

Colourful Ceremony To Open Aborigine Homes

Paper flags rippling and rustling in a stiff northerly struck a carnival note for the opening of the five new homes at Greenhill one Saturday, recently. The aboriginal occupants, expectant and excited, had decorated their homes inside and out for the formal opening ceremony by the Mayor, Ald. F. A. Slack.

Representatives of churches, service organisations and associations joined civic dignitaries for the ceremony. The numbers swelled shortly afterwards when three bus-loads of passengers arrived to break their tour of Festival gardens.

They arrived in time to watch part of a merry display by children from Greenhill school, and inspected the new homes, occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Fred Mumbler, Mrs. Amelia Hoskins, Mr. and Mrs. Alan Smith, Mrs. Leila Roberts and Mr. and Mrs. James Jackie.

Before the speeches began, two tiny tots, Beverly and Beryl Hoskins, presented sprays of flowers to the Mayoress (Mrs. Slack), and Mrs. N. Long, wife of the chairman of the Kempsey Aboriginal Welfare Committee.



Xmas Eve

Introducing the Mayor, Mr. Long emphasised that the simple opening ceremony had a much deeper significance for the Kempsey Aboriginal Welfare Committee.

“We take pride in the fact that this is the first step in a progressive movement through the years by which our coloured friends will be more adequately housed than in the past,” he said.

“It is a fact that in the past, Kempsey has won a name for itself of which we are not very proud, so we determined to do something so that these people would have an opportunity of bettering themselves in life.

“The families who have been selected for these cottages have been wisely chosen and we feel that if they are given an opportunity they will adopt the white man’s way of life and set an example to their fellow aborigines.”

Mr. Long then went on to thank the Aborigines Welfare Board for making the housing grant possible and extended his thanks to local tradespeople who cut costs to a minimum and enabled the committee to build five homes from the limited funds.

He thanked Mr. Ken Brenton, who designed and built the cottages; R. J. Jamieson and Sons, who provided timber at cost and made no charge for freight; Mr. L. M. Everingham, who did the painting at cost price; Mr. R. G. Melville, who did the brick work at cost; Mr. R. H. Packwood, who did the plumbing at cost; Mr. G. F. Brest, for joinery and moulding at cost; Schroder’s for ironmongery and hardware at considerably reduced rates and the Macleay River Co-operative Dairying Co. who provided other materials at cut rates.

Mr. H. J. Green, the newly-appointed Superintendent of the Aborigines Welfare Board made his first official appearance in Kempsey and warmly congratulated the Kempsey Welfare Committee and the townspeople on their encouraging work.

“What we see here,” he said, “is not an end but a beginning. It is only the beginning of the task of making the residents of these cottages at one with the rest of the community.”

In opening the homes, the Mayor commended the housing programme. “It is only a beginning of the future development and assimilation of our aboriginal brothers,” he said. “Many of the people here will recall that up until recently the housing standard here was not fit for our community.”

He congratulated the Aboriginal Welfare Board and the local Committee on its forthright programme and said that the integration would slowly bear fruit with better housing, education and employment of aboriginal people.

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