

NATIVE WELFARE CONFERENCE

Statement by leave by the Minister for Territories (the HON. PAUL HASLUCK, M.P.) in the House of Representatives on Thursday, 20th April, 1961

For the information of members and for the completeness of the record, I wish to present to the House an outline of the work of the Native Welfare Conference held at Parliament House, Canberra, on 26th and 27th January last.

This was a conference of Federal and State Ministers responsible for native welfare and the agenda was formed of items relating to matters which Governments handle in respect of the advancement of native welfare. In keeping with the custom of Federal-State ministerial conferences each participating Minister is reporting the results to his own government and the responsibility will rest on each government to make decisions on matters which fall within its constitutional powers.

The conference agreed on the following statement of the meaning of the policy of assimilation, to which all Australian governments adhere, and on methods of advancing that policy.

THE POLICY OF ASSIMILATION

(a) MEANING OF POLICY

The policy of assimilation means in the view of all Australian governments that all aborigines and part-aborigines are expected eventually to attain the same manner of living as other Australians and to live as members of a single Australian community enjoying the same rights and privileges, accepting the same responsibilities, observing the same customs and influenced by the same beliefs, hopes and loyalties as other Australians. Thus, any special measures taken for aborigines and part-aborigines are regarded as temporary measures not based on colour but intended to meet their need for special care and assistance to protect them from any ill effects of sudden change and to assist them to make the transition from one stage to another in such a way as will be favourable to their future social, economic and political advancement.