THE STORY OF LOOMA

by

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KEY
1. Bulldozed Camp
2. Billabong Camp
3. Djigida Camp
4. Floodplain

SCALE 1:100,000

Kilometres

DRAWN BY MARIE MEGAW

MAP OF LOOMA AREA
Looma village, with Looma babies to right side of hill in background.
ABSTRACT

Looma is one of a number of Aboriginal settlements established in line with the Federal policy of Aboriginal Affairs introduced by the Labour Government in 1972. It is a community of 330 people, situated on the Fitzroy River 120 kilometres south east of Derby. Apart from six whites, temporarily resident in caravans, the community members are largely full-blood Aborigines linked by kin ties, and their recent displacement from the Kimberley cattle industry.

The focus of this primarily descriptive study has been on an examination of the aims of the Federal policy makers and the aims of the residents with reference to community development - how these aims interact and on the part played by administrative bureaucrats in this interaction.
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THE LOOMA STORY

as told by MICHAEL MAUNDIE

Alright he started from somewhere round Christmas Creek (1) -
early days. Early days that Blue Tongued Lizard (Looma)
was travelling and everything was flooded this area.
Early days before. We never born that day. Nobody was
not here. This places was all full (of water).

There was a bird. You can't see him around here (but)
he's around here. He had five kids too. He come from
Dea Dea. He had kids too - in that hill and four living.
Well that thing (hill) been eaten up by the water. Alright
he tell that Blue Tongued Lizard - you'll have to take
your kids away because I got no room. He tell them. That
little bird tell him. I got my family here too. You'll
have to go.

He (Looma) look from there. This one (Looma Hills) was
standing long way - long way. Alright he start swimming
all the way - place to place - right up to Cherrabun.
Go Go (2). Long way.

Coming up close and he lost one over there. Right in this
station Liveringa. Right up to this hill here (where)
Djandamarra (3) was. From there he swim right across here.
When he was close, coming to this hill here, well he get
tired. He tell them kids off. "I get tired. You blokes
get off from here. I'm just about getting tired from swimming across." So he go down there and put the kids up there - over there now - Looma. For himself he stopping down there - the Mother.

Them blokes - the littlest one, he start crying for him. He's facing a different way. He's facing north-west. He's like that see. (Demonstrates crouching position with arms over face). He don't want to see his mother drown see(4).

(1) Station in south east Kimberleys.
(2) Stations between Christmas Creek and Liveringa.
(3) Local mythic hero.
(4) The Looma babies are now represented by rocks on the Looma Hills, while the mother is a large rock on the plain below.
CHAPTER ONE

THE SETTING

Looma is an Aboriginal village situated between the Grant Range (or Looma Hills as they are termed by the local population) and the Fitzroy River. (See Map). The total area of 7,800 hectares which was excised from the Liveringa Station lease and a stock route, is largely occupied by rocky outcrops and flood plains. Approximately thirteen kilometres away is the small town of Camballin, which is virtually a company town for the Australian Land and Cattle Company. Owning seven stations in the Kimberleys, A.L.C.C.O. is the only economic enterprise of any significance in the area. However, the Looma people have limited interaction with Camballin, both in terms of employment and in the delivery of goods and services. The nearest town of significance to the community is Derby, which is 128 kilometres to the north west. Derby, 2,640 kilometres north of Perth, is the administrative centre of the West Kimberleys, servicing a population of approximately 5,500. Being on a minor road, forty kilometres from the beef highway, linking Derby, Broome and Fitzroy Crossing, the community is quite isolated, with few casual visitors and tourists passing through (c.f. Fitzroy Crossing where virtually all cross Kimberley traffic halts). On the other hand, the community is well serviced with roads to other communities and there is considerable interaction with neighbouring Aboriginal groups.
BACKGROUND

The conceptualization and subsequent implementation of an Aboriginal village scheme on this site can be traced to the interplay between changing circumstances of the Kimberley cattle industry, changing expectations and aspirations of the local Aboriginal population and changing Government policy with respect to Aboriginal Affairs.

This area of the Fitzroy River was first developed by Europeans at the turn of the century. Initially, the land was used for sheep grazing and produced high returns on the settlers' investments. The old homesteads present in the area today reflect the early prosperity of their owners. Liveringa Station itself was established in 1882, soon after the Kimberley district was first explored by Alexander Forest. Over time "it developed into one of the state's largest sheep and cattle stations. .... By 1912 the station was estimated to be stocked with 100,000 sheep and 15,000 shorthorn cattle." (135:52) It was a showplace and early visited by the Governor of Western Australia and other dignitaries. Later, like most stations in the area, Liveringa changed to cattle grazing alone for economic reasons.

The Aborigines indigenous to the area came from that group now identifying themselves as the Nyigina tribe. However, their numbers and social cohesion were quickly reduced by the effects of pacification, introduced illnesses and cultural annihilation. Over time many shifted into the
towns, intermarried with other language groups and neglected the group's religious duties in relation to the land.

At the same time, Aborigines were emerging regularly from the Desert regions to the south. At Looma today these people are identified as the Walmadjari and Mangala tribes. While the Nyigina were struggling to survive the changes attendant on the white man's arrival, these Desert people chose to come out of their own country, which was then, and remains, virtually untouched by European endeavour. They came to work and settle on pastoral properties right across the southern Kimberleys.

Kolig (See Refs 17-22), in his studies of the move as a whole, concluded that the reasons motivating individual's movements must remain enigmatic. In the traditional worldview there was no place for curiosity - life was a fixed cycle as set down in the mythic past. Perhaps with the decimation of the indigenous populations along the Desert fringes, an always present pressure from the Desert people to move into surrounding more hospitable areas could have become effective.

The region that these Desert Aborigines left has been described by one writer as "probably the most undependable and impoverished habitat anywhere in the world where people have succeeded in living entirely off the land". (14:145) However, they were not seeking the land per se but rather the white man and his endeavours. "They were more intrigued by the prospects Europeans and their goods were expected
to offer. The white man was seen as a source of supply in similar terms as the land previously."

Aboriginal life came to centre on the fixed points of European settlement. Under the umbrella of European protection, indigenes and migrants achieved a *modus vivendi* over time. In many cases the indigenes, lacking in their own social cohesion and religious knowledge, became culturally absorbed or, as Koging terms it, 'Walmadjarized' by the Desert Aborigines.

Gradually their ties to stock work and pastoral properties became integrated into the social structure and value system. The focal social unit now became the 'mob'. This was comprised of those Aborigines living and working on the one station, e.g. the Liveringa mob. This was likely to include people of differing backgrounds, but they were able to live collectively under the authority of both religious and work-oriented leaders. In general, their social mores and religious practices were of little interest to the station management so long as the station work was performed as required. Thus, the group might arrange for initiation ceremonies and other occasions necessitating the gathering of people from several mobs to be held at a time convenient to the management. Such compromises were seen as an essential part of the reciprocal relationship they had developed with the white man. Over the years it became obvious that the whites were as much dependent on their presence for labour as they were dependent on the whites.
They had little reason to suppose that the time might come when the management was ready or able to dispense with their services. Exile from the property the mob had come to regard as home seemed impossible. While the newcomers and the indigenes had lost their day to day dependence on the land for survival, they had not lost their religious and emotive ties.

The Desert people had had to work hard at the justification of their presence and utilization of land that patently was not their country. The institutionalized means available to such a group for the annexation of new land have been described by Kolig (18:22). Thus where the indigenes had neglected their religious duties vis-a-vis the land and allowed the Law to become weak, the Desert people had a right, and even a duty, to take on the performance of these necessary tasks. This was the case in the region around Looma and the lack of any forceful opposition from the Nyigina made the task the easier.

Then, by means of referring to common mythical ancestors, those differing language groups on one station were able to establish a common bond. "Those people sharing a genesis myth are in a sense related to each other that though not being as pronounced as kinship bonds is supposed to pave the way for good rapport." (22:37). The myth of Looma - the story of the Blue Tongued Lizard and her children - is such a myth. As myths are usually vague in detail and common in characters across wide areas it is not hard for elders to manipulate them to prove a common
origin. The fusing effect of this is obvious in present day Looma. Thus they are referred to as the Loomas by outsiders and the Looma T-shirt sold at the local store is popular with all.

A further and to the Aborigine, an unquestionable means of establishing a right to new land was through the birth of children in the new area. To quote Kolig, "A person conceived in mythological terms at or near a site of religious import does not only retain a close linkage to this site for the rest of his life but he also has an inalienable right to the land surrounding his conception place. Due to this principle, the offspring of Desert Aborigines conceived in the southern Kimberleys possess a title to these lands, which they confer to the collectivity of their kinsmen." (22:38).

Also marking a group's right to a land area are the deceased. While not mourning for individuals, the group has ties to the land its ancestors have occupied and are buried on. At the move to the Looma site, the people marked the occasion by transferring the bones of a recently deceased to the new location. "The intention was clear: to make manifest the group's affiliation with the new abode." (22:40).

For all these reasons then, the Aborigines of the southern Fitzroy River area felt they belonged to pastoral properties and the pastoral properties in turn 'belonged'
to them. The occupancy of the white man was not questioned. Obviously he did not have ties of the same nature as theirs, but they were willing to help him run his stock in return for the goods and services he provided. In fact, some of the most recently arrived Desert Aborigines have difficulty in comprehending the invader image of the white man as he was well established in the area at the time of their arrival.

Over time, however, the mutually satisfactory integration of white and black was eroded. The Aborigines discovered money and Government and came to believe that this knowledge had been deliberately kept from them by station whites. Pensions were paid as from 1960 - initially to the Station management and then later to the individuals concerned. (Perhaps because of their predilection to view the world as unchanging even today some of the older people at Loo ma believe that their parents' pension money, which was not collected before they died, is stored in a station office somewhere). Government was felt to be appreciative of the Aborigines' work efforts, but the station managements were believed to be keeping them from many of the goods the Government wanted them to have. A realistic base to this belief is found in the fact that Aboriginal wages prior to 1969 were lower in the Kimberleys than anywhere else in Australia. It was not until the late 1950's that some stations paid money at all. (29:115) Governments, though but vague entities in most minds, were felt
to recognize and respect Aboriginal culture in contrast to the local whites.

From interviews with Looma residents it appears that Liveringa station at one time had a reputation for being a place for a good 'handout' and a proper pension. Several of the pensioners said they shifted across from other stations in the area for better tucker and 'handout'. This would have been in the late 1960's.

In early 1969, the Pastoral Award came into effect throughout Australia. Guaranteeing the basic wage to Aboriginal station workers as it did, this had a drastic effect on settlement patterns throughout the Kimberleys. Stations had to rationalize their use of labour and could no longer afford to support the station mob. The retrenching of labour was widespread. The onflow of this is seen in the increase in the Aboriginal population of the town of Fitzroy Crossing. Prior to 1969 it was approximately 200 people. Presently it is about 500 people.

At Liveringa the effects were not immediate. In 1969, the property was bought by the Australian Land and Cattle Company. Though the projects of this American-based enterprise have had little success to date, the management was interested in at least the appearance of efficiency. Understandably, they were not content to support the Liveringa group for long at the cost of this. However, while not encouraging the continued presence of non-workers, little was done to force them to leave. The majority of
household heads was receiving pensions and therefore self supporting. They were recognized to have some right to remain in their home station as long as they made no significant demands on the station management for time or services.

Pressure on this limited tolerance of A.L.C.C.O. management came to bear early in 1971. A neighbouring station, where the resident mob was highly prestigious because of its religious activities and knowledge, took on a new manager. His work expectations were such that Aboriginal compliance would have hindered the observance of their religious duties. Aboriginal moves to state their objections were met with by the dismissal of the workers. Aborigines from the station where the manager had previously worked were then brought in to do the work. Being from a different language group and not tied to the resident mob by kinship, their arrival pressured the resident mob to leave. In effect exiles from what they saw as the grounding of their existence, the core of this group sought refuge at Liveringa. Mainly pensioners, the group included a charismatic religious leader of high repute throughout the Kimberleys.

The Liveringa management now had a camp of roughly sixty people close to the homestead. They were mainly pensioners and contributed little to the economic enterprise. To the management they were an unwanted responsibility in terms of health, mail, supplies and schooling for the children. Having no legal obligation to cater to the
group, A.L.C.C.O. pressured the camp to move elsewhere. Access to the station store was denied to all but workers, mail for many of the newcomers was returned 'address unknown' and, in general, assistance to any Aboriginal activity was denied. These tactics had little success. It had been a rude awakening for Aborigines to discover they could be forced off their land. This newly amalgamated group was determined to stay. Their camp was perceived as a last Aboriginal outpost in the territory to which they could lay claim. It was also a highly significant and prestigious religious site. If they left this they would have nowhere to go. Without the land and its attendant security and prestige they were helpless. Certainly they could not and would not contemplate a return to the Desert but all other land was occupied or otherwise unsuitable.

The leaders recognized that the group and their own power were likely to disintegrate if they shifted to Derby or Fitzroy Crossing. To quote from Kolig, "The group would encounter serious difficulties in re-establishing such a prestige at another place. Other areas are covered by the sphere of influence of other important religious communities, who jealously watch over their status and would not allow another group to establish there, its specific blend of religiousity." (19:5). More than that, however, in the leaders' view they had a duty to stay and keep the Law going and the land attended to.

The conflict came to a head in late 1971 when the management bulldozed the camp. The reason given by A.L.C.C.O.
for this was that it was a public health measure demanded on many occasions by the relevant authority. However, Aboriginal feelings ran very high over the incident. Apart from the indignity and hardship of having their homes destroyed, sacred objects were treated in a cavalier fashion by the whites involved in the operation. These included some sacred objects brought across in the exodus from the neighbouring station. Their significance is recorded in Killer's memory of how he warned the station manager at the time, "we get killed no matter .... we can get killed by the white man for that secret I tell him. Very carefully." (see Appendix I: )

Some indication of the meaning of such a statement is given by Kolig. "Sacred objects represent a kind of certificate, visible and tangible, to their makers and owners and testify to their right to be present where their sacred objects are .... such objects may not be removed from one place lightly. They 'belong' to a place." (18 : 65).

The Aboriginal reaction to this occasion is given in Appendices I and II where Killer Narga and Freddie Johnson, the present political leaders at Looma give their stories of the development of Looma. Both men in their stories refer to the management's offer to help build up a new camp. Their scepticism at the offer is obvious. The wet was about to come and the need for shelter was urgent. At one stage the management offered to truck the whole
population to a place they had found for them where they would help them set up camp. However, the group declined the offer, determined to stay on their own land. As Killer says, "No we wouldn't go. That not my country. That for the different language. That's their country. We're in our own country ... Don't touch these people. I holdem right here in the creek." (Appendix I: )

Recognizing the power of Government and the possibility of sympathy for their cause, they looked for a spokesman. Someone fluent in English and acquainted with the ways of the white Australian, who would be able to successfully communicate their story. Freddie Johnstone was their first choice. Born right out of the area he nonetheless had Nyigina ties through his father and his wife. Raised by a white donkey-team owner, he had established a reputation among Aborigines as a mediator. He had been to Perth to speak as a representative of the Kimberley people on the Native Welfare Consultative Committee. He was also a Councillor on the Derby Reserve and used as a consultant by the Native Welfare Department in Derby.

A note was sent in to him at Derby via the Native Welfare Department. As his own story reflects he accepted the call for his help with enthusiasm. With the support of Native Welfare Officers he succeeded in obtaining aid for the camp. Initially, this took the form of assistance with buying food and obtaining pension and unemployment benefit entitlements. The Native Welfare Department,
quite apart from the Aborigines' desire to remain, were not anxious to see the group shifted as it would overtax existing facilities at Derby or any other possible centre. Early in 1972, the camp split so that the school age children could attend school at Camballin. The camp they set up on the outskirts of the town was without facilities and their presence was resented by the townspeople. This initially involved 14 children and 14 adults though, over time, it grew to number forty people. It also became a centre for those Aborigines who had taken on a commitment to fundamentalist Christianity. This had been proselytized by a Protestant mission established at Fitzroy Crossing in 1951. While it had had little success, the few converts were expected to disown all traditional culture. The leader of this group had originally backed the demands of the other Aborigines. However he came to occupy a marginal position after the split into Camballin/Djigada camps.

Kolig describes this man in his Luma Report as "a prestigious elder who has traditional ties to the Liveringa/Myroodah area. He has, however, lived for a fairly long time at Fitzroy Crossing and at the present time is resident at Camballin not Djigada. He has averted from Aboriginal traditional beliefs, and is a prominent figure as a representative of Protestant Christianity in the Southern Kimberleys. Since the cohesion of the Djigada group is strongly based on criteria of traditional Aboriginal religion (and in the group's active adherence to such
traditions), (he) necessarily remains in the position of an outsider." (19: 2)

For some time the game was at a stalemate. The people were being minimally maintained by their pooled resources and the health and welfare assistance of local government departments, but there was no movement towards a resolution of the situation.

Then towards the end of 1972, a local social worker with the newly inaugurated Community Welfare Department submitted detailed reports to the Aboriginal Affairs Planning Authority. These set out the present circumstances of the group and their aspirations. He made several recommendations as to possible action. At this stage there were approximately 130 people involved as the leaders had sent out word to kin on surrounding stations asking for support in their stand. Individuals were approached for their skill in talking English and people in general were asked to back the Liveringa people with their presence.

The social worker noted that the A.L.C.C.O. management had "indicated their unwillingness to co-operate substantially in anything which encourages the continued existence of Aborigines in the area." (C.W.D. files) He recommended that dependent on an anthropological study as to the legitimacy of the land claim, approximately 40 hectares of land should be excised from the Liveringa lease. The site recommended was that requested by the group - Looma. They had marked the place with a stake and taken the social worker to see it. He recommended that submissions should be made to the State Housing Commission regarding
a village scheme for the area.

The advantages from a welfare point of view were seen to include:
a) Less people torn between two cultures
b) No hotel
c) Effectiveness of internal social controls
d) Effectiveness of internal welfare system.

Erich Kolig, then an anthropologist with the Aboriginal Affairs Planning Authority in Derby, followed up these reports with one - the Luma Report previously referred to - stressing the legitimacy of the land claim from the Aboriginal perspective and the likelihood of their continued residence in the area. The claim was not for economic purposes and the people involved were largely pensioners and their dependents. Rather the claim was to allow the continued pursuit of Aboriginal traditions. The group was characterized as a cohesive unit with recognized authority and a stable social structure, who anticipated their occupation of Looma as a means of carrying out and perpetuating their life style.

These reports eventually fell on fertile soil. Western Australia had a State Labour Government and then in November 1972, Labour came to power federally, bringing with them a radically different Aboriginal policy. As the Looma people remember, all the big Government men from Perth and Canberra came to visit them. They seemed to understand the problem, backed their decision to stay put and promised
to help. Freddy Johnson went to Canberra and put the
group's story to Mr Bryant, the then Minister for Aboriginal
Affairs. At the same time, the Liberal Member for the
Kimberleys, Mr Allan Ridge, was publicly pressuring for
Government action by speaking out against the deplorable
conditions of the Camballin camp, which were described as
a disease threat to the townspeople. (See West Aust.: 7th
April 73). The political pressure precipitated Government
action.

Things started to happen. On 3rd June 1973, it was
announced that:
"An area of 19,400 acres about 80 miles south of Derby
has been given to Aborigines for a tribal village complex.
The land includes sacred tribal grounds.

Announcing the project yesterday, the Minister for
Community Welfare, Mr Thompson said that the complex
would be for the Looma people on Liveringa station.

The village would conform with their needs and personal
wishes ... Mr Thompson thought it was necessary for the
Looma and all other Aboriginal groups to return to the
areas that were significant in their culture ....

The Looma village is high on the list of State Housing
priorities for the coming year." (From The West Australian:
3.6.73: 1)

Approximately six months after this the people moved
their camp over to the Looma site from Djigida Creek
(see map). Bores were put down, a sacred storehouse was built and State Housing commenced their building project. The wishes of the people had been more than satisfied.

In July 1974, a Projects Officer was employed by the Community, together with his wife as a store assistant. A store was opened on site. The envisaged role for the Projects Officer was to assist in the development of economic projects at Looma and to manage and train personnel for the administrative tasks flowing on from the realization of the village scheme.

In November 1974, those of the Camballin camp who had held out from merging with the Djigida group, alleging that they could not live as Christians with those 'black-fellows', also moved to Looma.

This, then, was the background to the development of Looma.
CHAPTER TWO

AN ACTION PERSPECTIVE

The white man has done much to kill the culture of the Aboriginal but it is worth preserving. (6: 10)

We want them to take their rightful place in Australian society with their rights of self determination restored as equal citizens in word and deed and opportunity, entitled to the same respect and dignity that we as a community should accord each other and indeed all fellow human beings. (6: 22)

We still don't know what is best for Aboriginals. This must be studied .... I think within our Department we have many dedicated men who do take an interest in the question. (6: 9)

Our aim quite simply is to restore to the Aboriginal people their lost rights of self determination and to close the social, economic and political gap between our two communities. (6: 51)

The above are a selection of policy statements in the field of Aboriginal Affairs, made during the term of office of the Labour Government in Canberra from 1972 to 1975. These and similar statements give rise to questions such as 'Who are Aboriginals?', 'What is culture?', 'What is self determination?' and 'What is Australian society?'. Perhaps most importantly, given that Governmental policy is administered by public servants, 'What is the scope for bureaucratic interpretation as to the 'meaning' of such statements?"
To cite an example, after much debate within the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, the final definition adopted as to self-determination was, "Aboriginal communities deciding the pace and nature of their future development within the legal, social and economic restraints of Australian society". (quoted in 11:14) What does this mean in operational terms? It is a basic presupposition of this study that much of current policy regarding Aboriginals and its subsequent administration suffers from a failure to grasp that the concept of society is an abstraction from the ongoing process of social interaction. Thus societal restraints are not necessarily fixed and knowable entities, but rather the ever changing outcome of social interaction.

It is not the purpose of this study to evaluate present solutions to the 'Aboriginal problem' but rather to seek increased understanding of what the problem is through the use of a distinctive sociological perspective. This has been termed an action perspective (See 32) and is one that takes social reality to be socially constructed, socially sustained and socially changed through social interaction. It is a perspective that rejects the use of the methods of the natural sciences in order to get at knowledge of social reality - that rejects the treatment of human action as if it responds to forces in the same way that the subject matters of the natural sciences do.
Berger points out that a social problem occurs "when something in society does not work the way it is supposed to according to official interpretations." (1:49) In these terms, Aborigines are a problem because they are so obviously different in their circumstances from what we take to be the norm for Australians - they are ill-housed, poor, undereducated and underemployed. And what is more their distinctiveness as a group by virtue of their blackness causes us to question the taken-for-granted-view of Australia as a Lucky Country, where there is a fair go for all. To question the image of Australia as the land of opportunity, where none need be poor but those that seek and strive may become rich.

For a long time the way round this problem was largely to forget the presence of a racially defined group within Australia. (See 36) During the sixties, for various reasons, this faction became both less necessary for the powerful to support and harder to maintain. One of the aims of the Labour Government on coming to power was to validate the above myth with regard to all Australians and they stressed the inclusion of Aborigines in this validation. This has been reflected in the allocation of relatively large sums of money to Aboriginal housing, land, education, health and welfare. Another of the aims of the Labour Government was to encourage the acceptance of cultural diversity within Australia. With regard to Aboriginals this has been reflected in talk of encouragement of "Aboriginal initiative, independence and identity
as never before." (7 : 4)

The existence of these two distinct themes in current policy has led to a progress/preservation bind on the part of many planners and administrators. It is a bind that has recurred in various forms throughout the history of Aboriginal policy in Australia. An action approach would posit that the problem is not to decide on progress or preservation but to understand why the problem is seen in these dichotomous terms. The sociological problem is not to study the best choice or mix between progress and preservation but rather to seek to understand how policy makers, administrators and Aborigines actually interact socially. Such an approach is one based on phenomenology rather than positivism. Here the key to understanding is taken to be the perceptions man has of his external reality rather than reality itself.

Anthropology in the tradition of Radcliffe Brown and defined by him as comparative sociology, shows clearly how far from understanding the observer will be if he imposes his own meaning systems on observed behaviour patterns. Meanings are social facts given man by his existence in society. Socialization into shared value patterns helps in this process but society is not a static entity handed down from generation to generation. The meaning of social reality can be socially changed. All social reality is a dynamic human construction. It
is never fixed and permanent though at some times and places it can be more so than at others.

Whitlam on the 6th April, 1973, stated "The basic object of my Government's policy is to restore to the Aboriginal people of Australia their lost power of self determination in economic, social and political affairs." (quote in 6 : 12) Such a policy appears to have been formulated against widespread questioning of both the rationale and the effectiveness of assimilationist policy. Concomitantly there was an increasing availability of the results of grounded research conducted under the auspices of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, which had been established in the early sixties. These efforts highlighted both the history and the contemporary nature of Aboriginal interaction with the wider society. In particular the insights of C.D. Rowley proved to be incisive and persuasive. He is here quoted at length to point to the genesis of much current Aboriginal policy.

"... social change occurs as a result of decisions made by groups and individuals in response to new situations - a process far too complex for administrative management .... The special activities of government dealing with Aboriginals should be confined to activities arising from Aboriginal requests ... Aboriginals have special group needs related to patterns of belief and to social penalties suffered by those of Aboriginal appearance in 'white Australia'" (29 : 387-8) but policy "has to take into account how social change occurs; and it has to wait for Aboriginal groups to work out their own ways of responding to genuine opportunities." (29 : 418)
This fits very much into an action perspective in stressing interaction, belief systems and the importance of man's actions. However, a lot of this focus has been lost in the transformation to practical guidelines. This is in line with a long-standing tendency of policy makers with social problems of all varieties. This tendency is to reify and absolutize the concepts and theories of the social sciences and to use them in much the same way as the findings of the physical sciences might be put to practical use.

Such reification then serves to force matters under consideration into rigid either/or dichotomies, where experts are qualified to advise of the best choice between possible alternatives. This style of thought is so much part of the world-taken-for-granted that it is hard to question it as anything but natural. It is as much apparent in the work of social scientists as in the practical uses to which their findings are put. To quote Jack Douglas: "Absolutist thought is a fundamental part of Western thought - of moral thought and rational thought" ... (10 : 39) In moral thought it is apparent in all such arguments as "I have no choice", "It is a matter of principle" and "It is the will of God." In rational thought it is apparent in the increasing activities of social planners and the increasing obeisance paid by the rest of us to their absolute knowledge gained through rigorous application of 'scientific standards'. However, it is not all obeisance. Jack Douglas refers to
"the growing danger of technological tyranny in the scientific-technological society". (10:40) He and others such as Berger(1) and Silverman(32) are part of a growing move to force those subscribing to a faith in the expertise of science, to debate the phenomenologist's insistence on the ultimate subjectiveness of social reality. They are developers of a new paradigm within the social sciences which does not seek just to modify the old but to displace it. It questions the definition of science, it questions the validity of methods used by social scientists and it questions the Durkheimian notion of supra-individuality in social reality and its analysis. It questions the thesis that it is possible to know more in the abstract than what is known in the particular. It questions the notion that knowledge of the total will come through a steady accretion of empirical studies following a prioridetermination as to methods - like old-ladies-putting-together-a-quilt-to use Wright Mill's analogy. (41:142)

For most of this century sociological thought has run in positivistic deterministic tracks, which took for granted the objective reality of social life. Wright Mill's classic, 'The Sociological Imagination' (1973) unveiled clearly that the two major schools of sociological thought operating in a positivistic tradition - the Grand Theorists on the one hand and the empiricists on the other - together ensured that not too much was learned about man
and society because of the limitations of the framework used to seek knowledge.

This is perhaps best illustrated with regard to Australian Aboriginals by a brief examination of anthropological studies on the subject. As already stated, the structural functionalist approach of social anthropology has always recognised the impossibility of imposing the researcher's own meaning systems on the social constructions of those belonging to different societies. The first task has always been to establish the meaning systems of others in order to achieve societal understanding. To this end the methods are primarily those of observation and recording of the ongoing process of social interaction. By those in other disciplines this is often seen as the chief failure of social anthropology in any claims it might like to make to scientific status. It is unable to control and strain data through experimental settings and as a result the writings of anthropologists are often seen as interesting renditions of exotica but not science.

Yet Radcliffe Brown, who openly acknowledges his debt to Comte and Durkheim, aimed to establish anthropology as a science in the mould of the natural sciences. (see 28 : Introduction) His aim for scientific standing was very much influenced by his rejection of the forays into ethnographic writings by the evolutionists and diffusionists in search of data to support their apriori
formulations as to the nature of society. These armchair musings on the nature of man and their air of fantasy were a strong argument for rigorous controls on data collection and use.

As Burridge (5:51) points out, Radcliffe-Brown in many ways remains the most influential theoretician with regard to Aboriginal studies and it is interesting to look back on the conceptions he outlines in "Structure and Function in Primitive Society" (1952). He stresses that the concepts of 'society' and 'culture' are not to be conceived as some kind of discrete entity. Rather the concern of the anthropologist is the process of social life.

"The process itself consists of an immense multitude of actions and interactions of human beings, acting as individuals or in combinations or groups. Amidst the diversity of the particular events there are discoverable regularities, so that it is possible to give statements or descriptions of certain general features of the social life of a selected region... A statement of such significant general features of the process of social life constitutes a description of what may be called a form of social life. In comparative sociology we have to deal theoretically with the continuity of, and with changes in, forms of social life." (28:4)

Though the methods he advocates are ahistorical, he stresses that this does not imply a rejection of historical explanation. Rather he rejects what he terms 'pseudo-historical' speculations with regard to non-literate societies where no full and reliable written record is available.
Much of the above would be compatible with a phenomenological approach but this tendency is counterbalanced by the setting of this scheme of interpretation within a systems framework. For Radcliffe Brown, human social systems were to be understood by "means of the three fundamental and connected concepts of 'process', 'structure' and 'function'." (28 : 14)

The subject matter of anthropology was such that there could be no acceptance of social facts as universal and 'thinglike', but rather as always relative. At the same time, the drive to abstract - to talk in terms of systems and their adaptations - led to an oversocialized, passive view of man. Though his fieldwork methods allowed him to appreciate man the actor, the description of these observations via his theoretical framework left only man the puppet.

Radcliffe Brown spent time in Australia during the 1920's at Sydney University. Since then his students and their students have conducted quite extensive research into the social process of Aboriginal life. The data collected have been considerable but they have been collected largely to the end of filling in gaps in an accepted theoretical structure. This structure has been developed over time but not radically questioned. This has been especially so with regard to resolving the recognized tension between society as an ongoing and changing process of interaction and society as an abstracted thinglike
system. The time devoted by researchers to arguments as to whether a reported social fact is really a part of traditional Aboriginal culture reflects the drive to capture social reality absolutely.

