

14th January, 1972

Mr. W.C. Wentworth,
Minister for Social Services,
Parliament House,
CANBERRA. 2600

Dear Mr. Wentworth,

Your note of October 14 and the report on Ray Price's tour of the Northern Territory and Western Australia arrived while I was still overseas. I write now to acknowledge these and to thank you for sending them to me.

Having heard many young North Australian Aborigines sing 'Island' songs to their own guitar accompaniment, and display their acquaintance with the repertoire of Slim Dusty, Price's report did not surprise me. Such popular tunes with a good 'beat' are more easily acceptable to them - and to many other listeners - than any kind of 'classical' music. And, of course, the Aborigines have no reason to disguise this fact. It is good to know they enjoyed themselves so much.

With an International Fellowship from the American Association of University Women, I have been able to spend a year in the United States studying methods and techniques at a number of ethnomusicological centres. On my return journey towards the end of last year, I visited one or two of the more important Sound Archives in Europe. I was surprised to find how little Australian Aboriginal music is available overseas, and how few people are aware of the discs and publications of the A.I.A.S. Moreover, the question asked me most often was: What are Australian musicologists doing about the Pacific?

Though concerned with the dearth of available recordings from New Guinea and the south Pacific, Alan Lomax (Cantometrics Project - cross-cultural comparisons - Columbia University) is nevertheless aware of, and fully appreciates, Australian Aboriginal music. He believes, and asserts most emphatically, that somehow we should let the Australian Aborigines know how different their music is from that of other cultures throughout the world.

I hope he will be able to visit Australia before long.

Yours sincerely,

(Mrs.) Alice M. Moyle,
A.I.A.S. Research Fellow