



Type T Patch Code (New Document)

For use with Documents with Protective Markings up to and including

**CONFIDENTIAL**

**Document UIN**

3 0 0 0 0 5 2

**PM**

**Caveat**

0 0

0 0

NOTE: UK EYES ONLY (UKEO)  
and other Caveats are  
NOT PERMITTED.  
Give document special handling.

**Prepared By**

**Number of Sheets**

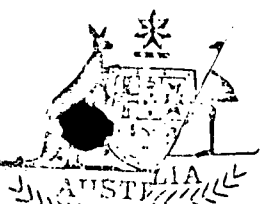
1 4

7 5

Note: See coding sheet for Protective Marking (PM), Caveat and Prepared By codes.

For use with Documents with Protective Markings up to and including

**CONFIDENTIAL**



# TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

© Commonwealth of Australia

32

32  
ROYAL COMMISSION INTO BRITISH

NUCLEAR TESTS IN AUSTRALIA

MR JUSTICE J.R. McCLELLAND, President  
MRS J. FITCH, Commissioner  
DR W.J. JONAS, Commissioner

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

AT ADELAIDE ON MONDAY, 19 NOVEMBER 1984, AT 2.10 PM

Continued from 15.11.84 in Sydney

Secretary to the Commission

Mr John Atkinson  
GPO Box 4044  
SYDNEY NSW 2001

Telephone: (02) 264 5155

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, Mr McClellan.

MR McCLELLAN: I do not understand any of my friends have anything to say today. As a consequence if we go to our first witness. It is Mrs Giles.

ELLEN GILES, sworn:

MR McCLELLAN: Mrs Giles, your full name, I think, is Ellen Giles; is that right?---Yes.

I think you live in Adelaide; is that right?---No.

You do not live in Adelaide?---Only sometimes.

Only sometimes?---Yes.

I think we will stay with that at this stage?---Adelaide, here.

I am sorry?---Just here, you know, Adelaide.

I think that many years ago you used to live with your husband at Welbourn Hill; is that right?---Yes.

Do you recall the years at which you lived at Welbourn Hill?  
---What do you mean?

When did you first go to live at Welbourn Hill? Do you remember that?---When I was a child.

When you were a child?---Yes.

When did you leave Welbourn Hill, how long ago?---I wish my daughter was - cannot come in?

Would you like your daughter to come into the courtroom?---Yes, please. I get - - -

Would you like your daughter to sit over near you in the witness-box?---Yes, I would like that.

I think we could arrange that.

THE PRESIDENT: Just do your best, Mrs Giles. We understand that memory fades with time, and it has already done so with me. Just do your best, will you?---Yes, I will.

MR McCLELLAN: Can you help me? Whenabouts did you leave Welbourn Hill? Do you remember when that was?

MRS MORTON: 1957?---1957.

MR McCLELLAN: I think that you were there at the time that you remember that the British were testing nuclear weapons south and to the west of your property at Welbourn Hill?---Yes.

Do you remember those occasions?---Yes.

I think there was an occasion at about that time when you remember a specific event which related to what you have called, or indicated to officers of the commission, was a black mist?---Yes.

Do you remember that event?---Yes.

I wonder if you would mind telling us what you recall of what happened on that day?

MRS MORTON: Yes, well, the black girls - - - ?---The black girls came in to tell me that it was a storm coming, black storm.

MR McCLELLAN: You were inside the house, were you?---Yes.

Do you remember whereabouts in the house you were? Were you in the kitchen?---Yes, we were all inside, but it did not come inside at all. It was not a big storm. It was this mixie sort of thing, black outside, and it went and it even killed the fruit trees.

Killed the fruit trees, did it?---Yes.

You were inside and the black girls came inside to tell you that there was a mist outside?---Yes, coming. This storm was coming.

Do you remember which direction it came from?---Wait a moment.

MRS MORTON: South?---It would be south-west or west.

MR McCLELLAN: It came towards your place from the south-west?

MRS MORTON: Westerly direction.

MR McCLELLAN: Did you go outside and have a look at it?  
---Afterwards?

When it was coming towards the house did you go outside and have a look at it?---No, not while it was there.  
The black girls went out.

The black girls went out?---Yes.

Did you give the black girls some directions as to what they were to do?---No. I thought it was just an ordinary storm the first time.

Were you used to having dust storms out at Welbourn Hill?

---Yes, all round there there has been dust.

Was this anything like the dust storms that you had seen at Welbourn Hill?---Only the first time around.

No, but when the black mist came was that anything like a dust storm that you were familiar with?---No.

It was different, was it?---Yes.

After it had come - I am sorry - when it came, was there any noise associated with it? Was there any wind or noise like that?---No, not really, but it was greasy.

Greasy, was it?---Yes, and all on the - - -

Did it cover the house?---Only on the sides where it was coming in, the windows, and the black girls, we had to wash all around there.

You washed the whole house, did you?---On the side, yes.

When you washed, did it wash away easily or was it difficult to remove?---No, it was sort of greasier.

Greasy, was it?---Yes.

What about on the ground, did it collect on the ground?---It did. Killed the - what am I trying to - - -

MRS MORTON: Fruit trees?---Fruit trees.

MR McCLELLAN: It killed the fruit trees, did it? Do you remember how long it took for the fruit trees to die?---I just do not know, you see. It is a long time ago that I was there.

What about people outside, was anyone affected, any person affected by the black mist?---I do not know. I cannot remember all that time.

MRS MORTON: No one was sick at the time?---No, it was afterwards, I suppose - - -

Someone could have been sick afterwards?---It is a long time ago, you know. It is years ago.

MR McCLELLAN: Do you remember if someone - sorry - you now do not remember whether or not someone was sick at all?

MRS MORTON: No, not really?---Not on our part there would not have been, no.

MR McCLELLAN: What about any of the Aboriginal people,  
do you remember whether or not - - - ?---I only  
had black girls.

MRS MORTON: You cannot remember?---No, I only had my girls  
around the house.

You cannot remember whether they were sick?---If they were  
not sick, then they were quite all right.

MR McCLELLAN: How many girls did you have at the time?  
Do you remember now?

MRS MORTON: About four, was not it?---Yes, about four girls.

MR McCLELLAN: About four girls?---Yes. They used to be  
inside.

When all these events occurred, can you remember which year  
it was?---Heavens.

Is that too difficult to remember?---I cannot remember when  
it was.

Can you remember the time of the year when it might have  
been, whether it was in the spring or winter?

MRS MORTON: No, she cannot remember?---It is a long while  
ago. I just cannot remember.

Do not worry, just say you cannot remember?---I do not.

Simple. That is all you can say.

MR McCLELLAN: One final thing - can you remember at all  
what time of the day it was when the black mist  
came?

MRS MORTON: In the morning?---In the morning part. That  
would be because the girls - - -

I do not want my photograph taken?---I do not want mine  
either, please.

THE PRESIDENT: I think you might desist if you do not mind.  
We are having enough difficulty.

MR McCLELLAN: Was it before lunch that it came?---Yes, yes,  
it would be before lunch.

Do you know whether it was a long time before lunch?

MRS MORTON: No. Just say you do not know?---It would only,  
it would only be coming in.

They want to know whether it was long - was it after breakfast or just before lunch?---Yes, it was early - - -

It was early in the morning?---Just afterwards when the girl was working.

MR McCLELLAN: Thank you, Mrs Giles.

THE PRESIDENT: Unless it is absolutely essential I think it would be desirable if nobody else questioned this witness.

MR JAMES: I can indicate I have no questions.

THE PRESIDENT: Mr Eames?

MR EAMES: I am concerned about one aspect of this. I will be very short.

THE PRESIDENT: All right.

MR EAMES: Mrs Giles, can I ask you a couple of short questions? Do you remember a lady who would have been a young woman then called Lalli Lannon?---Yes.

And her husband Stan at that time?---Yes.

I think she had been living in that area and she had had quite a lot to do with you, had she not?---Yes, but I - - -

MRS MORTON: You brought her up for a little while.

MR EAMES: You might not be able to remember this, but after a couple of days after this black cloud came across do you recall coming over to see you? She had been out at Mintabie. She came across to see you and said the kids were all sick and she talked about the cloud? If you cannot remember, that is okay.

MRS MORTON: You cannot.

MR EAMES: Well?---Yes, it is hard to understand.

MRS MORTON: You cannot remember. She would not remember? ---It was a long time ago.

MR EAMES: It might help - she says that you gave some castor oil. Did you have some castor oil?---Yes.

Any good property would have some castor oil, I suppose?---Yes.

Was Lalli Lannon living around that way about the time when this black cloud happened?---Yes, she would be there somewhere.

You remember in your statement that you gave, young Lester, he might have been called Jimmy Lester then, was he?---Yes.

The little fellow?---Yes.

Did you know him as Jim or Yami?---Jim.

Jim, was it?---Yes.

Do you remember his father and mother? They were called Kunji and Pinki?

MRS MORTON: No?---No, I do not remember that.

MR EAMES: You mentioned that Yami or Jim, that you had heard a story about Jim losing his eyesight?---Yes.

This was a story you had heard from what, the girls at the station about him losing his eyesight from his father?---Yes, it was something about that, yes.

Do you remember in those days they used to have Aboriginal medicine men?---Yes, that was one of them.

That is right. The Aboriginal people used to go to them and they were called nungkari, I think. Nungkari is spelt n-u-n-g-k-a-r-i; is that right?---I do not remember what they were called.

Do you remember that it was Jimmy's father, one of those people who did medicine for people?---Yes. On this boy, was it?

This is what I am asking you in case that is what you are thinking about.

MRS MORTON: I am not sure whether he did. Do you know? ---I do not know.

MR EAMES: It was around the time when this black cloud was there. It was about the time when there used to be people who do medicine, Aboriginal people, men who do medicine on other people - - - ?---Yes.

- - - to try and fix them up if there was something wrong with them?---Yes. They do not do good job.

That was what they were trying to do, I suppose. If someone had a sore or an injury or something these Aboriginal medicine men would try to fix them up; is that right?---Yes.

I do not know if you ever saw it, but did you notice the Aboriginal medicine men would use sticks, little



sticks that they would put on the parts of the  
body that were affected?---I do not know. I cannot  
remember this part.

MRS MORTON: It was . . . . . that is what they used  
to do.

I am wondering - tell me if you can about the story you heard about Yami's father putting sticks on his eyes, or in his eyes, if that might have been something connected with tribal people trying to fix him up? ---I suppose he would be, I do not know. You do not really know what they did.

Jim's blindness, that might have come after this black cloud business?---No, that was before, I think.

Might I ask you, as best you can, why it is that you are sure it was before the black cloud? You see, he did not go down to Alice Springs to the hospital for his eyesight until 1956?

Just say you do not know?---I do not know, it is a long time ago.

MR McCLELLAN: I think you spoke with Mr Ryan from the commission last week; is that right?---Yes.

You told him a number of things which he had typed up on a statement?---Yes, I suppose.

I tender the statement.

THE PRESIDENT: That will be 145.

THE WITNESS WITHDREW

MR McCLELLAN: I call Mr Irwin Dutschke.

IRWIN DUTSCHKE, sworn:

MR McINTYRE: I have yet to see Mr Dutschke's statement. I have not had a copy of that yet.

MR McCLELLAN: Might I start by asking you your full name - Irwin Dutschke?---That is correct.

You live at 17 Marnhull Street, Elizabeth Grove in South Australia?---Yes.

I think you made a statement to Mr Ryan of the Royal Commission; is that correct?---Yes.

Do you have a copy of the statement there?---No, I do not.

Have you had an opportunity of reading that statement?---No.  
It is the first time I have seen it.

Perhaps I can take you through it. You indicated that you are aged 58?---Yes.

You were the station manager at Yalata Aboriginal Mission between 1956 and 1960, and you indicate later your associations. Could you tell me firstly what the duties of the station manager at the mission were during the years you were holding that position?  
---From 1956 to 1960 I was the manager of the pastoral section of the Aboriginal reserve which was a station bought by the government - colona station - bought by the state government.

What were you required to do, specifically?---I was in charge of the stock, the sheep, and also naturally concerned with the Aborigines themselves.

Were you concerned with the welfare of the Aborigines at the station?---Partly. There were other members of the mission that were more directly involved. I was involved with assisting where possible with stores, rations, medical, if necessary.

What were your later associations, were they of the same type, or did they change?---They changed. I went back periodically to help out with building projects, and then in 1974 to 1978 - or 1974 to 1979, I am sorry - I was involved with the demolition of Maralinga village and outer areas, which was a project taken up by the Yalata Aboriginal community.

You describe on page 1 of the statement the nature of Yalata when you first went there, and give us some idea of the activities you were involved with, and which were taking place at Yalata. You indicate on page 2 that about 1958 there were hospital buildings being built there, and you describe the nature of the medical facilities which existed before the hospital, and give a picture that they were fairly primitive, is that right?---Yes.

You say that when the hospital was built these problems that there had been in relation to Ceduna hospital - you describe the problem which arose in the use of hospitals because of the Aborigines perhaps unnatural disinclination to utilize some of the facilities. You say in 1956 the health of the community was not too bad. You say there were some problems, particularly with dysentery, and that gave rise to problems of the health of young infants at the time; is that right?---Yes.

