



Some of the houses at Roseby Park

THE TWO FACES OF ROSEBY PARK

According to Jack Campbell the residents of Roseby Park reserve are so dispirited that it is difficult to get them to attend community meetings these days. This situation is in striking contrast to the vigorous early days of the reserve.

Situated 15 miles from Nowra on the scenic South Coast, Roseby Park was first formally nominated an Aboriginal settlement by Sir David Berry when, in the 1840s and nearing the end of his life, he set aside a section of land on his property for the use of his Aboriginal and Maori workers.

The Maoris had been brought from New Zealand to work in the area. Inter-marriage between the two groups has made the people of Roseby Park a peculiar mix, somewhat like the descendants of the eighteenth century English mutineers and the Tahitian women on Pitcairn Island or of the nineteenth century sailors and Aborigines on Cape Barren Island, Tasmania.

Today eleven families, sixty people in all, live on what remains of the original tract of land set aside

for their great-grandparents. Many of the younger people have left the reserve and moved to Nowra in search of work and better housing.

Administration of the houses at Roseby Park has recently been taken over by the Housing Commission. Jack Campbell, the local committee treasurer, hopes that this will soon lead to renovations which some of the houses badly need. The older people now living there have no desire to follow their children to Nowra.

But they still have plans for the future. Like their counterparts at Wallaga Lake they want a licence to farm the unused oyster lease which lies at their back door-step. They believe this could provide work for 5 or 6 men and a substantial income for the community. The same is said to be true of the lucrative fishing grounds nearby, providing a couple of boats and nets were available.

There is a cleared area of several acres on the reserve which could be developed as a caravan and