Burridge states this well when he writes:

"One of the inherent sources of confusion in anthropology is that once a people has been identified and written about they become fixed in the printed word, pinned to a book like a butterfly in a drawer ... Yet human beings are forever curious, experimenting in new ways, adopting the customs of others, mis-remembering the past." (5:65)

Over time Aboriginal culture has become "not simply an abstraction but a solid lump of stuff with form and boundaries. Which is precisely what culture is not." (5:212)

The drive to plump out Radcliffe Brown's framework for understanding Aboriginal society with as much empirical data as possible was perceived to be a pressing one because of the recognition that their 'culture' was soon to be broken and lost forever. The search was for remote communities where the data would be as uncontaminated as possible. The a priori orientations to structure, function, integration and interconnectedness led researchers to think in terms of stable social systems and to do so with convenience their perceptions were unconsciously blinkered. They tend to record rigorously only the interaction of Aboriginal with Aboriginal and to largely ignore the role of whites in the ongoing process. They tended to emphasize cultural differences between white and black to the neglect
of their common humanity. The picture drawn of the Aboriginal was so alien to the conception that it is no wonder that Australians as a whole found it most convenient to forget their presence when generalizing about Australian people, their conditions, needs and wants.

In sum the unchanging perspective of these studies gave support to the status quo and to policies that saw alternatives for Aborigines as separation or assimilation. Policies that posited that the Aboriginal must be kept separate in systems sustaining their own version of humanity or be remade to fit the pattern of our version of humanity were not questioned. At no time were the puppet-like Aborigines expected to fight back or question the social engineering seeking to remake them to fit into a society, the excellence of which was taken to be both concrete and unquestioned.

To paraphrase Burridge, data, like beauty, lies in the mind of the beholder. In Australia, as in America and England, from the 1920's to the 1960's the minds of social scientists were very much tied to the Durkheimian fiction of the possibility of treating social reality as if it was of the same order as the subject matter of the natural sciences.

As this study deals specifically with the Kimberley region of Western Australia it is not proposed to review the influences of social theory on policy since the inception of European settlement in Australia. In the area studied
it is only in the twentieth century that the population has been in intimate contact with Europeans and the consciousness of Government has been still more recent. As far as the Looma people are concerned it has been the structural-functionalists who have been most influential in providing a theoretical rationale for the development of policy towards the racially defined group known as Aboriginals. And the concepts on which most of their suggestions have hinged have been those of culture and assimilation/integration.

Biskup\(^{(4)}\) has provided a valuable analysis of the history of policy and practices with respect to Aborigines in West Australia. His work shows how policies have alternated between segregation, with concomitant aims of protection and amelioration, and assimilation, which at one time was hoped to be achieved first genetically and then socially - a hope seemingly based on faith in the breeders' reasonableness in the face of scientific evidence. For all their surface contrast these policies were remarkably similar in the way they conceived the Aboriginal problem. The choice was between total separation or complete amalgamation.

Because of the publication of the results of Aboriginal studies there were few policy makers not knowing that traditional Aboriginal society was a gerontocracy, that there was no awareness or concept of change, that it was a non-materialistic society, where people shared on
the basis of kinship ties, that there were no strong political units with recognized leaders - that there was in sum no reconciliation with our society and culture. Hence, given this understanding, the only possible options were segregation, where they could keep their culture, or assimilation where they could give it up.

The 'obviousness' of these options if we were not going to kill them off, is another example of the tendency of Western minds to concretize and absolutize the process of social interaction. When later distinctions were made between policies of assimilation and policies of integration confusion was apparent in the arguments that followed as to just what state was designated by each of the two terms. One resolution to this confusion is clear in a statement from an officer of the then W.A. Department of Native Welfare, thus:

"what we mean by assimilation is exactly what other authorities refer to as integration." (23 : 24 - my italics)

Policy makers and many deterministically inclined social scientists advising them seem to have difficulty in comprehending 'integration' as an overarching concept covering the process of parts fitting into a whole. Within this process there are an infinite variety of possible 'states' of integration. The logical abstractions of end states would be segregation and assimilation. Within the one society, complete segregation would be
hard to conceptualize as it implies complete lack of interaction between separate but integrating groups. On the other hand complete assimilation would imply that the identity of the interacting groups was no longer discernible. A state of integration could be a policy goal but necessarily an arbitrary and problematic one. (See 33)

Now the stress on the above concepts has been lessened and present policy is stylized as one of self-determination, land rights and concomitant retention of cultural integrity. As stated above, such policy appears to have largely evolved from the work of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, which has been based on non-absolutized conceptions of social reality. However, the absolutist hold on our minds is not to be dismissed so lightly. On its path to implementation the policy has to be interpreted by many men. It would appear that many interpret it to have a fixed state of integration as its unspoken goal. What is more, some of these interpreters have considerable power to impose their definitions of what is meant on all concerned. It would seem that in the view of many of those involved in the administration of present policy, Aboriginals are to have those advantages of our society that it is right that they should have and, at the same time, they are to retain those parts of their own culture not in conflict with the recently revised, broadened and pluralized vision of our own.
The point at issue is not whether such assumptions and intentions are good or bad but whether they have any chance of successful operation in practise. For all the rhetoric of self-determination, the image of the Aboriginal as a passive object to be engineered into acceptance by the wider society is still there. He is a deviant who must be acted upon in ways determined by those with specialized knowledge as to this social problem. This approach rests on racist ontological fictions which are rarely made explicit, but are the hidden premise behind much talk of the Aboriginal culture. The key to an Aboriginal becoming non-deviant is to become white. In the absence of such a possibility he remains understood in his totality by the master status of Aboriginal. But this very category is a fiction. The commonality among Aboriginals across Australia is not a result of interaction but of common treatment from the wider society and even this has not made them as similar as racist fiction would have it.

An Aboriginal could be defined as a person so labelled by society. In fact, D.A.A. defines an Aboriginal as "one who claims Aboriginal descent, so identifies himself and is accepted as such by the Aboriginal members of the community in which he lives." (From Education Department Guidelines on Aboriginal Secondary Grants.) This designation tends to release social forces likely to make him into a mirrored image of his socially defined character.
Women's Liberation movements have stressed how far being a woman is a social and not a fixed reality, a social reality dependent on ontological fictions that went unquestioned until recently. More importantly, women's movements show how once the reality is questioned, it is changeable through fighting back techniques on the part of the labelled. It is changeable through the meaningful acts of people in interaction.

Obviously politics and power are crucial in this process and it very much depends on the social location of those refusing to recognize a particular social reality as to whether their refusal has much effect. However, even the smallest chink produced in the fictions supporting the world-taken-for-granted at any particular time can have far reaching consequences. Just as there is no total power in society, there is no total impotence. This is well demonstrated in the activities of McLeod's mob, which started in the North West of Australia approximately twenty years ago and survived against strong reaction on the part of the powerful to have things return to the status quo. Today these activities are achieving mythic status in that they validate the view of the Aboriginal as an acting individual and not simply the white man's burden. (See 40: 1961)

At the same time the phenomenon of McLeod's mob continues to be dismissed as the machinations of a Communist on an
impressionable people who are not to be held responsible for their own actions. This passivity 'natural' to Aboriginals continues to come through in writings. They are the prisoners or puppets of their culture, and if they lose that they have no alternative but to become the flotsam and jetsam of our society unless we can get to them early enough to teach them our ways.

But all such views depend on a concrete conception of culture. As Stanner points out:

"Aboriginal culture like ours is an 'instrument' to life. People do not 'have' a culture or they have it only if they live it and at any time it expresses both changing and abiding values." (36 : 252)

Stanner acknowledges that he, like all mankind, was a prisoner of his society in his acceptance of the positivistic conception of a fixed social reality.

"Looking back on my writings, what was missing was the idea that a major development of Aboriginal economic, social and political life from its broken down state was a thinkable proposition." (35 : 14)

For him, as for all concerned in Aboriginal planning, it is a difficult struggle to escape from a style of thinking that unconsciously ratifies the existing order of life as natural and unalterable.

Even today, anthropologists are asked by policy makers to justify present requests by Aboriginals with evidence
from their traditional cultures. Erich Kolig ponders this use of anthropological knowledge at length in his article, "Aboriginal Land Rights, Policies and Anthropology - An Anthropological Dilemma." Because of his reliance on 'concepts' over 'process', after describing the non-traditional social reality that was Aboriginal land tenure at the time and place of his field work, he is able to conclude with what he sees as the major problem still remaining.

"Whatever land-tenure to Aboriginals meant traditionally; it was something profoundly different from modern legal conditions. How can both ways be satisfactorily brought into accordance?" (17 : 68)

It is, I would argue, this lack of resolution among anthropologists themselves as to just what they are talking about when they refer to traditional culture, that allows those not used to the idioms of anthropology to divide Aboriginals into those still having their culture and those that have lost it. Such a dichotomy is to be discerned in the findings of the recent Royal Commission into Aboriginal Affairs in Western Australia. Judge Furnell in his recommendations advocated a dual policy with regard to Aboriginals. On the one hand those with a 'self-determined' preference for our ways should be hastened into white society as quickly as possible. For the rest, they should be preserved in circumstances as closely resembling their tribal existence as possible.
Furnell fends off anticipated criticism of this latter recommendation with the statement

"Criticisms such as separatism are destructive of a design that has as its primary objective the preservation of an identity... which will drift into limbo and be lost if efforts are not made immediately for its retention."
(12:469)

Furnell even envisages extracting promises from individuals that they will strive to keep their old ways. But both white and black in Australia are living through the means of very different cultures than those they had ten years ago, let alone the precontact cultures they might have had. Furnell's suggestion also highlights a paradoxical interpretation to be made of 'Aboriginal self-determination'. While on the one hand the Aboriginal is surrounded by a robe of 'culture' that determines his actions and is the explanation for much of his present existence, on the other the individual Aboriginal is free to make an informed and rational choice as to whether or not to divest himself of this robe and whether or not to don ours.

Prior to this Royal Commission there had already been frequent questioning as to the relevance or validity of citing traditional culture to explain the current situation. One outcome of this was Henry Schapper's presentation of an alternative solution. In "Aboriginal Advancement to Integration" he sees most Aboriginals as
being "culturally and genetically different from Aboriginals at the time of first contact. They are a creation of the white man." (31 : 9) For him the key to understanding lay in recognizing the majority of Aboriginals as prisoners and victims of the culture of poverty. Most present-day Aborigines are seen as born and socialized into a vicious cycle of poverty, from which they are helpless to free themselves without white help. This Aboriginal subculture having evolved out of the history of contact, is characterized by extreme poverty, lack of identity, family failure and dependency.

"When a way of life is destroyed and bridges to acceptable alternatives do not exist, the inevitable result is alienation, despair ... The way out of this subculture is integration with the dominant society. It is not possible to reconstruct the original minority culture because its determining conditions no longer exist. The only way out is integration." (31 : 51)

Schapper's approach stresses our common humanity with the Aboriginal. His thesis is that a similar culture of poverty would be found in any group of people living in similar conditions - that there is nothing peculiarly Aboriginal determining their situation. At the same time his commitment to a natural science frame of reference leads him to believe that these people can be acted upon according to a plan in order to achieve known ends. Being men like ourselves, Aboriginals are samples of any society's most valuable resource. They must be utilized
and not wasted. In differentiating between the value of a person and the value of his culture and advocating that where science deems it necessary the one should be weaned from the other through processes of education and social engineering, Schapper leaves us with the Aboriginal still passive and still in need of being planned for.

Much of the policy implications drawn from the use of the concept 'culture' - whether of tradition or of poverty - can be traced back to the work of Boas, Benedict and Mead. Their conceptualizations of humans as children of their cultures grew into a dogma - a dogma consistent with liberal political aspirations. This held that all men are teachable and therefore divorceable from the culture into which they happened to have been socialized. Education was seen to be the key to harmonious political relations. If the young and impressionable could be reached, they could be indoctrinated in the unquestionably superior ways of 'our' society.

Such beliefs have been operationalized in recent years with respect to the American poor, but have failed to establish their validity. It would seem that social change is not such a simple matter. Rowley in speaking of such educational programmes with regard to Aboriginals, comments that the outcome is "likely to be more effectively expressed dissatisfaction than convenient conformity ...."
It is self-evident that new attitudes and values are not the result of passivity in a teacher-pupil situation. Responses will be in accord with the belief system of responders." (29 : 351-2)

Social change is difficult to comprehend within the systems view of society. The structural functionalist terms of reference it implies can only explain social change by imputing that the power of thought and action resides in social structures and not in men. The social change theory that supposedly was to be a scientific substitute for unscientific history has proved a less than rigorous base on which to make social predictions and draw up social plans.

An alternative set through which to view social change is that provided by the action perspective. This would posit that there has been a failure to appreciate that social changes are not simply the outcome of forces acting on men but also of men acting to redefine the meaning of social reality through social interaction.

"It is a simple fact that human beings assert themselves from time to time, and that ... the contact situation is one in which actors are forced to assert themselves and play out their roles; express their selves; has received little notice." (5 : 216)

It is this aspect that an action perspective is able to focus on when used to examine the present situation of an Aboriginal group in interaction with the implementation
of the wider society's policy towards them. In attacking the ontological fictions that are the creed of systems theories of social reality the approach does not deny the possibility of knowledge. Rather it argues for a revision of shared presuppositions as to the nature of science. It argues for the questioning of the faith that a science of society can be achieved through the imposition of an as if science on social data.

The classicists presupposed their methods and then adopted the theoretic stance most in accord with it. They posited that the phenomena of social reality

"could and should be studied only in terms of clear and distinct (scientific) formal categories defined by them in advance of their studies ... They assumed that all decisions could and should be made in advance of studies of the everyday phenomena. And they assumed that the goal should be one of controlling the everyday phenomena in the way that scientists seek to control the natural world .... In general, the absolutist stance subsumed the everyday world under the methods of science and, in doing so, its users never realized that the everyday phenomena they observed were scientified phenomena." (10 : 14)

Jack Douglas has cogently presented the fallacies of this stance. Perhaps most importantly the collection of all data is shown to rest on the very commonsense understandings that scientific methods aimed to dispense with. Douglas cites Durkheim's classic study of suicide - this aimed to demonstrate how the social can only be understood supraindividually. However, when Durkheim's data are followed back to their source it is seen to rest on individual official's interpretations of what suicide means or is. In all such use of social rates, the researcher
is replacing his own understandings as to the content of categories with those of unknown officials.

Similarly, the use of surveys presupposes an adequate understanding on the part of the researcher to enable him to interact with his subjects in a manner producing valid, truthful responses. Further, in subsequent coding and factor analysis, the use of surveys presupposes that the research can ascertain what responses really meant.

Likewise, Douglas argues, the Grand Theorists with their studies of higher levels of order are ultimately dependent on someone's common sense understandings of everyday life. Even if their distinctions claim to be analytical rather than concrete,

"there is no way of getting at the social meanings from which one either implicitly or explicitly infers the larger patterns, except through some form of communication with the members of that society or group; and to be valid and reliable, any such communication with the members presupposes an understanding of their language, their uses of that language, their own understandings of what the people doing the observations are up to and so on almost endlessly." (10 : 9)

Douglas emphasizes that he is not advocating the rejection of such absolutist abstractions but that he is advocating the rejection of their acceptance as scientific arguments. Scientific arguments he insists must necessarily be based on systematic observations of concrete phenomena. It should be recognized that the hard data in the social
sciences are obtained by those who systematically observe everyday life and then analyse from these observations, their meaningfulness to members.

The use of macroanalysis must continue for pressing practical reasons, but macroanalysis should acknowledge their dependence on understandings of the social process and strive

"to continually reorient and rebuild their studies ... on the understandings of everyday life provided by those doing these scientific studies of everyday life." (10:12)

Those doing such studies must necessarily have their own presuppositions as to the nature of social reality. Accepting Douglas's stand, these presuppositions are based on the dictum that "all human thought is intentional or purposeful." (10:25) The way to understanding lies in the determination of such intentions. Such determination is firstly dependent on phenomenological suspension. Exemplified in many anthropological monographs this can be seen as a process of "making explicit to consciousness the thesis which unconsciously underlies every individual judgement made within ordinary life about reality." (25:12) With this goes an acceptance of the principle that the context or ecology of any given phenomena must be of prime consideration in the determination of such theses. Such presuppositions in turn lead to a methodological commitment to study social interaction on its own terms.
Experimental situations tend to strip social phenomena of context. The only methods that at present seem able to retain the integrity of social phenomena are those of observation.

The knowledge gained through such methods is not to be taken as something external and independent of human minds. Its reality rather is to be assessed by the degree of its shareability. The wider its shareability the greater claims it has to objectivity, but the very nature of social reality means that objectivity will always remain problematic. Research must remain rigorous and systematic but recognize the limitations imposed on it by the subject matter.

This perspective aims to develop knowledge of how social realities are experienced and constructed by interacting subjects and not to establish just what those realities are in any absolute sense. Faith in such development rests on a belief in man's common humanity allowing understanding of his interactions across situational boundaries. The test of this must wait until situational studies have sufficient evidence to sort the differing effects of circumstances. Until such time the methods most likely to bear fruit are those aiming to keep research projects loosely focused so that reality is not filtered in set directions too soon. This is not to say that research should be without direction. There has to be some framework to introduce order into otherwise
indiscriminate perceptions. However, rigidly controlled experimental frameworks are held to blind the researcher to social reality.

The frame of reference of this present study then, may be summarized in the following general terms:

1. The social sciences and the natural sciences deal with entirely different orders of subject-matter. While the canons of rigour and scepticism apply to both, one should not expect their perspective to be the same.

2. Sociology is concerned with understanding action rather than with observing behaviour. Action arises out of meanings which define social reality.

3. Meanings are given to men by their society. Shared orientations become institutionalized and are experienced by later generations as social facts.

4. While society defines man, man in turn defines society. Particular constellations of meaning are only sustained by continual reaffirmation in everyday actions.

5. Through their interaction men also modify, change and transform social meanings.

6. It follows that explanations of human actions must take account of the meanings which those concerned assign to their acts: the manner in which the everyday world is socially constructed yet perceived
as real and routine becomes a crucial concern of sociological analysis.

7. Positivistic explanations which assert that action is determined by external and constraining social or non-social forces, are inadmissible. (taken from 32: 126-7)
CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study is primarily to understand the operation of the policy of the Department of Aboriginal Affairs within the grounded setting of Looma Village. The study is what Gans has termed a "reconnaissance - an initial exploration of a community to provide an overview." (13 : 350) The findings are, of necessity, primarily descriptive and qualitative and their 'objectivity' problematic. However, it is one of the presuppositions of this research that a careful rendition of everyday life is a necessary precondition to any evaluative and quantitative research.

Ultimately, it is my interpretation and abstraction from the raw material of everyday action. But in setting out the methods used it is hoped to make shareable some of the bases on which my interpretation rests and to allow for at least partial reproduceability of the study. The study aims to be more objective than an impressionistic sketch of everyday life, where how the perceiver 'knows' what other people are experiencing is left unexplored.

There are, however, inherent limitations on the achievement of any ideal state of objectivity within the social sciences. Douglas has outlined the reasons for the intrinsic uncertainty of all social knowledge.

Firstly, he points to the fact that most communication takes place in taken for granted contexts where participants'
expectations do not require overt communication. Thus the critical determinant of what is being studied is often not overt and observable. Then

"the crucial importance of the historical, biographical and situational aspects of the contexts in determining the meanings of communications makes it impossible to do anything more than partially reproduce the basic aspects of any field research." (10 : 31)

Finally, "and very much compounding the other two, there is the relative inability of the researcher to control human events, except by putting the actors in a social situation that they themselves define as experimental and that, therefore, leads them to act in ways that are different from the ways they would act in their natural setting." (10 : 31)

All three limitations were very much present at Looma. The methods used to gain the desired understanding were those judged most suitable to this end in view of the resources at my disposal. My inability to communicate in any of the languages of the group apart from their restricted English, the paucity of documentation as to the history of the people who now form the Looma community and the fact I spent only six weeks in the community are thus basic restrictions on the understanding possible. These considerations aside, the most available means of collecting the wanted information was conceived to be participant observation. Observation of interaction within the Looma community, of interaction among the administrators and public servants, and finally of
interaction between the two groups. Though not a focal point it was also expected that the influence of the wider society, both white and black, would be taken into account.

The techniques employed and the awareness of the values and limitations of participant observation owes much to general writings on anthropological fieldwork technique and the work of the Chicago School of Sociologists, especially that of William F. Whyte (1943) and Herbert J. Gans (1962). Both these writers give detailed descriptions of the ways in which they went about their fieldwork and these were used as guidelines in the present study.

Participant-observation as Gans defines it, is

"a generic and not entirely accurate term for a variety of observational methods in which the researcher develops more than a purely research relationship with the people he is studying." (13 : 338)

There are three possible roles for the research within this framework as Gans develops it, and they are not mutually exclusive. The researcher can act as an uninvolved observer - 'the fly on the wall' approach. Though at Looma my colour and position prevented my free movement throughout the community, there were occasions such as fights, transactions at the store, card playing, when those interacting were oblivious to my presence. The smallness of the village and the fact that much of
everyday life was enacted both outside and in sizeable
groups allowed considerable observation without involve-
ment.

A second role for the researcher is as a participant,
where participation is determined by research interests.
At Looma this style of research was used in such instances
as gossiping with the women when I would keep the
discussion focused on points of relevance to my research.
Highly open-ended and spontaneous, these were quite
frequently originated by people coming to my caravan. On
occasions I was chided for not bringing out my tape recorder
and notebook.

The final role is one where the researcher

"temporarily abdicates his study role
and becomes a 'real' participant.
After the event, his role reverts
back to that of an observer - and in
this case, an analyst of his own
actions while being a real
participant."  (13 : 339)

This marked some of my informal interaction, such as
going fishing or swimming with community members but,
more especially, it was the style of my interaction with
the community as temporary "enterprise officer". At
the same time I used opportunities open to me as enterprise
officer to elucidate material of research interest.

Within this general framework of a participant observation
approach, several secondary methods of data collection
were used. Perhaps the major of these were informal but
semi-structured interviews with administrators and with
identified leaders both male and female of the community. Some of these were taped and the transcripts of talks with three of the Looma leaders are reproduced as Appendices I, II and III.

Then, to give some form to the nature of the community, a census of the resident families, identifying members by age, sex, employment history, education, literacy, tribal affiliation, place of birth and marital status was completed.

Finally, data were collected from such Governmental files as were accessible. These included material on the historical background of Loom and on the nature of administration of past and present State and Federal policy towards Aboriginals. To round out the picture, any available documentation on such things as school attendance, use of social services, and use of health facilities, was collected.

**CHRONOLOGICAL OUTLINE OF STUDY**

A timetable of my involvement with the Looma Community is given to indicate the flow of these methods in operation.

June to August 1975 was spent in Perth collecting data from Government Departments, especially Aboriginal Affairs and Community Welfare. In the main, these data were on current Aboriginal policy and the history of the Looma
group. At the same time liaison was established with Social Work Supervisor of the Kimberley Division of the Community Welfare Department and the feasibility of the study was confirmed.

Two months were then spent on student placement with the Department of Community Welfare in Derby. During this time I both interacted with and became familiar with the interaction of administrators based in Derby. Informal interviews were held with several of them and I was an observer at a meeting held by representatives of those Departments most closely involved with Looma. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss the implementation of a plan to co-ordinate their activities with regard to communities such as Looma. (See Ch. 6 for an elaboration of this plan).

While on placement I also visited Looma approximately once a week - three times in the company of the C.W.D. Welfare Officer responsible for the area, three times alone and once in the company of my thesis supervisor. On the initial visits I confirmed through the Council Chairman and Vice Chairman that I had the group's permission to spend a few weeks at Looma so that I could write a story about it. The activities of anthropologists, linguists and film-makers in the Kimberleys are such that the role of a white interested in their everyday life and speech is not a foreign one. Someone who could 'put the word out' for Looma was welcome. Means of communicating
'their ways' to the white man and Government are valued.
The bulk of fieldwork took place over the six weeks from Monday 27th October, to Saturday 6th December. After one night at the Camballin caravan park I lived in a caravan at Looma itself. This had not been part of the original plan, as it had been pointed out by the Community Welfare Supervisor in Derby that one of the major aims of the Looma group since its inception had been to have their own place without white people (or 'gadeja' as they are termed by the group) resident. This aim had not yet been achieved, and there were six whites living in caravans at Looma at the time of my arrival. However, I felt to ask for permission to stay at Looma would be an imposition.

Then on the day of establishing myself at Camballin, the enterprise officer asked if I would be willing to take on his tasks for two weeks while he and his family went on holiday. This had not been in my research plans, but I quickly decided on agreement because of the access it would afford to information on the day to day running of the community.

As will become clearer in later chapters, the enterprise officer is a key figure in the day to day interaction between the Looma people and outside administrators. Ostensibly an employee of the Community, the project officer has extensive but not exclusive powers to interpret the purposes and expectations of 'Perth and Canberra Governments' and those of their local representatives to
the community. To play this role for two weeks would allow me to become a participant observer of the grounded interactions in which I was primarily interested.

The next Council meeting discussed the matter. It was agreed that I should take on the project officer's tasks for two weeks. It was also decided that I should bring my caravan over to Looma as I would be too lonely and far away at Camballin. I was not present at the meeting, but from the varying interpretations given of these decisions the next day by Councillors some confusion was apparent. Some thought I was taking the position on permanently and should therefore live at Looma. Others said if I was writing about Looma I should live at Looma so I would know more about it. Certainly I was very glad of the decision and the involvement of several of the identified leaders in selecting a site for my caravan allowed me to feel that it was a sincere one.

The first week was spent largely in conducting the census and talking at length with identified leaders, both male and female, and on both their instigation and mine. Time was also spent just becoming known in the community and explaining my presence, having long discussions with the white residents at night, observing the visits of the Community Health Sisters and the like. In sum consciously keeping my eyes and ears open as much as possible to all aspects of community life.
Then when the enterprise officer and his family left on Thursday, 6th November, my main given tasks were to run the store daily from approximately 9 a.m. to noon, to act as secretary to the weekly Council meetings, to keep a record of the community worker's hours, to order stores weekly and to be on call for consultation. As the family had only planned to be away for two weeks it had been arranged that I would do only a caretaking minimum of bookwork. Unfortunately, due to illness, the family were unable to return for five weeks. This occasioned some difficulties as I was not equipped to perform necessary tasks such as banking, and I found my research work limited. When I was due to leave to return to Perth, there was still no news of their likely date of return and rumours circulated that they were not coming back. I then came under pressure to stay - the community felt they could not manage without a 'gadeja' to run the store, pay the workers and deal with the technical requirements of the outside world. In fact, I could have stayed but, for reasons that will become clear in later chapters, it was decided that it would be more helpful to the community to have them manage alone. Both the Community Development Officer of Aboriginal Affairs and the Welfare Officer from Community Welfare were to call regularly and help as needed. As it happened, floods delayed my return to Perth for a week and three days of this time were spent in day trips to Looma. This allowed some assessment of
how the community were managing without a 'gadeja'. The project officer returned on the same day that I flew south.

This is an overview of the nature of my involvement with Looma. The specific methods of fieldwork may be elaborated as follows:

1. **CENSUS**

During the first week of living at Looma, I concentrated on completing a community census. This proved a good means of introducing myself and my purposes to the community at large. The general format of my introduction was that I had come from Perth to learn and write about Looma - about how Looma started, about how many people are living there, about the different tribes, about what sort of place it is and about what sort of place it is going to be or 'coming up to' to use the local English.

The reactions to this varied. Some seemed to see it as yet another incomprehensible but inevitable demand of the white. Others, particularly some of the political leaders, saw it as a useful link in communicating the community aspirations and needs to the vaguely conceived but manifestly powerful worlds of Perth and Canberra Governments. This perception led several people to volunteer information to me for the duration of my stay, so that I should "know and understand" as Killer Narga phrased it.
Freddie Johnson, Council Chairman, introduced me to the first families. Then at my request someone from the family just interviewed would introduce me to another family. As I and my activities became known in the community, this became unnecessary. The time spent at each house or camp varied greatly, dependent on the number of people resident in the household, the number of people involved in the interview, their fluency in English and their interest in talking. Many spontaneously offered information that they perceived to be of interest to me, but largely the interviews were kept informally centred on the wanted census details.

Many of the items on my checklist of points were impossible to elicit with any degree of consistency. Thus, chronological age was known only to a few and was a meaningless category to most. Rather, people were generally described as babies, kindi kids, school kids, workers, mothers or pensioners. Sources of income were quite well known, but questions on employment history produced a varying range of responses as did questions as to place of origin.

The actual occupants of a particular camp or house were found to be best listed by drawing a kinship chart, where against each family member it was noted whether they were living at Looma or not, source of income, tribe, etc. Any missing details were then collected later from
another informant - preferably someone I was referred to. On completion of the chart, I would query whether there was anyone else living in this house or camp. This proved hardest to be sure of in the houses, because of the number of different families sharing many of the houses. On the other hand, while it was hard to miss a house altogether, it was not hard to miss a camp altogether.

Two open-ended questions asked at all interviews were how this particular family came to be at Looma and what the informants thought the men would be working at after the houses were finished. These produced a range of responses based on varying interpretations as to what the question meant.

After completion of the census, the accuracy of the demographic details was continually rechecked over the remainder of the six weeks. This checking involved information from other sources such as the school roll, the worker's time sheets, the pension cheques cashed at the store and a census taken approximately twelve months previously. Also, as I became more familiar with faces, I was able to confirm whether strange faces were recorded or not. This was particularly so while I was working at the store when the women working with me were on-hand informants as to who was who. These same women checked the accuracy of the final census lists.

For all this accuracy remains somewhat of an ideal because of the difficulties of trying to count and categorize
in Western terms the members of a fluid and non-Western community.

2. **INFORMAL INTERVIEWS**

The white staff at Looma (i.e. two S.H.C. building supervisors, one linguist, one enterprise officer, and one store assistant), the Camballin school teachers and visiting Governmental personnel were all questioned on the nature of their involvement at Looma. In addition, any thoughts on the present circumstances of Looma and its possible futures were sounded out.

Five of the nine councillors were interviewed at length and the rest briefly as to their aspirations for Looma, its present circumstances and its history. The two traditional 'religious' leaders though often spoken about by the 'political' leaders were not interviewed at all. They maintained a very low profile with reference to the 'white-oriented' aspects of community life.

Several of the more powerful of the older women were interviewed, but these interviews were in marked contrast to the fluency of the men's. They reflect the fact that it is not women's business to speak for the community and plan for the future. However, their more personal statements and the fact they gossiped about daily community news was a valuable balance to the men's more politic presentation of information. It was mainly from the
older women that I received expressed dissatisfaction at such things as in the past station owners 'keeping money' from them. They also informed me who was bringing liquor in and fighting, who was doing things that other people didn't like and when the men were having 'big business' meetings down in the camp.