On page 3, you described further the nature of the problems that you observed in the community, and you referred,

in the middle of page 3, or the first part of it. -  
you say in all the years you have been associated  
with Yalata you have not seen, apart from the  
milpuddies, any effects of radiation coming from  
the tests. You meant to say, effectively, in your  
statement, that you have seen a lot of illness amongst  
the Aboriginies, but in no way could you associate  
any of the illnesses with the result of the tests?  
---That is right.

You go on to say. The Milpuddys - - -

THE PRESIDENT: What are Milpuddys?

MR McCLELLAN: The Milpuddys are the families that were  
involved in the Marcoo.

During the time 1956 to 1960, you described the nature of  
communications with Maralinga which you say were  
very good, and you had a good relationship with  
Colonel Durance and the security officer at the time.  
You indicate the personnel from Maralinga would  
sometimes visit you personally on weekends and try  
to help as much as possible that everything went  
as smoothly as possible with your work, and of course  
their work. Were these official visits, or  
unofficial visits that took place?---They would have  
been combined, official and unofficial. They just  
took a very keen interest in the safety of the  
Aboriginals, and assisted us quite frequently, as  
I think I mentioned in the latter section of the  
statement.

Can you tell me this: how many Aboriginies would there have  
been at Yalata in the years 1956 to 1960, permanently  
living there?---The numbers vary according to  
movements, the reserves, but approximately 400.

When you say they varied, depending upon movements, was there  
a constant movement, or was there a seasonal  
movement of Aboriginies, or what was the situation?  
---There would be occasions when they would arrange  
to visit friends in perhaps Western Australia, or  
relatives in Western Australia, or up north at  
Coober Pedy. Arrangements were made that they travel  
by rail. Likewise with Western Australians and  
northerners, they would come down and build up the  
numbers, but I would think about 400 would have been  
the average.

Would they travel to Coober Pedy by rail?---They used to travel  
to Ooldea by road, with mission vehicles, and then  
by rail perhaps to Tarcoola or Kingoonya, and then  
by road to say Coober Pedy, and likewise to  
Western Australia would be to rail ex Ooldea.

Was there a large number of Aboriginies going up to Ooldea as a regular pattern, or not?---No. Sometimes there could have been an ordinary truck load, as we would call it, a three-ton truck.

How many Aboriginies?---They would pile on, if they wanted to of course. I would say 40 or 50 at the most, at times.

40 or 50 on a truck?---Probably - they would get on if they could fit on.

How often would a truck go to Ooldea?---In those days not terribly frequently. Perhaps two or three times a year. That sort of thing has increased over the years, I believe.

Were there other ways apart from the truck of getting to Ooldea? Did they have access to motor vehicles apart from the truck?---There was one occasion I can recall where, as I mentioned in the statement, where they moved out on a proposed ceremonial visit at Coober Pedy, but they had their own conveyances in those days in the form of a camel wagon and horse-drawn vehicles. I have slides here if anybody is interested in seeing it, on this particular incident.

When did this occur?---The date is a little bit uncertain. I know it was summertime. From photographs I personally, and my wife personally, believe it was in the summer of 1956 to 1957. The welfare officer that was with me working on records, he thought it was 1957 to 1958, but I do not think it really matters - to my way of thinking it did not matter which year.

This was a movement that occurred from Yalata to Coober Pedy?  
---Yes.

How many Aboriginies went on that?---Possibly 40 or 50 travelling in a scattered group.

You have some slides there, have you, of the party as it was moving?---Yes. The reason they travelled in a scattered group was that they had their law sticks with them, and they had to travel separately, in a different group, but we were advised by the authorities from Maralinga that they had moved off. We did not know ourselves. Having their own conveyances at that time, they evidently planned that without us knowing. The group was stopped about 20 miles south of the railway line at Ooldea, and it was agreed after consulting, having a meeting with them, that the elders of the tribe, and the law equipment, the law sticks went by rail. They

were taken - we took them to Ooldea and got warrants for them, about 10 or a dozen from memory. They went on via rail to Tarcoola or Kingoonya and road from then on. The rest returned.

What had been their intention? Did they intend to do something different?---They had this - up north, had planned apparently an initiation ceremony for the young males and they had rounded up possibly 15 or 20 of the lads and young fellows and they were taking them up there to make men of them. Naturally they were very pleased to be freed and brought back again.

Was it common or not for small groups of Aborigines to leave Yalata and go their own way from time to time, do you recall?---Yes, it could be. Depending on the purpose, there were often small groups that go to Ceduna for various reasons or at times a small group may want to go and visit relatives in some other reserve. It is not always - it is quite frequent, it happened quite frequently, yes.

What, the people would leave the community and stay away for periods of time?---Yes, but in small groups they would look for transport. They would not have their own - in those days they did not have their own transport. It was not very common.

Would they moved distances on foot without transport?---A few. There were only - I can recall only about two or three old tougher-type Aborigines. One was - they called Aeroplane George because of his ability to travel long distances, and the other one was - no, I cannot remember his name, but they were not interested in transport of any sort. They would travel on foot and really go.

The Milpuddys obviously were able to travel on foot too. Were they an exception?---Yes, from my knowledge I would say they were probably one of the last Aboriginal families to travel such a long distance in a traditional manner. I believe they came from Ernabella and were heading to Yalata to see relatives and friends.

Could you tell me any reason why they were exceptional in their capacity to travel on foot?---No, I could not really answer that.

They had two young children too, did they not?---Yes.

Was it usual for young children to travel with their parents when the parents moved on foot?---In the earlier days, no.

We are looking at page 3 of your statement. You described the hospitality that existed. You say it was good. On page 4 you say the Milpuddy family were brought to you in 1957 when you were the manager of Yalata by the army in trucks and they consisted of a family

of four. Were they in trucks or were they in Land Rovers?---Two Land Rovers, I would think.

You say they came down one night, there was no forewarning and they just turned up, and these people asked them for identification, because the Milpuddys could not speak any English. They could only speak Pitjantjatjara. You indicate that you could not speak their language either; is that right? ---That is right.

So you enlisted the help of one of the Yalata Aboriginals to interpret. You established that while the Maralinga people were there, the Milpuddys came down on walkabout from Ernabella, which was a mission run by the Presbyterian Church in the Musgrave Ranges north-east of Maralinga. You indicate that you had learnt the Milpuddys had definitely travelled a long way, possibly taken a number of weeks, but knowing the location of the possible water points, it would have brought them directly through the ford area of Maralinga. From there they intended to go to Ooldea; from there down to Yalata in the normal way. Was there common knowledge amongst the Aboriginals at the time of water points in the Maralinga area?---Yes.

Did those water points enable Aboriginals to move through the Maralinga area with reasonable ease?---No, not under normal seasonal conditions.

What was the normal situation? Was there water to enable movement or not?---I think it can be described or answered as briefly, that the reason they left what is today called Maralinga lands, their traditional lands in the 30s or 40s was the fact they could not survive because of water and also problems with food.

I think that was Ooldea, was it not?---According to the older people that still remember their boyhood days or childhood days in the north-west, they describe it as very - they would not go back there to live, they might perish, because so many of their people perished through lack of water.

There being where - whereabouts are we talking about?---No, we are talking about their traditional land through there - the lands which are Maralinga lands today on the land rights grant.

I wonder - has anybody seen my map? Can I show the map which is marked M4. Are you talking about the area - I wonder if you could - there is Maralinga?---Yes.



There is Emu?---Yes.

Can you tell me which area you are talking about?---I am referring to this area.

You are tracing an area which is centred upon Lake Dey-Dey and Lake - - -?---Right through to over the Western Australian border.

From there due west to across the border?---That is right.

You say of that area, what, the water has gone or the water was never there?---I have been through quite a bit of it, but not as much as Barry Lindner, of course. He knows it better than I. What were possibly water rock holes would be only water points when it rained. They are so far and few between, it is a mystery how they ever existed, even in those days. The milpuddys would have come down from Ernabella and found their way down through here.

You are referring there past Emu?---Yes, and they would have gone to possibly Giles Flat Tops - there is a watering point, permanent water there.

Giles Flat Tops, where is that located on the map?---That would be here somewhere.

Could I just get a pen - I would like to have that marked?  
---It is about half-way to Emu from Maralinga, just south of these flat tops is water here.

I will mark that there, Giles Flat Top; is that right?  
---That is approximately where they are.

You say there is permanent water there?---Yes.

Could you just move sideways for a moment and I will just indicated to everyone where that position is. There is Emu there, Maralinga down there, and Giles Flat Top there.

THE PRESIDENT: Giles Flat Tops is close to Emu, is it?

MR McCLELLAN: Your Honour, it would be slightly closer to Emu than Maralinga.

THE PRESIDENT: It is between them?

MR McCLELLAN: Between the two?---We are probably a little bit far north. Possibly, but it is about half-way.

About half-way?---Yes. That is the only permanent water from there to Ooldea.

What about Lake Dey-Dey, was there water out at Lake Dey-Dey?  
---I could not answer that. I have not been there on the ground. I have flown over it a number of times but not on the ground.

What about any of the other lakes to the west of Lake Dey-Dey. Do you know if there is permanent water there?  
---Permanent water just over the border, about five miles over the border.

That is due west of Lake Dey-Dey?---Yes, I know that, but in between there would be very, very few permanent - Barry Lindner can answer that a lot more clearly than I. Barry found the rockhole in the forward area of Maralinga, section 400, where the Milpuddys were heading, but there was definitely no water between there and there. They were heading for this rockhole which is not permanent, apparently. I have not seen it myself but Barry has.

To conduct themselves down through this area, you say there was permanent water at Giles Flat Top. Do you know where else they may have found water on this journey?---No.

What sort of season had it been?---1957 was a drought.

1957 was a drought, was it?---Yes.

Well, it would be clear somehow or other they have been able to obtain water on the way through; would that not be clear?---Being a small group, they would have naturally found a few trees where they could have got sufficient water for a small group.

How do they go about getting water for a small group?---In the roots of certain mallee trees. They are very few and far between. They know them - they pull out the roots, break them into sections and the water just runs out, maybe three or four cupfuls at a time.

Just so I understand it, you have been told by the older Aborigines that the water in the area we described between Giles Flat Top and the Western Australian border had once been there or was there never water in that area?---There is water - I think I have understood your question. There is water there after, in these rockholes, after rain.

But otherwise no water?---Otherwise it is in a lot of little dams. They are only little dams that may catch water, but it is only there after rain. Permanent water is at this - I cannot pronounce, cannot remember the exact name of this waterhole just south of Giles Flat Tops, but it is permanent. You dig down about four feet and there is water comes up, the same as Ooldea.

As far as Aborigines moving through that area between Giles Flat Top and the Western Australian border, did you learn of any traditional movements of Aborigines through that area?---No, I did not know of any, not in my time, not one through - not unless they went with an organized trip with a good sound Land Rover.

Had you heard of movements by Aborigines through that area in earlier times?---Yes. When they were living at Ooldea, they spoke about occasional winter trips outback.

For what purpose?---Mainly ceremonial, I think.

For them to move for ceremonial purposes, can one assume there would be sacred sites or sites of specific significance located there which they were moving to?---Yes, I know there are definitely sacred sites out there. I could not tell you how many or to what significance, but Barry Lindner I think would be the authority on that.

Can we go back to your statement on page 4. You say they travelled a long way. You describe what they intended to do. At the time the Milpuddys were brought down, you had no idea - in the sense that that sentence is wrong, do I take it you had no idea where they had come from? Do you see that sentence a little over three-quarters the way down the page?---I am referring to the Maralinga authorities. They had no idea where they came from.

The people who brought them down to you did not know where they had come from?---That is right.

Were they military men who were with them, policemen or what?---I cannot remember. The visit was fairly brief. It was late in the evening. They arrived with this family and were very concerned, because they were found in the area. They had instructions to return that night, evidently, and I really did not know much apart from the fact that they were found in the area and that they had been decontaminated.

You obviously had a discussion about the fact that they had been decontaminated; is that right?---They were bathed frequently, several times, apparently.

That is what you were told, was it?---Yes.

You then say and you were told they were given new clothes, but you also say you did not think they had any clothes. What was the position - were they clothed or not?---I am sorry for a little confusion there. I believe that they travelled - were found with no clothes and if they had any it would have been very, very little, because that was the traditional way of travelling because of weight and comfort - you travelled a lot further without clothes.

What state did they arrive in at Yalata - were they clothed?  
---Yes, they were given - - -

What sort of clothing did they have and can you tell me mother, father, son and daughter, if you can?  
---I can be sure - I was quite sure that the father only had some type of army clothes.

What, a pair of trousers and a shirt?---Yes, they were definitely khaki.

Did he have anything on his feet - did the father have anything on his feet?---Pardon?

Did the father have anything on his feet?---I would not remember, no.

What about the mother?---I am not terribly sure where they got the clothes from, but I do not think they were - I am not 100 per cent sure - I may be guessing a little bit, but they were definitely woman's clothes or made up into woman's clothes to the best of their ability, but I think from memory they had a khaki colour also.

You do not recall whether she had any clothing that appeared to be hessian on her, do you?---No.

What about the two children?---The baby was in a blanket which was issued - a clean blanket - from Maralinga. What they had on underneath, inside the blanket, I do not know and the 8 or 10 year-old, as far as I can recall, had khaki shorts on about four sizes too big.

Do you recall whether the mother or the children had anything on their feet?---No, I cannot.

