

HOME FOR ABORIGINES DEDICATED

Grand Work of CHRISTIAN YOUTH COUNCIL at LISMORE

Representatives of Lismore City Council and other civic and church organisations recently attended the dedication of a home for an aboriginal family in Invercauld Road, Goonellabah.

Rev. W. Morgan performed the dedication on behalf of the Lismore Ministers' Fraternal.

The home was built in three weeks by 52 members of the Australian Christian Youth Council from Sydney, Brisbane, Melbourne and Adelaide.

The new owners, Mr. and Mrs. Cedric Roberts, of Cubawee, said they hoped to move into the house within a fortnight. Their four sons, Colin (aged 10 years), Michael (6), Cecil (2½) and Oral (1), and a nephew, Lionel (17) will live with them.

Mr. Roberts said after the ceremony he was grateful to members of the A.C.Y.C. and all who had helped in the construction of his new home.

He said: "I feel great. I am looking forward now to starting a garden and I hope the experience I have had in farming will help me."

Mr. Roberts has worked on banana plantations and at present is collecting leaf for the corkwood factory at Casino.

Leader of the youth council's camp, Mr. G. Hazell, handed over the building to an officer of the Aborigines Welfare Board, Mr. E. J. Morgan, at the dedication ceremony. As well as official guests, members of the public and several friends of the Roberts family from Cubawee were present.

DIFFICULT PROBLEM

Mr. Hazell said members of the council were conscious that their work in building the home was only the beginning of a difficult problem—the acceptance of Mr. and Mrs. Roberts and their family as members of the white community.

"It might even be a wrong beginning. We are only certain that an assimilation problem does exist. We are not sure how to face this problem."

With other speakers, including the Minister for Lands and member for Lismore, the Hon. K. C. Compton, and the Mayor of Lismore, Ald. C. J. Campbell, Mr. Hazell asked the residents of Invercauld Road to offer friendship to the Roberts's.

He said the A.C.Y.C. members could leave for home with a glow of satisfaction, knowing they had "done their bit" and that they could have confidence that Invercauld Road residents would carry on that work.

Members worked until late on Friday night and were up at dawn on Saturday morning putting last-minute touches to the grey and white painted weatherboard house.

Mr. Compton extended congratulations to the workers on behalf of the Chief Secretary, Mr. C. A. Kelly.

Mr. Compton said he hoped the council's aim—to help members of an aboriginal family to take their rightful place in the community—would become a reality and, in return, that Mr. and Mrs. Roberts would contribute worth-while service to the city of Lismore.

The years of neglect by governments, both past and present, were gradually being overcome, due to the efforts of the A.C.Y.C., similar organisations and the Aborigines Welfare Board, said Ald. Campbell.

He said for many years there had been an ever-widening separation of whites from aborigines.

"Although it is difficult for a family to make the break and try to fit in with a new community, I feel sure the Roberts family will prove their worth as citizens in the years to come."

GOOD EXAMPLE

"Lismore City Council has always opposed the placing of aboriginal settlements within the city. But we know if we can help the aboriginal families in our area, we will set a good example for other areas to follow," Ald. Campbell said.

Four other aldermen—M. Hill, D. N. C. Wilson, E. Whelan and I. Fitzhugh—attended.

The Welfare Board officer, Mr. Morgan, said he was proud that two of the three homes built for aboriginals in N.S.W. by the A.C.Y.C. had been in his area. He said members of the council had encountered "a great deal of difficulty and expense to themselves to carry the torch for the betterment of man's attitude to man."

Mr. Morgan handed the key to Mr. Roberts, who opened the front door to his new home.

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