3. USE OF INFORMANTS

Many of the people interviewed became informants who kept me supplied with information and opinions they thought relevant. Acting also in this role were many of those with whom I was working closely as project officer. Major informants were the women with whom I spent time swimming, fishing and drinking tea. Apart from relating the numerous stories both historical and mythical associated with landmarks we would pass on our expeditions, these sessions often took the form of a reciprocal exchange of the way things were in Looma, compared to the way they were in Perth. Such curiosity was particularly evident among the younger women.

4. ESSAYS

Written stories on life at Looma were collected from three of the working girls and the upper primary school children. For all it was a laborious task and not a medium with which they were at ease.

Data from all these sources were written down in field notes. These were transcribed and elaborated daily and
subsequently collated and analysed for this study.

A factor that could be expected to have some influence on the findings would be community members' understandings as to research intentions. I tried to be open about this but to speak of the University of Western Australia was meaningless. Some might initially have thought that I had the power to put the word for Looma directly to the Canberra and Perth bosses though I actively discouraged such a perception. I did, however, say that I would try to understand Looma as well as I could and offer my study to any seeking to know about Looma. I feel that much of the co-operation and support the study received from the people can be understood in terms of the importance they place of being understood by all-powerful Perth and Canberra. They interpret many policies and plans for them as the outcome of ignorance. This is especially so in view of the events of the last few years which have convinced them of the basic concern of Government in their welfare.

A further factor in the willing co-operation was the pride of the community in themselves and their achievements. To them it is a story worth telling.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Because of the theoretical framework of the approach, the non-secret nature of the study and the commitment to putting the word out for Looma, I feel confidentiality
is not possible without greatly limiting both the nature
and findings of this written report. At the same time
I have consciously tried to use names only where pertinent
and to avoid possible harm coming to the Looma people
as a result of my statements. Ultimately, this depends
on my judgment and I have attempted to remain aware of
the responsibility this involves.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

This is necessarily largely qualitative and not quantita-
tive. It is a descriptive rendition of my observations
but I hope the above has shown that these were not random
and superficial. In selecting what to render, the raw
data were read through numerous times, indexed and cross-
indexed. Rather than working from a preconceived hypothesis,
I have tried to write a study that stays with the integrity
of my observations. These observations were necessarily
focused by some presupposition as to what I was observing –
the grounded operation of Governmental policy.

The outcome of such analysis is not of a conclusive nature.
Rather to quote Gans,

"It is . . an attempt by a trained social
scientist to describe and explain the
behaviour of a large number of people –
using his methodological and theoretical
training to sift the observations – and
to report only those generalizations
which are justified by the data. The
validity of my findings thus rests
ultimately on my judgement about the
data and, of course, on my theoretical
and personal biases in deciding what to
see, what to ignore and how to analyze
the products." (13 : 350)
This overview can be confirmed or otherwise, at least within limitations, by further community studies. Hypotheses arising from this study can be investigated by the means of more systematic and focused research. However, the methodology as described is the initial means to understanding of everyday life at Looma. Such understanding is basic to any further sociological knowledge.
CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES

POPULATION

There were over 300 people living at Looma in October 1975. The details of a census taken then are presented in Table I. A census taken fourteen months previously provides a point of comparison (see Table II). Over this time the population almost doubled. The largest share of the increase came from the Desert people, which is consistent with the fact that the Nyigina have become dispersed as a group, with many established in a town way of life and relatively impervious to the attractions Looma offers.

Compared with a total population increase of 190% in this fourteen months, the number of children increased by roughly 310%. The Looma development has patently attracted as immigrants a much younger and more virile group than the original group. How much this reflects a commitment to the concept of Looma by the younger Walmadjari and Mangala and how much it reflects the availability of employment through the S.H.C. building project remains to be seen.

Outward migration over this same time was 14 or 8.5% of the 165 present at the time of the first census. Several of these were working on nearby stations, one was in gaol, one woman had left her husband, two children were at school in Fitzroy Crossing and one family had shifted to Derby after a dispute.
### TABLE I

**LOOMA POPULATION - OCT 1975**

**SOURCE:** CENSUS CONDUCTED AT LOOMA 27-10-75 - 31-10-75

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Walmadjarri M</th>
<th>Walmadjarri F</th>
<th>Walmadjarri Total</th>
<th>Nyigina M</th>
<th>Nyigina F</th>
<th>Nyigina Total</th>
<th>Mangala M</th>
<th>Mangala F</th>
<th>Mangala Total</th>
<th>Other M</th>
<th>Other F</th>
<th>Other Total</th>
<th>Total M</th>
<th>Total F</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percentage of Total</th>
<th>Percentage of Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 - 3 yrs</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>32.9%</td>
<td>28.8%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kindergarten</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>31</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School age</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>48</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-19 yrs</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-29 yrs</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>19.8%</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-59 yrs</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>25.9%</td>
<td>34.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60+ yrs</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>14.4%</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>70</strong></td>
<td><strong>65</strong></td>
<td><strong>135</strong></td>
<td><strong>51</strong></td>
<td><strong>48</strong></td>
<td><strong>99</strong></td>
<td><strong>19</strong></td>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
<td><strong>23</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>170</strong></td>
<td><strong>143</strong></td>
<td><strong>313</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Percentage | 43.1% | 17.9% | 31.6% | 7.4% |

(1) BASED ON 1971 CENSUS FIGURES.
### TABLE 2

**LOOMA POPULATION - SEPT 1974**

**SOURCE:** DEPARTMENT OF ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>WALMADJARI</th>
<th>NYIGINA</th>
<th>MANGALA</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M  F TOTAL</td>
<td>M  F TOTAL</td>
<td>M  F TOTAL</td>
<td>M  F TOTAL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 16 yrs</td>
<td>8 9 17</td>
<td>8 6 14</td>
<td>3 2 5</td>
<td>19 17 36</td>
<td>21.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 16 yrs</td>
<td>28 25 53</td>
<td>13 15 28</td>
<td>20 28 48</td>
<td>61 68 129</td>
<td>78.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>70 42</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>165</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>42.4%</td>
<td>25.5%</td>
<td>32.1%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
At the time of the 1975 census, 151 people were living in 13 completed houses, while the rest lived in the camp. Since the wet of 1975/76 virtually all people are living in houses, though the building project is not yet completed.

The tribal breakdown given needs explanation. The concept of 'tribe' is a post-contact phenomenon among Aborigines. (See 2 for a consideration of the use of the term 'tribe' in this region.) With their changed social structure the Aborigines of Looma have taken on the English word 'tribe' to refer to the flexible social unit that is largely demarcated by language use. Walmadjari, Mangala and Nyigina are the three tribes at Looma and individuals identify themselves as one of these. Each 'tribe' has its own language and in the camp situation at least, each tribe lives as a unit.

However, there is a lot of intermarriage between the tribes, Walmadjari is the dominant language, spoken by members of the other groups and the general feeling is that eventually all the tribes are going to become one - the Looma people. At the same time, when power and conflict are in play, tribal loyalties are one of the prime lines of division. The interaction between the tribes will be discussed at greater length in the next chapter. As can be seen from the figures, the Walmadjari are the most numerous, though this includes a large number of pensioners. The number of children under school age differs little from tribe to tribe.
TABLE 3

PERCENTAGE PROPORTIONS OF LOOMA POPULATION,
AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINAL POPULATION AND
TOTAL AUSTRALIAN POPULATION BY AGE GROUPS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>LOOMA</th>
<th>ABORIGINAL</th>
<th>AUSTRALIAN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-14 yrs</td>
<td>32.9%</td>
<td>47.5%</td>
<td>28.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-29 yrs</td>
<td>26.8%</td>
<td>26.2%</td>
<td>24.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-59 yrs</td>
<td>25.9%</td>
<td>20.9%</td>
<td>34.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 yrs +</td>
<td>14.4%</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SOURCES: LOOMA CENSUS, 1971 CENSUS,
DEPARTMENT OF ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS
Looma Kindergarten

Looma Kindergarten
The age divisions used in Table I are somewhat arbitrary as many of the older people and some of the young did not know their chronological age. However, in practical terms of being young, middle-aged or old, the divisions can be taken to reflect the age structure at Looma. Table 3 compares the age distributions of the Looma population, the total Australian Aboriginal population and the total Australian population. This shows the Looma people to have an age structure much closer to the national average, than Aborigines in general.

The twenty-three people listed under Others in Table I were, to a considerable extent young men from Port Hedland who had come to Looma for work on the S.H.C. building project. Numbering eleven in all, several were 'halfcastes' and all were relatively sophisticated young men. They had been given a completed house as their quarters. They had tenuous ties to the Looma people but most did not speak any of their languages. They stated frankly that they were only there for the work which they regarded as being very easy. There were also a family of Bardi from One Arm Point who had come to seek refuge after a family fight at home. One of the women of this family had distant relatives at Looma and her husband had worked on stations previously with some of the older Looma men.

Halfcastes do not form a significant group at Looma. Generally speaking they are actively disliked because, as Killer described it, "they have never done good for
our people". This can be at least partially traced back to the fact that they were often given positions of authority on station properties and had better conditions. Their interests were served by maintaining a social distance between themselves and the fullbloods. The few halfcastes are in the main children. Though they seem well cared for, they are usually described as "that halfcaste".

A feeling of superiority over those of mixed race was expressed by one of the leaders in speaking of the urban Aborigines he had met at an Aboriginal Arts Conference in Darwin. While he felt sorry for them, he felt that they should have no say at such meetings. They were neither one thing or the other. Whites and Aborigines were fullbloods but they were just nothing.

At the time of the census there were seven Europeans living at Looma - two S.H.C. supervisors, projects officer and family, linguist and myself.

KINSHIP & SECTION/SUBSECTION SYSTEMS

Interaction within the community is still largely structured by the expectations and obligations of the classificatory kinship system though present behavioural patterns are significantly modified from what they would have been traditionally.

Each community member stands in some sort of kinship relation to everyone else in the group. While there is room to play one's role with personal style, there are
### TABLE 4

**WALTAWATJARI SUBSESSIONS, MOIETIES AND GENERATION LEVELS**

**SOURCE:** BASED ON CHART IN HUDSON & RICHARD ET AL. 1976:36

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MOIETY I</th>
<th>MOIETY II</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>JANGALA</td>
<td>nanyjili</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nangala</td>
<td>JUNGKURRA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JUPURRU</td>
<td>nyapana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nyapurrn</td>
<td>JAWANTI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JAPALIYI</td>
<td>nakarra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nyapajarri</td>
<td>JAKARRA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JANGKARTI</td>
<td>nampiyirnti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nangkarti</td>
<td>JAMPIYIRNTI</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**KEY**

1) Lower case letters for female terms, capitals for males
2) Dotted line indicates generation levels
3) The equal signs linking subsections indicate those subsections which ideally have marriage partners within them. An acceptable partner could also come from the other subsection in the same generation level but opposite moiety.
4) The arrows indicate the determination of children's subsection through the mother.

**EXAMPLE**

A nangala woman will have a JUNGKURRA husband (or JAWANTI, if no suitable JUNGKURRA available) and their sons will be JAPALIYI and their daughters nyapajarri. In turn, the JAPALIYI son will marry a nakarra woman and their children will be nanyjili and JUNGKURRA.
socially set and maintained behavioural patterns expected of the participants in any relationship. These vary from joking relationships through to avoidance relationships. Thus traditionally there was an avoidance relationship between classificatory son and mother-in-law and between post-pubertal brothers and sisters. This has become muted within the confines of village life where marked physical avoidance is made difficult by the fact that some men are living in the same house as their mother-in-law, post-pubertal siblings live with their parents and community activities such as the pictures are attended by all. However, the relationship remains one of restraint and some individuals continue to actively avoid the possibility of close contact.

Consideration of the suitability of some of these institutionalized patterns of behaviour was apparent within the community. While they compared their system favourably with what they perceived to be the hard and cold ways of whites, certain situations such as the women endeavouring to run the store in a business-like fashion with an absolute rule of no 'bookups' and parents having to feed adult children even after they had spent all their income foolishly, were seen as problems.

The operation of the kinship system is inextricably linked with the section and subsection systems. Traditionally, the Nyigina had a section system where, "everyone in the tribe belongs from the moment of birth and even before,
Mothers' meeting in camp bough shed to discuss introduction of school play lunch scheme.

School play lunch scheme in operation
to one of four named categories. These influence marriage and kinship relations". (3 : 48) However, both Mangala and Walmatjari have a subsection system which has eight named categories.

Reflecting the dominance of the Desert people most of the day-to-day interaction at Looma is guided by the categorization of kin derived from the subsection system. Knowing the subsection or 'skin-group' of an individual, allows one to limit the possible classificatory relationship to oneself.

As well as this division into eight subsections, there are two other divisions influencing the social structure—moieties and generation levels. These together with the named subsections of the Walmatjari are schematized in Table 4. The moiety structure classifies the group into two distinct halves. This division

"is recognized as exogamous - that is where a person must marry into the opposite moiety and not into his own. This system of dual organization provides a clear-cut division for social and ceremonial purposes." (3 : 46)

The generation levels divide the group into two in another fashion and interaction between these two groups is guided by considerations of status.

"Within a person's own generation level are to be found to some extent at least, 'equals'; brothers and sisters, cross cousins, age mates and so on. The generation level above him includes those with
some authority over him, directly or indirectly: father, mother, father's sister, father's sister's husband, mother's brother, ... and so on. Deference and in some cases avoidance are relevant here."

(3 : 88)

Grandparents and their peers fall within one's own generation level and relationships with them tend to be more relaxed and egalitarian. Generally, at Looma the behaviour patterns related to generational levels are still operative though there is conflict in the work situation where a 'son' might be in a supervisory position over his 'father'.

There is a noticeable move on the part of political leaders to persuade the community to accept instrumental rather than kin-based interaction in the white oriented activities of the village such as the running of the store, distribution of medicine. However, even they have difficulty in adhering to this ideal in a consistent manner.

MARRIAGE PATTERNS

These are structured by the section/subsection system and it has been calculated that ideally a population of 1,000 - 1,200 is required to allow such a group as Looma to be endogamous. Of necessity, there are past and future kinship ties with the surrounding communities. (See 42)

Marriages were virtually all tribal. Only one woman had a wedding ring, had been married in a church and had taken her husband's surname. She was an immigrant from
the Catholic mission at La Grange. The marriages were
most often arranged by parents, though there was some
indication that the younger men, particularly those with
valued work skills, are having a greater say in the choice
of a bride. 'Wrong' marriages or those not in accordance
with the section or skin-group system were said not to
occur at Looma. The truth of this could not be assessed
though it was apparent that strong pressures - such as
the possibilities of ostracism and severe physical punish-
ment - against such marriages were operative.

All individuals at Looma have a 'white' name which is
largely used for bureaucratic purposes and interaction
with the outside world. Women keep their own 'white'
names on marrying and the children, as with tribal affilia-
tion, follow either the mother or the father in their
surname. Alternatively, some take the first name of
one of the parents as their surname. This 'white' name
is not used in intracommunity interaction and many people
were unable to give the name of another resident to
bureaucrats. They had no call to use it, though obviously
everyone knew his or her own 'white' name.

Of the 77 extant marriages at Looma, 22 or 28.6% were cross
tribal. In the seventeen cases where children were
involved, tribal affiliation followed the mother's in ten
cases and the father's in seven cases. Walmadjari men
in all cases had their children follow the mother, but the
other two tribes fluctuated in their pattern. An informant
said that traditionally the Nyigina should follow the father, while Walmadjari follow the mother, though it also depends as to where the married couple settle - in his territory or hers. Other informants said you can be half and half and chose which you want to follow to suit the occasion. In four of the mixed marriages the husband was living with the wife's family.

POLYGAMOUS UNIONS

Of the 77 marriages, 20 were polygamous. This involved nine men - 4 Walmadjari men with two wives each, one with four wives, three Mangala men with two wives and one Nyigina man with two wives. Thus 26.0% of the married women and 11.7% of the married men were in polygamous unions. These were limited to the older men, but the women involved were often quite young and relatively sophisticated. Power and prestige were definitely involved for the men but this also flowed on to the families of the women. It was noticeable that the status of immigrant families, especially of Mangala from the La Grange area was heightened by the adept marriage alliances they made with the entrenched gerontocracy.

In another direction, the power of the elder men was bolstered by the fact that their young wives held positions of importance in the running of such activities as the community store and kindergarten. Four of the six young women community workers had a polygamous marriage. There
Planting the Community Garden with the aid of Horticultural Advisers from Department of the North West - note absence of men.

The garden four weeks later.
were some indications that the allocation of such positions was not purely on the basis of ability. At the same time, these women seemed to be valued and chosen as wives because of their fluency in English, literacy and demonstrated ability in dealing with the complexities of the outside world.

STABILITY OF UNIONS

There were only two women with children and without a husband at Looma. One of these was physically handicapped and had never had a permanent relationship, while the other, a relatively well educated woman, was generally acknowledged to be a difficult personality and a drinker. From interviews it appears that some of the younger women either try to run away from their husbands or look for diversion. If caught, the punishment is severe. It is administered by the 'business' women with the blessing of the elders. During my stay, two women who were due for punishment made no attempt to escape it while another, who was originally from Derby, escaped to Wyndham leaving her young son behind to ensure less likelihood of being followed.

Generally speaking, women are married in their late teens and men in their late twenties. Dissatisfied partners have some room to manoeuvre for change and there were several instances of women who had more than one partner without being widowed.
CHILDREN

It is seen as very important that children be actually born at Looma. So far there have been four boys born there and these are termed the Looma children. This ties in with the group's drive to guarantee their continued existence in the area. However, the Community Health Service would prefer all children to be born at Derby Hospital. The Aborigines say they have come to the compromise of having the children born in the bush at Looma and then driven immediately with the mother, the 120 kilometres to Derby, 32 kilometres of this being gravel road. This is not seen as satisfactory by Community Health.

Children are seen as important to the group's future - both in terms of numbers and in terms of their education. It is hoped that, through the acquired ability of the children, the group will heighten its share of the valued goods of the white man while lessening the group's dependence on white personnel.

KINDERGARTEN

This is operated under the auspices of the W.A. Pre-School Board though staffed and run by the Community. During my stay it was located in one room of a completed house, which also served as a warehouse for the store. The teachers were a literate, unmarried girl of 22 years, and an illiterate married woman of approximately 26 years. Both were untrained but were visited weekly by a kindergarten teacher
from Derby. They were selected by the community. It was unclear as to whether they were voluntary staff or not. They received no pay to my knowledge but obviously expected it.

Enrolment was officially 28 but generally only about 10 attended at any one time and these were mainly from the neighbouring houses. Camp children formed their own informal play groups - especially as they had some distance to walk for the opening time of 6.30 a.m.

Activities were limited by a lack of equipment, but generally included story telling, singing and playing with the toys. The end was marked at about 9.30 a.m. by a glass of milk and high protein biscuit for everyone.

There are plans to build a kindergarten in the S.H.C. project. However there is general dissatisfaction that this is to be built before the new store. A kindergarten is not regarded as a priority. It is felt that children can play anywhere.

SCHOOL

At present the children attend the primary school at Camballin, eight miles away. There are plans to eventually build a school at Looma, especially as approximately 75% of the total enrolment of 65 is from Looma. The attendance rate for the Looma children is poor. In second term, 1975, the average attendance was 59% of the total enrolment
and as the town children have relatively high attendance rates the low figure is largely attributable to Looma. It is hoped by the local school teachers that a school at Looma will obviate the practical difficulties of transporting fifty children daily, allowing more tailoring of the curriculum to suit the needs of the Looma children and also allow both parents and children to accept school as part of daily life.

The Camballin school has two teachers and being classified as a disadvantaged school on numerous counts, as set out by the Australian Schools Commission, is fairly well equipped and able to obtain funds for excursions, garden projects and the like.

These compensations do not offset the disadvantages. The level of achievement even among the European students is low. Their essays reflect the paucity of stimuli in the area for a white child. In comparison the achievements of the Looma children are commendable. Very few have parents literate or fluent in English.

Few children go on to a high school, though since the inception of the Aboriginal Secondary Grant Scheme, there are no financial restrictions on this. The nearest high school is at Derby, where there are two boarding hostels. Parents however were not enthusiastic about allowing their children to leave home. This was not consistent with openly voiced aspirations that children should become nurses,
bookkeepers, mechanics and the like 'for Looma'.
Student compositions on living at Looma are reproduced at Appendix IV, together with two from workers.

ADULT EDUCATION

a) Pundulmurra Technical College - South Hedland

This had been used by a number of the community and numerous members, especially the women, had hopes of attending it in the future. Pundulmurra is a technical college for Aborigines, administered by the State Education Department. It offers short-term and basic courses in such things as truckdriving, mechanics, bricklaying, dressmaking, gardening and homemaking.

At the time of my stay, five boys in their late teens were away at Pundulmurra. From the descriptions given as to what they were learning, it seems the conception of the education available at the College is grandiose from a white Australian viewpoint. Rather than high school being a recognized preliminary to vocational training it was Pundulmurra which could transform young adults into the trained personnel required for the community.

Several of the young women wanted to go down both to learn generally about housekeeping and to learn bookkeeping and typing. A total of twenty five people put their names down to go, following a Council meeting on the courses offered. This was reduced as the councillors had the names of those they considered unsuitable struck off the list.
The women applying seemed quite sincere in their ambitions to learn at Pundulmurra, while the young men seemed mainly interested in a chance to have adventures away from home and see something of the outside world. Their main expressed aim in going was to obtain a driver's license and see Port Hedland.

b) **Literacy Classes offered by the Summer Institute of Linguistics**

A young woman working for the S.I.L. had been at Looma since April 1975, teaching literacy in both Walmadjari and English. Initially, she lived at the Camballin Caravan Park in accordance with the community's expressed desire to have a community without whites. The community later invited her to set up her caravan on site.

Four people (three women and one man) had already completed a literacy course in Walmadjari - all had previously been literate in English. There were two additional women who had taught themselves literacy in Walmadjari. Twenty one students (thirteen women and eight men) were enrolled in the classes at the time of my stay. Several of the councillors were enrolled and were concerned to learn to sign their names so they could use them on Council documents rather than a cross. Several of the other students were keen to be able to sign their cheques. Some measure of the level of adult illiteracy is given in the fact that of the forty-seven pensioners cashing cheques through the store during my stay, forty-four or 94%
Fishing - a popular pastime and an important source of protein.
used a cross. Of the generally younger population cashing Child Endowment cheques, twelve or 40% of the total of thirty used a cross.

There was some expressed dissatisfaction by the other language speakers that the linguist spoke only Walmadjari. It was felt important to have Mangala and Nyigina recorded too.

The linguist was supported in her work by the fact that the S.I.L. were also operative in Fitzroy Crossing. Two women here had been studying Walmadjari for some years and had extensive records of their work. They have recently published a handbook of their work which is intended for the use of school teachers, nurses and other white Australians needing to understand and communicate with Walmadjari speakers. (See 16)

While Mangala and Walmadjari are quite similar in sound, systems and grammar, Nyigini is distinctly different. It is thus easier for a Mangala speaker to acquire Walmadjari as a second language than for a Nyigina speaker. The linguist at Looma found that many of the children could speak none of these languages fluently but rather used a form of pidgin, which included features of both English and the tribal languages.

c) Aboriginal Adult Education Courses

These were never operative during my stay though equipment—a tin shed and some sewing machines—had arrived. One of the leaders had plans for his wife, who had been to
Pundulmurra, to teach the other women cooking and sewing. These did not materialize because of both a lack of enthusiasm on the part of the women and a lack of money to pay her for her services.

THE LOOMA COUNCIL

This is a recent development. It has the advantage of allowing outside agencies to deal with fixed representatives of the community. It was envisaged by D.A.A. that the Council would administer and manage the community in an increasingly autonomous manner.

Elections were held on 6th September, 1974 after the local D.A.A. officer had explained the concept of a council and its proposed purpose. The following is an extract from an interview with the only woman councillor regarding the Council.

A.M. "(D.A.A. Officer) came that time and we had meeting with (him). And they picked from the Nyigina tribe, me and Freddie. Four from Walmatjari tribe - Killer Narga, Joe Green, Frank Kidby and Peter Skipper. And three from Mangala tribe - Lucky Green, Roger Henry and Michael Maundie. We different tribes. Three tribes in Looma ... so they picked it out."

Q: Did they decide to have one woman?
A.M.: Yes, they decided they would have one woman.
Q: Who decided?
A.M.: Well (the D.A.A. Officer) said that you can pick woman for your councillor – man or woman if you like. Freddie put my name up.

Q: Do they have elections every year for Council?
A.M.: No. some time might pick other councillors. Because we can't be all the time councillors. But not yet.

Q: How did they pick Freddie as Chairman?
A.M.: Because he's good friend. Talk like. So we picked him for Chairman. We agree for him.

Q: And now Roger is taking Freddie's place. Why?
A.M.: Because he is a good man. Killer the boss of everyone. He help peoples. And ask them what they need. He do it for them. And he bring it out to the Council. And he tell us in the meeting. Killer the boss. He can sack anyone. Kick them out.

Q: Does he very often?
A.M.: Yes, some.

Q: What sort of things does he kick them out for?
A.M.: Grog. He tell them and they don't take notice – well push them out."

This has been quoted at length because it illustrates the common perception of the Council as a white introduced tool for talking to the white man, while the major political leader from Liveringa is still seen as having authority over the community members. However, as more and more community decisions are being made by the Council where the structure encourages all to voice their opinions, a power struggle has arisen.
The changing roles of the 'boss' and the councillors will be examined at greater length in the next chapter.

Council meetings are held every Monday afternoon outside the project officer's caravan and run from 4 p.m. to approximately 7 p.m. Correspondence from outside agencies is dealt with in this setting and any community requests for goods or services are sent out by the Council. The secretary (normally the project officer), takes minutes, reads correspondence and writes letters on behalf of the Council. (During my term as Secretary, literate women also took minutes and some of the correspondence was handled by Cr Annie Milgin).

A fairly new innovation at the time of my stay was an invitation to community members to attend Council Meetings as visitors, "to listen, but not to talk." Freddie Johnson explained this as a way of convincing the young, especially the men, of the importance of Council business. He felt they had to realize that Looma was a town with rules and regulations and that they had to listen to what the Councillors had to say and think about the time they would become Councillors. At the six Council meetings I attended there was an average of five visitors - both men and women.

The following is a fairly typical range of items covered at a Council meeting:

1) Councillors spoke of need to buy tools for the garden and the building of stockyards. Resolved to buy brace and bit.
Looma Council Meeting

Daily scene outside Looma store
2) Bank statement on store account read out. Credit $18,000. Councillors glad to hear that Looma is rich.

3) Freddie Johnson called for a report from community police on their work.

4) Michael Maundie spoke of the need for a second driver on the school bus.

5) Councillors spoke of their dissatisfaction at the failure of Camballin to provide them with any 'killers'. There has been no fresh meat at the store for three weeks because the generator has not been repaired.

6) Announcement from the linguist that she had a book in Walmatjari on how to vote, which with the Council's permission she would distribute.

7) Announcement from Killer that a Canberra housing man was coming to look at the Looma housing.

It was common for the same item to be raised weekly without any resolution of the issue. Most of the talking was done by four of the Councillors – Freddie Johnson, Killer Narga, Michael Maundie and Roger Henry. Votes were not usually taken until an issue had been talked over at length and total consensus was reached.

**COMMUNITY WORK AND FACILITIES**

In addition to the projects officer and his wife, there were approximately thirteen people on the D.A.A. funded community payroll. The major accountancy for the projects
covered was done in Perth by a firm of Chartered Accountants, which plays a similar role in several other Aboriginal communities. The day to day book work done at Looma by the projects officer is minimal and the people have no ready access to a statement of their current finances.

STORE - A small tin shed staffed by the project officer, his wife, and two young married women; this is open for three hours each morning and has a weekly turnover of approximately $2,000. Goods are ordered weekly from Derby at a 3% discount from retail price. The markup is generally 20% though the price is rounded up to the nearest 5¢ or 10¢ because of the general disdain for what is termed 'black money'.

By far the most popular items were meat, flour, sugar, tea, biscuits and cool drink. Fruit is purchased regularly but vegetables are very slow sellers. Prior to the project officer's establishment of the store, food was obtainable irregularly - either through the Camballin store or through truckloads sent out by a Derby store.

There is a considerable pride in the fact that in just over twelve months' operation of the store it has made over $18,000 profit. The project officer is able to cite the fact that a similar store run by an Aboriginal community at Derby has run at a loss for years. The fact that these profits are to be used to build a new and bigger store, where the customers will be able to walk in and select
what they want from the shelves, was a constant topic of conversation.

At the time of my arrival the women working in the store were being paid $18 per week. This was paid straight from the till. They generally worked from 6 a.m. to noon. Their positions were greatly envied by the other women and there were many complaints of unfair treatment from customers. For the last two weeks of my stay, three women ran the store virtually alone. After the first day they said they would chuck in the job because they couldn't take all the abuse and pressure for 'bookups' (credit) from the customers. This was raised with the councillors and both Freddie and Killer endeavoured to persuade the Community to accept their own people in what was seen as a 'gadeja's role'. While there was general verbal agreement with this, the tensions continued and most were awaiting the return of the projects officer to resume his position and resolve the issue.

The majority of cheques coming into the community are cashed through the store. Formerly, there was a bank agency also operated through the store but this was discontinued because of the low profit margin. Approximately twenty people were using an envelope banking system at the store. This consisted of placing money in a used envelope with the name and amount written on it. The amount would be adjusted as money was taken out or put in. As most of the people using the system were illiterate and unable to count it was an unsatisfactory system, open to abuse.
The store was a major gathering and gossiping place for the community. Because of the fact that most shopped daily, there was generally a long wait to be served which facilitated the formation of groups outside the store. The agreed-upon roster was that mothers shopped first for their children's playlunch which had to be sent across to the school before 10 a.m. Then it was the workers' tea time and they took precedence. Finally, it was the pensioners' turn.

**MAIL**

Mail was distributed through the store but there was no regular delivery. Rather several people had keys to the Looma post box in Derby and would collect the mail if in town. Every second Tuesday was 'pension day' and a special trip, if necessary, would be made to collect the mail.

**COMMUNICATION**

There was no phone or radio at Looma, though a radio was on order.

**TRANSPORT**

Quite a number of men had cars but only two were in good condition. The use of taxis was considerable. Up to six a day from both Derby and Broome would call. There were usually people wanting to go to town waiting to
backload any taxi that came out from town with passengers. The charge was $40 each way, though this was usually shared between several passengers. The well-founded suspicion that some taxi drivers brought cartons of alcohol out with them was a constant topic of debate at Council meetings.