How did they appear to you - did they appear happy and healthy, or distressed, or how were they?---They - it is a little bit hard for me to describe. It was late at night and they were anxious to be released from captivity as the saying goes. They were tired, no doubt, and we were looking for somewhere to camp, which we set up that night. They did not seem terribly worried, but they do not normally show - it is very hard for them to show concern unless they are frightened - they were not frightened.

You indicate on page 6 that they remained at Yalata. I take it they have remained there as permanent residents of Yalata after that time; is that right? ---This is the second paragraph?

No, the first paragraph you say at the top of page 6 - - -? ---Yes, "remained at Yalata."

Apart from the fact that father died, they are still part of the Yalata Mission, though you say at the moment they may be at Coober Pedy, but they became permanent residents of Yalata?---Yes, they are permanent.

When did the father die, do you know?---No, I cannot tell you the exact year, but after I left, as far as I know - after 1960.

Do you know how old the father was in 1956 or-1957?---Again, very difficult, but it was one of the families where the father was a very old man compared with his young wife.

Do you know the cause of the father's death?---No.

You say that the Milpuddys had never shown any effects of radiation as far as you could see and you say as far as you are aware it is unlikely they were affected by radiation. You also say that, to your knowledge, none of the Aborigines were killed during the tests; is that right?---I know of no Aborigines that suffered any injury or death at all due to the Maralinga project, the firing, or the bomb testing.

You then comment on the surveillance of Mr MacDougall.  
I take it you knew Mr MacDougall fairly well,  
did you?---The comment on the surveillance?

Yes, that Mr MacDougall carried out - you see at the bottom of page 6 you comment that the surveillance of fellows like MacDougall kept a pretty good guard on the movements of Aborigines and apart from the Milpuddie incident and another one which you have referred to, I take it that your view is that security was fairly good, was it?---We saw a lot of Mr MacDougall. He was backwards and forwards quite frequently and a remarkable man. Unfortunately, he never kept many notes and a lot of things were not recorded, but he was, no doubt due to advising us on some of the movements that he missed out on - when I say "some of the movements," there were two movements, one that I mentioned in the summer of 1957 or 1958 and the other one took place in 1956 where they advised us that there were people who had come from the west on the train and they were left at Ooldea and had to be taken out. This was on the eve when Buffalo was going to be fired. Mr MacDougall and also chaps like Alan Flannery and Colonel Durance were very co-operative and advised us of any movement of Aborigines that they saw on the line or travelling on the train - we were told immediately.

You say there was an incident just before the Buffalo, was there?---Yes.

Can you describe that for me - what happened?---I never thought of it when I gave this report, but it came to mind since. In October 1956 we were advised that the first major firing was going off this particular evening and in the morning we got a phone call from Maralinga that a group of Aborigines, possibly from memory 20 or 30, had arrived at Ooldea siding and they wanted us to get them out and I sent a truck up - - -

THE PRESIDENT: Just interrupting, your statement says that this happened after Buffalo, between Buffalo and - - -

MR McCLELLAN: I think this is an incident you are relating that you do not refer to in the statement at all.

THE PRESIDENT: I thought this was the incident at the top of page 7.

MR McCLELLAN: The incident you are relating now, is it an incident that you spoke to Mr Ryan about at all?  
---This incident I did not speak to Mr Ryan about - no, it came to mind since.

The one at the top of page 7, just so we have it clear - and I was going to come to it in a moment - is the incident which you have on the photographs there where the 40 or 50 endeavoured to move to Coober Pedy?---Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, well this is another incident?---That was a different incident, yes.

MR McCLELLAN: Can you tell me about this one before Buffalo?---Right, we sent the station truck up to pick them up and I got about 10 or 15 miles south of Ooldea and broke down. They somehow must have picked it up through aerial survey and something and again advised us that this had happened and I went up and I remember working on the vehicle all night to get them down - we only got them away next morning. I am not sure whether that had any - was relevant to why the bomb was postponed or not, but they would only be able to answer that, but it did not go off for another day or so.

Then you do describe at the bottom of page 6 and the top of page 7 this movement of 40 or 50. You say when they tried to walk to Coober Pedy - I think you indicated they also had with them some camels; is that right.

I wonder if I could just see the slides that you have there. How many do you have?---I only have two. There are two.

There are two, are there, showing the group collected at what point - whereabouts were they?---That is about 20 miles south of Ooldea.

Twenty miles south of Ooldea?---Yes.

Can I take these from you, sir, and promise that the commission will return them to you at the end of its deliberations - would you mind?---No, not at all.

I notice you have another photograph there; is that of relevance?---That was just a Ooldea - when we got up there we got this rail warrant. We dumped them in the camp.

It looks a fairly elaborate camel operation. Was it unusual for the Aborigines to move with the assistance of camels or not?---Yes, these people evidently came down before my time from up Boolgunya, or some place up north and they had been living around the area for several years and they evidently

decided to go back and take other people with them at this particular time, but being independent we did not know anything about it and they moved out on us, but thanks to - - -

I wonder if you can help me - was the use of camels in this way a rarity?---Yes, it was as far as Yalata was concerned.

It was as far as Yalata but what about Aborigines generally in the central part of Australia; was it unusual for them to use camels or not, or do you not know? ---No, I really could not answer that. I know years ago they did, but when they stopped I do not know.

You indicate on page 7 the nature of the phone call that you got from Maralinga. You indicate that Mr Kleinig, is it?---Yes.

Who was based at Ceduna, came up immediately and went that day to overtake the people and found them about 20 miles south of Ooldea siding heading north. Do you know how they were located?---No.

Originally, whether it was from the air or some other way? ---No, I really could not answer that. They never used to explain much. They just advised us and security was pretty tight and we did not ask too many questions.

You then indicate the nature of the equipment they had with them, which you have told us about already. You then describe, I think at the top of page 8, movements of Aborigines going to Coober Pedy. You describe the use of the train that was made at the time; is that right? You say they were free to come and go but they did not have the choice of going across prohibited areas?---That is right.

How was it they were denied the choice of going across prohibited areas?---First of all, I do not believe that this group could have got across the prohibited area with that equipment - with that trolley - I mean - - -

It might have been a bit obvious?---Most of the area is dense scrub, spinifex and sandhills and they would have travelled along the line and then probably to Wynbring and then north through Mulgathing, Commonwealth Hill, but Maralinga never took any chances - they were not happy in case they did.



When you say they did not take any chances, what do you mean?---The dealings we had with them, they were always very concerned that no Aborigines ever got into the area while the firings were on and after, of course, in case someone might get hurt and I think perhaps they were a little bit overprotective, but they were not going to take any chances - they wanted to make sure that these people did not get out of sight, in other words, travel - they could not wander into the prohibited area perhaps and cause a problem.

You indicate you maintained your association over the years with Yalata since you left in 1960. In 1967 you remember going back brief periods to help out and then in 1973 and 1978 for five years you were employed by the Yalata community on the Maralinga demolition project employing Aboriginal people where practical. You then describe some extraordinary sporting enterprise called government footballing. What is the concern that you are indicating there?---It was - I think if we recall, the Commonwealth Government did not know what to do with the place. First of all, the British Government wanted to get rid of it. They handed it over to the Commonwealth Government and the Commonwealth Government handed it over to the State Government and nobody wanted it at all. They wanted to wash their hands of it apparently.

It ended up with the Yalata community, did it?---Yes. That is basically the way I saw it. It was a responsibility that they did not want to have.

You then describe that you moved a nucleus of Aboriginal workers to Maralinga village as a permanent force to demolish and salvage Maralinga village and outposts. I take it you were present at Maralinga with the Aboriginal people, were you? ---Yes.

How many people of what order number were located at Maralinga at that time?---During demolition, you mean?

Yes?---We probably averaged about six or eight Aboriginal workmen plus our wives and children if applicable.

Was there any security of the range at that time, any police officers or military security?---We officially took over - when I say "we", the Yalata community officially took over about 8 January, I think, 1974, and the Department of Supply still had their two or three men as caretakers there until 19, about March, when they pulled out - - -

That is March of 74?---March of 74.

They left?---They left and then it was our responsibility to make sure that - put it this way - we were told where we could go, what we could do and so on, and it was our responsibility not to overstep the mark.

Can I ask you this? Were there areas in Maralinga which were fenced at that stage?---Yes.

Whereabouts were those areas located? Can you recall?

---I knew of three. There was one at the airport, at the southern end of the airport, the runway, and Taranaki, of course, and then there was another one at TM100, I think was the right name.

There were three areas that were fenced?---Yes.

Were those three areas fenced in a way which you would describe as man-proof, a high fence with barbed wire?---Yes, they would be man-proof. I do not remember barbed wire on top, but a 6 foot cyclone fence, 6 foot mesh.

Was that true of each of the areas that was fenced?---Pardon?

Was that true of each of the areas that was fenced? Were they fenced in the same way with a man-proof fence? ---Yes, I think so, from memory.

Can you tell me this? Were you told anything about what was inside the fencing?---Not exactly. We were told that it was hot, that nobody should camp or stay any length of time at these areas and we naturally, this was - we took the Aborigines to these points and showed them that these were areas that they must not go, and a couple of Aborigines would not even come and look anyway, but some did and they were told and warned not to go on these particular areas, and they did not.

What about the sites of the explosions, did you identify those sites when you were there?---We were shown by - I cannot remember whether it was Woomera's officials or the caretaker, but we were shown.

Were you told anything about going or not going to those areas?---Yes.

What were you told?---It was explained that certain areas like ground zero at each particular site, keep away completely. There was no need to go there, but areas like Roadside, which was the village, the TV cameras and so on, the monitoring village, or whatever you like to call it, in the forward area, but not - it was a place where people lived during the test period. We were allowed to go there because we had the job of demolishing some of those buildings.

Having been told not to go to the sites of the blasts, to your knowledge was that instruction observed or not?---That last bit of the question, to my knowledge?

To your knowledge was the instruction not to go to the sites of the blasts observed or not?---As far as I myself was concerned, no, because I went there.

What about others? Are you aware of others going there?  
---Yes.

Was it a regular occurrence that people - - -?---No, no, no.

Tell me, are you familiar with the glassified sands that are left behind by anatomic explosion in some locations?---I know what you are talking about, but I do not recall ever seeing any quantity.

You did not see any?---I believe it was all ploughed up and evidently it had been turned over, the ground has been turned over, and I do not recall seeing any at Maralinga.

Were you told of it by others who had seen it?---Yes.

At the time you were there?---Yes.

Did anyone ever pick any of it up and take it away?---Not to my knowledge, no.

Taranaki, you say, was fenced?---Yes.

Did you go and look at that fencing?---Yes. Actually I was involved in 1977. There was an official survey on checking the dumps as you are probably aware. I worked together with scientist Harry Turner on digging with a back-hoe, digging, uncovering the dumps, and so I actually worked there.

Uncovering the dumps?---Yes.

Where was this at?---This was inside the fencing area at Taranaki.

Inside the fencing at Taranaki?---Yes.

I see. You had better tell me a bit more about that. What did you do, have a tractor?---We had a back-hoe type of tractor at Maralinga for demolition purposes.

How large an area were you uncovering?---Probably 15 by 15 feet square concrete pad.

You uncovered a concrete pad, did you?---Yes.

What did you do with it once you had uncovered it?---It was uncovered for the purpose of getting, drilling - they were drilling at an angle through, underneath

the dumps, to check if there was any leakage. That was not done by us, but we uncovered them for that purpose.

They took a diamond drill through the concrete, did they?  
---We never removed the concrete. It was just to locate the actual areas so they could drill accurately not to disturb the burial site, so that was all that was involved.

How much dirt did you take off the top of the concrete?  
---18 inches, 2 feet.

Were you responsible for driving the machine, or did someone else - - -?---Yes. I did it because I did not want anyone else to blame me for sending them out, you know, if something happened. I thought: I am in charge. I will do it.

You took the big jump?---Yes, and I had great faith in Harry Turner.

This was inside the fence, was it?---Inside the fence.

Did you know there was Plutonium in the ground there?---I did at that time.

You did?---Yes.

Did you take any precautions in relation to dealing with the Plutonium?---I was issued with protective clothing and there were instruments all around us, monitoring instruments as we were digging, and I felt it was as safe as a house.

Safe as a - - -?---Safe as a house.

In the middle of the desert?---Yes, whatever. I had no fear at all.

Did you have a respirator on, gas mask?---Yes, some breathing - I cannot remember to what - yes, it had a couple of pads on each side.

What about Mr Turner, was he wearing protective clothing?  
---No.

Sorry?---No.

He was not?---Rubber boots.

Rubber boots?---Yes.

Where was he, on the tractor, or was he standing?---No, he was standing by directing where to actually dig.

Was there anyone else around when you were doing this operation?---No.

After you came out - I withdraw that - how many days did it take to complete this activity?---It was only an hour or two on each. I think we did two - I cannot remember - two or three dumps, and there was only an hour or two on each and then we came out. It was only one day.

One day?---Yes. It would not have been - it was half a day actually digging, I think.

Were you monitored when you came out? Did anyone take a Geiger counter or anything else and put it over you?---I do not recall that really.

Did you go and have a shower?---Most certainly, yes. There was no fear because Harry had all the instruments around and there was evidently no dangerous recording on any of them and - - -

Did you ever have any other occasion to go inside any of the fences while you were there?---At the airport, yes. I am not sure - I think - yes, 1974, early 1974, February 1974 - there was the one removed at the airport.

