

Danger seen in handouts

The Government should avoid giving "handouts" to Aborigines but should ensure that they were able to make their own decisions by giving them access to a reasonable share of the country's resources, a parliamentary committee was told yesterday.

In a written submission the Department of Aboriginal Affairs said a policy of giving wholesale handouts to Aborigines could lead to the development of a "cargo cult" among Aboriginal people.

The submission was given to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs by an assistant Secretary of the Department, Mr P. M. Mackenzie.

The committee is investigating Aboriginal employment.

"In tribal communities, Government largesse in the form of unemployment benefits, pensions, and child endowment, will go a long way to satisfying the mat-

erial needs of any community", the submission said.

"In many communities, therefore, material needs could be satisfied substantially without economic effort as we have traditionally thought of it.

"The 'work' performed by the Aborigines would take forms unknown to Western Europeans — for example the ceremonial perpetuation of a species of wildlife.

"In this situation it might be feared that the expectation of 'money for nothing' would produce something like a 'cargo cult'.

"The increase of drinking in recent years, in extreme cases, brings social activity to a standstill.

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"This is a difficult and alarming development of equal concern to Aborigines and government".

The submission said that a policy of supporting community employment projects for Aborigines had been developed as part of a move towards a new relationship between Aborigines and government — community autonomy on one hand and government assistance on the other.

"This is a difficult and