COMMUNITY WORKERS

The ten men on the payroll were split into two teams. The first, using the Looma tractor, was responsible for the fencing of the Looma property and the weekly rubbish collection, while the second worked on general maintenance activities around the village, such as checking the power house, dispensing petrol and keeping the area around the store and caravans clean and weeded. This team included two of the councillors - Michael Maundie and Roger Henry. Both had considerable communication with the projects officer as Michael operated the petrol bowser and had to check with the project officer over change on practically each transaction, while Roger was the driver for both the school bus and community truck. These were both constantly in need of repairs and parts.

Otherwise there was little direct contact between the workers and the project officer. Certainly there was little evidence of an ethos among the workers of working for the community. It was a job like any other except that the cheques were often delayed because the time sheets were not sent down to the Perth on time. On the other hand
Making bread in the camp.

Making damper in one of the houses.
it had the advantage of being less closely supervised than the S.H.C. positions. Each team had a foreman who ensured that certain standards were maintained but there was little indication that their efforts were regarded as an important part of the whole Looma project.

Killer Narga was trying to get a garden started at the time of my stay but it was hard to persuade the community workers to help him. Though eventually they did help with the fencing of the garden plot and the digging of trenches, they expressed the opinion that this was not their job but 'pensioner work'. This, despite the fact that their own 'work' was often difficult to identify.

Their view is probably attributable to the Council decision (based on the project officer's advice) that Killer could start a garden but could not expect financial support as the current budget had already been committed. It was expected that pensioners would do the weeding and watering. This led to a feeling that the garden was outside the scope and patronage of the projects officer and his workers. The project officer did little to dispel this or to encourage the workers to contemplate how they could achieve a community garden with a minimum of finance.

**STATE HOUSING COMMISSION ACTIVITIES**

Using Federal funds, the State Housing Commission has accepted the responsibility of planning a village scheme
in consultation with the Looma people and constructing this using community labour. Considerable resources have been expended on the project and the planning has been both ongoing and flexible.

In October and November there were two State Housing Supervisors in residence at Looma from Monday through to Friday noon. The number of workers on the payroll averaged between forty and fifty - this included three women engaged in office work. The average working week was 30 hours with an average pay of $67.20. Total weekly wages paid out ranged from $3,500 - $4,000.

At this time there were fifteen houses completed with a further twenty five in various stages of completion. Each house was estimated to cost between $21,000 and $30,450. They are constructed of polyurethane foam cored asbestos panels. The design of each house is a central breezeway on either side of which are placed bedrooms, kitchen, shower room and toilet. State Housing sells furniture designed to fit into these houses.

There was widespread expressed satisfaction at what had been built so far. While 'white' criticism of the buildings tends to be absolute, the only complaints from the people themselves were with regard to particular points. They felt they, themselves, had picked the housing design, had picked the site and had picked the alignment of houses. The main complaints or suggestions for improvement were regarding:
a) the need for some sort of roll-up canvas blind at each end of the breezeway. Both dusty winds and heavy rains occur for a reasonable proportion of each year and in either event the breezeway is rendered unserviceable. Also, there are numerous cold nights in winter.

b) The inutility of the sink located in the breezeway. This was a single unit and the women felt that they should have a double unit or at least a draining board if they were to do the laundry effectively.

c) A tap in each garden. These had been part of the original plan but had been removed after the public health inspector spoke of the danger of hookworm without drainage facilities. Most householders understandably felt that an outside tap was essential for the establishment of a garden.

d) The need for fencing. Opinion was divided as to whether this should be a fence around each house or a fence around the whole community. Some explained it as a need to keep other people's children and dogs out of one's own household. Others conceptualized it as a need to keep the cattle and horses, that would eventually be on the Looma property, out of the village area.

e) The need for the toilet doors to be longer to preserve the modesty of the occupant and prevent the possible embarrassment of the passers-by who might recognize
the feet of someone to whom they had a relationship of restraint or avoidance. State Housing had responded to this complaint.

f) The unsuitability of the siting of the wood stove which was outside in the open - in the direct heat in summer and in the rain during the wet, and at all times far removed from the kitchen or a table. Again, State Housing had been responsive and had extended the breezeway and placed the stove in an alcove within it.

The State Housing Commission had also supervised the provision of an infrastructure of services for the village, i.e. power, water and septic services together with a store, basketball court and picture screen. Further community facilities such as a clinic, kindergarten, store and school were projected.

The supervisory style of the two white State Housing Officers was one of a low profile but exacting. Thus, working hours were kept carefully and any worker not keeping satisfactory effort was liable to dismissal. Largely the Looma men worked under the direct supervision of one of themselves. These men received nothing but status for this and they tended to be young and literate men.

One of the white officers had been with the community since they had shifted from Djigida and had developed a good working relationship with many of the men. While
### Table 5

**Sources of Income**

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<td>Supporting Mother's Benefit</td>
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<td>Kindergarten Workers</td>
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<td>NIL Income*</td>
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<td>14</td>
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<td>22</td>
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* Does not include married females. Mainly young people. The men were not working at time of census though there was work available usually on S.H. building or with C.W. young unmarried girls had few employment opportunities. Also includes three older men waiting for decision on A.P. or I.P. claims.
endeavouring to respect the Looma people's ways he also insisted on European ways in the work situation. Because of the style of supervision and the importance the Community placed on the housing, the pride in their achievements by the workers was considerable.

SOCIAL SECURITY AND WELFARE

Much of the income of the community was obtained from the Department of Social Security. Thus of the 115 people receiving a living income, 51 or 44.4% were receiving federal pensions or benefits. (The income sources of community members are set out in Table 5). In addition, thirty people were receiving child endowment payments.

The closest Social Security Office was Broome, but officers rarely visit Looma. Rather the Community Welfare Officer who visits approximately once a week, acts as their agent. Because of their isolation and the difficulty of communicating in terms acceptable to bureaucratic requirements, there were both delays and omissions in the disbursement of entitlements.

At the time of fieldwork, unemployment benefits were not obtainable by residents as it was considered that the building project offered employment to all those seeking work. As pointed out at Table 4, this was not true in the case of young unmarried girls.
One ruling of the Department that had an effect on the community was the fact that only the first wife of a pensioner was eligible for a wife's allowance. As individuals do not pool their resources in Utopian socialism, but abide by a system of reciprocity, this gave some of the second wives the status of a 'poor relation'.

On the one occasion Social Security officers did visit to verify the existence of one of the prestigious religious elders who had been without his pension for three years because he happened to have the same name as another pensioner at Halls Creek - word was immediately sent round the village of their presence and within a short time twelve people appeared with queries as to their entitlements.

The Community Welfare officer is well known to the community, having worked for the State Housing Commission during the planning stages of the village. As well as acting as an agent for Social Security, which occupied a considerable portion of her time, she acted as a consultant on community problems, arranged for foster payments and the like and dealt with individual queries.

At this time, Community Welfare had introduced an Aboriginal Welfare Aide scheme to the Kimberleys. By this, twelve Aborigines were to be recruited to work within their own communities on welfare matters. The name of Gerrard Killer, son of Killer Narga, had been submitted by the local officer with Council approval. However, the
recruiting officer had doubts as to his suitability because of his low level of literacy. This, in spite of the fact that he had achieved the highest level of literacy among Looma males.

(Since then Gerrard Killer has been appointed as a welfare aide. In August 1976 his duties were largely filling in Social Security forms, acting as liaison officer for the community with outside agencies and taking responsibility for the delivery of mail.)

In terms of general welfare, the kinship behavioural patterns still operated to ensure that none went hungry or grossly neglected. There were three mentally handicapped adults and these were all cared for by their families. They had much the same status as children and there were few expectations placed upon them. One woman had a spastic child institutionalized in Perth and though she had been to visit the child, she had little hope that the child would ever be part of the family.

HEALTH

There were no statistics available on the health of the Looma people. From informal discussions and personal observation it would seem that they are a healthy community, especially in relation to some of the Aboriginal groups living in or near Derby. The local school teacher reported that the establishment of a store and the consequent guarantee of regular food intake by adults and children
had had a marked effect on the health of the community.
Perhaps the major problem was the high incidence of skin
diseases and trachoma. Both of these are considered
to be related to the aggravating effect of pervasive dust.
Except for the wet season, the region is very dry, with
sparse vegetative cover around the village itself. During
my stay when it was both hot and dry, just about everyone,
including myself, had running eyes or 'sandy blight'.
Without correct treatment, over time this can predispose
to trachoma and blindness. Hookworm is a problem common
to the region, but is not as rife at Looma as at other
settlements.

Community Health Sisters visit Looma twice a week and
as well as carrying out preventative programmes they
attend to the complaints of individuals. A doctor visits
the community approximately once a month.

There are also four camp nurses. These have been selected
from the local women and have no training or pay. Largely
their task is to hold and distribute the medicines issued
by Community Health Services. Ideally, Looma requires a
resident nurse but in response to the community's wishes
C.H.S. prefers not to place another gadeja at Looma. A
Walmartjari nursing aide was appointed to Looma but she
and her husband only stayed a very short time.

At present medical emergencies are met in an *ad hoc* fashion.
There is no telephone or radio at Looma so in the event of
a serious illness or accident the options are to head directly for the Derby Hospital by road or to drive to Camballin and send an emergency message to the Flying Doctor Service. In the absence of Western medical personnel the estimation of what situations warrant an emergency response is variable.

There are mabans or native doctors at Looma. Residents would not name these men but two reported the diagnoses they had made of specific illnesses. These pointed to a person or behaviour pattern as the cause of the malady. To quote from Robert Tonkinson's description of the situation at Jigalong, which is similar to that in the southern Kimberleys, these men

"are said to possess a maban, a magical object or objects kept within their bodies - usually in the stomach - and which has both curative and destructive powers .... Many have spirit familiars which aid them in their frequent and allegedly efficient communication with the spiritual world. Most native doctors inherit their special powers from their fathers and are said to be able to see inside people in order to diagnose and treat illness". (37 : 78)

In the two cases where I was told the maban had been consulted, the patient had also consulted the Community Health Sisters and was following both treatment schedules. Working for the Community Health Services was an anthropologist who acted to some degree as a mediator between native and Western medical practice. There was no active
discouragement of traditional practices. As a result the general feeling was that the two together - white and Aboriginal - would be stronger than either alone.

COMMUNITY POLICE

During fieldwork there were two men working as 'policemen' at Looma. This was the result of a Council decision that they needed police to keep the drink and fighting out of Looma as tribal law was too slow. Impetus to this decision probably came from the fact that surrounding towns had recently appointed Aboriginal police aides. There had been a visit to the community by a senior police officer involved in the police aide scheme, and the Council had the impression that they had been told to select two men to act as village policemen and then these men would be called to Perth for training and issued with medals and uniforms.

The Police Department subsequently stated that this was a completely erroneous impression and that nothing of the sort could possibly have been said, as under the relevant Act, police aides may only be appointed in situations where they will be under the direct supervision of a policeman. The nearest police post to Looma is at Derby.

However, at the time of fieldwork the Council were still waiting impatiently for the police to contact them. They had appointed the men to control the rest of the community,
but without any visible backing of the whites (not even a 'medal from the Queen') community members increasingly questioned the authority of the village policemen to tell them what to do.

On the one occasion the village police did approach the Derby police for support they were dismissed with sneers, and told that community members had a right to drink as much booze as they liked whenever they liked.

After this the Council decided not to approach Derby again until they had received clarification of the situation from the Perth bosses. The belief was that there was a need for on-site and recognized authority to control those who persisted in bringing in alcohol. It was felt it should be in the style of white law but administered by themselves.

Punishment would then be in the fashion of their own law. (See Freddie Johnson's talk at Appendix II for an elaboration of this.) However, their Law did not cover the present situation - it was too slow. The elders had to gradually come round to the point of putting up their Law. They would not respond immediately to the situation of someone trying to smuggle a bottle of beer in. For this they could see the value of deputizing the function of social control to "village policemen". Both these men were fully initiated and of significant tribal standing but they wanted to play a Western role with Western training, uniform and medals. As one of the Councillors phrased it "with white law and our Law together we will be strong."
RELIGION

During my fieldwork, contrary to what I had been led to expect, there was a spirit of Christian fervour pervading the community. Church services were held twice a week in a bough shed in the middle of the camp. There was a further service on Friday for the 'real' Christians. There were said to be nine of these, all apparently men, but I was unable to find what determined their 'realness'. People spoke of the fact that a collection was being made to build a proper church. Others said they were not subscribing to this but were supporting the construction of an Aboriginal Church. The definition of a Christian as given to me by some of the women was:

NO SMOKING
NO CHEWING TOBACCO
NO SWEARING
NO CARDS
ONLY ONE WIFE.

This reflects the fundamentalist nature of the proselytized belief. Certainly the origins of the movement could be traced back to the establishment of the United Aborigines Mission at Fitzroy Crossing in 1951. However what is perhaps most significant about the evangelical Christianity at Looma is the lack of white involvement. Ministers visit the community from all denominations and they are received politely. The majority of services however are conducted entirely by community members. The Camballin camp leader spoken of in Chapter 1 usually gives the sermon. Gerrard Killer is also a major figure
and reads the Bible, both in English and Walmatjari. The linguist, who is a Christian, attends many of these meetings. She reported that the sermons tend to be evangelistic, centring on why people should be Christians and often making an analogy between the Looma people and the Lost Sheep.

The story of Noah and the Flood is a favourite and similarities to their own Dreamtime stories are cited, to point up the basic oneness and common origin of men.

Only some of the Bible has been translated into Walmatjari which presently restricts preferences. One imponderable tale was the story of Christ turning water into wine.

While many members flatly state they are not Christian, others such as Killer, are trying to have their mother and father's religion and Christianity together. The avowed Christians, however, condemn much of their tradition as evil and sinful. Thus they would not participate in initiations and ritual ceremonies.

Right through my stay the arrival was anticipated of a Walmatjari missionary with the Church of Christ. Killer said he had invited him to come into the community to take the project officer's place and he had apparently been given backing by his Church to move into the Looma community and endeavour to proselytize. This man, who formerly was a charismatic leader among the Fitzroy Crossing people has been described in the following terms by Kolig:
"A figure of almost prophetic qualities forwarding new ideas to Desert Aborigines, played an eminently important role in introducing the concept of Aboriginal emancipation to Fitzroy Aborigines. This relatively youngish man, has received a sound Mission education and possesses excellent intellectual abilities. Until two years ago, before he left for theological training in the south of Western Australia, (he) served as the Fitzroy delegate to the Native Welfare Department's advisory committee and on other political bodies and was the main spokesman of Fitzroy Aborigines in all political and economical affairs vis-a-vis the Government ... Aborigines tended to credit him with all sorts of achievements.

On account of his Christian background and he relatively good knowledge of European socio-cultural conditions, (his) plans for Aboriginal emancipation were quite 'down to earth' and of a completely rational nature. Moreover, he had no interest in the revival or perpetuation of Aboriginal traditions. On the contrary, being indoctrinated by sectarian Protestantism (he) came to regard them as evil and prone to sinful doing.

Despite his determined Protestant orientation and his incompromising rejection of Aboriginal religion - which occasionally resulted in fierce arguments with extremely tradition minded Desert elders - he enjoyed an enormous prestige and confidence even among the highly conservative elders."

(20 : 33)

This man and his family arrived shortly after I left but did not take on the project officer's position.

Rather he is working for the Community Health Service as resident nursing officer.

As well as the Protestant activities, one initiation ceremony was held during my stay with a week of singing and dancing ceremonies preceding the actual operation.
Not all attended this but those that did spoke of it as a very big thing and I was constantly reminded to make notes on all I was observing and being told. Other religious activities which were secret were alluded to by some of the women.

Both the traditional religious elders and the Protestant religious elders could be observed daily in the camp in long conversations. From what I was told of these sessions by Killer, their main purpose was to seek to understand life and the directions in which the Community should be moving.

This then is a sketch of current circumstance at Looma village. In the next chapter interaction within the community will be considered against this backdrop.
CHAPTER 5

COMMUNITY INTERACTION

The Looma community as sketched in the previous chapter appears to have a stable social structure which is neither completely traditional nor completely westernized. It is rather the outcome of continuing adjustments made by the Looma people and their ancestors to the relatively rapidly changing ecology since first contact with whites.

The pattern of interaction within the Looma community at the time of fieldwork is very different from the social structure and organization of any pre-contact Aboriginal group. In pre-contact times, everyday interaction took place largely within the horde, the land occupying group consisting of closely related men, their wives and children. This group would probably have never numbered more than 50 people. (See 2 for a fuller description of this social unit.) While several neighbouring hordes would, depending on economic conditions, regularly come together for religious purposes, it was the horde that was the basic political unit. Each horde was independent and autonomous and not under the formal authority of any other social unit. Patterns of expected behaviour were as set down in the Dreamtime and were conceived to be of an unchanging nature. Law experts could be influential beyond their own horde but not in an
institutionalized manner. Life as laid down by the Dreamtime ancestors was fixed and unchanging. Individuals could not use power and authority to act on this pre-determined course of events. Rather it was recognized that certain individuals were more expert and adapt at understanding, following and interpreting the complex masterplan of life as expected by the ancestors.

Within the horde authority was in the hands of the fully initiated male members, with power increasing as religious knowledge increased. Because of the system of gradual revelation of the Law to a man over his life this led to a direct relationship between age and power. Economic circumstances would have prevented many of the difficulties associated with age, such as senility and infirmity, being considerations and such was the group's world-taken-for-granted, that few of the young men would conceive of challenging their elders' power. Without access to the secret-sacred aspects of knowledge and understanding, the most skilled and expert hunter could not expect to survive.

Women, too, within the framework of their world-taken-for-granted, could not conceive of challenging the leadership. Roles were set down in the Dreamtime and in the absence of radical ecological changes, individuals had little impetus to proffer deviant definitions. Obviously, over time, changes did occur but never so quickly and
widely that a community-wide consciousness of change per se was likely. The understanding of the whole of life was always in the hands of just a few who could relatively effortlessly make any necessary adjustments to fit social life to environmental circumstances.

Probably only the elders in the use of their power were aware of the deception inherent in the social structure. (A good example of this is given in Love's book on the Worora people of the N-W Kimberleys. No deaths were accidental and the guilty party was determined by placing stones, each representing a community member under a funeral bier. Those stones marked with liquid falling from the corpse signified the person/s responsible. However only the elder in charge of the operation knew which stone represented which person and so was able to effectively rid himself of any troublemakers. (See 24 : 154-155).)

To quote Berger,

"Society can maintain itself only if its fictions are accorded ontological status by at least some of its members some of the time." (1 : 166-167)

In pre-contact Aboriginal society, with the absence of alien social stimuli and alternative social forms, it is probable that the social fictions were accorded ontological status by most of its members most of the time. Such social deviation as occurred would have largely served to mark more clearly the boundaries to
acceptable behaviour. It would rarely have had a reformatory or revolutionary flavour.

In the post-contact situation a consciousness of change on the part of most members of Aboriginal societies has been unavoidable. The Looma community as it is constituted today is non-traditional on numerous counts. The group interacting daily numbers over 300, the members come from varying backgrounds, speak different languages and are all aware of alternate ways of life. Nevertheless, such adjustments to the complex of factors following European settlement have necessarily evolved from a base of traditional understanding and social perspective. In the continuing transformation of their ecology, the people now at Looma have been confronted with the necessity of reflecting on their own 'knowledge' and of recognizing its relativity. In the process, however, they have had the advantages of having chosen to move into the sphere of Euraustralian influence, of having settled into a life style where the impact of an alien society was muted and of having the opportunity to observe at first hand the likely outcome of any unthinking rejection of their own 'Law' (as with some of the reserve dwellers of Derby).

Similar in many ways to Looma are the La Grange Catholic Mission and the town of Fitzroy Crossing. They, too, are populated largely by Desert Aborigines who adhere
to their traditions and strive to dominate the indigines. The populations of each of the settlements interact with those of the other two.

Both Petri and Kolig, working at La Grange and Fitzroy Crossing, respectively, found that it is the Law which continues to provide the pivotal point to social interaction. However it is now a Law that is subject to constant questioning and reinterpretation.

Thus Petri and Petri Odermann speak of a Law meeting at La Grange, where elders from a variety of backgrounds discussed the origin of subincision, which was not a practice common to all groups in pre-contact times.

"Widely divergent viewpoints, concepts and attempted interpretations were put forward ... a solution to this controversial issue was not forthcoming. Such discussions however ... demonstrated that these Aborigines, contrary to still widely held views are in no way bound to a fixed and unmodified pattern. These and similar findings ... permit us to recognize that Australian Aborigines are quite prepared to question their traditional values and moral code, to discuss these and if necessary, to reinterpret them." (27 : 252-253)

Kolig in writing of Fitzroy Crossing found a population that varied greatly as to length of contact with Europeans and degree of adherence to traditional social forms.

"'Law' is manifested in the intricate complex of myth, ritual practice, observance of the kinship code, and obligations resulting from compliance with religious dogma and practice. However, the concept of 'law' as such, is open to varying interpretation and definition among Aborigines ...
The tradition ... does not represent a fixed and unalterable set of beliefs and behaviour ...

The procrustean bed of new living conditions, drastic changes of the socio-economic environment, and new legal codices has stretched the 'law' to its limits in many respects. Parts of the law have been strongly 'liberalized', portions have sunk into oblivion. Changes in values and cognitive processes make the strict observance of great parts of the original religious dogma undesirable. However, in a protracted process tradition is always being redefined and adapted to new conditions, without losing its property of being sacro-sanct and of remote origin." (20 : 15)

Both writers speak of a general feeling among the Aborigines that the Law must be 'kept going' if they are to avoid the fate of those who have lost their Law and drift on the fringes of white society. Both use the terms nativistic and millenarian to describe the development of this feeling into action. A definition that is apt in this context is that of Vogel. Reformative nativism is to him

"a conscious attempt to attain a personal and social reintegration through a selective rejection, modification and synthesis of both traditional and alien (dominant) cultural components." (38 : 250)

Both Koliq and Petri speak of the Walmadjeri people as being the most aggressively determined group to consciously maintain and revive the Law as the base to existential security. Many being recent immigrants from
the Desert, they were in a situation to observe with clarity the likely outcome of interaction with whites. They were able to descry the weakness of the 'indigines' Law and impose their own as a worthy deterrent to the uncontrolled influx of white ways, which while admirable and to be aspired to in particular instances, were as a whole harmful to Aborigines. They recognized Aborigines as a separate people, who while sharing certain aspects of humanity with the whites, demonstrably could not hope to achieve fulfilment in any capitulation of their own ways to the ways of the whites. The whites themselves continually demonstrated that there were no more rewards to being a 'white' Aborigine than there were for those who kept to the Law. Conversion to Christianity did not provide a better way of life, either materially or spiritually. In addition to the general lack of economic opportunity, lack of material betterment was related to the fact that in the limited and biased exposure to Australian society possible in this region, few could gain a flexible and meaningful conception of the Protestant ethic. The fundamentalist Christianity preached at Fitzroy Crossing for example was the outcome of particular social conditions in industrialized England and to be accepted a a whole by rural Aborigines with little awareness of such conditions, was unlikely to be a very meaningful and socially congruent action.
In conjunction with the wide development of nativism, the Aborigines received compelling evidence that the whites had the power not just to disrupt traditional life but to break it down with changes to the cattle industry and the consequent widespread displacement and dismemberment of station mobs. There was an increasing awareness that a land base, owned by the group in the proprietary terms recognized by whites, was necessary to any continued assurance of group control over their destiny. There was a developing consciousness that they were a deprived and exploited group, who could be assured of white lack of interest in their welfare. Far from station life being based on reciprocity they were the expendable tools of the white man.

Hope for their future welfare lay then in moving away from the control of the white man - into secure geographic enclaves which would provide the opportunity for a stable social life, with some cushioning of outside influences and the opportunity to make reasoned and appropriate adjustments to changing circumstances. It would also give Aborigines the chance to accumulate wealth. As they observed all round them it was the station owners (the land holders) that have the money.

This drive for emancipation was not developed solely by the Aborigines. Propaganda from various sources has been considerable and has fostered this sense of injustice and material deprivation. This propaganda has been a
recent outcome of changes in the wider society - it is only recently that what are regarded as basic rights of Australians have been conceded to Aborigines by at least some social elements. This itself was related to developments outside Australia - in particular the Civil Rights Movements of the sixties in the U.S.

However, the impact of such views was greatest on the more traditionally oriented Aborigines. Those more adjusted to the 'social reality' could not readily imagine either asking for or receiving land and more equitable treatment from the whites. Among the indigenes at La Grange, then a Roman Catholic Mission and previously a Government ration camp, Petri found that

"it did not seem to be a matter of collective reflections that the Europeans had taken away their country. In this regard the migrants out of the Desert definitely had different views. The leading men amongst them liked to point out that the whole of this continent should be given back to the Aborigines ...."

These were

"mostly unsophisticated Aborigines of the young and middle age levels who put a stress on their own traditional orientation. We could not help but get the impression that it was mainly the concern of the Yulbaridja and Walmadjari migrants, the most unsophisticated ethnic units in the North-West to adopt the idea of 'landright' in modern socio-political terms." (26 : 7)
Looma is sited between Fitzroy Crossing and La Grange and much of what the Petris and Kolig found is also applicable to the people living there. It was the Walmadjari who were the key figures in conceiving and justifying the land claim and they anticipated Looma as a place of retreat where Aboriginal traditions could be perpetuated. Economic considerations only developed later, later probably influenced by expectations of the Aboriginal Affairs Department and the plethora of claims for cattle stations by Aboriginal groups throughout the Kimberleys.

The pattern of social interaction at Looma is an atypically successful Aboriginal adjustment to change. New definitions of social reality have retained their links with the old. The basic guide to social interaction is the classificatory kinship system. Each member is in a known relationship to all other members, with concomitant social expectations. In addition, there is considerable intermarriage between differing 'tribal' groups according to traditional rules. Practically all are foreigners to this particular site but all are linked by the fact that their offspring will be Looma born. All share the same conceptualization of the 'Law' though there are wide variations within this. There is a conscious we/them feeling, both with regard to other Aboriginal communities and with regard to whites.
Against these forces of conversion there are some points of divergence in the social fabric. These would include the differing tribal and language groups, the young against the old, the Christians versus those following traditional religion, the drinking of alcohol and differing aspirations for the future of the community.

The main factor preventing the development of any community schisms is the leadership. Leadership is of four major forms at Looma and none of them are purely traditional. Traditionally, leadership did not extend in any formal manner beyond the members of a horde. However with the larger settlements of people from varying groups, a new form of leadership evolved. Along with this, the elder men had now much more opportunity to discuss and work through solutions to life problems. Leadership is an achieved and not ascribed status and must be continually protected from any usurpation. The fact that Looma happened and that a village has now taken shape has given the leaders behind this more immense prestige and widened the scope of their influence.

The leaders at Looma can be listed as follows:-

1. 'TRADITIONAL' RELIGIOUS LEADER
2. 'TRADITIONAL' POLITICAL LEADER
3. 'WHITE ORIENTED' POLITICAL LEADER
4. 'CHRISTIAN' RELIGIOUS LEADER

1. The 'traditional' religious leaders at Looma were two Walmadjari men, of enormously high repute
throughout the southern Kimberleys for their religious knowledge. There were also several women 'religious bosses' who were in charge of the women's sacred material, responsible for the women's section of ceremonies and administered punishment to the women. However in virtually all their actions they were under the instructions and authority of the men. Both these men maintained a low-profile vis-a-vis the white oriented activities of the village and I had little direct contact with them. They made frequent 'business' trips to surrounding communities, especially Fitzroy Crossing, and I was kept advised of their movements as these were obviously events of importance to the community in general. One had, in addition to four wives, a landrover in good repair which was chauffered for him by another community member. As he had been without his pension for three years because of confusion on the part of Social Security, this is a rough material indication of his status.

Though I had little direct information as to the nature of their religious activities, Petri and Petri Odermann speak at length of their charismatic activities in the days prior to Looma. Revolving round visions of a future egalitarian society without any colour-based distinctions to material well being, a Jinimin (or Jesus Christ) cult was developed which brought the Old Testament doctrine of the Protestant missionaries
into accordance with the 'Law'. They dated the first appearance of this cult to approximately 1963. Jinimin was said to be white and black in colour and was said to reveal himself to fully initiated men ac corroborees. (This last I was told by a woman at Looma.)

"Jinimin had proclaimed that all land had from the beginning belonged to the Aborigines and that in future there would be no differences between Aborigines and other Australians - all should share equally in that land ... Jinimin's future world without social and 'racial' differentiation can be realized, it is said, only if they (the Aborigines) have enough political power and achieve a sense of self-identification. Only under such conditions can they successfully counteract the designs of Europeans. One pre condition, however, is that the Aborigines must 'keep going' the old 'law'.

The Christian Redeemer, adapted to their own categories of thinking and values, assumes the role of protector and preserver of their traditional culture ... the retention of the pre-European or traditional religious and cultural form is coupled with a Utopian dream of an egalitarian society, in this world, patterned along Western lines."

(27 : 258-260)

One of the present leaders was "the cult chief of prophet of the new teachings. His name was on every lip" (27 : 260) throughout the Southern Kimberleys. Though illiterate, he was said to have a 'Holy Book' among his sacred objects which set out 'the word' or the Law. Both elders were later displaced from their home station along with their sacred boards. (See Chapter 1) They shifted to Liveringa and it was their
revelations and interpretations of events that were major motivating forces in the move to stand up against the power of the local whites. They took little direct part in the resulting consultations with whites but were obviously kept informed of each development. A major innovation of this leadership was punishment for social crimes in an institutionalized manner. This again was different from traditional society where retribution or revenge tended to be the responsibility of the aggrieved party or a near relative. Punishments first came in with the ritual performances associated with the Jinimin cult. Instead of the relaxed and unconstrained manner common to more traditional performances, the new rituals were performed within the framework of a Protestant Church Service, in an atmosphere of reverent earnestness and absolute silence. Failure to maintain this atmosphere, late arrival or various other misdemeanours could bring harsh penalties.

"The main punishment for violating the rites of proper conduct at such rituals, in having scorned God's Law, is to stand for a whole day, from sunrise to sunset, under supervision in a shadowless place with hands raised and without food or water." (27 : 264)

The elders would direct this punishment and decide on the time and place but they would not be physically involved in it as they were able to allocate these responsibilities among numerous initiated men. Over
time, this power to punish came to be used for offences in general social life as well as for those in ritual activities.

This development was an important adjustment to the new conditions as it gave the leaders some hope of preserving group autonomy and independence. It was modelled to some degree on the white legal system with its court system and the power of men to sit in judgement over their fellows according to white law. At Looma the elders continued to administer this power to keep community order. Though they would deal with any flagrant offence such as a wrong marriage, their main concern and the main concern of the community as a whole was to see that they kept drinkers and trouble-makers under control.