Did you go inside the fence, did you?---There was some project on organized from WRE, as far as I know. There were men and equipment from WRE sent up and they did something. They removed earth, did something and covered it up again, concreted it.

Were you involved in that process?---Not in the actual involvement of that - - -

Did you go inside the fence?---We were told to keep away, but there was - the fence was removed and hence afterwards we did walk inside.

You did walk inside?---Yes.

You mean - let me come back a step - before they conducted this exercise near the airfield they took the fence away altogether, did they?---Yes.

After they finished the exercise you walked back in?---The fence was removed and there was no fence there until 1979 when I left. I believe it has been refenced since.

You walked in when there was no fence?---Yes.

Did others go with you?---Yes. I think - I remember Channel 7 taking a film about 1978 or 79. They were there.

Was it common for people to walk through that area?

---We were told there was no danger whatsoever of walking through that area.

Was it common for people to walk through that area?

---No, definitely not - it was very - we were told we could walk through, but no one should ever camp there.

There were I think you would be aware a large number of things, items of equipment, stores and the like, buried at Maralinga?---Yes.

Were they a source of curiosity?---Yes. There was a major problem. For specially some of the people that actually did the burying, back in the 1950s or 1960s, claimed there was quite a lot of - quite a lot of money involved in scrap metal and brass, and lead and so on. There were quite a few approaches from outsiders to want to come in and dig, retrieve this gear on a percentage basis, and that sort of thing. All that sort of correspondence - - -

Did this contact come to you, or someone else?---Yes, it came to us. It was always referred to - - -

When you say us, do you mean you personally?---That would be right, to the community, or ring up and I would refer it to the community, or the community would refer it to Woomera, and Woomera would deal with it. There were no contracts whatsoever.

Did anyone ever go out of curiosity and uncover this gear? ---We uncovered some of the domestic areas and retrieved a lot of scrap copper, brass, et cetera.

When you say you uncovered the domestic areas, what do you mean - you uncovered burial pits?---Domestic dumps.

How did you know they were domestic dumps?---Firstly, it was quite common knowledge of people that had worked there and told us where the household garbage and this sort of thing was buried - scrap from the workshops and so on was dumped, and secondly it was left unbeknownst to the British authorities, a map of all the dumps in the area, including the forward area, and which ones had radioactive material, and which ones did not.

Did you find that map by chance?---Yes.

Whereabouts did you find it?---It was in a police station. They had a map on the wall, an ordinary directional map on the wall. Someone had put this map over a classified map, and when we removed this map there was this classified map. That classified map was then handed over to Woomera.

Did that tell that there were lots of things like jeeps and trucks and cars and so on buried out there?  
---That did not indicate that, no.

Were you aware that that was the case?---There was plenty of evidence that that had happened, yes.

What was the evidence for that?---Number 1, there were plenty of people that told us; number 2, that some of the dumps had subsided, and little bits of material were sticking out of the ground, where the rabbits had dug down.

Would it be right to assume that these dumps, when they became visible, became items of curiosity?  
---Naturally, yes, out of curiosity.

How was that curiosity satisfied? Did people go scratching around amongst the dumps, or did they stay away from them?---Aboriginals - I take it you are referring to the Aboriginals?

Aboriginals, or white men?---I was probably one of the curious ones which naturally had a look, but anything that was buried was so mutilated and destroyed that it was of no value anyway.

How did you work that out? Did you uncover it to have a look?---Partly uncovered - there was one vehicle with its wheels sticking out. We partly uncovered that and you could see it was absolutely destroyed.

What did you do, take to it with a shovel to uncover it?  
---Got a back hoe and went over it a couple of digs.

With a machine?---Yes, you could see it was burnt, crushed with a bulldozer, and you could see that the tyres had been slashed and so on. So it was covered up again.

Did you uncover many other pieces of equipment?---In the domestic dumps, yes. There was all sorts.



What about in the other dumps which were not domestic dumps?---We did not uncover anything. There were no major dumps, no dumps uncovered that we did not believe were domestic.

Did you uncover any vehicles that were painted red or yellow?---I do not remember any paint on these, because of corrosion.

What about the Aborigines, did they have a curiosity similar to yours?---No. They were so scared. One incident, just out from the front of the hospital in the scrub, they were wandering around in the scrub and came across a part of an old transmitter. They raced in and said, "Have a look. Come and have a look. It might be a bomb." They were really frightened. It was something they did not recognize. They were no problems whatsoever as far as anything they did not understand was concerned.

In other words they did not have the curiosity that you had?---No, no.

You indicate on page 8 of your statement - you expressed concern at the bottom of the page about whether or not it was safe. You say you had buildings, laboratories, a lot of equipment still there, domestic equipment, and the question arose of whether it was safe. You went to the state health department and were assured by them that there was nothing to worry about, the place had been checked out completely and there were no problems whatsoever. If you were not happy with that you could go to Melbourne, or apply to Melbourne to get monitoring badges, and of course they had to be sent over there for development and so on. So you did not do that, but they assured you there were no problems whatsoever, and the assurances were quite justified because there had been no evidence of any contamination. You told us of the time you went inside the fence at Taranaki. Did you go to Taranaki outside the fence on any other occasions?---Yes, I did.

On many occasions?---No.

Why did you go there on other occasions?---I think it was just a little bit of curiosity, I suppose, like to have a little bit of a look around and, like many other people, they used to come up there and want to, which we refused permission, mainly because we were told that there was no immediate danger of going to any of these areas,

providing you did not stay there any length of time.

Did you drive vehicles up to the Taranaki fence?---Not off the road. The road that was there, we would just turn around and go back again.

Tell me, how many pieces of earth-moving equipment did you have with you when you were there, just the one back hoe or did you have some others?---No, the back hoe and a small bulldozer.

What was done with the back hoe after it was used to uncover the pit at Taranaki?---Sold about a year, 2 years later - sold at Ceduna.

Was it washed after it went inside the Taranaki fence?---I do not recall doing any particular cleaning.

Did Harry Turner suggest to you that you have a go at cleaning the bucket after doing the job?---There was no suggestion by the authorities that it had to be covered.

By that do I infer that it was not done?---To my knowledge it was not done, I do not think.

What sort of tread did it have, did it have wheels and rubber tyres?---Yes, rubber tyres.

You described the incident that occurred in 1977 when Mr Turner was there. You described the pulling down of the range workshop. You say the big store at Watson was taken to Yalata, and you described the fact that Land Rovers were taken also. You kept the Bedford truck. You indicate you cannot recall any buildings being erected at Yalata for living in. What was done with the buildings that were taken from Maralinga, were they sold?---Yes, nearly all the buildings were sold. Only a skeleton were left.

Were those sold by the community on the open market?---Yes, there were only a few buildings went to Yalata itself, the rest were sold throughout the state.

Sold by the community?---Yes.

Directly, so they did the negotiating, or was it done through an agent?---I did the negotiating on their behalf of course, but they received the proceeds.

Were there a lot of buildings sold?---More than 100.

What sort of money are we talking about the community receiving?---the main workshop was \$12,000, I think, on site. The rain store was \$10,000, and varying down to a few hundred dollars were smaller buildings.

All that money went to the community?---Yes.

Do you think in fact a couple of buildings were sold as far away as Queensland, and the Aborigines got the money?---Yes.

Mr Lindner was in charge of the whole community project?  
---Yes.

You were only in charge of Maralinga, and you were responsible to Mr Lindner for what you did?  
---That is right.

You say the Aborigines also helped for a few days at Kittens, demolishing buildings there. Who were they helping to do that, you or some other people?---Ourselves. My offsider, a white man, he took two or three or four out, and they pulled down one building at Kittens. The rest of them were picked up, jacked up and taken away. We did that ourselves.

So you did not encourage them to go out there at all. You did not encourage the Aborigines to go to Kittens?---No, the forward area.

Were they curious about it?---Not really.

Perhaps they might have been frightened to go there, not knowing what it was all about. You explained some taboos in relation to TM areas, and so on. I think you said there were about eight workers with you at the time, and their families. Were there children around?---Yes. Mainly pre-school kids of course.

Did they display the usual childhood curiosity?---No.

They did not?---They were too small mainly. It was only during the holidays the older kids came up, and they were not allowed. As far as work was concerned they were not allowed around the place because in demolition it was naturally too dangerous anyway, and they would only be playing around the village.

Did you ever have kids between the ages of say 8 and 15 around the place?---Yes, there were one or two up there at times.

Did they roam the area?---No, not on their own.

Not on their own?---No.

How do you know that did not happen?---Well, they did not - they roamed around the village itself on their own but not outside the village. The airport is three miles away. The nearest - they did not seem to have any desire to go out there.

That would be pretty unusual in kids, would it not, not to head off and roam generally?---But the airport was regarded as keep away, and that message, you have only got to tell one or two aboriginals, they pass the message on. No, you could take any Yalata person up to Maralinga, even if they had not been there before, and they would know the airport is taboo.

What about the forward area?---The same applies.

The same applies?---Yes.

Were you concerned about the movement of aboriginal children into the areas that might have been a problem?---Yes, certainly. We kept a good watch on them. On weekends, I always wanted to know which direction they wanted to go. Mainly they used to head down to the railway line at Watson and the attraction down there was a little bit of lubrication for their throats. They were only too pleased to go down there for weekends and they did not bother us up the northern end.

On page 12, you describe the way the aborigines traditionally moved through the bush. You speak again of the milpuddies, the nature of the water available for movement through these areas. You describe on the bottom of page 12 the fact that elders had different expeditions at different times, to go out and relocate some of the old sacred sites. However, you say there was never any thought of anybody going out on foot because it was thought that the people might perish. While they were out there on some of these trips, you would sometimes take out fresh supplies and so on. They had difficulty in finding some of the places and you would fly around and try to locate them from the air by taking a couple of aboriginals with us. What areas were you able to assist the aborigines in this way in finding their sites?---First of all there is so many years since they lived in that

country that they have lost some of their sacred sites.

I appreciate that, but what area - you describe this assistance that you gave. Whereabouts did you give it?---I am talking towards the Western Australian border, up Dey-Dey - - -

Perhaps if I get the map again, you might just help me. West of Lake Dey-Dey?---Right through from north of Cook, right through - - -

Where is Lake Dey-Dey? You are saying west of Lake Dey-Dey?  
---Yes.

How far north and south?---I believe that country really goes up to the Birksgate Ranges somewhere and well over to Western Australia. We flew right out to Western Australia, over the border, looking for these different sites.

So, are you telling the commission that you assisted the aborigines in the area generally west of Lake Deydey from the air and on foot to locate sacred sites?---I did not do much travelling on foot. It was mainly by air. I would take out supplies. Barry Lindner - - -

During what years did you assist with these aerial flights?  
---From 1975 to 1978.

Did you find many sites for the aboriginal people?---I really do not know. That part was handled by Community Welfare and Barry Lindner. They could answer those questions much more - I know some were found, but to what significance, I would not have a clue.

You say the oldest of these people, when they lived in that area, were basically boys and they have lost a lot of their traditional sacred sites. I just want to understand what you have said there. Are you saying that the people that you were endeavouring to help, when they had lived in the area, were only boys by the time they left?---Yes.

When you say boys, what age are you talking about?---They just say, when they were young boys. It might be 10, 12, it could be anything.

What happened for them to cease to live on the area?---I really do not know why they - how they lost a lot of the sacred sites, but they just could not find them again. Some were found through flying around and they recognized them from the air, but I believe some were never found.

Well, about what time did they stop living in the area and using the sites, can you help me with the year there?---They left - I do not think there was much traditional activity in the area after 1940.

After 1940?---No. It is only approximate of course, but they were for many years living on the railway line as beggars.

Can you tell why it was there was this interest in the 70s in going back and finding them?---They were trying to locate their sacred sites in anticipation - - -

I appreciate that, but why?---In anticipation of mining companies possibly going there and they wanted to secure them and make them - map them and secure them so they were, they could tell the mining companies where they could go and where they could not. That was the main reason, I believe.

Did they through all these years, did the aboriginal people express concern to you about sacred sites and the bomb programme at all?---They never discussed much with me personally, no, not in that line.

You then say on page 13, you suppose they have lived in a traditional style before the tests. Firstly what do you mean by, "lived in a traditional style"?---I think, as I mentioned earlier, for some reason I am not terribly clear, I believe it is due to the invasion of the dingo in the area where they ran out of a lot of food and kangaroos and so on, and they just could not - partly food and water - they just could not exist in the area for any length of time, and that is why they moved.

I am just interested to know what you mean by their traditional style of living. Is this a nomadic style?---Yes, traditionally living on the land, completely independent.

You suppose they had lived that way before the tests. You say a lot of the older people established especially. Are you inferring that in any way their lifestyle was affected by the tests or not? ---No, their lifestyle had changed back in the early 40s or earlier.

For the reasons that you describe?---Yes.

You indicate that change goes back as far as the time of Daisy Bates and you describe the problems of water?---Yes. The only thing I might point out in relation to - it is like the Milpuddys coming

down through the area. That was a traditional road to them. They all travelled that direction.

This movement down from the north?---Yes, that would have been a traditional road from watering point to watering point, and the forward area has cut that road.

I take it that when you say a traditional road, it was a road that all the aboriginal community would have known about?---Yes, they would. It was a common knowledge road. That is the only way they knew of travelling, but of course today, that is completely finished because of no nomadic walkabouts as they were and they have got the road through to Emu anyway, and they have got their vehicles to travel on it.

