

INTEGRATION OF ABORIGINALS IN QUEENSLAND

Following a meeting today in the Premier's Office between the Prime Minister (Mr. McMahon) and the Minister administering the Department of the Vice President of the Executive Council (Sir Alan Hulme) representing the Commonwealth and the Premier (Mr. Bjelke-Petersen) and the Treasurer (Mr. Gordon Chalk) representing Queensland, agreement was reached about the unresolved issues relating to integration of aboriginals into the Australian community - difficulties which might possibly have required legislation by the Commonwealth.

The Prime Minister came to Queensland at the invitation of the Premier and said his visit provided an early opportunity to seek to resolve the unsettled issues.

In a joint statement issued following the meeting, Mr. McMahon and Mr. Bjelke-Petersen said :-

"We now have a full appreciation of each Government's problems and we discussed the various matters needing resolution."

Mr. McMahon outlined those in which the Commonwealth was especially interested and Mr. Bjelke-Petersen indicated proposals which his Government was ready to make.

After discussion, arrangements acceptable to the State and in accord with the principles and objectives of the Commonwealth were agreed to.

Broadly, the matters considered encompassed questions relating to :-

- (1) Freedom of movement off Reserves;
- (2) Control, through Reserve Councils, of access to Reserves;
- (3) Control of property - freedom of choice will be allowed but with provision for consultation with the Council and/or the Administration as a safeguard against exploitation;
- (4) Control of transactions - arrangements as in the case of control of property;
- (5) Liquor Canteen System - freedom of choice to Reserve residents to decide whether or not liquor will be permitted on a particular Reserve.

2.

- (6) Torres Strait Islanders - a separate Act of Parliament;
- (7) Vagrancy Laws : Paragraph (ii) of Section 4(1) of the Vagrants, Gaming and Other Offences Act will be repealed;
- (8) Wage Rates - special consideration will be given to inexperienced, slow or retarded aboriginal workers;
- (9) Reserve Councils - native representation will be reviewed.

Full details will be spelt out later.

It was recognised that the existing Queensland legislation was designed to assist in protecting persons who, without guidance and assistance, could be subject to exploitation and that it was not, therefore, to be seen as discrimination against aboriginals.

But both the Prime Minister and the Premier indicated that there was a willingness on the part of both Governments to do all that was possible to meet the desires of the aboriginal people.

Mr. Bjelke-Petersen added that he was now in a position to confirm to his Minister in charge of Aboriginal Affairs the general lines already laid down for the preparation of draft legislation to be introduced at the next Session of the Queensland Parliament.

-----

BRISBANE  
8 April 1971