitute and by that is meant incapable of gaining sustenance either by work or by the traditional methods of living off the country, or who cannot be maintained in the tribal social structure and who, for one or more of these reasons has been placed, with departmental approval, on the Mission ration strength. In the case of the Warburton Mission the cash reimbursement is not given, the equivalent value in rations, blankets and clothing being supplied.

In respect of children, and again with the exception of the Warburton Mission, the Missions are reimbursed at the rate of 35s. 9d. per head per week, plus 5s. per week per head equivalent of a Lotteries Commission grant. In addition the Missions draw from the Department of Social Services 10s. per week child endowment for each child and the Native Welfare Department pays all medical, educational and burial expenses. At the Warburton Ranges, the Mission receives 10s. a week child endowment, 5s. a week Lotteries equivalent and rations, blankets and clothing.

At the Warburton Ranges the Mission is kept on a fixed quota basis of 20 adult indigents and 60 children. Often they have many more than the number of adult indigents mentioned in very old people alone who are either blind, sick or otherwise incapacitated. Among the adult able-bodied natives on the reserve there are frequent cases of sickness, injury, etc., but the Mission can only ration the set number. Any additional calls on rations must be provided from the Mission's own stock, as in the case of the party of sick natives who arrived at the Mission a few days before the visit of the Select Committee.

For most of this year the Mission has had 80 or more children in the home, which has meant that all in excess of the arbitrary figure of 60 have had to be cared for at the Mission's expense.

The Committee is of the opinion that in respect of the adult indigents and the children in the Mission home, the Mission should be placed on the same cash basis as other Missions in the Eastern Goldfields and that the arbitrary figure for adult indigents and children mentioned earlier should be rejected so that the Mission can be reimbursed for all the natives in these two groups who are supported by the Mission.

The Committee is also of the opinion that 25s. is insufficient to meet the requirements of adult indigent natives, particularly when it is borne in mind that clothing and blankets in addition to rations have to be supplied from this amount. This amount should be considerably increased.

Natives on the reserve, other than those in the two groups referred to above, receive no assistance at all other than a measure of medical attention. The Committee believes that rations on the scale supplied to adult indigents should be supplied to all natives on the reserve who require same until such time as more permanent and satisfactory measures are implemented to provide for the basic food requirements of these people.

#### POSSIBILITY OF PASTORAL INDUSTRY IN WARBURTON RANGE AREA.

All the evidence taken by the Committee indicates that a large area of land in the vicinity of the Mission and between the Mission and the South Australian border is well suited for pastoral purposes. Furthermore, it has been the experience of the missionaries that water is available at depths of twenty to thirty feet almost anywhere in the country surrounding the Mission and they consider that the same would apply to the rest of the pastoral country between the Mission and the South Australian border.

As an indication of the carrying capacity of the land in this area it is of interest that the Mission has successfully run sheep and cattle for some years. The flock has multiplied from the original 30 bought in 1947 to over 700. The sheep are yarded each night to protect them from dingoes at the Mission and are taken out to graze each day, being shepherded by natives who are well adapted for this work. Since 1947 the flock has grazed within a radius of two miles of the Mission and then only on portions of the country within that radius. In addition to the sheep the mission maintains a large goat herd and 70 head of cattle. The latter also graze close to the Mission. The fact that the cattle keep in close proximity to the Mission and do not have to forage miles away indicates the quantity of feed available for stock in the immediate vicinity of the Mission. All the stock when seen by members of the Committee were in the finest condition.

The Committee is of the opinion that the establishment of a pastoral industry in the Warburton reserve is the most satisfactory way of providing for the needs of the natives in the area. Such an industry could and should be run conjointly with Mission activities in the area. Once the industry was firmly established the question of handing it over to the Mission for administration could be considered.

While it is considered that the missionaries are ideally suited by nature, temperament and training for welfare work among the natives it is considered that in the early stages at least the establishment of a pastoral industry along the lines envisaged by the Committee should be the responsibility of those more suited to such work.

In the early stages the function of the industry should be to provide beasts for killing as food for the natives. Since there are only approximately three or four hundred natives on the reserve excluding those that come in from across the South Australian border, if three beasts were killed each week the meat should be sufficient to provide at least a pound of meat per day for all natives on the reserve. The natives could supplement this basic ration with seeds and other natural food. An original herd of 300 cattle should be more than sufficient to supply from the natural increase the required number of beasts for killing purposes to allow a ration on the above scale.

It is considered that a vegetable garden of five or more acres could run in conjunction with the beef herd. In return for the meat and vegetables thus grown the natives would be required to work in the garden and do any work associated with the stock.

The missionaries have proved that vegetables when irrigated grow surprisingly well in the rich soil of the Warburton area. In addition grapes, figs, oranges and such fruits flourish in the area provided they have the water. The scope for the extension of fruit and vegetable growing is virtually unlimited providing sufficient water is available.

A water survey of the area would soon establish the resources in this regard.

The Committee is of the opinion that a scheme of this kind could be extremely costly or equally inexpensive depending on the approach.

Since cost is an all-important factor the Committee recommends that the implementation of the scheme should be reduced to the bare essentials. To this end it is suggested that one man and one man only be appointed for the purpose of establishing the industry. Such a man would have to have a knowledge of stock and natives and of the type of country involved.

The first requirement would be a Government survey of the water resources of the area. Then a contract could be let to sink a series of perhaps eight or nine wells from Laverton to the Warburton Mission to supplement existing watering points for cattle. The same contracting team could also sink a number of wells at selected grazing areas on the reserve.

