

MMCC/DJD
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28th July, 1954.

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HIS HONOUR, THE ADMINISTRATOR :

RETTA DIXON HOME

I attach hereto a report dated 27th July, 1954, submitted by the Superintendent, Bagot Aboriginal Reserve concerning certain incidents at the abovenamed Home.

Mr. Matthews has come under my personal notice on three separate occasions.

- (1) On 8th November, 1953, he assaulted a ward, **REDACTED**. (Tab 1 refers).
- (2) Whilst at Bagot Bulk Store in February, 1954, I saw Mr. Matthews assault three boys, none of them older than about seven years. He struck them repeatedly, and indiscriminately, with a piece of knotted two-inch diameter rope. I intervened, and it was obvious that Matthews had gone berserk, as he took some minutes to regain any semblance of composure. On being questioned as to the reason for the brutal assault he stated that the boys were playing instead of sweeping. Mene children are given such tasks. Mr. Matthews concluded by saying "You interfere too much at this place." In fact, it was only the second occasion I had spoken to the man.

I discussed this incident with Miss Shankelton, who gave an undertaking that Mr. Matthews would not be permitted to punish children in future, also that she herself would supervise any punishment.

- (3) The latest is detailed in Mr. Dentith's report.

At my interview with Miss Shankelton on 21st July, 1954, she admitted that she had not carried out the undertaking given to me regarding Mr. Matthews, and in view of that, and after further discussion during which she sought another extension of time for Mr. Matthews, I informed

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Miss Shankelton that I required Mr. Matthews to be off the Aboriginal Reserve within 48 hours.

I now have another problem in Mr. Walters, who has taken upon himself the role of Judge and Chief Whipper. His activities will be closely watched, and although Miss Shankelton gave undertakings in this regard, I am afraid I cannot accept her word in future.

The Mission is quick to place all blame on the environment, but I differ in that regard. The basic trouble is the complete inability of the staff to conduct such a Home. They are unrealistic, and particularly narrow and fanatical in their views. A number of the staff are middle-aged and older, unmarried, and obviously have had no proper training or vocation for their task.

These incidents only serve to confirm my oft-expressed opinion that all the children should be removed from their custody and transferred to the proposed Gawler Hostel. It is apparent that Miss Shankelton is prepared to cooperate as far as it suits her internal policy.

The latest incident to come under notice concerns a girl, REDACTED, 16 years. This girl, and with the knowledge of Miss Shankelton has been pursued by a full-blood larrikan named REDA. She is now pregnant, and Miss Shankelton took it upon herself to write to the girl's father requesting permission for her to marry REDA. The father has objected, particularly to the person REDA, and I heartily concur in his objections.

With only a limited staff, I only hear of odd incidents, as the Home is conducted entirely without regard to the wishes of the legal Guardian. They conform to certain requirements when finance and other assistance is required.

R. K. McCaffery

(R. K. McCaffery)

ACTING DIRECTOR OF NATIVE AFFAIRS



The urgency of a transfer to Gawler of a lot of her people is obvious. The authorities at the Rotten Dean Home appear to be absolutely unsuitable. I hope you can advise these people watch on their activities. P.M.

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