Before the milpuddie incident or before they were found, did you know of that traditional road through the area?---No.

You learned of it after that?---In fact I only learned of it about 1977 or 1978 through some aboriginals that were talking about this water, and I went out with Barry Lindner and they were talking about water south of or south-west or south of the Giles Flat tops and it turned out it was this place in the forward area.

I guess if you did not know about it, then probably very few white men did, would that be right?---I do not think many white men did either.

Have you ever talked about this with Len Beadell?  
---Lenny Beadell may have known.

Have you ever talked about the road with him?---No.

What about McDougall, did you ever talk to him about the road?---No, we did not talk to him either.

Did it come as a surprise to you to learn there was an aboriginal road right through the middle of the Maralinga range?---Yes. I thought it was - yes, I was surprised. I did not really think there would be any water point in that area, but evidently there was.

When you speak of a road, do you mean if the Milpuddys used it, then you would expect that others would use it as well. Is that the sense in which you speak of a road?---Not today.

Not today but what about back in the 50s?---There could have been, but the Yalata people would not have because they knew of the bomb as they called it.

Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Can you tell me this: how did you come to take on the job at Yalata Aboriginal Mission? Had you had a particular interest in aboriginals or aboriginal matters before you went there? ---I did not have much experience with aboriginals except a few up the river which were tribal as we know them over there. Yes, I did, I had great feeling for them and I still have.

You went there not just as a job but in some sort of a vocation?---Yes, something with a purpose,I thought.

I see. Thank you. Mr James, I think this witness's evidence falls more within Mr Eames' sphere than yours. I do not mean that you are to be stopped from asking, but I think it might be better if he went first.

MR JAMES: I could indicate I only want to ask a question about 1976.

THE PRESIDENT: All right, you ask that question.

MR JAMES: Do you recall in 1976 seeing a Mr Avon Hudson at the airfield I think here in Adelaide?---Yes.

I think you introduced yourself to him and asked him about the location of some of the burial pits and the equipment as you would embarking at that stage on the commencement of the salvaging operations. Do you recall that?---No, not really. I could have. I mean, it is possible, but it would have only been in the domestic area around the village.



You did not speak to him at all about salvaging material that might in any way be contaminated, did you?

---No.

Not that you can remember?---I do not remember, but I am sure I would not have.

I have nothing further.

MR COLLETT: Mr Dutschke, you are a qualified air pilot, are you not?---Yes, only in a private capacity.

How long have you been flying for?---1952.

I suppose - when did you start flying out at Yalata?---1956.

So the air searches for Aborigines that you have told us about were with you as pilot, were they?---Yes.

In fact, during the Maralinga salvaging operations you did some of the negotiations by flying to negotiate with various contractors, did you not?---Yes, the community bought the aircraft for various reasons, partly for that and also for the assurance that if anyone got injured at Maralinga through demolition work that we could get them out quickly.

It was a community-bought aircraft, was it?---Yes, it was the community's aircraft.

You told us a fair bit about matters that occurred before 1956, for example, where Ooldea people were living and camping. Are all those things as a result of what you have been told yourself?---Prior to 1956?

Prior to 1956?---Yes.

You had not been involved at all at Ooldea prior to 1956? ---No, 1956 was my start at Ooldea.

Did you learn to speak Pitjantjatjara or Kokotha yourself? ---Unfortunately I am a poor linguist and never ever mastered more than a few words. I understand a bit more these days than when I went there, but I basically cannot speak Pitjantjatjara.

Any German?---Less.

There seems to be a lot of German names that crop up in relation to Yalata. Is that as a result of the Lutheran Church influence in the Yalata Mission? ---Yes.

That is fairly widespread across the west coast of South Australia, is it not?---Yes, the Lutheran Church, from memory,

was invited to take over the Yalata people at the time in 1954 or 50 I think it officially took over, because of their record over on the west coast with the Aborigines around Ceduna.

Principally at Konnibba Mission?---Yes, Konnibba.

You have told us in your statement a bit about the health of Aboriginal people at Yalata. Do you recall whether there were any epidemics of measles whilst you were there?---There would have been, but I do not remember any great number, especially any loss of life over measles, but - - -

Is it your recollection that there were very severe epidemics of measles or flu whilst you were there?---No, there was only one severe epidemic whilst I was there, but I do not remember what it was - that was when they were camping, during the drought in 1957 they were drinking fairly stale water and we put it down to the water that caused a lot of problems. We had to move them and put them on bore water - that is all we had - well water.

Are you sure that was 1957?---Yes.

You have told us something about the association of Yalata people with their traditional areas. When did you last speak to Yalata people about their association with their sacred sites on the Maralinga lands? ---I think the last trip we did would have been 1978 where I was involved, and that would have been the last time I spoke to them about that subject whilst we were out there.

1978?---Approximately, yes.

Were you aware the Yalata people were keen to go back and set up an outstation in the region of Lake Maurice or Lake Dey-Dey?---I do not believe they would, because number one, they relied too much on medical and stores and hotels and what-have-you today and moreso the motor vehicle.

That would not accord with your perception - if they wanted to go back to Lake Dey-Dey or Lake Maurice, that would not accord with your perception of their link with the land?---I could not imagine them doing that for more than perhaps going there for a bit of a holiday.

You would be surprised if there was a permanent exodus to both places?---I could not imagine, it no.

You have told us quite a bit about the arrival of the Milpuddy family at Yalata. It must have been quite an event, I suppose, in the history of Yalata at that time?---Yes.

Was Pastor Temme there?---Yes.

Was he in charge?---Yes. You might find it strange that they left it with me instead of him, being the superintendant of the mission. The reason being, it was a geographical thing. Colona was on route, was the closer point, and Maralinga left it with me. That is how that happened.

You took them to Pastor Temme, did you?---I referred to him immediately.

You told us about - I am sorry, I withdraw that. You told us about the clothes the people were wearing, the Milpuddys were wearing when they came to Yalata. Were you the first person they saw when they got out of the Land Rover?---I would say yes. Being night time, I really - and 27 years ago or whatever - the only thing clear in my mind is that the old fellow had army clothes on. The rest is - they had clothes, but exactly what, there is a certain amount of guessing attached to it.

Did they appear to be distressed at all?---No.

Were they vomitting?---No.

Did it smell as though they had been vomitting?---No.

Are you sure about that or can you just not recall?---I did not notice it - no, I am quite sure about that.

Did you get to know the family well after their arrival?  
---Not really. I lost contact with them a bit because they went to live in the main camp and I was more concerned about the pastoral side of the sheep and the water and domestic supplies and so on than actually doing the personal contact, but - - -

Do you remember their names, for example?---Old Charlie Milpuddy is the only one I would remember - that was the old man that died. I think his name was Charlie.

You do not remember the name of the boy or the mother?---No, but they have English names now - they have given names, I believe, in the last few years.

Does Henry Gibson ring a bell?---That sounds about right. One is a Gibson.

Was the mother's name Edie - Edie Milpuddy?---I cannot remember.

What about Rosie Williams, does that ring a bell, as the daughter's name?---Yes, that sounds - Rosie sounds familiar.

Do you know if Henry Gibson or Rosie Williams had children?  
---I am sorry, I did not - - -

Do you know if Henry Gibson or Rosie Williams themselves had children whilst they were living at - - -?  
---I think so, yes. Barry Lindner would be able to answer all these questions much more accurately than I.

When did Mr Lindner come to Yalata?---He came in 1960, the year I left. We overlapped for that year.

When the Milpuddys came, did they have any dogs with them when they got out of the Land Rover?---Yes.

What happened to those dogs, do you know?---They were destroyed.

Had the people at Yalata seen the Milpuddys before; were the Milpuddys known to them?---I really do not know. The person that identified them for me that night was a local coastal native Aboriginal, a coastal one who had lived on the station for years and he could just speak and he passed on the message that they came from - he did not know them personally, but evidently they had relatives and they moved in. To stay that long they must have been known quite well.

They were described as spinifex people, were they not?---Yes.

You told us about another incident which you had not recalled until today?---Yes.

I think you said some people were found, what, 15 miles south of Ooldea?---No, they were broken down with a truck. I sent the truck up to pick these people up and the truck broke down 15 miles south of Ooldea and I went up there to - immediately I was advised and I went up there to fix it up.

I am confused now. How many trucks were broken down?---It was an old Chev truck that we had on the station. That was the only truck that we had those days.

That was the truck in which you went up to collect them, was it?---That was the truck that went up to pick these people up.

How many people were there?---Truck loads, 30, perhaps.

Which direction were they going when they were - - -?---They were heading for Yalata - they were returning to Yalata from the west.

From the west?---Yes.

Had they driven across the - - -?---No, they came by rail. They were left at Ooldea by the train and of course Maralinga was worried they might wander into the area, so they advised us to get them away straight away.

What was the situation - they got to Ooldea on the railway station and they had started to walk towards Yalata, had they?---I do not think so - I think the truck went right up there.

Did Maralinga people ever suggest they would bring them down to Yalata?---Did they suggest - - -

That the Maralinga people, anyone at the camp at Maralinga would bring them down - was that ever suggested? ---I - they did not ever transport them, except the Milpuddys, I do not know of any movement by Maralinga with the Aborigines at all.

That was regarded as your role?---That was our job, yes.

Do you recall whether there were helicopters at that stage travelling to - - -?---Maralinga had a couple of choppers. They came down to the mission on several occasions on business.

Can you recall whether it was at that stage or later on? ---I am sorry my hearing is a little - - -

I am sorry, I think you told us that this particular incident occurred just before one of the Buffalo tests; is that right?---Yes.

Can you recall whether helicopters were coming down to Yalata at that stage?---No, I do not know how they found them - probably - the train would have gone through Watson, which was the rail link to Maralinga, and they would have realised there were Aborigines on the train - possibly that was how they found out.

I think we are at cross purposes. Was it a regular occurrence for a helicopter to come down to Yalata or did that just happen rarely?---Very rarely, no. Plenty of aircraft fly over, surveillance aircraft, Valetta bombers and what-have-you, checking up on weather or something - I do not know.

As a pilot, I suppose you take some interest in being able to recognize the planes that fly over?---Yes.

Were the Valetta bombers the only planes you recall flying over Yalata?---No, Vulcans - I remember seeing a Vulcan one day at high altitude, but they were cruising around all the time - various purposes - weather - reconnaissance no doubt was involved too.

Ever see any Varsity fixed-wing aircraft?---Yes.

Often or rarely?---During the - leading up to each firing there were - a week or so - there were aircraft around all the time - you know, every day.

How often every day; once a day, more than once?---No, it could be two or three times a day you would hear them or see them sometimes.

What did they appear to you to be doing? Were they reconnaissance aircraft, or were they for a variety of purposes? ---I do not really know what the purpose was. It was a case where they would beat us up. They would come over the house about 10 feet and give us a wobble of the wings and go off again, but mostly they were cruising around at approximately 10,000 feet or even higher.

You then told us about this other incident where you apprehended 40 or 50 people south of Ooldea?  
---Yes.

And you have kindly provided two slides to us, one of which shows a number of Aboriginal men sitting on a cart drawn by two camels?---Yes.

They were part of the group that you apprehended, were they?  
---Yes. You will note that some of them are women, but that was only a very small part. They were scattered over a big area travelling in an unusual fashion, mainly because of the lores equipment which they had with them which meant only the initiated could look at it, you know.

Sort of a spread out convoy, was it?---Yes. When we loaded all this gear up on the vehicle, the women all had to go away and the young people, all had to turn their backs.

Another slide shows a vehicle as well, I think?---Yes.

A motor vehicle?---No, it is a horse-drawn vehicle. The motor vehicle was the vehicle we went up in.

That was yours?---Yes.

Do you now remember the names of any of the people you spoke to?---No.

Does the name Old Secretary ring a bell?---No. One of the first encounters I had with - I was only there possibly a few months, and it took me a long time to remember the names of 400 people. I never remember them all anyway today but I would not recall too many.

Do I take it that you and Mr Kleinig effectively worked out a way for at least the older men to get to their ceremonies without going through the prohibited area?---Yes.

Are you saying that you really introduced people to the use of the train at that stage?---Could you - - -

Well, you say in your statement, the way that you worked out was for the men to go I think from Ooldea by rail to Tarcoola?---Yes.

You say at the top of page 8 of your statement, I think that started the idea of travelling by train?---Yes. They would have come from memory, they had a rail warrant plus a road warrant to get to wherever they were going that was issued by the department through Pat Kleinig.

On this occasion. Was this the first time such warrants had been issued to your knowledge?---It was the first time I had encountered it because it was the first time I had been involved in this sort of thing. But no doubt this happened quite frequently. In fact, it was the first job I believe that he had. The first officer that was stationed at Ceduna and I think this was one of his first jobs, so both of us were fairly green.

What I am getting at, do you know if Aboriginal people used that train before that time?---They are bound to have used it at some stage or other. Whether it was official or not, whether they had paid their own way or not, I do not know.

Was it a frequent thing to go by train to the bright lights of Ceduna or Kalgoorlie?---They could travel by train to Kalgoorlie. It was only road to Ceduna. As the years went by, it was more frequent.

Was it frequent at that time, 1956?---No, not to any degree.