The man appointed by the Government for the purpose of establishing the industry would then be charged with the task of droving 300 head of cattle from Laverton to the Warburton Ranges. At the ranges the cattle would be divided into three or more groups and established on the wells. The controller, or whatever nomenclature was given to the responsible person, would then have the task of sinking more wells, erecting yards from natural resources available and generally establishing the industry. He would establish the vegetable and fruit sections at the same time.

The main requirements of the controller would be a 4-wheel drive vehicle, windmills, tanks and troughs for the well and an irrigation plant for the garden and orchard. In addition he would have to have adequate tools and material for a shed for his residence and equipment. Later when the scheme was firmly established a house and more permanent improvements could be erected.

The controller would be responsible for the killing of beasts, for the distribution of vegetables and all aspects concerned with the pastoral and fruit and vegetable growing industry established on the reserve.

To achieve a partial separation of children from their parents the controller's house and garden, stockyards, etc., should be situated not less than five miles from the existing mission building, though the choice of a site would naturally be dependent on a number of factors.

To ensure that the maximum amount of native labour was employed it is recommended that as few mechanical devices as possible be used. Much of the carting work in the area could be done by camel or horse. This would obviate the need for large quantities of petrol which, because of the cartage involved, would be expensive in the area.

The Committee believes that if a pastoral industry was commenced the industry could well develop rapidly to the stage where it would not only supply the main immediate food requirements of the natives but would provide stock for sale in the outside markets. It could well develop to the stage where it could absorb all the native labour available in the area at present and in addition provide secondary training opportunities and employment for the educated mission children. It would also attract many of the natives now living in degraded and deplorable conditions in the Laverton district.

#### CONCLUSION.

The Committee has arrived at the conclusion that the plight of the aborigines in the Warburton-Laverton area is deplorable to the extreme. The natives lack even the most basic necessities of life. Malnutrition and blindness and disease, abortion and infanticide and burns and other injuries are commonplace. Game is extremely scarce on the reserve, water supplies for drinking precarious, and adequate medical attention far beyond the resources of the Warburton Mission. Employment opportunities for mission educated children are hopelessly insufficient and in the circumstances education only serves to leave them more poorly fitted for fending for themselves when thrown back on their own resources at the completion of that education. Immediate food and medical aid are urgently necessary for these people and permanent provision for them a pressing obligation on the State.



### RECOMMENDATIONS.

The State should accept full responsibility for the welfare of all natives in the Warburton and Laverton area.

The Committee recommends that a pastoral industry and fruit and vegetable growing on a scale sufficient to meet the basic food and employment requirements of the natives in the Warburton area be immediately established; this project to utilise, with the exception of the controller, only native labour, and to be under the control of a practical person with a knowledge of natives and preferably with experience of the area.

Because of the remoteness of the area and unsatisfactory features of the present form of administration in respect of these natives, the Committee recommends that the controller be vested with the sole responsibility of administering the Native Welfare Act in the area and that he be answerable only to the Minister for Native Welfare.

The water resources on the Warburton reserve should be developed to provide adequate drinking water for the natives; for the purpose of making it possible for game to survive and multiply in the area, and to enable the natives to extend their scope for food gathering over the entire reserve.

Wells should be sunk at suitable intervals along the track between the Cosmo Newbery and Warburton Missions to provide assured supplies of drinking water for natives traversing the route.

Adequate food should be made available to the natives on the reserve to supplement what they were able to obtain at present until such time as a pastoral industry and fruit and vegetable growing on a scale sufficient to meet the requirements of the natives are established on the reserve.

Immediate medical attention should be given to natives on the reserve for ailments which are outside the scope of the Mission medical facilities.

A regular medical and dental survey should be made of natives in the area. It is suggested that such a survey should be carried out at least twice yearly.

Pre-school and primary education should be available to the children on the reserve. The present standard of primary education should be raised and educational facilities on the reserve greatly extended. Under no circumstances should young children be permanently or semi-permanently separated from their parents by transfer to distant schools where their parents in the normal course of events, have no access to them.

This should be a basic principle of any plans by the Native Welfare or other departments for the education of native children.

The Committee disagrees entirely with the proposed wholesale removal by the Native Welfare Department of Warburton Range children to Cosmo Newbery for primary education.

Technical training facilities should be provided in the vicinity of a centre such as Kalgoorlie for the purpose of giving native children from the Warburton and Mt. Margaret Mission Schools the training required to enable them to find skilled employment.

More assistance should be given to the Warburton Mission particularly, especially in respect of facilities at the mission, rations for natives and transport. The road from Cosmo Newbery to the Warburton Mission should be graded where necessary.

The work of the Native Welfare Department in the Eastern Goldfields, which includes the Laverton district, should be expanded to adequately cope with the task of finding employment for the natives and developing existing and new outlets for native labour.

Pastoralists and others employing native labour in the Laverton district should be required to provide living accommodation and facilities in keeping with the standard to which natives employed by them have been trained.

The practice of aerial baiting in this area should be suspended until such time as evidence is available to disprove the contention that this method is ineffective against the wild dog and is injurious to the food supply of the native population.

The facts disclosed by this inquiry provide ample justification for a similar parliamentary investigation in other areas of this State and this Committee recommends accordingly.

The Committee wishes to express its appreciation and thanks for the manner in which all witnesses interviewed by the Committee gave evidence before the Committee. The missionaries at Mt. Margaret, Cosmo Newbery and Warburton Ranges went out of their way to make the stay of the Committee at each of the Missions as pleasant as possible and the Committee is very appreciative of their kindness. The special thanks of the Committee are due to Sgt. Anderson of the Police Department. Sgt. Anderson accompanied the Committee on the journey to and from the Mission. His intimate knowledge of the country and practical experience with the natives of the district were of considerable assistance to the Committee.

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