

30 JUL 1974

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The Maningrida Council has made available to The Mirage the tape recordings of last Sunday's meeting with the Prime Minister and various Ministers. We publish here some excerpts from the tape.

The Council presented to the visitors a written list of what they saw as major problems that confronted the Aboriginal people of Maningrida. The meeting took the form of a discussion of these points.

We publish these excerpts of this important meeting, as we have published notes on council meetings in the past, for the information and benefit of the community.

Silas Roberts: Points the Maningrida Council wishes the Prime Minister to consider:

1/ ARNHEM LAND HIGHWAY: Last year a survey of opinions on the proposed Arnhem Land Highway was conducted by the council. Ideas were taken from areas which would be affected by the highway. The following consensus was drawn:

- a. The highway runs straight through places that are settled or are likely to be settled therefore the people want the highway to be re-routed so that it does not run through these areas.
- b. The emergency road to Bulman and Katherine should be constructed to ensure continuous supply of urgent goods to Maningrida and outstations, pending a solution to the current barge trouble.
- c. roads to different countries (areas) should be given preference. This will be of great help to the bush stations.

MINING COMPANY: The Council fully agrees to the Government mining survey as proposed in the Woodward report but actual prospecting and mining operations should be in close consultation with the different tribal councils at all times. (e.g. FAMCO type operation is the model of suitability).

BARGE: Maningrida and other coastal settlements are always at the mercy of private shipping companies. The council is of the view that the Government should run a State shipping service similar to West Australia's State Shipping Service. This type of service will be beneficial to all coastal areas and is a most urgent and immediate consideration.

THE TOWN:

- a. Maningrida occupies a portion of Gunavidgi country. This makes them the people most affected by the development of this town. The town plan and present developments here show that this will be another balanda town. For this reason, the Council strongly believes that the town plan should be changed to meet Aboriginal needs.
- b. If Maningrida becomes another balanda town the Gunavidgis would have no place to go. Other tribes living here have the promise of their land, the Gunavidgis have nothing.
- c. The Gunavidgis do not want the present Maningrida area to expand. The number of balandas here should be reduced.
- d. The development in the balanda section of the community is much faster than development in the Aboriginal section.

To date there is insufficient housing, water and electricity. People want water and electricity to run through their houses.
c. Residents in Maningrida would like to have their own high school here so that children won't have to go to Kornilda or Dhupuna.

OUTSTATIONS: People who have gone to live back in their own countries are trying hard to develop their own areas and be economically self-sufficient through small scale industries.

a. These people would like fishing rights to be exclusive to Aboriginal people.

b. These people would like full Government support, especially in building country roads, transportation, housing and schools where requested.

On Arnhem Highway:

Senator Cavenagh: I don't think you've got a problem.... you'll be protected by Woodward and the Public Works Committee enquiry... It's only a proposed road now, under Woodward the people must be consulted... I don't think it's a big issue.

On mining:

Senator Cavenagh:... If it happened that another company finds something worthwhile on Aboriginal land unless it's in the national interest it can't be mined without the approval of the Aboriginal community... I think you can accept there'll be no mining on sacred sites... (Under Woodward) Minerals remain the property of the Crown, they give an extra concession to Aboriginals on their tribal lands... I think you can accept that while you have a Labor Government that the question of fulfilling overseas contracts or mining profits will not be in the national interest to go along with it where it belongs to Aboriginals.

BARGES:

Senator Cavenagh: My Department has considered the question of an Aboriginal shipping line to service Aboriginal port communities and one of the proposals was that we should buy out Perkins which we're not prepared to do... This will be one of the things we'll possibly consider now we're back in office again. We are concerned about this and we recognise that sea transport is the cheapest form of transport for coastal areas and whatever we can do we'll get on with and try and hurry it up.

THE TOWN

The visitors were told that in saying yes to various proposals viz. housing projects, the Aboriginal people had not realised the European content that would be involved in such projects. Where they envisaged perhaps two or three skilled supervisors coming out, 15 or 20 builders of various types were employed.

Senator Cavenagh: Well, with regards to housing you get over that by selection of your type of house. If you select a type, prefabricated and only assembled on the job, possibly Aboriginal labour can do it with two or three skilled supervisors. Aboriginals in their present stage of advancement cannot do electrical and plumbing.

HIGH SCHOOLS:

Senator Cavenagh said that a high school at Maningrida was economical doubtful... high schools required a large capital expenditure and many teachers. "I feel it is matter for the Education Department," he said.

Dr Moss Cass, Minister for the Environment suggested a differently structured high school where you have the whole age range in the one school. Something like the old type bush school.

At this point Stephen Gawulgu stood up to talk about the town plan. The Genavidgi people did not want a caravan park in their area as indicated on the present town plan.

Ray Munyal: I think we'll have four or five Aboriginal affairs (staff) teaching us to running this country, also outstations. And education people, six or seven, something like that. Mobile Works force and Housing Association we only need two team to build our house. Two team, two people only. We don't want more Europeans coming

We just want a rule. A lot of white people coming in through here and they will take away from our country ... Aborigine dreaming... take away from our country and this is why we don't like it. We like to manage ourselves; full black Aborigine to black. We don't like mixed up black and white... everything we running... ourselves.