As Freddie Johnson stated, "They punish them so they can realize and understand - they not going to make any more trouble."

Besides harsh physical punishments it was also believed that these elders could punish people through what white Australians would term supernatural means. Thus sickness, an injury or bad luck could all be seen as the outcome of wrong doing. On one occasion Killer came to my caravan to tell the linguist and me to stay inside that night and be careful to shut all our windows. There had been a community meeting that
afternoon to discuss a drunken fight between a few of the younger men earlier in the day. One of the elders had decided to "call up a big wind and rain to show the troublemakers that they better stay clean." Killer added that these troublemakers had been warned previously and would now have to take the consequences. Killer said he was very sorry that it had had to come to this and that the whole community should have to be punished for the actions of a few. It would be very hard, but the troublemakers would have to learn. That night was very windy and I later found that a cyclone warning was current throughout the West Kimberley. There was however no rain and when I saw Killer next day he told me that they had decided that a full storm might have been a bit too hard, so the religious elder had called it off at the last minute.

Despite these acknowledged powers there was some expressed dissatisfaction at the activities of the elders. Many of those concerned with keeping order such as the councillors and the 'village policemen' felt that they were too slow in putting up their law. No-one else could move to formally punish or control individuals without permission from the elders but often the elders would wait months before taking any action. There was also some feeling that the elders were not keeping up with all the changes at Looma and
were not quick enough to move against new and different types of troublemakers such as those using taxis to transport alcohol and those smuggling alcohol into their houses.

The following is Freddie Johnson's description of the role of the religious elders.

"They are the real bosses for Looma. (But) they can't keep Law all the time - they have to be ready for it. Policemen have to grab men and bring them to the Law.

Any trouble in the Camp they like to punish it with Aboriginal Law. But any serious trouble - stealing motor car, stealing grog or store, call the white police. That's why we're going to have to get a radio for Looma.

Some blokes living here from Fitzroy, Broome, Derby, Port Hedland cause a bit of trouble - they don't go the Looma way.

Our Law, Aboriginal Law - his just as good as white man law. Pretty hard - can be punished. But they (the elders) don't like to do it. I'm just waiting for it but I can't say come on. I mean I can't go over and say come on you blokes - put up your Law. No I can't I get trouble for that ... They're the ones that work things out. How they're going to do it and when they going to start."

This illustrates both the power of the religious leaders and the limitations to this power and the possibility of questioning the use of their power. The present day pattern is one of joint political power where the religious elders are increasingly dependent on a
political delegate or spokesman in relation to white
oriented community activities and community interaction
with the wider society.

2. 'TRADITIONAL' POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

At Looma, Killer Narga is openly acknowledged as the
'Boss'. Prior to Looma he was the leading station
hand at Liveringa for many years. While illiterate
and having a very limited comprehension of white
Australian society, he was an intelligent and able
individual who functioned as a mediator and guide
between 'traditional' camp life and the demands of the
station management. As the mob 'boss' it was his duty
to advocate Aboriginal group decisions and interests
vis-a-vis whites and in turn pass on white decisions
to Aborigines. With his relatively comprehensive grasp
of the outside situation as it impinged on the group,
he was invaluable to the religious elders in keeping
them informed of changes and interpreting these.

It was Killer who decided that the group should ask for
help from the Government and that they should invite
Freddie Johnson to help them communicate their story.
He was responsible for implementing in practical terms
the nativistic drive that had been spread in a spiritual
sense by the religious cult prophets.

His aspirations for Looma are to develop a separate
community where the members enjoy the material benefits
of white culture but come under a minimum of control
from white personnel. Again and again in discussions with administrators from Government Departments he has stressed this latter point, so that now there are six white residents at Looma, none of them settled permanently.

Like the religious elders, Killer identifies himself as a Walmadjari. He is a fully initiated man and plays an important part in ritual ceremonies. He is also the driving force behind the only community economic endeavour.

Added to this, he has in recent times shown a great interest in Protestant Christianity, as it has been interpreted to him by his sons and Limeric Malupak, the elder from Camballin. He is continuously striving to make sense of new experiences and keep some control over the direction in which the community is moving. He had obvious respect and faith in the powers of the traditional religious elders but felt that things would be better if their understandings and philosophies could be made stronger by the addition of the Christian understanding. In the same way that Aboriginal Law, in our legal sense could remain strong only with the support of white law, Aboriginal Law in our religious sense needed white religion.

However while Killer is actively striving to keep the community as a cohesive and adaptive whole in the face of the increasing impingement of the outside world, his efforts are limited by several factors. The first of
these is that while he is still acknowledged as the 'Boss', the Village Council is assuming an increasing role in community decisions and Killer is not the Chairman of this. On several occasions Killer took it on himself to write letters on community matters to outsiders without reference to the Council. There was general disapproval of this practice and after one particular letter it developed into a full-scale argument between Freddie Johnson, the Chairman of the Council and Killer. Freddie told Killer that he was not to hand his own letters to visiting Canberra bosses. That was Council business and any such letters would have to be written with the approval of all councillors and have all their signatures on it. Several other councillors became involved in the argument and though Killer tried to defend his actions they all backed Freddie. Killer eventually admitted he was in the wrong and said he would bring all such matters to Council first in future.

Killer's standing in the community was also undermined by the fact that the projects officer openly stated he was senile and past any possibility of leadership. For his part Killer was openly hostile to the projects officer and was constantly working on ideas for his removal. He had offered the job to several other white people from surrounding areas and his latest move had been to write away to ask the Walmadjari lay missionary
mentioned in Chapter 4, to come to Looma to fill the position of projects officer.

While I was at Looma this man was expected to arrive very soon. Under the misapprehension that I had taken the projects officer's position permanently, Killer came to ask me if I would be "O.K. to work with the Christian from Fitzroy Crossing" who would be coming to live and work at Looma after Christmas. When I said I would be back in Perth by then, he said, 'Yes, well we'll have someone like you from Native Welfare to run the store and (this Christian) will be able to do all the rest. Limeric and I bin having meeting down the camp. Agreed that (he) can do that job properly'.

Again this action was without reference to the Council and when this Christian lay missionary and his family did arrive, they were not able to assume such a role, as by then the projects officer had returned and the Council as a whole were not prepared to dismiss him. Few had Killer's active hostility towards him and for some, such as Freddie Johnson, he was very supportive of their power base as he kept stressing that community decisions must be channelled through the Council and ignoring any special claims Killer might make to leadership.

A further limitation on Killer's status as a political leader was the fact that he had not even been to Port Hedland while Freddie had had numerous trips to Darwin,
Perth and Canberra to talk with the big Government bosses. He was ignorant of many social facts of Australia that even young women in the community were acquainted with. Killer obviously felt his lack of knowledge and experience keenly and at least three times spoke to me of meetings he was planning to attend in Perth or Canberra. There was little likelihood of any of these materialising. His last hope was that the other Government (Church of Christ mission organization) was going to fly him and Limeric down to Perth to collect a shield to put in the church they were saving to build.

Killer also had greater difficulty than Freddie in making himself understood to whites. While admitting the truth of this, it was particularly galling to him, as he felt that Freddie's grasp of community problems and understanding of how to cope with them was inadequate. There was a constant tension apparent in the relationship between these two men. Both would make critical remarks about the other to whites, but both realized their reliance on the other. Thus Killer said of Freddie,

"I get on with him O.K. but he is not really of my people. Freddie alright but he speaks too roughly. Have to take it slowly with these people - tell them what to do but slowly and explain things to them so they can understand what is going on - why things need to be done."
On the other hand, at a Council meeting Freddie threatened to pull out and go back to his own country, saying he worked hard for this place and made it go right but nobody appreciated him, nobody helped him. Killer obviously upset at the thought of losing Freddie's talents and skills, immediately asked the Council why they couldn't pay a wage to Freddie out of the store profits. (This was immediately objected to by all the other Councillors because of the sacrosanctness of store funds. As had been repeatedly impressed in them by the project officer, this money was to build a bigger and better store).

Killer then has the problem of continuing to need Freddie Johnson's services but at the same time having to come to terms with the fact that what was initially power delegated by him to Freddie has increasingly become power in its own right. It would seem that he is well aware of the need to actively work at preserving his own power base so as to be able to guide the community in the directions he feels appropriate. He still has the bloc support of the older, more traditionally oriented members. He is also incorporating the Christian faction and through his sons, who are relatively well educated, hopes to consolidate the knowledge base of his power.

This desire for continued power did not seem to be for personal ambitions but primarily to enable him to realize the vision of an independent Aboriginal community, free
from white interference in day-to-day affairs but enjoying the material benefits of the white culture. He would frequently discuss his plans for community projects. Besides the garden which he was working on while I was there, he hoped to set up a fowl run to supply the community with fresh eggs, to build a shade house to grow delicate plants like tomatoes, to build a bough shed where the women could communally cook lunches for the school children and to have the women learn sewing and cooking. He also felt that in about two years time Looma would have to get a nearby cattle station to provide the young men with employment and the community with an income.

He explained the need for these plans by saying,

"If I don't work and get my people to work for Looma, some of my people might lose their houses. Not me - I'm alright. I understand. But these other people have to understand the Government always watching. Have to work for Looma. Not have too much rubbish like before. That's why I'm working so hard on this garden. But some of these young fellas - they just can't understand."

Work hard he did. He cleared a 2-hectare plot almost single-handedly, brought in water tanks which he filled daily by hose from the nearest house and with the help of the horticultural advisor from the Department of the North West and a few community members, fenced and planted the garden. Verbal community support of his work was considerable but practical help was minimal.
However, he was convinced that he was doing what had to be done and that in time the others would come to understand and join him. The strength of his convictions was demonstrated when plans were being made for initiation ceremonies to be held at another Aboriginal community, six miles out of Derby. Killer, Freddie and one of the religious leaders were to be the three big men from Looma at the ceremony, and their presence was essential to make the occasion a successful one. To be away at this stage of his garden's development however was risky - he could not rely on anyone else to water his seedlings day and night for the two days he would be away. "They need me at Mowanjum for it to go the right way but I've got a big job to do here." Eventually his threat to absent himself from the ritual proceedings was taken seriously and one of the religious elders volunteered one of his wives to water the garden.

Part of the explanation for Killer's conclusion that the community should work physically on 'economic' projects can be traced to the fact that he had relatively little to do with Government in the past and hence the largesse that has befallen his project in recent years has made a big impact. He is able to believe that Government generally speaking understands the problem and is willing to do all in its power to help Looma achieve independence and self-sufficiency provided the people are able to show they intend to work in
the manner expected of all Australians and to fulfil Governmental requirements in the areas of education, health and welfare.

3. "WHITE-ORIENTED" POLITICAL LEADER

In contrast, Freddie Johnson has had far more extensive and diverse experiences of the complex of social realities that are Government. He is much less of an 'idealist' and far more inclined to see Aboriginal Affairs as the outcome of various white whims which can change over time but always provide limits on Aboriginal action. The most an Aboriginal leader can hope to do is to conform to these limits and manipulate within them as much as possible to personal and group advantage.

Prior to present Aboriginal policy, he had been a leading spokesman in Derby for Aborigines. To him then the aspirations of Aborigines were that they wanted to live like white men. In keeping with Governmental policy of the time, he did not stress the importance of tradition vis-a-vis Government. In 1961, when he gave evidence at a Select Committee into Voting Rights of Aborigines he strongly stated his feelings that Citizenship Rights as they were then administered only meant that a man with Rights could no longer associate with his friends. He was informed that he was mistaken but he continued to say that to his mind Citizenship Rights should be given to all Aborigines. They were just as good as white men and they wanted to live like white men. He didn't see why they should be
discriminated against and have to individually leave their own group to be accepted by whites. (From transcript of his verbal submission in Community Welfare files.)

In addition to the fact that he spent several years as a young boy with a white donkey team driver, he had had a wide variety of work experiences. He had worked on stations, on the wharves as a lumper, with a building team as a labourer, as a handyman-gardener to a white family in Derby and as caretaker of the Derby Reserve. Later he worked informally with the Native Welfare Department in Derby keeping order on Reserves and locating wanted Aborigines.

With this background he has a much less stereotyped view of whites and Government than the more traditionally oriented. He is able to play tactical politics vis-a-vis whites with considerable skill. He has also since his shift to Looma and partially through his wider involvement in current Aboriginal Affairs, experienced a personal renaissance with regard to traditional culture. In particular he is concerned to use the Law to keep young people under control and away from drinking, fighting and trouble. From his own experiences in Derby, white law had proved inadequate to the task when drinking rights were introduced to the Kimberleys in 1972. While still living in Derby he had been negotiating with the Community Welfare Department over the possibility of
introducing Aboriginal Law to help the whites keep order among Aborigines going the wrong way. (See 21 for a discussion of this attempt at revival.)

At Looma this remained a major concern but here the situation was slightly different in that the 'Law' was still a vital force among the population. Here his main concerns were to have the 'Law' adapt to changing circumstances and to have white law formally back Aboriginal 'Law' by employing police aides at Looma. His constant refrain was that "this is not a ration camp, this is not a reserve, this is a village, just like a town and we've got to keep it clean. The Council has to to run this town and you've got to take notice of the Council." Frequently he would take advantage of gatherings such as outside the store or around the Community Health vehicle to elaborate on this theme. Such diatribes usually received a passive reception. His preoccupation generally was with law and order of an authoritative nature. At one stage, after he had discussions with the School's Commission on education needs at Looma, he called a community meeting to announce that parents would be fined $200 by the Government if they didn't send their children to school every day.

His relationship with the projects officer was in some respects similar to his relationship with Native Welfare at Derby. The ultimate responsibility for the housing and feeding of the community was in the hands of the
project officer and behind him the Government. His task as Chairman was to keep order and relay the demands of Government to the community. In all the time I was there, he never once discussed any future plans for working towards a more self-sufficient community. When asked directly about economic ventures he thought the 7,800 hectares at Looma was plenty of room to run cattle on - it would just be a matter of bringing a truck on to the property, loading it up with Looma cattle and taking them down to the meatworks.

The fact that he could hold such beliefs demonstrates that his interaction with the projects officer was not primarily related to the development of an economic base for Looma. Rather it was over the administration of the village through the Council. Looma Council was a government in the same way as local government Councils in Derby and Broome. They would set down the rules and the community would have to follow them. Elizabeth Sommerlad in discussing Community Development in tribalized Aboriginal communities made some observations which, though not an exact reflection of the Looma situation, are appropriate here.

"The individuals identified as key initiators in the community had in common their familiarity with western life style, and an ability to communicate ideas in English and to grasp unfamiliar concepts and their implications. With the encouragement of white staff, they saw the advantages of building up their own
traditional structures and encouraged the community to become involved and accept responsibility in certain areas. Several problems have been encountered in this phase, however. First, because of their ability to grasp new ideas, these few Aboriginals have been used by whites as the channel for most communications to the community. This situation has resulted in the investment of considerable power in these men, and they have often been reluctant to pass on information or ideas to others in the community for discussion, thereby abusing their position of privilege. Second, while these men are outstanding because of their ability to communicate in English they do not necessarily reflect the traditional power base of the community. Reinforcing this group therefore establishes a counter authority in the community. A third problem is that one of these individuals was chosen as Chairman of the Town Council, following a suggestion by a staff member that such a position was desirable. A situation has evolved, however, whereby other Councillors want to dismiss him from this position but they have no traditional mechanism for doing this, nor is there a constitutional rule by which they can abide." (34 : 12-13).

Some indication of the power that Freddie Johnson has amassed in his positions as Council Chairman and community representative on various outside committees is given in the fact that he now feels able to allude to the fact that Looma is really Nyigina country and that the Desert people don't really belong there. The traditional authority of the community lies in the hands of the Walmadjari and there was previously no fighting back on the part of the indigenes to their invasion and dominance by the Walmadjari.
However, for all this, the Chairman is still wary and respectful of traditional authority and does not openly defy it. In many ways, as indicated previously, he concurs with it and works with it to community ends.

There are two other men at Looma who would also fall into this category of 'white oriented' political leadership, though their role is very much secondary to that of the chairman. The first of these, Michael Maundi, was called in to help during the Liveringa days. His chief qualifications were the facts that he had had some Mission education and had spent two years in Perth receiving medical treatment. On the Council and a delegate to Consultative Committee meetings with Freddie, he tended to be more of a diplomat than a politician. He would complain at having to go to Derby and speak on matters for the community, without having a chance to consult others on their feelings.

Of a very pleasant nature he found it hard to disagree with anyone and rather than becoming involved in discussions over community affairs, he preferred to concentrate on his community work, which largely involved dispensing petrol and keeping the generator maintained. Because of his personable nature and fluency he usually showed white visitors around the community and answered any of their queries.

His nephew was the other 'white oriented' political leader. Also a community worker, his main tasks were to drive the school bus and community truck. At 28 years he was very young to hold a position of responsibility but he was the one to whom the position of Chairman was delegated in
Freddie's absence. He had been raised at La Grange Mission and was relatively sophisticated. It was his wife who wore a wedding ring. He was neither an active Christian nor involved with traditional ceremonies to any extent but was respected widely for his intelligence and skills. Through his large family he was linked to most of the other power figures within the community. Thus as well as being Michael Maundi's nephew his brother was one of the two most skilled men on the State Housing building team, his sister was married to one of the 'Lawmen' and his mother's co-wife was the only woman councillor.

More than any of the other Councillors he was concerned with money and accounting. He wanted to have an accountant at Looma to teach bookkeeping and to enable the community to know how much money they had at any time so they could plan for projects such as buying equipment for the garden or building stockyards. He seemed to be the only one of the councillors apart from Killer who could envisage failure for Looma as a real and immediate possibility. His generally pessimistic nature mitigated against the community at large heeding such ideas.

None of the other councillors in my observation was an important leader though they were mainly men of middle age, of some skill and importance in the group. The one woman councillor was an important member of the community, being the chief assistant at the store but she did not presume to guide discussion or influence decisions at Council meetings. That was for the men.
4. CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS LEADERSHIP

As stated previously, Christianity as such is relatively new phenomena at Looma but one of considerable impact. The chief religious leader is Limeric Malupak who was persuaded by Killer to come across from Camballin to Looma with his Christian message. The message is an evangelical one stressing why people should become Christian. Though far less traditionally oriented than the Jinimin cult, the form of this Christian movement is still largely derived from traditional structures. Thus the important figures are predominantly middle-aged to elderly fully initiated Walmadjari men. Of eight key figures identified all were Walmadjari men and only two of these were young, being Killer's sons.

Direct participation by whites in this movement is minimal, though the Protestant mission at Fitzroy Crossing and the translation of the Bible into Walmadjari by the Summer Institute of Linguistics have been influential factors. (Those Mangala who have migrated from the Roman Catholic mission at La Grange are noticeable for their lack of involvement.) There also appears to be some filtering through of the charismatic activities of the Walmadjari lay missionary at Fitzroy Crossing. All the Christians at Looma were daily awaiting his arrival and their own ideas of Christianity had much in common with his 'protestant ethic' based aims for Aboriginal advancement and liberation from material deprivation.
Limeric Malupak had daily discussions with Killer over the development of an economic base to the community. The group in general was regularly saving, both towards the building of a Church and towards the accumulation of material possessions. Limeric, a blind man, was more of a community sage than an active leader and most of the effects of his leadership were felt through the dissemination of his ideas by Killer. The actual church congregation to whom he spoke directly, while committed, would not have numbered more than thirty people.

Gerrard Killer, Killer's son, while only 22 years, was also of considerable influence. He had just returned from Kalgoorlie where he had been working in the mines as well as receiving theological training. His earnings had enabled him to return with a late model car in good working order. This was the envy of all. He also returned with and extensive knowledge of the Bible and a drive to proselytize. Even those not Christian admired his moral strength and skills. He didn't drink, respected his family and the traditional elders and while quietly offering a Christian message of understanding did not decry the old ways. His selection for the position as Aboriginal Welfare Aide for the Department for Community Welfare was a popular one and it was readily admitted that he was the only one skilled enough for the paper work involved. As well as giving him the highest income in the village, this position would provide him with a new Government car.
In Killer's acceptance and sponsorship of Christianity there is some possibility that he is perceiving the Christian word in a traditional thought category. The Bible in this view is a key to understanding white culture in the same way that sacred objects are a key to understanding Aboriginal culture. Thus Killer would often say, "Gerrard has the Book - he understands."

Kolig in writing of the bewilderment at white culture and society among Walmadjari in the general Fitzroy area, found that some

"suspected that the reason may be found in the fact that Aborigines do not have sufficient insight into the vital secrets hidden behind a repulsing facade which the European society purposely maintains vis-a-vis Aborigines. The insinuation is that European culture and society also centres around a sphere of secret-sacredness."

(17 : 14)

Similar suspicions might underlay Killer's conversion to Christianity. He perhaps sees this as a necessary tool in enabling the community to come to terms with modern circumstances. His own professed Christian beliefs were able to co-exist with his 'father and mother's 'Law' but for the 'real' Christians there was no such internal co-existence though there was the possibility of social co-existence of Christianity with tradition. This was shown when he was speaking of arrangements for the initiation ceremonies at Mowanjum.
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"We three big men will be going. Also lot of young boys going - got to learn that business over there in Mowanjum. Few married men going too. Women got to play too. Maggie (one of his wives) is a Christian - she can stop with my mob here. But she can go if she wants to. Christians can go to look at the people. They can pray and make it happy. (List of male Christians) are all Christians and they are going to stop and look after people here."

While within the more unsophisticated and mainly Walmadjari section of the community there has been some conversion and minimal mutual respect between the older syncretic Christians with their Jinimin cult and the 'real' Christians, the rest of the community, especially the young and those with previous unexalting exposure to Christianity, have responded to the Christian movement with a distinct lack of interest. They have little faith that there is any advantages attached to being Christian.

At one council meeting, following Freddie's frequent complaints throughout the community that Killer was planning to build a church without reference to the Council, Killer made an announcement of his plans.

"I got something to say. We had a meeting with Fitzroy Mission mob. We like to have one house here for church meetings. Young fellas who making too much trouble might come to church."

This was received in silence by the other Councillors and I said I didn't think the Government would give money to build a Church. Killer replied,
"Other Government-missionary might help. I've already spoken to (Walmadjari lay missionary). I just bring it to meeting to see what Councillors say. We need Church. All agree to go ahead?"

The Councillor deputizing for the Chairman cautiously said, "Need a lot of money." Killer replied, "Got a lot already. Limeric and I got a lot of money already."

None of the councillors made any further comment and the subject was changed.

What direction this religious movement will take in future is open to conjecture. With the shift to Looma of the Walmadjari lay missionary and Gerrard's increase in power and status through his position with Community Welfare, it could possibly attain wider acceptance.

On the other hand continuing rejection by the bulk of the community is likely unless these men have the charisma to substitute new meanings for the old and redefine community assumptions as to the meaning of Christianity and of human existence. As it is now, Killer's involvement in the movement is proof to many that he is indeed becoming old and weak.

THE ROLE OF THE PROJECTS OFFICER

The role of the projects officer is discussed here as he has a minimum of interaction with outside white bureaucrats. He is seen by many of the Looma people as their 'white boss' for whom they depend on for goods and services in much the same way as they were dependent on white station management previously. He is nominally the
employee of the Community though few would presume to treat him as such. His qualifications for the position were that he is a carpenter by trade, had had previous experience working in an Aboriginal Mission in Queensland and is willing to live an isolated life with his family.

The conditions of employment are that, though the position is funded by the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, the projects officer is answerable only to the employing community. Though this is ostensibly in line with a policy of community self-determination, in practice the situation can cause difficulties. A document issued by a Co-ordinating Committee consisting of Government Departments involved with Aboriginal communities in the West Kimberleys, discusses such problems, generally.

"Independent communities which have experienced the appointment of their own advisory staff have in some cases run into administrative difficulties.

In some cases the advisors have limited or no knowledge of social change processes which permit communities to exercise the maximum right of self determination, in fact as well as in theory.

Invariably the appointed staff have certain technical skills or knowledge but have been called upon to exercise or have assumed authority to operate in other areas for which they were neither qualified nor experienced. This has often placed them under undue pressure and strain.

Having no consistent basis for operation the advisors have often found themselves involved in side issues of internal community politicking and in some cases exercised an undue manipulative influence.
Due to the dependence the communities developed on their appointed staff it became obvious the communities found it almost impossible to serve notice. On the occasions that notice has been given it would appear that external European influences have played a major part. (Invariably such influences further decimate the community.)

The communities currently have no means of appealing against pressures and manipulated decisions brought about by their advisors.

No community appears to have an effective, comprehensive ongoing programme for its development. Existing programs tend to be terminal." (from D.C.W. files)

Specifically at Looma the projects officer was hampered in his work and in his conception of what this entailed, by his lack of knowledge as to the bases of community interaction and as to current Governmental policies on Aboriginal Affairs. He had little consciousness of any theories of community development and because of his isolation had little opportunity to benefit from the practical experiences of others working in this field. His main guidelines to action were drawn from his experience of working at an Aboriginal Mission. Thus his role model for the position of projects officer was a position of superintendent or manager.

Judge Furnell in his report of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Affairs in Western Australia has concluded that the prime function of projects officers in communities such as Looma lay in the stimulation and facilitation of some economic base.
"...one is bound to stress the urgency for commencement of activities of an economic nature, which should have direction and advice from capable white supervisors chosen with the approval of the people themselves, who should be superseded only when the Aborigines feel and prove themselves capable of carrying on the management." (12 : 405)

This too was the view of Aboriginal Affairs in funding the position of project officer, though the role was never clarified by the Department and the project officer received little support or guidance from the Department once in the position.

Since commencing employment in July 1974, he had concentrated his efforts on making a financial success of the store. Indubitably he has been successful. However, $18,000 of community profits were lodged in a Derby bank waiting until enough had been accumulated to build a bigger store. None of the community was in a position to question the economics of recycling the existing income of Looma into the one endeavour. Rather there was widespread pride that Looma was such a rich place - especially as the stores in similar communities generally ran at a loss. The project officer's contentment with the status quo communicated itself to the people in general and there was little concern with what would happen once State Housing finished their building project and ceased to pay wages. Most spoke vaguely of raising cattle though it was patently impossible to run a significant herd on the small amount of grazing land available.
In addition to the store, the projects officer took responsibility for the administration of village affairs vis-a-vis the outside world. He largely worked through Council meetings and here he had considerable influence over community affairs because of the Council's dependence on his decisions as to what was feasible and was not. However he had little direct involvement in community life and largely communicated his views through four of the councillors - Freddie Johnson, Michael Maundie, the Deputy Chairman and the woman councillor. To most this was a satisfactory arrangement in that it duplicated the situation on the station, where the management would use mediators to communicate with the camp and enable internal social life to continue with a minimum of interference.

This laissez-faire atmosphere produced a feeling of security and limited autonomy. The project officer was 'boss' and he would see to their material needs in return for community acquiescence to his few communicated expectations such as keeping order within the community. They had their land, their houses and their store. Now they could relax and enjoy it.

Those few led by Killer who expressed dissatisfaction with the overall performance of the projects officer received plenty of support from outside whites. However in the absence of any possibility of the urgency for a change in direction being demonstrated, and in view of the practical difficulties of finding a replacement, most were content to let things lie.
CHAPTER 6

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF GOVERNMENT POLICY AT LOOMA

In the first chapter it was postulated that the development of Looma could be traced to the interplay of three factors - a dramatically changing cattle industry, changing expectations and aspirations of the local Aboriginal population and changing Government policy with respect to Aboriginal Affairs. In this chapter it is proposed to examine the policy of the Labour Government that was followed from 1972 to 1975, and the manner this was implemented with reference to Looma by relevant Government departments - both State and Federal. As fieldwork ceased prior to the last Federal elections of November 1975, at which the Liberal Party regained power, this examination ignores subsequent alteration to both policy and administration.

Both major federal parties had taken an increasing interest in Aboriginal Affairs since the mid-sixties and with the outcome of the 1967 referendum, giving the federal government the power to legislate on behalf of Aborigines, both worked to develop a federal policy on Aboriginal Affairs. For both parties the slogan "integration" had replaced that of "assimilation" and it was the Liberal Government of the late sixties which initiated action from Canberra in the sphere of Aboriginal Affairs. A three man Council for Aboriginal Affairs and a Minister
in charge of an Office of Aboriginal Affairs were appointed
to advise the Government on policies.

However the achievements of this Government in the
field of Aboriginal welfare paled beside the schemes
and programmes regarding Aboriginal affairs that were a
major part of the Labour party platform prior to the
1972 Federal elections.

In Western Australia the State Labour party preceded
the Federal party into power and was working towards
the implementation of Labour policy prior to November
1972. Thus in July 1972 the Native Welfare and Child
Welfare Departments were amalgamated to form the Community
Welfare Department and the Aboriginal Affairs Planning
Authority. Instead of coming under the umbrella of
the hegemonic powers of the Native Welfare Department,
individual Aborigines became entitled to access to the
same public services as other Western Australians. The
responsibility of the small Aboriginal Affairs Planning
Authority was the policy planning and coordination of
Aboriginal Affairs in Western Australia. The level of
involvement of this authority was not with individual
Aborigines but rather with that group labelled Aboriginal
and experiencing the attendant disadvantages and lack
of opportunity in social life. The aim of the Authority
was to restructure both society and the labelled group
to alter the social meaning of Aboriginality.
A.A.P.A. then was the first authority which took decisions to allow the development of Looma as desired by the Liveringa people. In this they were pressurized by the Community Welfare Department and especially by the social worker, who had been responsible for the first comprehensive report of the wishes of the Liveringa and the means by which these could be implemented. This was followed by the report of the A.A.P.A. Anthropologist, Dr Erich Kolig, which imparted an acceptable academic aura of legitimacy to the claims. Even so progress by the A.A.P.A. in responding to these claims was very slow.

Then in November 1972, the Labour Party came to power in Canberra. With this was introduced a much more comprehensive and thorough-going policy on Aboriginal Affairs than was possible purely on a State level. To quote from a D.A.A. publication on "Policy and Plans in Aboriginal Affairs":

"The underlying principle of the Government's present approach in Aboriginal affairs may be describe as self-determination. Emphasis is nominally on Aboriginal participation in the making of policies and in decisions about the programmes that effect them and about their future. However, much remains to be done to make this a complete reality.