I take it you have had some continuity with Yalata after you left in 1960?---Yes.

Was that because of your association with the church or with Mr Lindner?---Yes, and for several reasons. I knew Barry Lindner quite well - I had worked with him before in different projects. We had, like in building and so on, I went over there to help build a couple of buildings and so on, been in the building business since then.

You have told us a bit about your understanding of the milpuddies movements before they were discovered on the range. Can you remember who told you about that - was that Mr Turner or someone else?---The first I was told when they arrived that they were found in the area and we established they came from Ernabella. They were spinifex people and they had walked down. This was established. I did not know many details exactly where they were found. I knew they were in the area, that Maralinga were very concerned. They were terribly worried about the incident.

What I am getting at really, was it Mr Turner who told you all about that?---Who told you about the milpuddies movement?---The actual incident, on where they were found and how they were found, I think it was Harry Turner that told us in about 1977. We definitely discussed the Milpuddy incident.



So what you have said about their movements which appears in your statement comes from what Mr Turner told you, does it?---The actual point of where they were found and - - -

What they were doing?---That is right, yes.

Were you appointed by the Yalata community as manager of the salvage project?---Yes.

Did you enter into a contract with the Yalata community to do that?---I had a written contract.

Do you still have it?---I think I would, yes.

Can you produce it to the commission?---I am not sure whether I could or not. I think so. I was going through paperwork not long ago and I do not think I destroyed it. I would not be certain.

If you find it, could you undertake to let us have a copy?  
---Yes.

In fact, how long did you work on the salvage job?---For how long?

Yes?---Five years.

Full time?---Yes.

Was your principal job at first to arrange the tenders between people who wanted to purchase various items?---Yes.

Did you do that on behalf of the Yalata community?---Yes. The first year consisted mainly of sorting out equipment and assessing values and so on. There was an enormous amount of gear up there and buildings, and it was only 1975 when the sale started to take place basically.

People would approach - potential tenderers would approach you?---We tried the tender system and it did not work very satisfactorily. For example, the picture theatre, we had an offer of £5 for or \$5 or \$50 or something. We turned around and got \$15,000 for the building and \$9000 for the projectors.

To attempt to cut a long story short, who made the decision about who got the salvagable items, you or the community?---There was a group of consultants, Tonkin and Reid or Tonkin and Partners or something in King William Street. They were our consultants and they told us what to accept on

tenders. They were our advisors and advised us on the tender and acceptance after the tenders were called.

Was there a list kept of who the successful tenders were for what buildings?---I do not think there were too many tenders accepted anyway. They were the people involved with the tendering.

You mention at the bottom of page 10 of your statement that most of the demolition was done by yourself and your offsider. That is in the context of Kittens. Is that the case for the whole of the demolition of Maralinga or just for Kittens?---I did not get the basic part of your question, I am sorry.

You say at the bottom of page 10 of your statement, "The Aborigines helped for a few days at Kittens demolishing one building there. As far as I can recall that was all. Most of it was done by myself and my offsider."?---Yes.

Who was your offsider?---A chap by the name of Brian Kurtzer.

Was he your offsider for the whole of the project?---No.  
He went down the Antarctic in 1976 I think.

For how long was he your offsider?---2½, 3 years perhaps.

Are you saying that that is the only building the Aborigines helped to demolish or it is the only building at Kittens?---No, not in the forward area. It was the only building at Kittens. The only other area in the forward area that they helped with demolition was Roadside itself which consisted of all these huts, domestic and TV huts, we called them.

In fact you had at various times quite a number of Aboriginal people working in the salvage team, did you not?  
---They changed from week to week or month to month, about six or eight a time, but there could have been 50 or 60 all told that worked there over the years.

And they were not all from Yalata by any means, were they?  
---There were several from Western Australia. That is about - but mainly from Yalata.

Was there a policy of giving employment preference to Aborigines on that work?---Yes.

You mentioned expeditions to look for sacred sites on lands near the Western Australian border. Are those expeditions that Mr Lindner took Yalata people back on?---Yes, in conjunction with officers from the Community Welfare, I think.

Mr Nicholls and Mr Busbridge?---Yes, and the Mines Department -  
I cannot remember the name there.

Were those expeditions for the purpose of liaising with the  
Mines Department over mining or potential mining  
activity in the region?---I think so.

You have given us the benefit of your knowledge and experience  
in relation to traditional life at Ooldea before  
people came to Yalata. Can I just ask you about  
traditional life at Yalata once people got there?  
---Yes.

People were living there by the time you got there in 1956,  
were they not?---Yes.

Is it not the case that the community was attempting to adhere  
to as many as possible of its traditional practices  
at that stage?---That is right.

They had a business camp distinct from the main community,  
did they not, where traditional business was  
practised?---Yes.

And initiations continued at Yalata whilst you were there?  
---Yes.

In fact, did you get the impression that people were very  
keen to carry on their traditional ways even though  
they were at Yalata rather than further north?  
---The old people, yes. The younger people, there  
was a big tendency for the young boys or young men  
I should say to miss out on being initiated and  
that - in some cases in latter years, we encouraged  
them to be initiated. Whether it was a full  
initiation or not, but we found they were, you  
know, much better members of the community once  
they were initiated. They were not such uncontrollable.

Did you notice after you came in 1956 whether there were any  
attempts by the community or members of the  
community to go back to Ooldea?---No. I recall  
none whatsoever. In fact, I do not even recall  
anybody going back for a weekend camp apart from  
perhaps going trapping dingoes or something like  
that at one stage. I really cannot recall anyone  
wanting to live back there.

Would it surprise you to hear that the report, the 1958  
report of the Aborigines Protection Board, noted  
there was considerable difficulty keeping  
Aborigines on the reserve at Yalata?---Yes.

Was that not your understanding of the situation?---I am not sure what you are referring to in respect of their statement.

Putting it another way, can you think of any reason why in 1958 at Yalata there was considerable difficulty keeping Aborigines on the reserve?---I really cannot, apart from headings towards Penong.

Penong is not far from - - -?---No, 65 miles or 70 miles or - - -

That is attachment 9 to the South Australian Government's submission. Were you and Mr Kurtzer the only non-Aboriginal people involved in the salvaging team?---No, a lot of - most of the demolition was done by the purchasers. The people who bought the buildings or equipment contracted to buy on site and we mainly did the organizing for the accommodation and equipment, for example, crane work, loading trucks and so on, whereas they had to pay for it, naturally, but most of the demolition was done by the purchaser.

I take it when you first went out to start the demolition work the village appeared intact to you?---Yes.

There were a large number of buildings at the village?---It was just as though people only left the day before. In some cases it was- workshops were intact, equipment in the workshops, offices - you could even pick up a biro and some of them would still work.

Was any list kept by the community or its consultants as to where each building went?---The first 12 months was spent deciding what the community wanted themselves and what they wanted to sell and it was a matter of equipment mainly that took a fair bit to sort out and decide which buildings they want, which were the most useful and those that could be sold, so they had to say in most cases - - -

I appreciate they had the say, but did you ever see, or where you ever a party to the making of a list or an inventory of where all the buildings went or what happened to them?---Everything was documented as far as on the purchase, the dockets, and what have you - who bought, how much, where the purchaser lived, but not necessarily where some of the gear went and that was all passed on to the community and went through the normal channels, as far as I know.

As far as you know it would have been kept in the community's files at Yalata?---It should still be available.

At Yalata?---It should be still available at Yalata,  
yes.

I take it you did not keep any of that documentation yourself?  
---No, it was just the basic bookwork and passed  
on.

There were at various stages attempts by the community to  
salvage underground items, were there not, apart  
from - leaving aside the question of items in  
pits. Was there not an effort by the community  
to salvage copper wire, other underground  
fittings?---Yes, part of the village was underground  
wiring and part overhead. That was - where  
practicable, that was pulled up. There were a  
couple of areas that we did not, because, for  
example, out at the XA area there was one cable  
running towards the red dump, the middle dump,  
sort of thing and we were advised not to touch  
that and it was left.

How were you advised not to touch it?---Woomera advised us.  
Mr Lucarotti I think it was from memory.

There was a lot of interest, was there not, in the taking  
of copper wire from Maralinga at various stages?  
---There was an awful lot of it and it brought  
in quite a handsome figure on the salvage side.  
I think I remember one cheque was about \$20,000  
just for copper wire salvage alone.

Who was the lucky recipient of that copper wire?---The  
Yalata community, of course.

Were they the only group who got copper out of Yalata?  
---Yes, most certainly.

Was that something you were involved in - were you involved  
in the digging up of copper wire at various  
stages?---I was involved in the marketing - yes.

At any stage was the community involved in excavating  
underground items like lathes and trailers and  
hydraulic jacks that were buried in pits?---Yes.

In fact, what happened to those items?---Re-buried.

Were they the only items that the community dug up as far  
as you are aware?---Actually the community did  
not do it - I did - and was advised by Woomera,  
Mr Lucarotti as a matter of, to re-bury and that  
was done.

Was that in about June 1976?---Yes, it was about Easter-time,  
I thought, but the report may have gone through  
in about June, or when he came up there it might  
have been June. It had been done a few weeks

before, as far as I know- no, I reckon it was Easter that year - it was Easter-time because it was just after Easter when Lucarotti came up and that incident was solved on the spot - I mean, it was worked out.

Can I show you a letter from the Department of Defence, attachment 35 in the South Australian Government's submission? Have a look at this letter from the Department of Defence to the Director-General of Community Welfare dated 7 June 1976 and the second paragraph reads:

It is confirmed that in the course of a recent inspection . . . . . which had been buried there.

Is that the excavation you were talking about?  
---Yes. That was probably written a month or two after - it was Easter weekend when Mr Lucarotti and Tony Jay were there, I think, or I think someone with him, and they did not - like I said, they wanted us to re-bury it.

Where were those items excavated from; do you know the location of those pits now?---I could not tell you the exact building number, but it was in the XA area, up in the northern or roughly middle of XA area.

Are you sure it was in the XA area?---Yes.

If I can draw your attention to the fourth paragraph of the same letter which reads:

There were other items, however, such as . . . . . and the XA area which are shown on the attached sketch.

?---There was definitely no - definitely nothing touched at the DC/RB area. Those items possibly could have referred to the XA area the same as this.

Did you see vehicles and ducting when you excavated the XA pits?---No - ducting, yes. I do not think you would call it ducting. It was about 10 inch pipe that was used as a flue. That is the only - I refer to ducting as a square or round, you know, ducting you have in ceilings for - there was tons of that up there, but in that hole there was what would appear to be a flue.

Can you now say that all of the equipment was excavated from the XA pit that you were involved, can you say that

it was all returned?---It was all re-buried, yes.  
There should be a letter from Yalata - - -

If I can draw your attention to a letter from Yalata dated 27 July 1976, which is attachment 36 in the South Australian Government submission, you will note there that the community gives an assurance that it will not engage in any activity at Maralinga which would not meet with the approval of the area administrator and it says no further excavations will be made in the DC/RB and XA areas. Is that the case; were there in fact any further excavations?---No, definitely not.

It goes on to say:

We found several detailed maps showing where the cemetery areas are located and are fully aware of the dangers in those areas.

They were the maps I was referring to. There were actually two identical ones, duplicate.

So you had those maps at the time that you in fact - prior to going into the XA pits, did you?---Yes, this particular spot was not marked as dangerous. It was only the fact that it had subsided and it was very poor burying, you know what I mean. It was a matter of just pulling it out and it was done in all good faith. I do not want to criticize the department, but there was a slight reluctance to give us decent terms of agreement, or you know, what exactly could be done and what exactly should not be done.

In fact, were you ever told before this that you were not allowed to get into the pits? Did you consider that to be part of the salvagable material? ---Yes, but before - generally - I have not got any correspondence to back it up, but there was: do it, but we are not going to give you our blessing, you know what I mean? We are not going to say you cannot, but apparently this upset - being in the XA area, it upset the powers that be at Woomera and that is the last thing we wanted to do, but it was settled quite satisfactorily as far as I was concerned.

Did you observe items of equipment protruding above the surface of those pits in the XA area?---Yes.

Do I take it they were not buried all that well?---No, there was so much air space that when it rained it just washed the water down and left the gear

sitting on top and the rabbits would undermine it to let the water in. Some of it was very poorly covered up.

Having seen things poking up, it became a temptation, did it?---Yes, especially when it is a bit of good gear, which we thought - it was badly damaged anyway, so you can just imagine in all these years lying in wet or damp soil.

The letter to which I have been referring you, attachment 36, is a letter you will see jointly signed by Mr Cook, chairman of Yalata Community Council and Mr Lindner the manager and it goes on to say:

There are other burial pits . . . . .  
ex the desalination plant.

It goes on to ask whether there could be an answer or a decision as to whether that underground material can be salvaged?---Yes.

Do you know if there was ever a decision made; were you ever given the green or red light?---We got a flicker of the green light, if I can put it that way. Nobody would just say you can and put their name to it, but they did say you could not, do you know what I mean; it was: you can, but do not blame us if anyone gets hurt. That is it - not those words, but there was a definite agreement on that, you know what I mean? Nobody wanted to commit themselves to it, really.



In fact, was it the case that there was no red light until a letter of 12 February 1979 when the Prime Minister himself said that such salvage should not go ahead underground?---Yes.

Were you aware of that?---No. The situation, I know, changed a lot through nobody was very interested until the demonstrations started, and of course that I believe changed a lot of thinking.

