

CRS NTAC 1982/34/0
 33/233 Item on Corporal Punishment



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DEPARTMENT OF TERRITORIES,
 Canberra, - 5 MAR 1956



MIN. 51/1195

His Honour the Administrator
 of the Northern Territory,
 DARWIN. N.T.

ABORIGINES INLAND MISSION : RETTA DIXON HOME.

1. On 24th February, the Minister received in Sydney a deputation from the Aborigines Inland Mission, consisting of Mr. Collins and Miss Shankleton, and discussed two matters relating to the Retta Dixon Home.

2. The deputation showed the Minister the following telegram received from the Director of Welfare on 3rd February -

"Your letter January 4th and telegram February 3rd refers. I note that your Darwin staff is greatly concerned that corporal punishment of any sort on my wards is forbidden. I should like to confirm that corporal punishment is not to be inflicted on my wards in any circumstances. This derives from plain facts that I have no authority to authorise corporal punishment and secondly that as Legal Guardian I have a duty."

The Minister promised the deputation that he would make enquiries, and has asked me to take up with you the question of corporal punishment at the Retta Dixon Home. The Minister comments :

"The stand taken by the Director of Welfare seems to be rather far-fetched and unreal. While we have to take every precaution to see that the wards are treated properly I cannot understand how discipline can be maintained in all circumstances without some corporal punishment."

3. The second matter discussed was that of the future of the Retta Dixon Home. The deputation referred to the unsuitable buildings, unsuitable location and serious overcrowding of the Home. They had in mind the transfer of the Home to a more suitable site and the erection of cottage homes, and asked whether the Government would bear the whole capital cost while leaving the management and running of the Home in the hands of the Mission. The Minister told them that the way was open for them to put forward proposals for the consideration of the Government and that this was the only way for such a proposal to be tested. The Minister states :

"I should like to have the views of the Administrator about the future of the Retta Dixon Home. There is obviously a very great need for an extension of this kind of work and we should make up our minds how the extensions can be made under conditions most favourable to the children."

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2.

Your views would be appreciated, therefore, on :

- (a) the future of the Retta Dixon Home; and
- (b) the question of corporal punishment at the Home.

5.

A copy of the Minister's minute is attached.

C. H. Lambert
 (C. H. Lambert)
 Secretary

*His Honour the Administrator,
 Director of Welfare.*

*In view of comment
 to see me. J. B. 9.3.51*