The Labor Government has taken action to implement certain new policies based on the recognition of Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders as comprising distinctive cultural and ethnic groups with a right to determine their own future:
a) Recognition of Aboriginal land rights .... announcement that ownership of land in Aboriginal reserves in the Northern Territory will be vested in the Aboriginals and appointment of a Commission to investigate and report on ways and means of implementing this and other aspects of the Government's Aboriginal land policies .... provision of funds (up to $5m a year for 10 years) to assist Aboriginal communities to purchase land (generally pastoral properties) for economic and social purposes.

b) Consultation .... convening of National Aboriginal consultative committee to advise the Minister on Aboriginal affairs.

c) Bilingual Education .... announcement of a policy of providing primary education for Aboriginal children in Aboriginal communities in their own language ....

d) Incorporation of Communities .... legislation foreshadowed to provide for the incorporation of Aboriginal communities to allow groups to achieve their own goals through their own social and economic development programmes. Programmes of action are needed which:— (a) encourage and strengthen the capacity of Aborigines to manage their own affairs; (b) increase their economic independence; (c) eradicate their handicaps in access to equal health, housing, educational and vocational training; (d) promote their enjoyment of civil liberties and remove remaining law provisions which discriminate against them; (e) the Government also considers that special measures will be necessary to overcome the disabilities now being experienced by many persons of Aboriginal descent. These should properly be regarded as temporary and transitional in the progress towards fundamental objectives."

(8 : 3-4)
From this bare outline of policy it can be seen that the Liveringa people had happened upon a fortuitous time in continuing with their decision not to shift from their land. They had in fact made their wishes known to the Native Welfare Department as early as 1970. While the local officers of the Department were reluctant to see the group shifted because of the problems this would create elsewhere, they did not channel the group's requests to the top of the administrative structure for some two years. The group's request and decision to have their own place called Looma did not cohere with then current policy and bureaucratic structure and functions.

However with a changed emphasis to self determination and laying the groundwork to enable Aborigines to take responsibility for their own affairs, the meaning of the situation altered radically. The phenomena of Looma, which until then had been set to be ignored and forgotten along with much other Aboriginal initiative, was exactly the type of event, through which the new policy could be made manifestly meaningful. The initial action taken to establish the bases for the development of Looma in terms of land, water and housing was made from a high political level, as described by Freddie Johnson in his recollections of events. (See Appendix II) Decisions were made in Canberra and Perth and "all the big bosses" were involved.

There was money in plenty to have the project come into being and the Aborigines of Looma were amazed at the understanding of the whites and their willingness to
consult the group as to their wishes. From the Aborigines' point of view, the change-over in approach by Government was satisfactory on all counts. Instead of promises and 'humbug', they were watching the physical development of Looma, day by day.

In these initial stages, the newly established Department of Aboriginal Affairs was seeking to fit the structure and practices of their administration to the policy goals of maximizing Aboriginal involvement and self-determination. The spirit of this policy demanded a departmental structure that was responsive to Aboriginal decisions at the local level rather than the traditional bureaucratic system whereby policies and decisions filtered down from Cabinet or high level staff.

It was planned that the Department should be a decentralized one where head office would serve as a supportive and resource service to local offices. The main thrust of the Department's decision making and action would take place at the local level.

This attempt to turn bureaucracy on its head was short-lived. Aboriginal Affairs found itself unable to cope administratively with the multitude of responses to their encouragement of Aboriginal initiative. Moreover they were unable to effectively dismiss criticism of their administration. As Duke and Sommerlad found in their analysis of the workings of this new Department,
the result of enquiries by the Public Accounts Committee, the Auditor General and the Public Service Board, "was less responsiveness to community requests and more formal channelling of these requests through local offices and then to the appropriate Canberra branch of the Department." (11: 23) The recommendations of the Public Service "included a significant increase in the size of Head Office establishment .... negating the Department's own conclusion, that what was needed was heavy devolution and regionalization with a small think task and monitoring Head Office group, not an expanded traditional bureaucracy. " (11: 24)

The structure and functions of the Aboriginal Affairs Department as it operates out of Derby and in relationship to Looma is basically that which was envisaged when Labour first came to power. However the focii and emphases of the Department's work at the time of fieldwork highlights the scope for bureaucratic subversion of political intentions and the inability of governmental agencies involved in social development to allow self determination at a local level within a bureaucratic framework and in tandem with the principles of ministerial accountability.

The officially stated functions of the Department as it is represented in Derby are as follows:
"The functions of this department have been established as being to:
(a) provide for consultation with persons of Aboriginal descent;
(b) recognise and support as may be necessary the traditional Aboriginal culture;
(c) promote opportunity for the involvement of persons of Aboriginal descent in the affairs of the community, and promote the involvement of all sectors of the community in the advance-
ment of Aboriginal affairs; (d) foster the involvement of persons of Aboriginal descent in their own enterprises in all aspects of commerce, industry and production, including agriculture;
(e) provide consultative, planning and advisory services in relation to the economic, social and cultural activities of persons of Aboriginal descent, and advise on the adequacy, implementation and co-ordination of services provided or to be provided from other sources;
(f) make available such services as may be necessary to promote the effective control and management of land held in trust by or for persons of Aboriginal descent and (g) generally to take, instigate or support such action as is necessary to promote the economic, social and cultural advancement of persons of Aboriginal descent in Western Australia, and to that end to apportion, apply or distribute the moneys available to it." (9 : 1)

The structural means of achieving these aims focus around consultation and coordination, with both operating at local, regional and state levels. At the state and regional level, there are consultative meetings between representative Aborigines twice yearly. Locally, there is provision for preconsultative meetings to enable particular groups and communities to determine and clarify, within the community, issues to be raised on their behalf at regional and state level meetings.
With coordination, again there is provision for meetings at local, regional and state levels. Membership at these meetings includes representatives from Government agencies involved in Aboriginal affairs and an Aboriginal representative from the consultative committees. At the state and regional level, meetings are relatively frequent, though at the local level the Department has depended on the informal and ad hoc coordination of involved officers.

Other undertakings of the Department relevant to Looma are the provision of community development services and funding, in various forms, of projects for the development of Aboriginal people. With regard to community development, "the department undertakes the support and promotion of Aboriginal group and community activities which have as a base either social/cultural and/or economic goals... the task of the Regional field staff is to promote the development of these groups and to assist the members to take charge of the group and its activities. The relationship of departmental personnel to these activities is basically supportive and advisory." (9 : 3)

Having established the official intentions of the Department of Aboriginal Affairs it is now proposed to look at the 'on the ground' functioning of the Department and of those Federal and State agencies working in accordance with Aboriginal Affairs policy. Within the Derby office
of the Department, a major hindrance to the achievement of stated aims is the gross and continuing lack of support staff. Of the nine projected positions there are normally only two filled - those of area officer and typist. For a short period at the beginning of fieldwork there was a field officer to assist the area officer but when he left the position remained unfilled. Then toward the end of fieldwork a community advisor, who was to cover all West Kimberley communities, was appointed. However he was shortly after promoted out of the area and not replaced.

In practical terms, this meant that the area officer was tied very much to the office and rarely visited Looma - certainly not frequently enough to have an ongoing understanding of community dynamics. No preconsultative committee meetings were held at Looma for reasons of staff shortages. Community decisions and requests were sent out via either the Council minutes as recorded by the projects officer or the delegates to the biannual Consultative meetings. Both these delegates (Freddie Johnson and Michael Maundie) were chosen because of their ability to speak English and not for their ability or authority to speak on behalf of the community. I was informed by a D.A.A. officer that after the arrival of the Walmadjari lay missionary there was an attempt to send him as a delegate. However the projects officer successfully manoeuvred to prevent this by insisting,
contrary to the truth, that delegates had to be Council members. There is also no follow up action to check out what community members learn of consultative meetings from their delegates. The Department offers no support service to ensure that delegates do not unduly enhance their power through the control of information from the outside world.

The lack of any realistic involvement by D.A.A. in the day to day running of the community effectively means that the Department is unable to fulfil its charter of offering consultative services and community development support services. There was expressed Departmental dissatisfaction with the achievements of the projects officer and his wife - this despite the fact that they had been initially recommended to the community by the D.A.A. Area Officer. Thus in the area officer's annual report for 1975 it is stated:

"Although recommended by myself, both (the project officer and his wife) have proved to be inadequate in their positions. The year has been marred by arguments between (them), State Housing Commission personnel and Community Health Service staff; lack of communication has been a source of worry to the community's accountants and a general lack of direction and development is manifest at Looma.

This may be attributable to (them), then again they are possibly unable to handle such a position. Lack of direction from this department may also have contributed to the stale
situation at Looma. Whatever the causes, until (they) are replaced by a more energetic and capable person or persons, the Looma situation will change little. ...... Physical development has, apart from the S.H.C.'s role, been limited to fencing the area at a very slow rate indeed. Vehicles are continually off the road for repair, through lack of supervision idle money (store profits) is accumulating at the Bank at Derby, which is very difficult to audit accurately, as records kept at Looma are poor. Little responsibility is shown by the staff and consequently no sense of responsibility is developing among the people at Looma ...... Lack of control of the project by ourselves once again indicated that the Department's approach to communities should be reviewed. Staff employed by Aboriginal communities can turn their positions into sinecures with little intent on their part and the Aboriginal members of the communities are reluctant to face such an issue."

(D.C.W. Files)

It is interesting that this officer sees the problem as one requiring greater departmental control and a review of its approach to such communities. In terms of the Department's stated aims and policies the problem rather seems to be one of structural failure to achieve the intended approach. If 'self-determination', as a mode of operation rather than any concrete achievable state remains the guiding principle of the Department then the observed failures at Looma perhaps point to the lack of involvement of community officers in community interaction and the consequent lack of opportunity they have to lay the groundwork for the implementation of 'self-determination'. If the major aim is to restore the
responsibility and independence of Aborigines this is not likely to be achieved through greater bureaucratic control. Nor through a situation of 'laissez-faire' which would seem to more accurately describe the Looma situation.

However, it is in line with the general shift in perspective among administrators of the Department, that this area officer should see the solution to the problem in terms of greater control. As observed by Sommerlad and Duke (11) the pressures both from within and without the Department are for a return to a traditional bureaucracy with a hierarchical chain of accountability and responsibility. This despite the fact that the architects of the department's underlying policy were working from the premise that "those who have made the decisions - and must live with them - are more likely to work for their implementation than they are for decisions imposed by a department of government, however qualified its expert advisors." (11: 5)

While the Department's level of consultation with the Looma community was low and skewed in the direction of those leaders satisfied with the project officer, the level of coordination with other agencies involved with Looma was quite high. However it suffered from the fact that the decisions of the various departments participating were more likely to have filtered down to the Derby office from head office than up from field staff actually
visiting Looma and similar communities. Compared to the bi-annual meetings of the Regional Consultative Committee, the Regional Coordinating Committee met not less often than once a month and for a large part of 1975, meetings were fortnightly. Representatives at these meetings tended to be regional supervisory staff rather than field staff and it was often the case that field staff would learn of an issue involving Looma after a decision had already been taken at a Coordinating Committee Meeting.

Other problems were apparent in this process of holding regular coordinating committee meetings. The differing degrees of decentralization of authority in involved agencies meant that committee members could not effectively make joint decisions at a committee meeting. Issues often had to be held over while the decision maker, from outside the region, was referred to. This had an effect on which members were likely to become actively involved in the concept of coordination at the regional level. Thus Community Welfare and Community Health were enthusiastic supporters and would often arrive at joint decisions on local issues. Implementation of this decision would then have to await persuasion of other involved governmental agencies at a State level. Often suggestions for change would be taken as criticism of a department's present system of operation and much time would be spent clarifying this.
Also affecting involvement in committee meetings were more personal factors. To some the aim was to achieve more personal power through striving for regional decision making. Then, in a town as small as Derby, working relationships cannot be kept purely ascriptive. Involvement and commitment to the idea of regional coordination tended to be effected by friendship circles and leisure interests. In line with this, the involvement of different agencies fluctuated to some extent with staff changes.

Overall the Regional Coordinating Committee was able to achieve some of its aims but its effectiveness was limited both in terms of its internal structure and the lack of effective support services - both from other D.A.A. consultative and coordinating structures and from the administrative structures of involved governmental agencies.

The concept of interorganizational coordination pulls against the bureaucratic pattern to be found within organizations. Though it is possible to reach agreement on specific issues, limited in scope and time, the Coordinating Committee must of necessity run on less formal and controlled lines than an individual Department. There is looser accountability and supervision and consequently it is harder to achieve aims. However, the coordinating committee has the decided advantage that it is able to explore much more effectively than a
bureaucracy, just what the organization's aims and objectives should be.

There was at the time of fieldwork, an effort to facilitate coordination of Governmental agencies at the local level. A written report on this was prepared by an officer of the Community Welfare Department in mid-1975. This submission was the outcome of extensive and long-standing discussions between certain West Kimberleys field staff. These talks centred on their frustrations at the lack of coordination and conflicting priorities evidenced in the involvement of different departments in community development processes.

The key point of these proposals was the establishment of resource teams from the field staff already actively involved in facilitating social change or in providing needed technical expertise at a face to face level within communities. It was envisaged that these teams would consist of such personnel as nursing sisters, teachers, pre-school teachers, a mechanic and an overall social development facilitator.

Team members would meet regularly and draw up plans of development which were to be achieved through the collaboration and cooperation of members under the overall guidance of the facilitator - a person to be "familiar with social change dynamics and skilled in methodology to enable broken and/or depressed communities to plan and operate programs to achieve independence, self reliance
and acceptance within the Australian nation." (DCW files)

The resource teams would be accountable to the Regional Coordinating Committee but no provision was made for structural accountability to the communities involved, as it was assumed that all team members would subscribe and be committed to the humanistic assumptions that underlay the project. Communities were said to have the option of inviting resource teams to work with them or (presumably) continuing to work with much the same individuals on a 'non-team' basis. They were also said to have access to the Regional Coordinating Committee if they were to become dissatisfied with the team's work.

It was felt by the architect of the proposals that resource teams were needed because none of the Aboriginal communities in the area had an overall master plan of development. Such planning as was evident tended to be devised to meet contingencies as they arose. Further the employment of community advisors by communities had proven to be a failure as there was a lack of authority and supervision over their standards of work and their role tended to become clouded by constant politicking and undue manoeuvring of community decisions.

Further the piecemeal and uncoordinated involvement of outside agency staff often resulted in an overlap of services delivered and an obstruction and displacement
of developmental processes. With a comprehensive, interdepartmental and interdisciplinary approach to each community situation, it was hoped that community needs could be tackled on an integrated front rather than in a piecemeal manner which arbitrarily divided the community along such lines as age, sex or health. Accepted as problems common to all of these communities were a confused self image of being different or inferior, a weakened social structure, totally inadequate for the task of guiding economic, social and economic growth and a lack of the basic technical skills needed for development. The task of the resource teams would be to work to overcome these problems. If these internal structural faults of the communities could be overcome, the desired development of self determination, increased independence and self sufficiency would flow on.

To test the truth of these articles of faith, it was further propounded that outsiders familiar with this sphere of research, should be invited to evaluate the success of the project over a five year period at six monthly intervals. To this end a preliminary study of the communities involved was undertaken by Chris Duke and Elizabeth Sommerlad of the Centre for Continuing Education, A.N.U. These two academics had had considerable experience of community development, particularly with regard to Aboriginal communities and Elizabeth Sommerlad as mentioned previously had undertaken
an analysis of the workings of the newly established
Department of Aboriginal Affairs. In a four day tour,
largely spent with the men who were to be the facilit-
ators of the two initial resource teams, the two visited
most of the communities involved.

In their report to the Regional Coordinating Committee
they found that the scheme had merit though some
criticism was warranted, some practical difficulties
could be foreseen and some clarification was required.
They pointed to the fact that in any process of community
development, decisions as to methodology are firmly tied
to political ideologies. Thus a 'liberal' approach to
community development would take for granted that men
are rational and can be persuaded to act in the interests
of others. A 'conservative' approach on the other hand
would take for granted that men are not rational and
do not know their own best interests, that groups in
society are essentially more important than individuals
and that the direction of development is decided by which
group has the most power to impose its decisions.

The proposals for resource teams are based on a 'liberal
approach and assume that there must be consensus with a
'rational' analysis of the problem and rational solutions.
They take for granted that Looma and similar communities
have to adjust to the wider society. They aim to
increase community integration and capacity - to shore up
the Aborigines' social structure so they can better cope
with the social reality of the outside world and find their own level of operating within it.

The appropriateness of this approach to the Looma community is questionable. As the history of the community's development indicates, Looma has a relatively integrated social structure and viable leadership capable of taking decisions. At Looma the internal social structure is intact and not in need of restoration. Rather it is the impingement of the outside world on the community which is now actively eroding the effectiveness of Aboriginal initiative and independence. Within Looma the present leadership struggles described in the previous chapter demonstrate the importance of including the dimension of 'power' in any design for social change.

As Duke and Sommerlad point out, the resource team proposals assume that Aboriginal communities must adjust to the status quo and perceive the role of a community development team as enabling the Aboriginal community to make the best adjustment possible. The Looma people have already demonstrated that they are able to act on the status quo to redefine reality. Apart from long term plans to hand over power to community members as the team develops the community to stages where they are able to accept it, the proposals evade the issue of how Aboriginal communities are to take power, which would make self determination a meaningful concept. Without some ability to wield power, such communities are always in the
situation of recipient. However rational and altruistic the white definers of the situation, they hold the potential power and can change their definition without reference to involved Aborigines. This then is a theory of social change that is not relevant to all community development with Aboriginal people. Rather it is primarily for those groups which have become anomic, leaderless and lacking in self-pride.

Such criticisms highlight the fact that there is no one theory of social change leading to a set of accepted techniques. Rather any community development work must stem from understanding the meanings which those concerned assign to their acts. From an action perspective, community development work is achieved not by personnel skilled in set and predetermined social change methodology but rather by those skilled at plugging themselves into an interacting group and acting to shape the commonly perceived social reality. Charisma is undoubtedly a helpful attribute in this endeavour but not always necessary.

After questioning the theoretical underpinnings of the proposals, Duke and Sommerlad look at the value of coordination and the difficulties it involves. Effective coordination could mean more effective imposition by whites on the lives of Aborigines. To quote from their report,
"Nowhere in the proposal is there mention of power being transferred to Aboriginal people. In fact, the benefits of coordination to Aboriginal communities are completely dependent on the goodwill of whites and their code of ethics. It is theoretically possible that coordination could result in more effective control and repression of Aboriginals if the resource team decided to unite to impose its particular objectives on to communities. It is already clear that the resource team has adopted unilaterally a model or approach to community development which is not oriented towards changing the distribution of power in society to give Aboriginals more access to the available resources but is concerned only with internal structural changes." (DCW files)

The dangers of more effective imposition by the bureaucrats on the lives of Aborigines are reduced however by the many difficulties standing in the way of effective coordination being achieved by the resource teams. Thus among those involved in the project there was a lack of clarity and agreement as to what role the facilitator should take. Of the two men prepared to act as facilitators, one was already very involved and a key figure in the activities of the communities concerned, while the other visited only occasionally and saw it as his task to respond to Aboriginal initiative rather than stimulating activities.

In addition there was the difficulty of encouraging members to cut across compartmentalized departmental roles and responsibilities so that they could become a team working towards a common goal. The fact that in Looma team members would only make visits to the community and meet each other face to face only occasionally made this
task the harder.

Then in the selection of the team it was apparent that only those converted to the approach were considered. Key individuals such as the police and the Looma project officer were excluded.

Over this, there was reluctance by members to break away from the authority of respective Departments and firmly support team decisions. Allied to this was the reluctance of Government departments to allow meaningful regionalization of decision making.

Apart from such problems, Duke and Sommerlad saw a need to have Aboriginal representation on the resource team. Even if the stated aim of the project was to coordinate the activities of all Government agencies involved locally in Aboriginal Affairs, without appropriate Aboriginal involvement, it would work against the principles of encouraging self determination. By observing the nature of bureaucracy and the ways in which decisions are reached, Aborigines would gain insight into the 'world taken for granted' of white field staff. In this manner they would be in a better position to clarify their own 'world taken for granted' and how bureaucratic decisions are likely to affect their own plans for development.

Though Duke and Sommerlad concluded their assessment of the proposals by offering their services in setting up a system of evaluation and arranging periodic meetings with resource team members, the project has not to date been introduced.
This can be traced to various factors, most of which were covered in the consultant's list of possible barriers to coordination. Chiefly, perhaps, there is no power to implement coordinating committee decisions. The necessary consensus on both the methods and objectives of community development is not present. Without this the factors pulling against effective coordination outweigh those that would push towards it. In addition there is quite a high turnover of staff in the area and a lack of knowledge of, and commitment to, a policy of self determination. Many staff members find comfort in knowing explicitly what their duties are in relation to a certain community. They are not at ease in viewing the overall development of a community as their concern.

The ambiguities necessarily involved in this are unacceptable to many field staff. In addition there is the fact that for many field staff a tour of duty at Looma is but part of their career as a public servant. Even while working with the Looma community it is often a small part of their total workload. This mitigates against close allegiance to the interests of the Looma people, especially when this comes into conflict with the interests of bureaucracy. Feelings of impotence among field staff are also a factor to be considered.

Thus while there is continuing general agreement as to the advantages of field staff coordination at the local level, the project has been dropped as unworkable. During
fieldwork, informal coordination of visiting field staff and the flow on from the Regional Coordinating Committee Meetings was observed to be minimal. In addition there was little evidence of on-going consultation by the field staff with the community. The Looma Council had been introduced at the instigation of the Department of Aboriginal Affairs but even here officers would circum-navigate this and introduce new practices and policies without reference to the Councillors.

Allied to this, Councillors themselves would often not bother to consult with local officers as they perceived them to be of little import in the whole scheme of bosses. Real power was observed to lie with the "Perth and Canberra bosses."

The breakdown in effective coordination and consultation was particularly evident in those areas of concern to the Looma people, which were not the direct responsibility of any one agency. Thus during my stay the control of wrongdoers, especially drinkers and fighters, was patently a major preoccupation and was a continuing topic of debate at Council meetings. The Looma people had taken the initiative of selecting "community policeman" and had reasoned that they should fit with the white system of law and order. However these actions met with a marked lack of response by any of the involved departments. The police justifiably claimed that the Police Aide Scheme as enacted by Parliament did not cover the Looma situation.
Other departments similarly claimed the problem did not come under their jurisdiction. When eventually an Aboriginal Legal Service lawyer did pay a brief visit to Looma over the issue, he misunderstood the community's wishes and reportedly left with the promise that he would try to have a white policeman stationed at Looma. The actual amount of drinking and fighting at Looma was minimal and would certainly not justify the presence of a policeman. The point at issue was that the community wished to retain internal control. Any social group is dependent on some degree of coercion to persist, and the Looma leaders rightly see the power to control community members as essential to the continuation of the self-contained community.

Apparent at Looma is a belief on the part of many bureaucrats that 'appropriate' change can be induced by providing the improved living quarters and adequate amounts of educational, health and other facilities which they supply. There is a superficial obeisance to 'traditional' culture and its importance but very little active recognition of an Aboriginal perspective of life as a day to day reality. Certainly there is very little attempt to comprehend this perspective and its changes.

The projects officer is able to maintain his position by the nature of his interaction with the community. To the Looma people he was the key gadeja figure. He supplied the community its immediate wants and adequately took the place of the former station 'boss'. He made no pretence
to be filling the position in the manner envisaged by
the Department of Aboriginal Affairs when they funded it.
He frequently argued with personnel from servicing
Departments but by keeping within certain limits was sure
to be safe from any outside control. None of the visiting
government staff were in a position to demonstrate
effectively what his role should be nor, more importantly,
guarantee a suitable replacement.

In the absence of any figure of comparable importance
and power to the Looma people, it was his definition of
reality that guided their actions. During my term as
project officer, there was an abortive attempt to have
this officer dismissed while he was on holiday. Field
staff had discussions with community leaders, excepting
Freddie Johnson, to persuade them to fire this officer.
Reflecting on this scheme, it was basically ill-founded.
The general community consensus was that they needed a
gadeja on constant call to deal with the vaguely comprehended
demands of the outside world. The position had been offered
to several of the whites with whom the community had had
close contact, but all had refused. To sack the officer
without the assurance of a replacement would be obviously
foolhardy. Further, though he was not actively liked by
all, the failings that were perceived by outside field
staff were not crucial to the community as a whole.

In fact he was probably in many ways more acceptable
than a community advisor, determined to develop, might
have been. His laissez-faire attitude to the day-to-day running of the community allowed a feeling of autonomy to persist. He manipulated the dynamics of the community through the white oriented leader but did not pressure for involvement in areas of greatest interest for the community.

As stated in the previous chapter, the main area of conflict was in his lack of encouragement of economic enterprise and initiative. This was in clear contrast to the message relayed by the Canberra bosses who had been instrumental in the establishment of Looma. However, while he alienated the traditional political leader and some of his followers over this issue, to the majority of community members it was not of great concern. Money was coming in regularly through the State Housing workers and it was hard to envisage a time when the money would cease. Even if this happened, the common view was that they could then start to raise cattle and grow vegetables.

In truth, there is little economic potential for development at Looma without considerable technical input and the provision of an infrastructure of services. The project officer himself manifests little interest or ability in this area. However, there has been relatively little alternative input in this area to cause the population to grasp the importance of economic development to the continuation of Looma as an independent village. Remembering that the original wish of the Liveringa mob for the development of Looma was not for economic purposes,
this is an important point. The only real input came from the Department of the North West which provided the services of a horticultural advisor to the community just prior to my arrival. Over the period August 25th 1975 to May 13th 1976 a total of ten short visits from the advisor's base in Broome was made to the community. In the absence of active encouragement by the projects officer and in view of the fact that the funds available to the advisor were cut as from January 1976, these visits were not sufficient to implant an ethos in community members.

As this was virtually the only practical message the community has received regarding the necessity of economic development, it is not surprising that the majority are content to rely on Government funding to cover their material needs. Because of the small amount of the totality of Australian culture represented at Looma, in decisions linked to an understanding of this totality they are obviously dependent on others' interpretations. Here the failure of the implementation of Federal policy at Looma is most obvious as the figure on whom the Looma people have become dependent is not someone who is laying the groundwork for meaningful self-determination.

However in view of the overall failure of bureaucrats to see through the intentions of Aboriginal Affairs policy, it is perhaps fortunate that a laissez-faire approach on the part of the projects officer and the community's
physical isolation has allowed a sense of self-determination, community integrity and identity to persist in many areas of social life. Whether this will continue in the long term remains to be seen.
CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this community study has not been to capture the life of the Looma people as it really is but rather to indicate the continually changing social reality of these people. Just in the short time that Looma has been established the nature of the community has changed tremendously. As well as the total numbers increasing by over 300%, the age structure and tribal composition of the group has altered. The group as a whole speaks of its wish to become one people - the Looma people. However with the increase in numbers which has allowed each tribal group to become a viable social unit in its own right, there is also some pressure to divide along these language lines. This is exacerbated by the fact that the leadership struggle tends to attract followers via tribal allegiance.

Because of the high degree of tribal intermarriage, the common ties of those who have worked on a station together and the feeling of pride in being a Looma resident, the forces of division were never enough to split the community permanently. Rather lines of conflict and lines of cooperation cross linked the community in such a manner that there was usually a sense of commonality dominating any differences.

The 'Law' was overall a major integrating force. The original demand for the Looma site had been for a place of
security where the group could perpetuate their traditions. Though with the later immigrants there were variations in the degree of adherence to the law, it was still the pivotal point of the group with regard to day-to-day interaction. The leaders of the 'Law' were feared and respected by all and their wishes regarding 'traditional' areas of life were complied with. They had the power of punishment for tribal wrongdoing and had no trouble in deputizing others to carry out their orders.

Their law was not a carefully preserved version of pre-contact law but the outcome of several decades of peripheral contact with Europeans on cattle stations and in small outback towns. Their version of the truth and their resulting instructions and expectations as to correct behaviour were drawn from pre-contact law but the two religious elders had had the skill and charisma to incorporate changed circumstances into the traditional framework.

Their Law had been a major factor in motivating and sustaining the group's initiative to fight back against the social reality that indicated they were to become displaced fringe dwellers following the introduction of the 1969 Pastoral Award decision in the Kimberleys. However with the Government's decision to make a large grant of land, to provide housing and services and to continuously consult with the group, the role of the traditional religious elders became more limited to traditional affairs.
In the Liveringa days they had spoken through the traditional political leader, Killer Narga, but they had still been intimately involved in the day-to-day development of the move. With the establishment of Looma and the delegation of authority in relation to white oriented activities to Freddie Johnson, the schism between their world view and the ongoing complexities of everyday life as introduced by whites became more obvious.

Killer Narga struggled to make sense of the new conditions. His conclusion was that the people would have to work hard at a market garden, raising cattle and pigs and any other economic activities possible, to show the Government they deserved to keep the houses and all the other offerings. Otherwise it was possible that just as their huts were bulldozed on Liveringa, they could be evicted from Looma. Killer Narga clearly recognized the basic ephemerality of being a recipient of Government handouts. To his mind it had to be a reciprocal arrangement between the Government and the Looma people. As on the cattle station his people worked in return for tucker and clothes, so in the new development the Government was providing the Looma people with their own village in return for work.

However, this interpretation of events did not sway the group as a whole. While Killer retained his prestige as the man who had negotiated for Looma - as the Boss, his real power was on the wane. This was due to a combination of factors, the chief of these being that he was down-graded as 'senile' by the gadeja project officer, which undermined his power base and reputation for being able to mediate for the group with whites. He had also
delegated much of his power to Freddie Johnson, because Freddie's greater knowledge of and skill in white ways. The fact that this placed Freddie structurally in the position of greatest importance with regard to the communication of village decisions as to future development requiring the assistance of whites, was probably not foreseen by Killer or any of the other leaders. The fact that Freddie was supported and encouraged by the project officer to be the spokesman for the group was a further complication. In fact neither the religious elders nor Killer could communicate with the project officer as their English was not clear enough. The project officer was satisfied to understand community dynamics through Freddie's perception. This was never radically different from that of the community at large, but rather varied on small points mainly connected with what would affect the balance of power and leadership.

Probably the major difference between Freddie and Killer was that to Freddie it was clear that the Government would continue to look after them no matter what work they did or did not do. It was not necessary for the group to initiate work activities. Rather that it was the Government's task, and the role of the Aboriginal was to work this system to best advantage. As a man brought up in close contact with the totalitarian powers of the Native Welfare Department, he did not have grounds
to believe in the possibility of self determination by the Looma people. Whites would always be there to say what was acceptable and what was not. Further he did not particularly want to function independently of whites. The 'gadeja' could take responsibility for providing the goods desired by Aborigines and conveying the demands of white society. This prevented friction within the group and allowed all to operate on the principle of least work for the greatest return possible. Freddie Johnson conceded the power of whites over Aborigines and his argument was for making the most of this situation. His aim was to work the system, not to change the system. This view was supported by the project officer who held much the same beliefs himself. He had little faith that the Looma people could achieve an independent community. Furthermore, he could not see why they should. As at other Aboriginal Missions throughout Australia, the Looma people would be assured of food and shelter in return for some degree of malleability to white control. Any possible restructuring of Aboriginal initiative and decision making was both unknown and unthinkable.