Which demonstrations are you referring to?---When - the one that Avon Hudson was involved in. That sort of caused a few - I do not know - headaches - not headaches, but nobody knew what to - nobody knew where they stood really - I do not know.

What did that relate to, very briefly? Did it relate to the digging up of submerged materials or something else?---No. Prior to that, nobody was very interested and everything was going along as far as we were concerned quite satisfactorily, and then all of a sudden, big rumpus, and the Commonwealth police are brought in to make sure that terrorists did not get in the area, so the whole situation changed up there. It was very difficult to work.

When was that?---After the last stage of Maralinga, the last stage I was up there.

At what date did you finish with the salvage work?---I cannot recall whether - it was 79 as far as I remember. I had five years there. I started on 8 January 74 - it must have been 79.

Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: When the Milpuddys were delivered to you by the Maralinga party that brought them down, did anybody from the Maralinga party suggest to you at that time or at any other time that you should keep the incident to yourself; not talk about it, not let anybody know that it had happened?---Yes.

Who was it who said that to you?---I cannot tell you the name of the person, but whoever was in charge of the bringing down of the - whether he was an army officer, I do not know. I cannot remember the exact words, but it would have been - it was roughly: we are very concerned about it and we would like you to not to talk about it.

Yes, Mr McIntyre.

MR McCLELLAN: Can I just enquire - I have another witness who I must call today because of his travel and other commitments.

MR McINTYRE: I would think no more than 10 minutes. Might I just speak with my friend?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

MR McCLELLAN: Can I just enquire - we will have to sit then to something like 5.30, if it is not inconvenient.

THE PRESIDENT: Our attitude is we have not got much choice.

MR McINTYRE: You said that you were at Maralinga from 56 to 60. Do you recall when it was that you arrived there? Sorry, not Maralinga, at Yalata?  
---My wife joined me in 1957.

You said in your statement you were at Yalata in 1956?  
---Yes.

When was it in 1956, do you recall, that you went there?  
---I went there in June 1956.

You said at page 3 of your statement that you had a lot of contact with Colonel Durance and the security officers and you have talked about them visiting you often up to the time of the main series of firings. You have also told us about the activity of the aircraft that you saw prior to the trials?---Yes.

Would it be a fair comment to say that as far as you could perceive things, there was a noticeable increase in activity both in the air and in terms of contact with Maralinga prior to the trials period commencing in 1956?---Yes, I think so.

I take it from what you have said that your recollection is that your contact with Colonel Durance and the security officers prior to the main series of trials in 1956 was for the purpose of them being satisfied that the Aboriginal persons present at Yalata were there and accounted for and not absent from the site?----Yes, that is the impression I have.

That is speaking about the trials generally in 1956. Do you recall whether there was any increase in activity immediately prior to each of the four detonations at the 56 set of trials?---No, I did not notice any change in between, from one trial to the other.

I take it you recall when the trial series finished in 1956 - you recall when the final explosions took place?  
---Yes, I knew when they were finished.

Did the aircraft activity and the frequency of contact with officers at Maralinga drop off after the trial series finished?---Not immediately. It would have tapered off, yes.

You mentioned the visits to the station by helicopters.

I think you said on a few occasions they dropped in and saw you prior to the main firings. What was the purpose of those visits as you recall?  
---I really do not know. On one occasion they came down and picked up the Reverend Temme and took him up north - I do not know for what purpose.

You have told us about the aircraft that you flew and the searches you conducted for the sacred sites at the stage when the Aborigines were not able to find them for themselves. What is your recollection of the ability or the difficulty or the ease with which you were able to detect movement on the ground from the aircraft? Did you have any problems seeing areas where people had moved or was that an easy thing to see?---You are referring to the problems on the ground more than the air?

Perhaps I will take it back a minute. When you were searching for the sacred sites by searching from the aircraft, were you able to detect evidence of recent movement on the ground?---I am sorry, I do not know really what you are referring to, but - what movement on the ground?

When did you first get your pilot's licence to fly?---In 1952.

When did you first start flying an aircraft around the South Ausrtalian desert area or around the area where you were working?---1957.

When you were searching for these sacred sites, at what altitude would you fly?---Anything from 500 to 1000 feet.

Whilst on those flights, if there was anybody moving on the ground in the vicinity where you were flying, did you ever have any difficulty in seeing them or not?---No, not normally. I mean, if it was a person that - for example, a person that was in camouflaged clothing, you would, but a person with normal clothing - - -

Did you ever see any Aboriginal persons moving over the ground when you were flying this aircraft in any of the searches for the sacred sites?---No.

When you were closer back to Yalata, did you ever see any Aboriginal persons on the ground?---Yes.

In their natural state or in the clothing they were wearing at the time, was there any difficulty in seeing them from the height at which you were flying?---No. Of course in most cases, there was smoke or fires

associated with it and it would attract a person, but generally, no, you would not have any difficulty.

Coming to the aircraft that you saw flying around the area of the mission in 1956 prior to the main series of trials, did you ever have any conversation with any personnel from Maralinga who told you any of the aircraft were being used for recognizance purposes?---No.

Did you ever have any occasion to speak to any of the pilots of the aircraft at all?---I did, but I do not think we discussed any of their movements.

Was there any reference by Colonel Durance or any of the security officers to any aerial surveillance of the countryside at the times they were ringing you to ascertain the whereabouts of the Aboriginal people at Yalata?  
---I cannot recall any.

You mentioned that you thought some of the aircraft that you saw might have been used for recognizance. What was the basis of you thinking that that might have been the case?---I associated it more for the weather data, checking winds and temperatures or something - I do not know.

You mentioned the possibility of recognizance. Was that based on anything that you were told or was that just a possibility which you thought might have been the case?---More a possibility, I would say.

You said that according to the older people at the Yalata area, they said that in their childhood they had moved in the area in the north-west of the state, but they would not go back to the north-west because they would perish. Was that their attitude in 1956 when you arrived at Yalata or was that something which became evident only later on?---I do not recall them ever saying that because I do not recall ever talking to them about this matter back in 1956. I did not seem to discuss it.

I just read to you what my note was of what you said before. It could have been an incorrect note, but is it the case that you now believe from what old people told you that they would not go back to the north-west area because they might perish?---That is my belief, but it includes the younger people also. More so the younger people, I think.

When was it that you first held that belief - was that some knowledge that you acquired between 1956 and 1960?  
---I think mainly while I was involved at the

Maralinga project that we discussed the area more with the chaps that were working there.

When you say the Maralinga project, do you mean the atomic trials?---No, the demolition project.

You have also described the traditional movements of the population at Ooldea. I think you referred to their winter movements to sacred sites in the north-western area. Whilst you were at Yalata from 1956 through to 1960, were you ever aware of any inclination on the part of the people at Yalata to move into the western area of the state, to go back to these sacred sites?---Not on their own. None going back on their own steam, if you get what I mean.

Were you aware of any groups that actually moved with the assistance of transport back into those areas from 1956 through to 1957 or thereafter until you finished at Yalata in 1960?---I know of no groups that moved in prior to 1960, but after 1960, I know groups have went on these expeditions. That is all.

They were expeditions to where?---On the sacred site expeditions. That is the only movement I know of in that area.

You have mentioned Mr MacDougall a couple of times. Did you see much of him from the time you arrived at Yalata in 1956 until 1960?---Yes, I would say we would see him every month or so.

What was his purpose in coming to Yalata?---His main purpose was he had discussions with the superintendent. He used to call in at the station where I was, which is 70 miles apart from the actual mission. He would call in and perhaps just have a yarn.

What was your impression of the purpose of his visit to Yalata itself to see the superintendent; did you understand the visits were for a purpose, or were they just dropping in out of curiosity to have a chat?---Knowing the way Mr MacDougall operated, I think it was just concern on the welfare of the people, checking up who is about and who is missing, or perhaps interstate, or you know, identifying the whereabouts of the people.

Did you get to know him very well yourself?---I had no problems with him.

What is your assessment of him as a person in the job he had? Did he appear to be a competent person, or did he have a lack of knowledge of the matters he was concerned with, or how would you describe his qualifications for the job he was doing?---I think there has never been a man like it. I think his qualifications were great, except that it is a shame that he never documented his experiences to any degree. I think that was mainly a problem.

You mentioned Mr Turner, too, I think, and you described him. What was your impression of Mr Turner when you came across him in Maralinga Village in 1977?---I had known Mr Turner since 1956 and I was quite impressed from the very day I met him as a very competent man and a very interesting man.

Coming to the salvage of items from the village, you said you were told there were hot areas inside the fenced areas and you were told that Aboriginals should not go into those areas. Who is it who told you those things; was that Mr Lucarotti at Woomera or somebody else?---I think Mr John Conlon was the first man to take us around and warn us on any burial sites that were dangerous.

Was it the case that you were told of some areas where you could not go and you were told which areas you could go to?---I do not know if there was any place that he said we could not go. It was a matter of pointing out the problems involved if we were there too often or stayed there too often or stayed there for too long a period.

Were you told you could go inside the fenced areas?---No, he did not tell us that, no.

Were you under the impression that you were not supposed to go inside the fenced areas?---That is right, yes. I do not know of anybody that went in the fenced areas apart for special purposes I described with the digging with Mr Turner.

You described the forward areas and you said that others apart from yourself went to the forward areas. What people were they; were they Aboriginal people, or were they white people - this is during the salvage operation?---They were mainly white people. There were fellows like the chaps - the Department of Lands - that did the survey for locating these dumps. I remember going out with them and showing them where to go.

Were the other people that went to the forward areas people that went there out of apparent curiosity, or people that went there because it was part of their job to go there?---There might have been one or two occasions where people got there in curiosity, but I can remember one incident where we had some farmers up there who brought some material and after tea they shot through and went spotlighting and went around the barrier and out there. That was reported to Woomera immediately.

Where was the barrier?---About 6 miles north of the village.

On the road leading north to Roadside?---Yes.

Did any of the Aboriginal people you were concerned with at any stage ever, out of curiosity or any other reason that you are aware of, proceed north to the forward area past Roadside?---I cannot recall - when you say north, they would have gone north a few hundred metres.

Past Roadside?---Past Roadside. I am trying to think if there was any trip up Emu way or not, but in general I cannot think of any unless it was unbeknowns to me.

Finally, passing to the excavation of the pit with Mr Turner in 1977, who provided the back-hoe for you to do the work with?---It was the community's at that time; it was bought by the community for the job and then sold after the job was finished.

Who asked you to let that hoe be used for the work that Mr Turner was doing at the burial pit?---I do not remember the person, but whoever was in charge of that project.

How long was it used for in the course of that job?---It was only away one day. I took it out in the morning and brought it back that evening. It was only used for several hours out there.

Do you know whether it was monitored at all after it was finished with and before it was returned to you?  
---No, I do not.

I have no further questions.

MR McCLELLAN: I have no questions.

THE PRESIDENT: You are excused. Your evidence is over.

THE WITNESS WITHDREW

MR McCLELLAN: I call Mr Gersden. Your secretary reminds me I have not tendered Mr Dutschke's statement. I shall do that together with two coloured slides and they can be marked RC146.

BENNO HERMAN GERSDEN, sworn:

MR McCLELLAN: Your full name is Benno Gersden?  
---Benno Herman Gersden.

You live in Minoil Road, Kangaroo Island?---That is right.

I think you made a statement in relation to matters within your knowledge and of concern to the commission; is that so?---Yes.

Do you have a copy of the statement there?---Yes.

I wonder if you might get it out.



THE PRESIDENT: I have only one. Could I have the latest edition?

MR McCLELLAN: Your Honour should have the latest edition, I hope, only. It is sworn on 16 November. It is noted on the bottom. I tender that statement. It can be marked RC147.

THE PRESIDENT: I do not think we have it.

MR McCLELLAN: In that statement you indicate you were born in Germany and you describe your early life and you indicate in particular you were trained as a plumber?---That is right.

You came to Australia in 1952. You landed in Adelaide. After a time you apparently went to Western Australia - sorry, you went to Mount Gambier and you worked as a plumber. You later went to Western Australia. In due course you came back to Adelaide and in the early 1960s you found work hard to get because of the credit squeeze that occurred at that time; is that so?---That is right.

You saw advertised a job at Maralinga. You applied for it and you got it and you indicate in paragraph 12 that you were employed, you have been able to confirm from the department's records, at Maralinga from 1961, January of that year, to December 1962?---Yes.

You indicate how you got there. You indicate in paragraph 15 your temperate habits. You then indicate in paragraph 16 that your first job at Maralinga was to do some work at Taranaki? ---That is right.

You were working outside the fence and you say:

- - - putting up galvanized sheeting,  
canteens . . . . . digging  
some trenches.

You indicate that there were people at the time there who were constructing towers and you had lunch with these people and you described the conversation which took place; is that so?---I mentioned - we talked about what the towers were for. We were interested and they said they were going to let some bombs off.

You then describe in paragraph 20 - I am sorry, in paragraph 19 you describe Taranaki as you observed it then. You indicate there that you believe the area was contaminated because there

were people working in and around the fences in protective clothing?---That is right.

Did they have any face protection, respirators?---I do not recall this. My belief that the area was contaminated is only in hindsight. At that time we did not put much thought to it. We just wondered why they were dressed in white overalls and had galoshes on.

