

# The Canberra Times

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## **Drunken welfare workers 'embarrass' Aborigines**

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DARWIN, Friday. — Tribal Aborigines were often "saddened and embarrassed" by the drunken behaviour of white welfare workers in Aboriginal reserves, the Select Committee on the Alcohol Problems of Aborigines was told in Darwin today.

The chaplain of the Anglican Church Missionary Society, Canon N. B. Butler, told the committee that in the past, too many drunken welfare workers had been allowed on the reserves.

"European staff who' display signs of alcohol abuse should not be tolerated on reserves", he said.

"So much bad behaviour that is alcohol-related and is destructive to these persons' welfare efforts".

He said some government works being carried out on Aboriginal reserves were "hindered" 'from being completed because the workers concerned have not been willing to forego drink in the Aboriginal communities when asked to do so by the Aborigines.

Canon Butler was one of 10 people who gave evidence to the committee today, during the committee's second day of open session in Darwin.

### **Eight MPs on Committee**

The committee is made up of eight MPs including former Ministers for Aboriginal Affairs, Mr Les Johnson (Lab, NSW), Mr Bryant (Lab, Vic), and Mr Wentworth (Lib, NSW).

Canon Butler said he supported calls made yesterday in submissions by government departments that Aboriginal communities be encouraged to tackle the alcohol problems among their own people.

At yesterday's hearings four government departments unanimously agreed that a government-sponsored program of aid to help customary tribal law deal with the problem was the best way of combatting Aboriginal alcoholism.

Spokesman for the Departments of Health, Aboriginal Affairs, the Northern Territory and Attorney-General's all proposed that the Federal Government institute some sort of "self-help" system for Aborigines.