In contrast to this, the desert immigrants still had high self esteem and faith in their ability to function independently. They had not yet conceded totally to the white man - they were not the broken, anomic, leaderless people that are often taken as representative of all Aborigines in Australia today. The policy of self-
determination could have been expected to be highly successful among this group. There would have been no need to first restructure and build up a group of broken individuals. With sensitive community development work at the time of the first settlement of Looma it appears there would have been considerable scope for making tangible and meaningful the principles of encouraging Aboriginal initiative, independence and identity.

The actual development however has been more in the opposite direction. The lack of effective administration of the above policy combined with the reinterpretations as to reality made by community members on the basis of recent experiences and on the previous experiences in other Aboriginal Communities, which have also been missions, have resulted in a tendency developing at Looma to sit down and wait to be looked after. To depend on the Government to direct Looma in the way they think best for the community. There has been little attempt by any of the visiting bureaucrats or the project officer to argue with such a reinterpretation.

Small advances have been made in specific areas such as in the sending of young people away to Pundalmurra Technical School to learn the skills necessary to operate community services. The Community Council also takes pride in the fact that visiting whites have to seek a permit from them. However this only applies to private individuals. They would not presume to treat a Government man in the same way.
The only overall plan for community development seems to be coming through the Christian movement. This is providing goals and guidelines for people. In its evangelical message it stresses the benefits to being a Christian. It stresses the protestant ethic of working hard on this earth to receive rewards in the next. It offers to believers a chance to understand how an individual can operate to best advantage in white society. A lot of the values it instills are qualities likely to make an Aborigine more successful and acceptable in white society.

Again, however, this strong framework from which to develop a process of self determination has been neglected by the bureaucrats. Most, in reaction to many of worst features of mission activity, dismiss it as a ghastly confidence trick played on the 'noble savages' of Looma by persistent missionaries. A few actively discourage Aboriginal interest in the movement.

In truth, Christian movements have in history often been the catalyst for encouraging group solidarity, self respect and independence. Whether this will be the case at Looma remains to be seen. Killer already draws many of his ideas for the future planning of Looma from his Christian sage (see his plans for Looma at Appendix 1). However, as already stated, the need for future planning has been downgraded by Freddie Johnson, and it is he for the moment who has the most say with regard to mobilizing machinery.
It is interesting that one of the few occasions the bureaucrats allowed so-called self determination to operate at Looma was in the selecting of the project officer. He was actually chosen by the Area Officer of D.A.A. from among the very few people in Derby interested in the position. None of these would have been likely to have the background knowledge to understand just what enabling a group to become self determining and independent meant in practical terms. Yet the Aboriginal group was expected to be the employer and task master of this project officer. They were to set expectations and dismiss him if dissatisfied with his facilitation role.

This seems to reflect naivety on the part of Aboriginal Affairs as to the nature of social change. While visiting 'expert' field staff were imposed on the group with regularity, when it came to the key figure in any attempt to lay the ground work for self determination, the group was expected to wisely select a suitable advisor.

This decision by the bureaucrats seems to indicate their continual bias to see Aborigines as a passive abject to be socially engineered. Visiting field staff drawing on the expertise and knowledge of experts on Aborigines, would perform their services for the community in the best possible, theoretically known way to encourage development and initiative. However access to knowledge of the day to day reality of this particular community was left largely in the hands of a man neither able or willing to use the opportunity.
To return to Rowley, on whose work much of present policy was based, it is apparent that the implementation of policy at Looma has been marred by a gross misunderstanding of administration as to the underlying intent and tenants of the policy. Thus,

"exhortation, social engineering, or education do not produce change in any predetermined direction: the process is far too complicated for that. It is a continuous chain involving countless compromises and response decisions to new stimuli, and to old stimuli in new situations; responses by individuals and by social groups whose reactions will flow from the complex interactions and adaptations by members as both environment and social - political relationships change. Group responses with express results of personal and sub-group interaction arising from new relationships within the group, and between the group and the social and physical environment." (1972 : 351)

Much of the Aboriginal problem and its resistance to 'solutions' stems from this view of Aborigines as somehow different from ourselves - as passive objects rather than active beings. To return to Burridge's simile "like a butterfly in a drawer." (1974 : 65) As the situation at Looma indicates, it is possible for Aborigines themselves to act in terms of this ontological fiction. That it is a social reality and not a fixed reality is again indicated at Looma, in the demand by the Liveringa mob to have their own place.
I born in Desert - long way - long way - from River - Fitzroy Crossing River we call him - call it Canning Stock Route - my father and mother never see white man in this country and this river. They born in Desert long way - they teach me with this idea and when I been getting in Kaleyeeda - George Range we call em - white man call em George Range. I come there - I stop there when I was little kid and my father and mother was there. They don't know white man and they don't know English. They been having own language - speaking to them people and speaking to me too. Alright policeman come along - he picks me up from George Range, Kaleyeeda - I come Desert long ways to Kaleyeeda, George Range and policeman come along and looks for some bin make trouble¹ in Kaleyeeda George Range and policeman come along and pick us up - everyone - he take my father and my mother too. He take me to place callem Noonkenbah sheep station. My relations in there at Noonkenbah. They know me - I come to my relations. My countrymen too I come to Noonkenbah. My father he taken to Fitzroy Crossing police station. And my mother he leavem Noonkenbah - stop there.

And I don't know white man - never understand. I talk to my people. I'm crying for my father - he's gone to

¹ The trouble was cattle killing. Killer acquired his 'white' name at this time because the police thought it amusing that such a small boy could be a cattle killer. (Information from Mr Yim Rose, former owner of Liveringa Station.)
Fitzroy long way. From Fitzroy Crossing he go to Derby - alright puttem gaol in Derby. My father in gaol in Derby. Alright from there I waiting for my father in Luiluigui Station - cattle station. I bin go to cattle station. Another half caste bloke take me to Luiluigui station. I stop there, my father run away from Derby to Fitzroy Crossing River. Well and he never findem water. He bin get I don't what he bin do. I was just a little kid. I don't know nothing about em. He die halfway. Might be no water. That's was a... I was a little boy that day. Right, I went into Luiluigui cattle station. I learnem bit of something - English there - not too much. I stop there in Luiluigui cattle station. I know that job. I train it little by little with the old people to learn me up there, teaching me how to work well. I do the work there round there Luiluigui station and help ride horse. I ridem horse again. They teaching me. I go out musterering cattle. I learn it my idea - I get a chance from white man telling me what to do. I pick "yes" or "no". I learn a little but now I follow that English and white man talk. He teaching me. I learn at Luiluigui when I was a little kid. I grow big there and my relations they sent me back to bush again to my mother from Luiluigui. I had a bag of flour to go bush. Taken for my Mother and Father - I had relations there. Big mob of them people. And I bin get big boy now and learn that English. They sent me back bush to get MAN. Well I bin get man in the bush
and I come back again to the job in Nerrima cattle station. I learn there. I learn more - now everything I learn. I learn how to ride a horse - how to muster cattle - how to branding cattle. I bin on the station working. Doing a lot of work now. I learn English. I get idea from another boy - teach me and tell me what to do. And I started race horse training - 'Caliban'. I make good race horse and they bin go to Derby racing. My race horse is winning Derby Cup. I learn everything in Nerrima. I go back Nerrima cattle station. I come to Liveringa and I get Man - I understand. I come to Liveringa and I live there. I had no whiskers. I was young in Liveringa. I stop there. Alright. Till I bin get married. My wife is Susie Bugal. I get married in Myroodah Station - they give me my wife but I bin take him to Liveringa. I stop there with her and my promised wife in Noonkenbah - another one. I take him. Bin allowed to havem two wives. You can havem. That's from my father's and mother's Law - havem two wives in Law. I bringem my wife. His name Maggie Minmarier. I got the two in Liveringa. Alright. First kid is born. Joey Killer in Liveringa. Joey born along Liveringa Billabong. Blackfellas there before - no whitefellas in this country. Before - long time. Gerrard is after - then David Killer.

**Susie:** Gerrard and David born along Derby hospital. My two bin born along bush.
Killer: I talking. You stop. Right. From there we bin live in Liveringa Station. Alright I was working a very long time in Liveringa. All the kids been born right there and then all the kids been in Camballin School all the time and they've bin high up in the whiteman - they bin get to understand everything - school. Alright. I was very good in the whiteman. I never have trouble with the whiteman. Soon as I come from desert - long way - never had trouble with the whiteman. I bin really good in the whiteman - run everything, muster cattle, muster sheep, everything and never had trouble with the whiteman. I was very good in Liveringa Station. Alright, now we had another Manager. His name is Kim Rose. Good man in the country too. He bin look after me and he bin look after my children. All the kids in the school everybody, white and black bin in the school at Camballin. I askem Boss. Liveringa Boss asked me to put em in Halls Creek school. I gotta havem at school in Liveringa Station where I am here now to look after them - Mother and Father. I tell em that man. Alright he take it that man. Kim Rose take that word what I wantem. Well he send a letter to Government. Government say alright well he can school Liveringa station that's alright. That worrying. We worry a little bit kids might get killed in another place. Long way from Mother and Father - long way we bin worrying. Well they be school at Camballin - they bin high up - they learn work and everything. And when Mr Rose go
away - I was talking with another rough man - white man and very rough. He bin stick women and men. And I tellem, I come along and say, Hey take it steady man, don't be too rough. You want work these people, my people, well take it steady, don't be too rough. Another way you'll be get your swag and go. Follow that road I tell em that Manager - another man. Alright that night he bin just pack his swag and go away that man. He bin in Liveringa. Alright America man come along to Liveringa. He come there - very good man too. He's alright to me. My wife is work in house, and Susie Bugal he bin doing office work. Alright my wife work in the kitchen for the Missus in Liveringa station, bin very good. Alright and America man, his name Roddy. He one of them good bloke, good missus. He bin look after my wife. Paying right wages and I was look after that money. I was standing there when people paying my wife and everybody in that house Liveringa station. I was very good there and Roddy was very good to me. And he bin look after my people and one night Roddy didn't like to see the rubbish in my house - everywhere mess and he didn't like. Alright that man he never like rubbish in my house. My house bin mess. Too many rubbish, too many people in there, workers, some girl never doing any work and clean up the rubbish. I tellem to clear up the rubbish and put em in a big truck and they didn't do it. This man American come along see the rubbish everywhere and he tell me Killer you'll have -
we'll have to crackem this house and put away the rubbish. You can have another new house - we give you new building. Alright I tell him. Don't knock that house - that big house - that for the pensioners from another Government owner - I was working when I was young. You just leavem them. You can crackem all this mob of other houses 6 - 7 houses here you can knockem, take away rubbish. I talk to Roddy. Alright and I tellem this mob, my mob. Get ready, bulldozer coming very soon - he'll be here tomorrow. Get your gear. Pack up everything. I'll get a truck and go to that billabong, Liveringa billabong over there - other side. We'll stop there - make camp. Nobody wont shift em round. We'll stop there. I talk to my mob. Alright this mob startem pack up - swag and all - everything. Canvas and pipes - everything what been in the house at Liveringa. They move. Alright I was moving there - I get everything from store and I put my wife come along. She finishing. Alright I get a big truck. Big truck cartem to billabong - putting camp there, canvas, pipes and all - and I go to Roddy - talk to Roddy. Alright and what about some money. You wanta holdem for a little while. I'll gettem next time when I fix up this mob here. Alright bulldozer coming that day, that morning. He knocks all the houses and I tellem 'Carefully, this my gear. Aboriginal here we got a lot of things and you got to be careful. Don't touch matches in there - we got the Law, and all that. Other way you might be get into trouble from Blackfella. And you got to be
very careful and I'll be standing there. You come here, you see this big tank here and you see that lot women standing there. Women can't look you - gotta be hid all these women. Not allowed to watch me and you. Kids and women everybody go and hide at the creek. Going to be man and man for this thing.' But I standing there and he start a bit of trouble with the matches and we everybody bin there - my mob, young boys. I tell him to be careful with that matches. Spinifex bin burn and everything could get burnt. Alright I askem car. You bring your new car. You bin help me - very big thing. I showem place - what to do. Alright this one danger - I talk to Roddy very carefully and we get killed no matter. Bin white man - we can get killed by the white man for that secret I tell him - very carefully. Alright we just put everything in car - load em up all kinds what we had there. We take em away - put em away along creek - secret places - away there. We tellem - we wont ever have trouble with you as long as you help me. You be very good and I'll be very good. Alright I talk to Roddy. Alright Frank Jillamunga and Tommy Mugidi was there - they help me and everybody bin there. Big boys, some bosses. We never have trouble with Roddy. Roddy was very good but some people bin make a bit of wrong and Roddy didn't like rubbish in that house. That's all. Alright these people bin come along and tell me what are you going to do. You going to work here or you going to pull out? Well I can't
pull out anyway. I got everything here. Very big thing here underground you know all that I tell em - I talk to my mob and Government know this secret - they know everything and will we go down there stop along billabong. I sendem message to Derby - Native Welfare. I sendem to Kevin Johnstone my secrets from Myroodah - olden time from my father and grandfather. I sendem to him and I tell em. Some white bosses come along and some leaders. And some leaders he not like our camp. Some big men - all the gentlemen - ladies got nothing to do with it. All the gentlemen can come. Alright Kevin Johnstone come along and I show him that place. I talk to him. Alright he's alright. We shift up over there. We wouldn't move from that billabong - we stop there, that Liveringa billabong belonga blackfella. Not for - no white fella been living there. Black fella been living there before. Old people they die right here in Liveringa. We stop there. We wouldn't go anywhere - to another station no - we stop there. I might findem place one other time when I think which is the place I can get em. Alright that was Kevin Johnstone I talk to him. Gentleman was there - all the whitemen been there. All the Americans, everybody, been there. I show this - very big you know. Alright thats all I bin tellem Kevin Johnstone - thanks very much he said to me. Thanks very much you show us everything. You got a lot of big things here. Alright they bin go back and we bin in billabong. Stay there. Rain come that
day. Christmas now. I buyem Christmas from Derby - for
my mob. I take my money and buyem cakes and everything
for my mob and one white man came with a big truck and
say I got you place, you can pack up. I want to put
you on that Nareeda - he bin want to take me with the
big loaded truck to Nareeda and 2 white men come along
with the big truck and say we going to give you a home
where you can stop out of Liveringa. You don't like stop
Liveringa well you can stop there with your mob he tell
me. I tell him. No we wouldn't go. That no my country.
That for the different language. That's their country.
We're in our own country - Njigina and Mangala. I bin
just talk to that man. You can go back. Don't touch
these people - I holdem right here in the creek. I gotta
move to Jigida very soon when the rain comes. That is the
place Jigida - that belonga blackfella. We'll move
there and stop. And I'll work something important to my
people. I'll work through the Government I'll go and see
Government very soon when I move to Jigida. I've got to
just get my money from Liveringa homestead. I takem to
Jigida I gotta move. Well from that day I move to Jigida.
I put my canvas first, ring him up. I put my things inside
and I cartem my people. Men work and carry swag on
shoulders and women, everybody. We come to Jigida - makem
camp there and clear spinifex too. Very hard work we bin
doing clearing that place and Mr Roddy come along and I
tellem well we stop right here. We wont move anywhere.
You can still feed me. You can give me some meat, bullock and we'll pay you. I talk to Roddy. Alright we'll do that. And we not leave you. Wasn't my fault you know some people they can't understand - they don't like this secret way told to white man. In Jigida we might get wrong some way. We gotta get room somewhere. Roddy good man to me. Two man been there - another man - he very good too. That Roddy he been buildem house for the young boys. He been buildin' good house. He bin puttem Gerrard in that house there. He ask me "I bin puttem Gerrard in that house - he can stop there and he can start work brandem cattle - for you, you can be in Jigida - might give you room - anytime, any other time.' Oh well I got room Looma. I talk to that man I got a place Looma - callem Looma I go tomorrow morning - take my mob and start put a stake in there and cleanem place alright so the Government can see. I talk to that man alright. We walk from Jigida to Looma. We find that place where to put the house we can have them. Alright. Well we move from there - from Jigida - we leavem women - everybody in Jigida. Everybody stop there. Alright we come back from Looma when we been see the Looma. Alright I bin say I bin go to Derby. Can I have land? Can you help me? I talk to Native Welfare in Derby.

Fran: Was that Kevin Johnstone?

We can make a place there at Looma. He said. How far from Camballin? Oh its not too far. We can have a store - he can have Camballin room there and we can have a room in Liveringa - right through to Mount Anderson - we can have that area and 120 miles from Looma to Luiluigui, boundary - long way - well that much alright - we come back. Just waiting round there in Looma and Jigida. Alright now all the Government men come from Canberra - all come now. They bin come to Jigida - see me. Alright you got your place now - you got to show us now, where you going to have em. That Canberra boss come along - all the Government men we take em to Looma show them place. Here we can have em! I show them the stake just here where Jock bin living now. A big tree bin there. I show them and I cleanem this place - right in the middle with a shovel and we want it right here! I talk to the Government (raps table for emphasis).

Fran: Do you remember any of the Government men's names? Killer: Umm. I forgot them now you know but from Canberra. All the big bosses. They say alright. Very good. I takem to that creek there. I put a peg there in the creek. I put anothe peg over there. Me and Nelson, Nelson Kumbai. He put the peg for me. I tell him to put the peg here - all the way. No white men. All blackfella. And how you going to gettem - he ask me for water - how you going to get water? Well we got water here under the ground. I'm a blackfella. I can tell you water. I bin use my (head).
Fran: So did they put a bore down?
Killer: Yea bore here (pointing to water tanks).
Fran: You told them water here and they put the bore down?
Killer: Yes. I told them water here. There is water there underneath, I bin know. "How you know?" Oh I know. I'm a blackfella. I understand the Law - everything. (laughs).
Fran: So did it take them long to put a bore?
Killer: Oh not too long. We bin waiting from Jigida for them to put a bore here.
Fran: You couldn't shift across until they had the bore?
Killer: No. They put a bore and that house - you see that house over here. The secret house that one first. And I bin takem two men to build that house. To makem everything one. Finish.
Fran: You built that house yourselves?
Killer: Yea. Two men from Canberra from long way came and built that house. Alright finish. That was very good you know this way. I never had nobody with me to pack up - you bin - only bin - stop with these old people - Nelson Kumbai, Frank Jillamunga, Tommy Mugadi, Lemon Billy and um Nugget Moore, and Lion Kabanyi, Andy Kabanyi - all that old people.
Fran: Were you all pensioners? Were you all on the pension then?
Killer: Yea. I had the pension and truly I bin work - you know money for them to come look Jigida and from after I askem big truck for them store. Alright big truck cartem for the Jigida Reserve.
Fran: Where did the big truck come from?

Killer: From Derby. Dynon bin do the job for Jigida, he bin cartem but I bin havem two taxis to cartem tucker first. And after I askem that man come from Canberra for truck, for bus. I talk to them I want a bus please for my school kids to work by bus when I get in Looma. I talk to them and we meet and you bin can help to putem grader to grade this road here from Jigida to Looma.

Fran: They did all this?

Killer: Yea you know I bin talk to the Government and Government bin put em on grader. Make road.

Fran: And did you ask them for anything else?

Killer: Yes.

Susie: Gravel.

Killer: Gravel from stone you know. Put gravel here you know. Alright and when I shift up here I was very happy and I talk to my boss - see I bin very clear with that man at Liveringa station. Roddy you know. He's a good man in this place but it wasn't my fault. Another people been push me to get this place.

Fran: You would have like to stay at Jigida?


Fran: So you thought Looma was the better place?

Killer: Yea. Looma the better place.

Fran: Who picked Looma out? Who came and found Looma?
Killer: Me.
Fran: You decided that this is the place?
Killer: Yes.
Fran: And did you talk about it with everybody?
Killer: Everybody. We had a meeting you know. We bin have a meeting. All the time meeting and all the time visitor come to tell us you know, what to do (laughs). Keep on coming, very good.
Fran: And things happen? After they come and have a meeting they do what they say?
Killer: Yea. We talk to them Government, put up fence across here you know for own block here. Looma.
Fran: Did you ask for that much?
Killer: Yea. Own land right up to Luiluigui corner and Mt Anderson. Mt Anderson that same company from before K.P.'s. K.P. Liveringa No. 1 before. I was working little boy. This one now (Liveringa) America taking this - ALCCO.
Fran: And you all came across here when the water came and you all went down the camp?
Killer: Yea
Fran: And did you know you were going to have houses then? Did you ask for houses from the Government?
Killer: Yes.
Fran: You wanted houses?
Killer: Yea.
Fran: What sort of houses were you thinking of?
Killer: Village. We ask village you know. Like this one building.
Fran: Oh just like you've got now? This is just what you wanted? Right from the start?
Killer: Yea. And where to look. Look to the hillside - for shade - sunshine that way we look this way.
Fran: So what do you think of it now?
Killer: Oh very good.
Fran: And what will happen when the houses finish?
Killer: When this building finish alright there'll be - we got the job for them young people what they can make up. What we want to think to get right with these young people and we got the building yards for cattle - yard for horse. We kept the jobs for them people if the Government allow us to give them - you know if Government agree for job well I askem in meeting. Alright another job we got for young fellows - they can go down to river with the landrover - right they can get pig - piggy - piggys from river. And we growem up here - we sellem that piggy piggy to somebody - make money a little bit.
Fran: Will you eat the pigs here at Looma too?
Killer: Yes. Good meat. Alright and um we might be think about after - after this might be two years time - might think about sendum young boys - we might get a place - cattle station somewhere to help Looma. Thats what I need you know. I talk to this mob here - old people - when the meeting comes me and Limerick got to
speak to them people you know. Limerick's one of them good men. Limerick Pindan - the one blind. Thats a Christian - Christians can help me and really Gerrard going to be good one.

Fran: He understands.

Killer: Yea he understands what we doing now. Gerrard. He might look after Book for me. You know. Make it good for me and mother. Make it good for the young people, to teach them you know.

Fran: Are you a Christian Killer?

Killer: Yea.

Fran: When did you become a Christian? Were you a Christian a long time ago?

Killer: Long time (Laughs) Long time. I bin getting old now. I understand you know but I go to my Law - I talk to them my Law - alright.

Fran: You've got your Law and Christians law together.

Killer: Yea. That be alright?

Fran: Yea.

Killer: Eh?

Fran: Yea.

Killer: Should be good.

Well we here in this Loma now. Everybody here. All coming and they working. Very good here - all young boys. Working-building side they work. Some married men and young boys they working here very good. And we agree with the Camballin people. Camballin bosses. We
agree good and sometimes we go to Camballin - buy some store.

When we short anything in this store here alright we go to Camballin store. I sendem my mob - women, men, anybody to buy everything in Camballin store and we get meat out of Camballin - bullock and he very good.

Well I got another to say but dinner time now. I got to leave you.
Freddie: This is Freddie Johnson talking now at Looma. Everybody ask me how Looma started so I bring the word out for it. Looma started first not Looma but Liveringa Station. This - everybody here now - like Aborigine blokes, all the Liveringa group been working on Liveringa - working for the sheep station and coming in for the cattle station. I'm in Derby. I'm the leader of the Derby Reserve. I started off in Derby Reserve. Before the trouble come out of the Liveringa, I went to Perth and talk about all the Aborigine, - how they going to be, they want to work, they want to live like white man. They was talking about. So I went over and talk about it in the conference like. Then I found out, the trouble come out of Liveringa and Killer Narga, he's the one of them houseblokes, that's working on the house for Liveringa. He's one of the bosses for the station like, and so the fault come out of it and then they got pushed away from Liveringa - the whole lot of them. Bulldozer bulldozed the house and everything - knock it down, and then they just rolled their swag and carried it on their shoulders across the creek and they camp on the creek. They didn't know who is going to help them. They tried - think think. They reckon, 'Oh what about we send word to Freddie Johnson in Derby!' I was in Derby so they write note and brought the note and Kevin Johnstone - he's one of the Welfare - he was in Derby in the office
so we went and show him the paper. He read it. 'Oh!' he said to me, 'Look. Big trouble at Liveringa, what are you going to do about it?' He said. 'I can't go. You gotta go. You're the man. I can't go.' Cos he's a white man see. And I said, 'Righto I'll have a go at it. I'll try.' So I went. I went to Liveringa and find out. I took my five councillors from the Derby Reserve. I lended them my Nissan and I went with the Native Welfare car. Mr Ross Morrison, he took me. He had nothing to do talk. I had to talk all see. He just took me in and he stand there and wait till I talk. Native Affair didn't say anything at all. I had to talk whole lot and I asked Killer - Killer come up and see me. Said 'Oh here's Freddie Johnson.' Then they all come up and rush 'Oh here he is!' They all come and I said 'Gooday, Gooday, Gooday,' to everyone. Then I turned round and asked them, I said, 'What happened?' 'Oh' they told me, 'we got pushed away. Bulldozer knock house down, everything, we carry our swag. Nobody help us to carry our swag. They didn't lend us a truck, like you know, to shift camp.'

Fran: Who are they - ALCCO?

Freddie: Yes, this ALCCO mob. And I said, 'Why couldn't help you? You bin ask for to help you to carry your swag on a truck like to shift your camp?

'No, no they didn't help us.'

'After what you do when you carry your swag?'
'Oh we stop in the creek.'
'Where do you get your tucker?'
'Oh we got some flour - a little bit here and a little bit here, you know.'
'And how everyone goes with tucker?'
'Oh, we got nothing, little bit you know. We got kangaroo and we got out the river like.'
I said, 'Right' and I said, 'What you blokes going to do. You going to stop here? Go back to station again and work for them blokes?'
'No we not going back no more. We not going back no more. We don't going to work for them. They push us with the bulldozer and knock the house down, well we won't go back and work for them.'
So they said, 'We'll stay out.'
'And what are you going to do? You want to go to Myradooh, you want to go to Luiluigui?'
'No, we can find a home. We can make our own home and we gotta stay there and make our own way. We trying to make up garden or we going to try to put up our own houses. We might buy some tin, timber.'
'Oh,' I said, 'alright, if you got enough money we can buy some iron, timber, nails, hammer say and start building for your own home.'
Then I said to them. 'Alright what about I talk to the Government? I'll go back and arrange about this. We'll find a place for you. And try and make a place for you blokes and live your own way. That would be better.'
They reckon 'Oh yes, that alright.'

'Yes' I said, 'Righto. Don't try and talk more. I'll go back and find out what I can do for you.' I said
'I might have to go to Canberra to find out.' So I said,
'You blokes wait! Don't say anything don't talk and
I'll go down there to Canberra and to Perth. I'll have
a meeting. Have a talk. If they agree they going to
help you blokes, well I stay and help you blokes.'

I said, 'Killer the boss for you but I'm only just talking,
I'm a representative man you see. I can represent for
the West Australia so I can talk for everybody in the
West, this Kimberley like.' So I said, 'I can try.
I might be alright. I might get along alright. We get
along alright so we be always looking that way. You got
to take notice of what the Government say and you gotta
help Government too.' I said. 'If he help you, you gotta
help them too. Righto?

And they said, 'Oh yes, that's more better. We'll try.'
I said 'Righto, well I'm going back now. I'm going up to
that house. I'm going to see these blokes.' And I said,
'I'm going to come back again and find a place for you,
a Reserve.' You know just a temporary reserve, not really
a reserve. Like man can erect a tent up and they all can
stay there. So I went up to the house and come to five
men. I talk to them, they said to me. 'Gooday, gooday,
come in and have a talk.' They said, 'What's your problem?'
I said, 'Well my problem,' I said, 'I like to find out
why these fellows got pushed away from Liveringa.' I said
'That's my problem. I like to find out.'

'Ooh!' they said 'nothing much.'

They reckoned 'nothing much. Because we want to clean that place and we can start buildup again.'

I said, 'Yes, how long does it take you to build up a house for them mob?'

'Ooh, wont take long!'

I said, 'Rain just start coming now. Poor blokes they get washed away in that creek.' 'But,' I said, 'Now you better leave them now. Don't worry about the buildup. Just leave them I'll find the place and from now on I said you blokes got nothing to do with them. Leave it to me,' I said. 'I'll manage those blokes. I'll see what they want and I'll see how I can handle them. Right and none of them going to come back and work for you no more.'

I told them that.

'Ooh we can shoot meat for them' - (you know killer).

'No, they don't want that. They get their own tucker, they go out on river, they get their own tucker. They don't need anymore tucker from Liveringa, and I'll find out how to get them tucker.' So Killer made arrangement with taxi like, carting some flour. So I went over to the reserve I look at the place. I reckon, oh this is pretty nice place. Oh yeah pretty good place. So I went back to them and I ask them, 'What about stay there?'

'Ooh yes, that's alright. We'll clean up, we'll keep the place clean, we'll buildup them tents.'

'Righto,' I said. 'And what you blokes need, from town?'

'Ooh we want some tucker.'

'Alright,' I said, 'when I go back I'll talk about for
some tucker. And we'll see about it - Mr Johnstone and I and bloke in office and some lady there. We'll talk about it and make arrangements and we'll get tucker out for you. That's what I can try,' I said, 'if I can bring something for you."

So I went back in Derby and I told him, I told everything and another Native Welfare was there - listen to me like, Mr Ross Morrison. He never said a word. He just standing and listening like, you know, let me talk.

And Kevin Johnstone said, 'Oh you done a good job - good.' So we put it all up and he ask me, 'They going to go back to the work?'

'No they wont go back.'

'How they going to get tucker?'

'Well,' I said, 'this should be in the paper there.'

He look at it again and said 'Right. We'll try and do something about it for them.

We went to Dysons and we told them like whether you can cart tucker for them. And he said, 'Yes I can do it.' The Government will help us, so he said, 'Right I can do it."

So he load up his truck next week. Load it up and brought it out here and they buy all the tucker. They were at Jigida then. Right down on the creek - when flooded time came we had to change the place. I said 'Righto' I said to Killer. 'You got to find a better place than this. I only find this just for now. You can find out where we can have the place.'
He said, 'Oh well we can look around.'
He come up here and look around and he find this and he go back to the camp and he sent word to come up. So I came up here and he showed me.
He said, 'Here's the place I find. What do you reckon?'
'Oh!' I said, 'that's alright. That's where you want to be. Yea, good place.' And I said, 'Next week I'm going to Perth. I might go to Canberra and I'll talk about something there.'
He said, 'That's right.'
I said 'You don't to be start now. Wait! If I get a good word, I'll bring it up to you.' Righto and I went back to Derby. I got on the plane - went to Perth right through to Canberra.
Fran: Do you remember who you spoke to?
Freddie: Yes. Minister like, Bryant I talk to him. We talk about a lot of things and everybody is there and afterwards he said 'Freddie Johnson you're one of the Liveringa group?'
I said 'Yes.' 'Well,' he said, 'what's your problem?'
And I come out with it. I said, 'Well I'm a Liveringa group and what they done - they get pushed away to creek and they didn't have nobody to help them. They sent word to me, to Derby, and I went out and see them, and they want help, so I told them, alright I'll see this. I'll go down to Canberra, I'll bring this up for you. I'll see if I can do something better for you. So I went to Canberra, I'm here now talking in Canberra.'
'Right,' he said, 'keep going.'

