

I'LL HATE POLICEMEN ALWAYS —PERKINS

Mr Charles Perkins, 37, outspoken Aboriginal public servant, believes Flynn of the Inland was a "racist at heart" and says he will always hate policemen.

He makes these statements in a 22,500-word article in "The Family of Man," a journal published by the Rev Ted Noffs, of the Wayside Chapel, Kings Cross. The article is the first of four.

Mr Perkins, a senior public servant in the Aboriginal Affairs Department, was involved in a dispute last month when he criticised the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Senator Cavanagh. He also described the Minister for Northern Development Dr Patterson, as a "hick from the sticks."

He wrote the articles before the dispute.

In his first article, he blames Alice Springs police for the death of his youngest brother, Ernest, in the desert two years ago. Ernest had been reported missing three days after walking off, in the middle of the night, from a construction project 60 miles from Alice Springs.

He says the police got the message in mid-afternoon on a Wednesday but decided not to leave until early next day.

Mr Perkins says: "If they had gone on Wednesday afternoon they would have saved him and he would have been all right. He was only 27 and had six kids.

"This is one of the many reasons why I hate policemen, and always will."

Mr Perkins accuses police of having "perse-

cuted the Aborigines right down the line." Police had shot Aborigines, separated two-year-old children from their parents on the instruction of the department responsible for Aboriginal welfare and "used" Aboriginal girls for up to a year at a time.

Mr Perkins calls the late Rev Dr John Flynn, founder of the Flying Doctor Service, a racist who "let people die because they were Aborigines."

"He did not as a rule pick Aborigines up in the plane," he says. "The plane was for whites only."

Painting an unflattering portrait of the Northern Territory when he was a child, he says Aborigines were to be used "either for sex, labour exploitation or companionship when there was no one to talk to, apart from a dog or a horse."

He says he was born on a table top in a disused telegraph station near Alice Springs, "around 1936-37," and later lived in a mud hut.

"There were a lot of people in our family," he says. "Half of us died at birth from one illness or another.

A twin sister died when she was about two or three. His father's name was Connelly but his mother retained her maiden name, Perkins. He saw his father only once.

Seven of the 14 children survived birth. A sister died in a motor cycle crash when she was 16. A brother committed suicide and Ernest died in the desert. His mother lives in a Housing Commission home near Alice Springs.

Mr Perkins, the first Aboriginal university graduate in Australia, describes his career at Le Fevre Boys' Technical School, Adelaide, as "always below average."

He says: "I was not interested in school. It meant nothing to me. Nobody encouraged me in any way. Nobody ever gave me a reason why I should study hard. I failed miserably and I was booted out."

The only subject he passed was woodwork, which he hated.

Sydney Morning Herald
1st February 1974