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## COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.



Northern Territory Administration,  
DARWIN.

BAGOT RESERVE?  
27th July, 1954.

The Acting Director of Native Affairs.

RETTA DIXON HOME - Mr. Matthews.

On Wednesday 21st inst at 11. 20p.m. while having supper at my residence in company with Sister Nichol, Miss Bennie, Mrs. Dentith, and Captain Slade we heard screams for approximately one and a half minutes. It sounded like two young people screaming with pain.

While the screaming was continueing I went and inspected the Native Reserve but found everything in order and no clue as to where the screams had come from. On returning to the residence I was informed that those who heard the screaming believed it came from the Retta Dixon Home.

The following evening (Thursday) my son Hartley, came to me and said that three boys from the Retta Dixon Home were at the gate. They told him to tell me they wanted me to let Mr. Mc Caffery know that they had been flogged the night before by Matthews and Watters. They claimed they were marked and one **REDACTED** had an old scare previously given by Matthew bleeding and broken.

The boys concerned were :- **REDACTED** and **REDACTED**, and they said, they were punished for going to the pictures on the R.A.A.F. without permission. It was quite evident that the punishment was administered in the yard at the Home.

On receiving this information I immediately rang the Director of N.A.B. and reported the incident.

Later that evening one boy told A/S Superintendent Kenny in the Canteen of the incident and stated he was hit while lying on his stomach with a tennis racket. It is believed this boy was **REDACTED**.

The next day the Director instructed me to make an appointment with the Superintendent, Retta Dixon Home for him at 2 p.m. I also accompanied the Director to that interview. When I asked the Superintendent if a tennis racket was used in the punishing she said no, but admitted she did not witness the punishing but remained in bed, although she gave instructions for Watters to wait up and punish the boys. I therefore have no reason to doubt that a racket was used.

This is the third time Matthews has administered cruel punishment in the past few months, I regard him as a person who loses control of himself in a fit of temper. Over the past month he has been acting in a peculiar manner, he has called me out on the belief people are trespassing, each occasion has been a false alarm. On Tuesday 27th he called and complained that a full blood Billy Rielly was writing to girls at the Home. This was not correct and he had laid the complaint without Miss Shankleton's authority. In all I have found him most unsuited for work with young people.

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Tel. Address:  
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**COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.**

Northern Territory Administration,  
DARWIN.

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Matthews left the Home on Sunday for Sydney, his wife and family are to follow to a position on a Queensland Mission Station.

The only report I have had since the incident is that Mr. D. Watters is just as bad at punishing as Matthews but the boys concerned said they will be clubing together to "bash" him up if he hits any of them.

It is a great shame that the Superiors of the Retta Dixon Home regard the attending of Picture Theatres against their beliefs. The children of the home get very little pleasure and entertainment as is known to free children, under guidance. I think they should be taught now how to behave in places of amusement which they will contact when they are free citizens. Too much religion in my opinion only creates a sour attitude to the broader things of life,



L.K. Dentith.  
SUPERINTENDENT BAGOT RESERVE.