Did they have anything on their hands; did they have gloves on?---Sometimes they seemed to have gloves on, yes. They were dressed in some protective gear.

And you were not?---We were not; we had shorts and singlets on.

Were you working in the same area as they were?---Yes.

What, right alongside?---Perhaps 50 yards away.

You describe that you did not receive any instructions on dangers and then you describe this place which you have called Colonel Sanders Folly.

THE PRESIDENT: I suppose a little Kentucky chicken would have been welcome in Maralinga.

MR McCLELLAN: Probably. It is better than Kitten, no doubt.

Where was Colonel Sanders Folly, as you call it; was it very far from Taranaki?---It was through the fence - it was in the forward area.

I have a map here. I wonder if you could help me?---I would like to mention here that at the time I was working there and went to Colonel Sanders Folly I had never seen a map.

I have this plan here which might help you. Maralinga Village is down here, Roadside is up there and Taranaki is up there?---We went through the fence and we travelled along the track more or less in a north-easterly/easterly direction following the sites of the previous explosions. They were visible on our right.

If you were moving east you would have been going generally to the right-hand side of the plan. Can you see the other explosions - Breakaway, Biak, Marcoo, Radje and One Tree? You are indicating you moved from Taranaki out across the top generally in a north-easterly direction, that is, the top of the other sites. How far away from Taranaki did you go? ---I have been trying to recall the distance.

We just followed the track until we got there, but I remember passing quite a number of previous explosion sites and the village was very close to the last one, or the one we considered to be the last one. It might have been 200 or 300 yards away from the last explosion site.

Who gave it the name Colonel Sanders Folly?---I did not recall the name Sanders. When I made my first statement on this I just called it Colonel-somebody-or-another's Folly and I mentioned in that interview to some people from Senator Carrick's office, I think about two years ago, and they gave it the name "Sanders". They had heard of it from other people, apparently, before and they were very interested. It might have been another name, but that is what they told me.

What did you find at this place Colonel Sanders Folly?  
---It was a small village consisting of perhaps a dozen buildings. It had a mess hall, recreation room. It had some quarters and old what we call Nissan huts of round construction.

You had never heard it described as the Kittens area at all?  
---I do not recall that, no.

Apart from the mess and accommodation facilities, were there scientific facilities there?---Yes, there was one building which must have been used for that because we met some people there who were taking things out of that building. We were primarily concerned with the mess hall, with the kitchen and the toilet blocks for salvage reasons, to take things out that were needed. We did not go into every building.

Did you have any reason to believe that Colonel Sanders Folly was anything other than a set of buildings used for accommodation and laboratory purposes?---Not at the time.

What about now?---Now I know a bit different, yes.

What do you know differently now?---Now I believe that what had been hinted at us after I left Colonel Sanders Folly - I made some inquiries, just talking to the chaps. I asked why was it called a folly, why was it abandoned. They said because it got contaminated - it was too close to the detonation area and was - - -

Who told you this?---Just chaps around the place. I could not give you the names.

Were you ever able to confirm that with anyone in authority or command?---No, except when I was talking to the people from Senator Carrick's office, they seemed to be of the same belief.

Who did you speak to from Senator Carrick's office?---Again I cannot give you names. I am fairly bad remembering names. There were three men there.

Was one a Mr Garron?---I honestly could not tell you what their names were, no.

What about Dr Weatherall?---One was a doctor, one appeared to be a scientist and another one appeared to be a politician. That is the way they were talking, the roles they were playing when asking me questions.

Can you remember the name Dr Metherall?---No, I do not. I am sorry. I did write to them. They wrote to me and I have still got correspondence from them.

You described the nature of the duties you carried on and you described the successes you had in designing particular pieces of equipment. In paragraph 28 you say you were never told to be careful nor to

go to a particular place. The only restrictions on you were that you could not get a Land Rover as these were always in high demand. Did you commonly go into the forward area without a specific purpose or not?---That was the only time I went through the fence on these two days. Apart from that, we went to many different places over the two years but never again through a fenced area.

You describe in paragraph 32 your observations of the place you know as Colonel Sanders Folly. You say in paragraph 36 that while you were at Maralinga, you witnessed two big explosions that looked to you like atomic explosions. They were let off on top of the towers at Taranaki and you saw two mushroom-type clouds. How high did these clouds go up, would you be able to tell me?---Do not forget we were nearly 30 miles from the explosion site. They looked huge, they looked big. They looked like the explosion you see on television, the atomic explosions. They were first a ball-like cloud and then another one shooting up through it. The only thing, we did not, in hindsight - it was not the brilliant flash that was associated with - - -

Was it anything like a rocket or similar device taking off and shooting through the clouds?---At the time, I do not know. As I said, both explosions had a secondary effect coming through the big cloud. That went up and up and up.

At the time the explosion went off, were there balloons in the area to test the wind?---If there were, we did not see them.

I take it from your statement these were pretty loud explosions?---Yes. It was like thunder but there was no - the after-effect of sort of a wind blast was fairly mild at that distance.

But there was an after-effect?---Yes, there was some.

You describe in paragraph 38 having described throughout your statement the fact you were able to carry out many trips. You say on some trips you saw Aborigines in the bush but you do not recall where on the range?---Yes.

You say you cannot remember all the trips you had done nor did you always stick to the tracks. You met a lot of Aborigines on your way to the coast when you went fishing but these would have been outside the designated area. I show you this map, the one marked M4. You see on that map, there is Maralinga and there is of course the coast?---There is Yalata.

Yalata mission marked there. The trips that you made in which you saw Aborigines, were any of them made north of Maralinga?---When I first got there, the first year I was more or less a passenger on the vehicle because I was unfamiliar. I was taken along - "Would you like to come?" And I would say, "Yes." I was never sure which direction we went, where we went. I was just told this was such and such.

What about later on when you can tell me of directions?  
---Later on when I was more or less in charge of the trips, we always went to the coast. Sometimes we went as far as Western Australian border, sometimes Ceduna, sometimes Yalata mission or just to go fishing.

Did you ever find Aborigines north of the Nullarbor Plain on these trips?---On that side?

Yes?---Not on these trips. We always found them south of the railway line.

You found them south of the railway line, yes, but what about north of the Nullarbor Plain?---In this area here?

Yes?---Yes, definitely here.

You are pointing to the area on this map between the line that marks the edge of the plain and the railway line?---Yes, just south of Watson. There was one large party, I recall, because we stopped there. It was getting on to dark and there must have been maybe 40, 50 people there altogether.

Were they camped there?---They were camped there. I did not see any vehicles but they had some kangaroos roasting. We stopped on the site for the night. We had something to eat and talked a bit. They indicated that some of them came from thataway - that was from the north.

You are pointing to the north?---Yes, and some came from Yalata.

Did you see Aborigines on other occasions?---I only recall once, that was early in the piece, but I could not tell you where. It must have been somewhere in the Maralinga area.

You are pointing to Maralinga itself north of the railway line. You say there was an occasion when you saw Aborigines in that area?---Yes.

What were they doing, do you recall?---They were just simply walking along, youngish people, probably four or five. We did not stop. At the time I did not think anything of it. I expected to see Aborigines on these trips and we just drove past.

Were they in the prohibited area?---They were in the Maralinga area. We were in the Maralinga area. If that was prohibited to them, I do not know.

Did you report the sighting to anyone?---No. I did not think anything of it. It is only now I have been beginning to question this.

You describe in paragraphs 41 some of your health problems and on into 42 and 43. Then you describe interviews that you had since with various people including some people from Senator Carrick's office?---Yes.

How is your health today, has it improved?---I like to think it is pretty good. I have only been hospitalized once this year.

What has been the problem this year?---Some bleeding, haemorrhaging at night.

Internal?---Internal, yes.

What does the doctor say to you at the moment - are you in good shape?---No, I have not got cancer. It has been checked thoroughly for cancer. I just bleed now and then. There has been no explanation, no satisfactory explanation.

Thank you.

MR JAMES: If I could take you to these explosions you witnessed whilst you were at Maralinga, firstly did everybody at Maralinga come out to witness the explosions?---I could not tell you that.

Most of the people?---I would think so. In our workshop area, we all went outside to have a look.

Was it optional or was there some sort of order?---There was no order.

Did there appear to be any system of checking on the whereabouts of people before the explosion occurred?  
---No.

Were you given any instructions to turn your back on the explosion or anything of that order?---It was suggested that we should not look at it, yes.

Not look?---Not at the first flash, no.

But you in fact did look, I gather?---Yes. I think some had welding goggles on. I think I might have had some goggles on myself.

Welding goggles?---Yes.

You did look at it. You saw no flash?---None of these tremendous flashes that you - - -

That you associate with an atomic bomb?---No.

Indeed in the conversations around the camp, you refer in your statement to a discussion about testing for tactical atomic weapons such as artillery shells?---Yes.

Who did you hear that from?---Again we talked a lot with service people, the lower ranks that is, and there was just this talk going on. They work up front and they said: I think they are going to do such and such. They are doing this. It was never confirmed. Officially we were never told anything. Not by any superior officer or superior civilian personnel. We were never told anything.

Did you ever hear any code name used for these explosions, such as Kittens, Rats, Tims - anything like that? ---No.

No code name at all?---I do not recall them.

How did you know the explosions were going to occur?---The two Taranaki ones?

Yes?---They were a big event. There was long-term preparation for that particular explosion.

They were announced formally and properly around the camp? ---I think it was common knowledge. The towers were built for them. They were huge towers, visible from a distance. I was out there - many people worked out there. That was common knowledge that two atomic bombs would be exploded from the top of these towers.

They did go off, I gather, on the top of the towers? ---I guess so, because there was nothing left of the towers afterwards.

That is where the towers had been?---Yes. I believe previous explosions were also done from towers and some from balloons, where we drove past.

Balloons?---Yes, I think so. That is what we were told at the time.



About a year or so after you had left Maralinga, you got a visit from two Commonwealth policemen?---Yes.

You mentioned in your statement they wanted to know if you were involved in the dumping of things taken from the camp?---Right.

A stockman apparently had found a heap of stuff hidden in the bush that had been dumped?---Yes.

Was any indication given to you as to what stuff had been dumped and whereabouts?---Not really. They did not go into detail. When I did question them, they said some tyres and such things. They did not tell me exactly what was there.

They did not indicate whereabouts it had been dumped?---Not whereabouts, and how much, no.

For how long were you interviewed in relation to that?---For half an hour.

I think things changed a bit when you were interviewed by the three men who came after your contact with Senator Carrick?---Yes.

How long did that interview concentrate on Colonel Sanders Folly?---Most of the time.

Which is?---About an hour, an hour and a half.

Did there appear to be any interest in any other question except that place?---Not really. I was very disappointed when I left.

Because the reason why you had contacted was your own medical condition?---Right, yes.

The vomiting of blood you had experienced at Maralinga? ---And all my health problems since, yes. They were not interested, no.

Had the vomiting of blood and internal haemorrhaging continued from when you were at Maralinga until today? ---I would not say regularly, no, but it certainly has continued, yes.

I have nothing further.

MR EAMES: I have no questions.

MR McINTYRE: You described this area as Colonel Sanders Folly as having, I think, a water tower?---Yes.

And some Nissen huts?---Yes.

How many huts were there?---There could be about a dozen buildings. I did not go into all of them. I did not count them. It was a medium sized camp.

Do you ever recall an area being described to you by the name of Camp 43?---It seems to ring a bell, but I cannot really place that.

Do you ever recall, as you drove north-west from Roadside up towards the forward area that there might have been a water tower with some Nissen huts within a couple of miles of leaving Roadside on the right of the track?---No - you mean one of the earlier construction camps? I know that one and it is not that one.

It is not that one?---No, definitely not.

Are you quite sure it was beyond the Taranaki fence?---Yes, it was a long way through the fence - it was a far way out.

A few miles, or what?---Several miles, yes.

It is not Emu you are talking about?---No, Emu was - - -

It is a few miles from the Taranaki fence?---Yes.

I take it a few miles from the previous bomb sites or the sites of the tests?---It was in sight of a bomb site.

But it was a few miles from the bomb site, was it?---Which bomb site are you talking about?

Was it a few miles from the closest bomb site?---No, it was at most a mile - it was within sight. It is very difficult to judge distance. It is all flat there.

Did you ask anybody as to why it was there, or what it was there for?---Yes, it was explained to me that this particular Colonel thought he would cut down travelling time and station everybody who worked out front in that village.

Were you ever told that the British stationed people up front at Roadside for the 1957 tests to avoid the need to travel back to the village?---No, I do not know anything about that one.

Do you recall how long it was prior to you seeing Colonel Sanders Folly that you were told that it was built; did they say how many years it had been there for?---I do not know how long it has been there, no.

Was there anybody else with you when you saw this area?  
---Yes, one man.

What was his name, do you recall?---Alf was his first name;  
his second name I never knew.

Who was the range commander there at the time that you were  
there, do you recall?---No, I never met him.

You say they changed every six months?---Fairly frequently,  
yes.

Who was the person who was your immediate superior?---Pop Griffiths -  
Les Griffiths.

I have no further questions.

MR McCLELLAN: I have no further questions.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Mr Gersden, you may step down.

THE WITNESS WITHDREW

THE PRESIDENT: We will adjourn until 10 am tomorrow.

AT 5.30 PM THE MATTER WAS ADJOURNED  
UNTIL TUESDAY, 20 NOVEMBER 1984