'And I told them not to go back to the work, stay one side and they want to be alone. Not working for any white man anymore. Still no Aboriginals working at Liveringa even now. I got on to Mr Roddy and Fred Morrison at Liveringa and second time I brought Mr Johnstone with me and Mr Johnstone having a go at them. I just stopped quiet. He's the one to talk.'

Fran: What did he say to them?

Freddie: Oh he told them rough too, very hard. They didn't speak anymore. So I talk to this bloke, Mr Watch-you-call-him, at Canberra.

'Oh,' he said, 'good problem. That's pretty good. Well we'll see if we can help you for that. We'll try.' He said, 'might be next year. We'll find out.'

That was about four years ago now. And so one year I went up to Canberra and next year, straight away, answer come to me and the lady, Lesley she come up. And (s)he working for Mr McKenzie's place. Upstairs right up in the air. And they showed me that village - the house like - they showed me the houses we want. I was happy. I said 'They're the ones!'

(S)He said 'There you are, whenever you're ready they're up there.'

Fran: Where were you then?

Freddie: At Derby.

Fran: And where was Killer?

Freddie: Killer was still at Jigida. And so, Killer said,

(1) State Housing Commission
'You can always see how everything goes, I just stick to you.'

And I said, 'Don't try going and talk to anybody,' I said, 'just wait. Stop and wait.'

And Lesley come from Perth and I said, bring the type of the house, model, bring it up to the Liveringa group so they can have a look at it - what sort of house they like. When Lesley come up with the plane, (s)he come up to the Reserve and call me up and (s)he said, 'We got to go to Liveringa, I got the type of the house, you want to have a look at it?'

'Yes!'

'Righto we'll leave in a minute, we'll go down to Jigida!'

'Righto,' I said.

We had a drink of tea, then off to Jigida. I call everybody, 'Come along everybody.'

Everybody rush, gooday, gooday, gooday to Lesley you know. Then get the houses, put it down on the ground and they had a look at it. And I told them, 'What sort of a house you want? Like this or another one?'

'No this one the best. You get more wind this side and this side'.

'That's the one you like or you want windows?'

'No, no we don't want windows. We'll have it like this.'

They look, everyone's around. 'That's good, that's good. What time we going to start?'

'Oh well, just leave it to them,' I said, 'and we'll find out.'
And they ask me, Dr Coombes he came up and McKenzie, and Mr Gare and Mr Cornish - everybody come up and we stand under the big white tree over there. I showed em, how we can put the houses up here.

'Oh pretty good place, yes nice place alright. Where you going to have your water?'

'Oh we put the bore down there.' I said. 'Somewhere along there.'

I said. 'Just from the side of the creek here.'

'You think you can get water?'

'Oh,' I said, 'we can try.'

And McKenzie told me, 'You can't get no water, bedrock underneath.'

'Och,' I said, 'You might get through. I don't know. Might be bedrock there, might be none, but we can try. Might be you'll find out it's a bit hard. Bloke can drill the bore and he'll soon find out.' They drilled two bores. The first one they drilled this side, take them three days to get water and then he said to me,

'That good water.'

Then they tried the other one - take two days and a half for water to come up. They tried more and they said,

'That's the best water. Pretty good.'

When I back, I went to Perth again and Mr McKenzie and all them told me, 'You win. You got water.'

I said, 'I got to win sometimes.'

Mr McKenzie said, 'Right we going to start the housing.'

And they did, they set it up.
Fran: So when you got the water did everyone shift over?
Freddie: Yea, I told them, 'Wait till the water starts, then you blokes can shift. Not yet, wait for the water!' Soon as they got water everybody shifted camp. Then all the material come. The man made the community camp, then they start to build up the house over here.
From Jigida not really 100 people was there. When it come to the Looma, when they got together like, there's about 300 now here at Looma now. 300 now. While there's 300 here and sometime they go and back again you know, up and forward like you know. Back and forth.
Fran: And the ones at Jigida, were they mainly pensioner, old people?
Freddie: Yea, pensioners and some young boys what was working on stations. They left the stations and came to stay with the old people at Jigida and when Looma was ready they all come here.
Fran: Would you say there were more young people now?
Freddie: Well I think there is more young people here now like - very few on the stations now, they all come in.
Fran: They've finished for the year.
Freddie: Mm. Should be - they all - some of them in Derby like - you know in the station what belongs to Looma like, they got their relations, mother and father like, they can come here like. They can always come here. If they want to go away and work for someone else that's alright they can still go like - we wont stop them, they
can still go, but really this is job here for all the pensioners like to look after the places, clean up the homes - that's only pensioner work. That's all but we not supposed to pay them - we not pay them for that. But whoever working community like they get paid - garden like they get paid.

Fran: And where does Looma get the money to pay all their men?

Freddie: Well these fellows get paid from the Government like. Budget money like what I put in for.

Fran: And you get that every year now?

Freddie: Mm we got it this year and we paid them. The fencing blokes now and the other cheque never come in yet. Just waiting for it now.

Fran: Do you have to put in each year for more money from the Government?

Freddie: Yea. Cause I was going to leave too - Looma - I was going to finish up. I had meeting with them - somebody else to take my place - to work. I told them 'You got to find that good bloke to look after you blokes. I'm finish up now and I'm going away.' 'Oh no, we wont loose you - you can't go away see. You can go for trip but you're not going for good you got to come back here, stay here at Looma.' Well I couldn't say anything at all cause they got me in every way like. Stopping me - they didn't want to let me go.

Fran: Where were you going? To Derby?

Freddie: Oh I was going back to Mt House - that's where
I'm born - that's my country. I want to go back there. And still and yet when I had Derby and someone wanted me to go back to Derby Reserve and look after it. 'Oh you're not at Looma bloke you're a Derby bloke come back here.' I said, 'Look, gimme peace. I want to have a rest someway. Well,' I said, 'somebody's got to be a good man. I'm not only one man here that's a good man for everybody.' I said. 'If I die what you blokes going to do. That's the time you fellas got to look out. If I die that's the end. You fellas got to work your mind up how you going to talk.' 'No, no don't do that and don't say that - you die.' I said, 'Oh everybody got to die. Only for your life. There's a rock standing there but human being there's a clock working in here. When your clock stop finish.'

Ooh, they all laugh you know.

Fran: You think this is your home now, you think you will stay here?

Freddie: Well its my father's home like - country you know. They all call this Nyigina you know. My father Nyigina and my mother Nyaranyin. My father went to Mt House and married my mother and I was born. I'm a between my mother and father and we work it out. Well not me - I was just a little kid - they work it out like. They reckon oh you can be a Nyaranyin, you can be a Nyigina. When I grow up like here I say oh I'm a Nyigina man. They can't beat me see. I'm a Nyigina man and I'm a Nyaranyin man. Both ways
see. I've got relations over there and relations over here. But if I want to go I can go.

Fran: Would a lot of people at Looma belong to two tribes? Mother one tribe and father another tribe.

Freddie: Well no. This is only Looma people here what Nyigina from Liveringa. See them hills over there run right along there, a lot of people die belongs to Liveringa really. There are only two old women here still alone belongs to Liveringa really.

Fran: What are their names?

Freddie: Um what do you call it. Alec. First house here. That old lady you know Topsy. She's a Liveringa, they belong to Liveringa.

Fran: They're Nyigina?

Freddie: Mmm Well a lot of these young fellows - little kids they born here but they like from different tribes father. But they born at Liveringa. Well I think they say, 'Well this is my country.'

Fran: There are 3 babies born at Looma now?

Freddie: Yea. They belong to Looma. I don't think we knot that out now, they all come in together now. At this stage they reckon they all be one.

Fran: One people?

Freddie: Mungulu, Walmadjari and Nyiginya they just got to all be in one.

Fran: They going to marry across.

Freddie: Well, umm. No I mean like if they got somebody to marry like if a bloke got a daughter, well Nyigina wouldn't marry. Like say Walmadjari bloke and Mungulu
blokes got a daughter to marry well Nyigina bloke wouldn't marry that. You got to wait for the Walmadjari bloke to take her. If the Walmadjari bloke agrees, 'Oh we don't want to marry that girl,' then Nyigina bloke can marry her. Alright and everybody agree. That's the way.

Fran: So for a Walmadjari girl, Walmadjari men have first choice, and for a Nyiginya girl, Nyigina men have first choice?

Freddie: That's right. See if Nyigina girls want to marry Walmadjari or Mungulu, they got to talk about it they got to agree that but you can't take it just what you want.

Fran: It's still promised marriage here?

Freddie: Yea.

Fran: The girls don't find their own husbands?

Freddie: No. Well but I mean at this stage now. As you can see the girls running all over the place. But we don't bother that see.

Fran: To get back to the houses. They all came over when the water came. You were still at Derby then?

Freddie: Yea.

Fran: They all shifted over down there and they started to build the houses two years ago?

Freddie: Yea. Last year they started. Beginning of last year. Then I came along. I only just come here for a holiday, you know to stay here and they reckon, 'Oh you not going back. You got to stay here.' They knew me see and they don't want to let me go back to Derby and I still
had a Reserve to look after so I sell it in the last meeting. I got nothing to do with it now. I got Looma. Well I'm not the boss - Killer's boss but you know Killer's not good up there to talk like - to think about some things like. Straight away.

Fran: You do more of the talking with the white fellas?
Freddie: Mm. Well I can see something come along, I knew what people going to do and I can see how we going and I can talk. English like Killer wouldn't spell it really to make people understand. Talk you know and he get mixed up and people can't understand him. That's why. Well I told him, 'Well I'm not the boss.' I said to Killer. 'You can sack me too,' I said to Killer, 'if you want to.' 'Oh no,' he said. 'Oh no I wont sack you. I want you.' 'Well' I said, 'you're the boss. You can do anything.' I said. 'You can sack me anytime you like. You can sack anybody.'

Fran: He's the boss of everything at Looma?
Freddie: Yea see there are are. 'Oh no' he said, 'we wont sack you, you're doing good talking - you're doing a good job at Looma.' I said, 'That's alright, that's really good, thanks very much I said for telling me that.' Now I like to see somebody take up the job too - you know work like me. See some of these fellas can't talk nothing.

Fran: Yea, who would be the young fellas that are?
Freddie: Well young fellas if they interested.
Fran: Are there any that are interested?
Freddie: Well many times they listen to me but they don't interested. I don't think they want to take it. They want to do it their own way you see.
Fran: How would their own way be different?
Freddie: Well I mean what I mean their own way - they want to just work and go, they don't want to listen to old people telling them. They just like to do, you know.
Fran: Do you think they see Looma as their home forever?
Freddie: Well - Looma should be home for them.
Fran: Mm but they just come and go?
Freddie: Look like it. You can see it and I see it. I'm watching it.
Fran: They think its like a reserve?
Freddie: Like a reserve but I'm telling them, 'This is not a reserve. Not like a reserve. This is village,' I said, 'like a town. Village got the law - same as a town.' I said. 'You go to any other place,' I said, 'police catch you. You got to look out the law.'
Fran: Do they understand that Looma belongs to the Looma people?
Freddie: Well they understand like the Looma people.
That's what they reckon, 'This is our place Looma, oh well we can do what we like see.' That's what they might be thinking. I always watching it. That's where they might go wrong. But they got to be careful. They can't keep on doing it.
Fran: No.
Freddie: The Law - like our law, Aboriginal Law - he's just as good as white man law - pretty hard - can be punished. He can go for six months, he can go for two years. As I say pretty hard. But they don't like to do it. I'm just
waiting for it but I can't say come on.

Fran: Who doesn't like to do it? Tommy Mugudi?

Freddie: Well I don't know what they do - they're waiting, they're trying to get everything right I think. That's what I'm just watching it. I mean I can't go over and say come on you blokes - put up your Law. No I can't! I get trouble for that. See well they're the ones that work things out how they're going to do it and when they going to start. Like that.

Fran: Well do you think they'll have it when they have their initiations over Xmas?

Freddie: Oh yea. Initiation - you can have plenty fun. But the Law that's very hard. Just like a man going to gaol for six months. Initiation all that ceremony its pretty easy for everybody. Plenty show at that.

Fran: How do they punish them?

Freddie: Well they punish them. Take them outside - they keep them in the shade, don't give them tucker like. They don't give them cup o tea or dinner. They just got to wait to get breakfast. That real punishment. They get to be real hungry. Blokes there to watch that bloke. to givem tucker give him water what he want. And I can't go over and say, 'Oh here have a feed.' They watching and I get trouble-trouble. He got the right way to do it but they wont kill nobody. Nobody died you know, they look after them. They punish them so they can realize and understand - they not going to make any more trouble.
Fran: What would most of the punishments be for besides drinking?

Freddie: There was punishment before the same way and everybody didn't do it like. They keep this punishment — this Law like but they didn't want to show it up like. But when they got Looma their own place — well they can put their Law up. Now same as a bloke here. I had a row with taxi bloke Louis and I don't think he realize yet what I'm talking about. He can get punished here if we want. We can do that. Take the key off his motor car and we can leave him for 3 or 4 days to go back to his place. Like a gaol like.

Fran: What was Louis doing?

Freddie: Oh well we had a row. He was carting grog like and making trouble and all. He reckoned, 'Oh its nothing. You can't stop me.' Might be that. I wrote a letter for all the Council — wrote a letter for him. He had a look at the letter but still yet I don't think he take any notice but the other way he might. If he get caught.

Fran: Did you tell the police in Derby?

Freddie: Oh yea. Police know. Only trouble is we watching him. Well the other way put the lock on the gate for him. That's the trouble he come through in the middle of the night bringing grog to the houses. But still everybody don't like it. That way to see cos make trouble in Looma. Looma is good place and Looma is you know Government help. We got these houses and I told them 'Should look after things. What money we make got to pay Government back.
Now' I said 'this time Government wont lend you money at all.' I said 'you got to work for your living. You got to make money and enough money maybe you got to send it to Government and pay them back. Then you be all the time good with them. See if you broke again they might help you. Well,' I said, 'you got to see that. Don't think like you get money from money. You don't think about it again. You just going to turn your back, no' I said, 'that's wrong'. You got to think about the Government want money just like you and I. We all want money. But you got to be careful,' I said, 'sometime you might do wrong thing and then you jump around and you want somebody to help you. See that's your own fault. You don't see first place what you done and you go around and want help now.' That's the way. Lot of people like that. When they make trouble they come back to ask help. 'Can you help me?' It's wrong you see. First place you make wrong you got to see everything right for Government. I had to work right. I do the Government job, I still here yet. They never sack me yet. Only I want to get out of it. I getting tired. The blokes still want me. Well there you are, see.

Fran: How will they make money at Looma after the houses are finished?

Freddie: Well I reckon if they go out work their own cattle you know - branding, sell their own cattle in the meatworks, all that.
Fran: Do you think there is enough country to run cattle?
Freddie: Oh enough country. You can easily get a truck and load it and take cattle to meatworks. Garden too - sell vegetables. All that. That's what I tell them, not the pensioners like. But all the workers gotta stop work and buy horses and cattle. But I said to them, we got to see that yet, need a fence and keep the cattle in, gotta finish the fence first.

Fran: Do you think they will finish before the wet?
Freddie: Oh I think. They reckon they going to finish it on Wednesday or Thursday. Along from the river. They'll leave the rest till next year. As long as you block this and ALCCO is got nothing to do with it then. It's open now and cattle walking right through the fence. ALCCO cattle coming into our place and the cattle draw together and follow themselves out again. Like that and they trying to block Looma.

Fran: The cattle can't get across the river.
Freddie: No the cattle can't get across when the river full. Hills keep them in too and the other fence come from Mt Anderson block it again. They can't get through. They can't climb the big hill.

Fran: And eventually will Looma have everything for itself. A school and all those sorts of things?
Freddie: Yea. I trying to get big freezer, if I'm still here. A big freezer to hang all the meat in like. That's what I was thinking. Oh me and Jock was talking like. And he said, 'Oh well you can put it to the meeting and we can
find out like. We can talk about it in the meeting.'
'Well,' I said, 'trouble is the money. The Government -
we got all the money and I don't know what you going to
do with it. We going to pay all these fence workers and
we got to pay for own wireless - Looma buying it and a
projector for our pictures - we got to buy that. And we
should get another 1/2 ton truck like. We got one truck
in garage now and that costing a lot of money, Looma money.
And I'm buying tractor too. No mechanic here at Looma
at all."

Fran: Do you think eventually Looma will train all its
young people for things like being a mechanic?
Freddie: Yea. Well I got one bloke want to be come in.
We was talking about it in the meeting and yet I don't see
him come in yet.

Fran: Who was he?

Freddie: Well I don't know. He was a white bloke. He
going to come here and try and learn the fellas to work
mechanic's job. Well I said that's alright last meeting
what we have and everybody agreed that. But we didn't
say really when we wanted him to be here in Looma, see
like we had meeting for you and they told me stopping in
Camballin and I said 'Oh no good.' I said, 'Camballin
too far for him.' I said. 'Bring it to Looma (s)he can
stay more better close.' Straight away see. Made it good.

Fran: Thanks. That was really handy.

Freddie: Well you got up to Camballin and back - by the
time you know the rain might come. That creek will get full up - pretty quick.

Fran: In the wet does that mean Looma can't get to Derby?

Freddie: No we gotta wait till it go down a bit and then we go. Plane can't land too.

Fran: And what about Pundulumurra? You got a lot of guys at Pundulumurra doing courses?

Freddie: Oh we got about five I think went over there.

Fran: What do you think of the idea of Pundulumurra?

Freddie: Umm. Well I said that's right - some of them went down and caused a bit of trouble down there. And I said well - girl trouble - and I can't help that. I can't talk about that - that's up to her and him. Somebody I said - anything like that I can't talk about that its pretty ... Same as me if a girl loves me that's between her and me (laughs). We don't let anybody know it. Some of the people getting upset about it had done the same thing - everybody done it.

Fran: And the kids going to school, do you think they'll all be working with cattle or will they do other things as well?

Freddie: Oh that's the thing too - they learn different things. Some of the kids want to go to cattle and if he wants he can go but they can learn welding anything like that for Looma.

Fran: And do the parents understand about school?

Freddie: Well some parents you know - some do. Might be
few but I can't tell you which is which bloke cause I -
some don't care much. I can see that too. They don't
understand. Well like Gladys my wife - its alright. She
understands that kids go to school if they want to be
learn more. They say, 'I got a sore eye, I got a sore
in my leg,' and all that. I say, 'Go and see your mother
and see what she says.'

Fran: And what does Gladys say?
Freddie: 'Oh you gotta go, you gotta go!'

Fran: Do you think it's a good school? They have things
that the kids are interested in or is there too much
white fella stuff that they don't understand?

Freddie: Oh I don't know - that must be it or they just
like to stay sometimes - at home you know. Might be feel
tired or anything like that you know. And we can see
it you know. We say, 'What's wrong with you if you don't
hurry up in the morning, change clothes and have a wash?'
'No I feel pain. I got pain. Sick.' Sometimes pretty
cunning you know. When they say that and you walk away
and come - he's gone to play.

Fran: Healthy as anything.

Freddie: Pretty cunning oh yes.
APPENDIX III

TRANSCRIPT OF TALK WITH MICHAEL MAUNDI 6th December 1975

From Desert. Father and Mother. I was small that time, somewhere round 1930 or 40 - somewhere. I was little boy. Went to Dampier Downs Station. Start looking around there and I get a job in the station when I was a little kid. And the Manager of that Dampier Downs Station called Roger Dye. Drove me up to Broome school. I was working in dairy farm. I was shift all them little calves and steers every morning. Bringem back to dinner-times to yard. Every morning I go with Dick Dye, his son. Every morning, four o'clock in the morning – go round every house in Broome with milk cow. Go round the streets, everywhere, every morning. Come back about seven o'clock in the morning. Come back home and start about nine o'clock to let little calves out.

A good while there I was working and that man, he was going to take me down to Perth for schooling. That morning I was ready. You know, I was just a little kid. I don't like to go down to a different part of the country. I was frightened. I was thinking about my home - my parents - mother, father that I left on the station. I run away that morning. That was Friday morning. I went to Roebuck Plains Station. And after that they get me - bring me down to Roebuck Plains Station to start work. So I started learning to ride horse. I was working for that white man. Then after that I run away to Broome and then Priest see me in town. Priest from Beagle Bay Mission. Bishop Ryan.
He ask me question. He ask me if I can go down to Beagle Bay Mission. He got a place he told me. Good for you - you can learn schooling. Alright so morning time, I jump on the truck to Beagle Bay Mission and then started schooling.

And then from there when I finished school I went to station work. They send me out to station - back to Roebuck Plains Station. After a little while work everywhere on station - Anna Plains Station, La Grange, back to Broome and from there I go back again to Mission. La Grange Mission to learn carpentry job. Then one day, travelled up and down, up and down working. Till I come to Myroodah, Liveringa working. Riding horses, mustering. One day come when everybody, all this Killer mob, Killer and all this mob, they want to start to build a station. I come to Liveringa Station anyhow. I joined with them. Killer. I was stopping in Liveringa Reserve. We was talking together - the mob that here in Looma now.

One day come, they was talking, trying to put me in the Council (Not Looma Council but Native Welfare Council) business. Telling me to stick up for them town fellas. Alright, they was telling me I could go everywhere in meeting. That day they bring me down. I can be like boss of the group. I was out at Luiluigui Station working there last - Myroodah and Luiluigui and then one day I come to Port Hedland meeting. Conference meeting. Me and Charlie Rogers. Freddie Johnstone pick us up.
Now I'm in Looma.

**Fran:** Why did you go to Liveringa? Did they come and ask you to go?

**Michael:** Yep.

**Fran:** Why were they all going to Liveringa?

**Michael:** Well, everybody call us in.

**Fran:** What for?

**Michael:** To help the blokes.

**Fran:** To get some land?

**Michael:** Yep. We was talking about how to get this land. Talking, talking, talking, talking. Alright they keep talking. Alright one day come, and they told me if I can take the job. I just telling them fellas. I can't do much because I don't know much. No they bin just keep on telling me that. You alright! Especially Killer was telling me.

**Fran:** Did you know Killer from before?

**Michael:** I know Killer. Like he's my grandbrother. He know my relations. All that.

**Fran:** Did you ever work with him before?

**Michael:** Yea, I was working with him. First time. It was my father and mother were relations to him.

**Fran:** How big will Looma be? Are more people going to come?

**Michael:** Well look like it. They coming, little by little. All over the state, they coming in.

**Fran:** Why are they coming?
Michael: Well, all that most tell me because got relations at Looma. Derby, Broome, Fitzroy - they like Looma better.

Fran: Why do they like Looma?

Michael: Because its a quiet place in the bush. Because they like to settle down in the bush. Because they like parents where they are living. Other places - Derby, Broome, all that - too big. We like to sleep in a small place - bit off from other places.

Fran: Not too many gadeja?

Michael: Yes.

Fran: You like it better without gadeja?

Michael: Yes. We want to be like .. you know .. some of them stations, good stations. Well, why can’t we live alone?

Fran: And do the people coming here understand about Looma and how it is going to make money?

Michael: Yes. Work. Got to be work. Not going to be walking around just free. Got to keep after his parents. To work for parents. Father and mother. That’s these young people today. They got to help their parents. They got to work for them. That’s why everybody going to places to learn. Pandulmurra, Adelaide and all sorts of places - Perth.

(Woman then interrupted with a long speech in Walmadjari. Michael goes on to explain it.)

That sign. Excuse me, we just talking about that sign what we got over there. Taxi stand. See every taxi got to pull up over there. People can notice that. Another
notice up at main gate - Looma gate.

**Fran:** What does that one say?

**Michael:** No alcohol. Cissie was just telling me that Killer want taxi to go right up to camp and all the councillors don't like this. Only one councillor telling taxi to go there in the home. The other eight councillors didn't want it. Even elders didn't like that. Everybody, this Looma community.

**Fran:** Who are the elders here?

**Michael:** Frank, Lion, Tommy. Only have 9 councillors here. So only one bloke here making a bit of a mistake. That's the boss - Killer.

I know everybody drinking alcohol over here. We'd like to kick it out. Not for alcohol here. Not in caravan, store. We don't want no alcohol here. No we don't want it.

**Fran:** What about the State Housing men?

**Michael:** No, they're alright. That belong them. They can havem. But we - white men can have a drink. That's his drink. But other way round. Nobody don't like that. These old people don't want to drink. They can just drink water - ordinary water or tea, cool drink - that's alright. They can drink squash, anything. Cordials - but not that otherway.

Some ladies drinking.

Parents help their young ones when they spend all their money on drink. They have to do that. Not like in the white man. White man rule is different - one way. You
don't give them any. If they want anything - tucker -
well he's got to work for it.

**Fran:** You know the three tribes that are here?

**Michael:** Yes. Three tribes - Mangala, Nyigina, Walmadjari.
Well all that three to help together to help one another.
One crook - they're one body.

**Fran:** Do they marry? Nyigina marry Walmadjari?

**Michael:** Yes. Some kids born at Looma. That's why they
One belong to Joe Green. Lot of fellas and a lot more to
be born.

**Fran:** What other buildings will you have here at Looma?

**Michael:** Well might have a schoolhouse, might have a
clinic. Going to buildup boys' quarters. Going to be
build up workshop - where you going to put your cars in.
Going to be build up office. Have our own office, store.
That's all I think.

**Fran:** What are you going to do in the garden next year?

**Michael:** Tomato, beans, corn - all kinds everything.

**Fran:** You going to build stockyards?

**Michael:** Yes. We just waiting for the horses - we got
some cattle here at this place in the Looma. We going
to everything. Might get a paddock here round the village
to keep out cattle and horses. If you can't put the
paddock, well, they'll just come in - walk everywhere.
Like that one we got there in the Camp - Danny.\(^1\)

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\(^1\) Pet cow at Looma.
APPENDIX IV

LOOMA STORIES

My name is Annie Milgin. I am 25 years old and I live at Looma and I like it very much, and also I am working at the store. Every morning the customers pay grocery from the store and I have one girl working with me, her name is Clare Henry and we like it very much.

At Looma we planting a garden and Killer in charge of looking after the garden and he has four women working in the garden, first we planted paw-paw, bean, watermelon and rock-melon but next year we got to have more bigger garden.

And at Looma Eva Juboy use to have pre-school for the little children every morning. Some time Joy Langsford use to have some women learning how to read in Wolmajiri language. And here people love to have houses of their own and they planting some lawn and tree around. Cissy Juboy has her garden at the back and she planted a banana and he growing good. Some time we use to go with Fran down to the river for a swim and Fran use to like swimming down the river because it is nice and cool.

I am a council woman, there's eight council men and I'm a nine so there are three tribe. We council have our meeting every Monday and Freddie Johnston he's our chairman. And here in Looma we have two police men in charge to keep out some drunken men from trespassing. Also they keep the gate
lock from people bringing in grog. We council make sure that taxi should not trespass and we make sure that some drunken men on a taxi. Some time men bring bottle in to our property, some men from council bust their bottle. If he don't take no notice to council we put meeting for him.

ANNIE MILGUN

When we was staying in Liveringa and we was working there. After then we was pulled out from there and we was staying at the billabong for a while and we shifted to Jigida and then we was staying there. After then Killer went with the some couple of men to clean the place to live there and all the people from stations and town people came in and we was staying altogether at Jigida. After then we had meeting at Jigida and then Freddie Johnson came and some of the men to help us.

And when Killer, Banjo, Tommy, Nelson came here to mark this place and show to Don Gordon this place and we showed him Looma Lizard and all the Looma. And when we came here all the people were clean up and it was starting to rain in here and then they build our own tent to live in here. And when the State Housing men came here to stay to build up the house and some of the men were starting to build it up. They build a office first and all the houses and then they build a small store. After then we had no water in here only Mr Jim Robinson gave us a small
tank in here. We was living with that water for a little while and all the men were digging a hole in the ground and start it to pump it up and then were finishing it off, and we had a power house. One for the water to filled up the tank, and we got new power house so we can have a light in our house, and then we are working here and living in this place and we are keeping it clean all the time and cleaning our own house. And we got nine councillors and two police men, they are Jimmy and Mango. We got two helps so they can stop all the people from drinking and fighting so they can give them for long time in the Law so they can know it for any time.

EVA JUBOY

When we first shifted to the houses we planted some trees and a lawn. Some people likes Looma. Also some of the men are building some other houses they made the basketball court for all the girls and boys to play in. Also Allan bought two new basketballs from the shop at Derby. I am living at Roger’s house. Sometimes we climb up the hill and when we look down we see the road is a shape like a Q. Sometimes we go for a swim with the dodge. Also we see the pictures at the basketball court. Also I like Looma its good we go to school with the bus. Also we are making a little farm, also we got the lights on again. Some people are living at the camp. Also Clare and Annie works at the store and some babies were born in Looma, their names are Jeffery, Stanley, Cyril and Kelvin.

TEPFLA HENRY
When we shift at our house we will put flower and some other plants and lawn and some trees. I like living at house I feel happy. I like Looma is good some people like Looma. There is building a house for all the people. Some people live at house. Looma have hill and shop. Some kid went to the hill there, climb on top of the hill. Looma have basketball and a little farm.

GLORIA PINDAN

I like to ride my bike in Looma and go with the tractor to the river and I like to climb on the hill. We like to play with the basketball, we like to eat some fruits from the garden, some girls like to go to the shop when the mens come to have dinner. After dinner they go to the river with the truck sometime we play hope skot and hole game and red rover sometime we go to Myroodah crossing for fishing. And go for hunting in the hillside and go back to Looma and after go to the camp to play with Christine, Lucy and Dora. We like to play hole game after we like to play red rover we like to play house game too. I like to go to the shop to buy some things for us to eat for supper.

MARY SPINKS

I like to have an house, some houses have trees and other plants and some houses have vegetables and some have other
plants like lawns and some of people live at camp and some people live at houses and some of the men will build an house for some people. And some of the working men live at houses and some of the men live at camp. And the peoples feel happy with their houses and Looma and shops and other thing at Looma and Looma had basketball court and some of the people going river and Looma had a little farm.

RAELENE PINDAN

At Looma we looked pictures and sometime we went swimming with the truck, sometime we climb hills. And some people are living at the camp and some are living at house and sometime we play basketball and we go fishing. Sometime I play with Edward Green and go for ride to the river and Lance and his father sometime get some wood for his home and goter a lawn by his house and some men are building some house and Roger is driving the bus.

EDWARD BROOME
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