

to advise him; and the gradual process of turning the Department of Aboriginal Affairs over to Aboriginal staff and administrators.

► POSSIBLE ABORIGINAL ELECTORATE:

The Federal Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Mr Gordon Bryant, has announced that he is considering the establishment of a special all-Aboriginal electorate in the Northern Territory. He said the plan is dependent upon whether the people favour such a proposal. If they do, he is prepared to recommend to the Commonwealth Government that it be implemented. Precedent for the scheme exists in New Zealand where all-Maori electorates already exist. The suggested location of the electorate is Arnhem Land. Mr Bryant has also proposed that Aborigines resident in any part of Australia might be eligible to enrol in the electorate.

► DO SCHOOLS EDUCATE ABORIGINES?

Research carried out by Mr Alan Duncan of the Aboriginal Education Council indicates that the performance of young Aboriginal children at school as measured by IQ ("Intelligence Quotient") tests, actually deteriorates as they progress through school. In the case of 150 children he studied in western areas of N.S.W., he found their performance fell by one-third between the ages of 5 and 12. "Their performance drops off so badly that by the time they enter high school", he said, "more than half the Aboriginal children in N.S.W. are classified as slow learners". The effect of this on their opportunity to obtain good jobs is obvious. It has been well-known for a long time that lack of proper food is detrimental to intellectual development and that conditions at home can hinder the ability and willingness to succeed at school. Mr Duncan indicates that these disadvantages are added to rather than compensated for, by the existing school system. The child's innate intelligence is not harmed by the school process, but it seems his ability to perform the skills which the tests measure is adversely affected.

► SPORTS EQUIPMENT FOR PURFLEET:

The National Aboriginal Sports Foundation has made a grant of \$500 to the Purfleet community to buy sporting and recreational equipment for the reserve's young people. Application for the grant went through Mrs Alice Briggs, secretary of Purfleet Aboriginal Advancement League. Enquiries about the Sports Foundation can be addressed to its Secretary, c.o. Department of Aboriginal Affairs, P.O. Box 241, Civic Square, Canberra, A.C.T. 2608.



Mr and Mrs Bert Draper of Moree at their 75th birthday celebration

(Photo courtesy Moree Champion)

► MOREE COUPLE CELEBRATE 75TH BIRTHDAY:

The accompanying photo shows Mr and Mrs Bert Draper of Morton Street, Moree cutting a 75th birthday cake at a surprise party sponsored by the Aborigines Inland Mission in December. Mrs Draper celebrated her birthday on 22nd November and her husband on 10th December. Church members, Daughters of Charity and Mr Lyle Munro gathered at Pius X Mission for the party. Mr Draper, who retired after 43 years with the Railways Department, and his wife, have been staunch A.I.M. Church members for many years.