Senator Cavenagh: What's the Mobile Works Force. They're for house building aren't they.

Terry Yibberal: Mobile Works Force should finish. They've been here for three years...

John Hunter: What he's saying is that the Mobile Works Force have been on the job too long and they haven't finished the houses they started three years ago.

Billy Yiriyin: That's it.

Senator Cavenagh: There's something wrong here somewhere. When did you start your housebuilding.

Hunter: The MWF has been building houses here since 1966 it's program would vary from eight to ten houses per year at any given time it may have had from four to eight men on the job. Its actual house building rate since 1966 is 2.4 houses per year finished.

Cavenagh: Now, who engages the Mobile Works force.

Hunter: The Department of Aboriginal Affairs, Darwin.

A discussion then followed on the Maningrida Housing Association and the visitors were told that the housing association had moved out of the control of Aboriginal people.

Dr Patterson, (Minister for Northern Development): "Could you do without a plumber?"

Hunter: You're getting back to an argument that is virtually unanswerable. When you press us on that point we have to admit ultimately 'no! We can't do without a plumber but it depends on that plumber, it depends what sort of a guy he is. If he's the right sort of guy and he can draw people to him, then ultimately, you'll have a situation where you've got a lot of Aboriginal plumbers. But if he's an okker Australian he's going to have the traditional Australian attitudes to Aboriginals which means they're way down there somewhere and he's just not going to relate to them at all. That's the situation we've got.

Dr Cass: Do you really need a plumber? What interests me is what sort of a house does an Aboriginal really want. When I drove in here I was astounded to see the housing. In fact I thought 'My god, where am I coming to.'

Billy Yiriyin: Mobile Works Force when they finish this building they're finished. Only the Housing Association then. I don't like Mobile Works Force.

Cavenagh: Well, you're the boss, you can sack 'em....I thought they put in drawings what Aboriginal people wanted. That's what I thought they were doing. It's for you to make plain to the architects what you want. Apparently something has fallen down.

John Hunter suggested a freeze on development at Maningrida.

The visitors said the council should put their ideas down on paper, and send a submission to the government.

Cavenagh: It's up to you people. What I've been trying to say all the time is that what we're trying to do is to give Maningrida to you people. If you want a freeze on development at Maningrida say so. Discussion ensued on this topic. Senator Cavenagh said the Government was determined that Aboriginal people WOULD progress, as pledged by the Prime Minister in his 1972 policy speech.

Dr Cass: It's a question of what you want, it's the first time I've heard it expressed like this. It's the first time the Prime Minister's heard it expressed and I'm impressed by it. I can't answer for them, I know you're impatient, but since it's a new concept to them I'd like to see it written out in your terms so we can try to understand it better. Maybe I should even come back again and even talk about it.

It was then suggested to the visitors that written submissions were rarely acted upon.

Senator Cayenagh: e're prepared to accept it whether it's in writing or verbally. But all we ask you is to consider it well. The discussion returned to housing.

Gaugh Whitley, the Prime Minister: If you want us to help to provide houses then we want to be sure that the houses we provide are the ones that the people want themselves.

After more discussion Glen Boushaw commented on the idea of a freeze on development: May I put forward what I believe is the interpretation here and that is in essence that there have been too many of our color come in in too short a time. I don't think they mean necessarily stop education, stop health or stop forestry but in the last couple of weeks there have been 10 foresters come in, there've been 10 different teachers come in, no doubt in some reasonable capacity. And they've been overwhelmed by the European or balanda content, which has escalated from something like about 40 when I came here in '69 to something like 260 today. But the rate is going up almost beyond comprehension.

Prime Minister interjects: Fewer Gunavidjis, more balandas.

Glen Boushaw continues: If the Departments could operate in a holding capacity. This I think is the context of the freeze.

Councillors Yiriyin and Muryal appealed to the visitors for a favorable decision on their submissions.

Prime Minister: What's been said now, has been put here (indicates paper) for instance you do say here, in what you've written that you don't want the balanda people to become more and more. The present number of balanda people in Maningrida should become less and less. You've put very well here, we can understand this and we'll remember this.

Edited by Peter Cooke and Don Gillespie.

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D.A.A. Turmoil:

Most of the population of Maningrida is aware of the current turmoil in the Department of Aboriginal Affairs.

The Mirage does not know any more about this matter than anyone else at Maningrida.

When we have some official information from the Department of Aboriginal Affairs we will print it. Until then we will stand by.

D.G.

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At the Weekend

Duty Officer:

Duty Sister:

Pictures

Friday: LAST SUNRISE, at SET

Saturday: PRIDE OF MISS JEAN BROME.

LETTER TO THE EDITORS

The Editor,
Maningrida Mirage,

Dear Sir,

In Mirage issue no. 153 of 1972 I wrote the following:-

Mr Goff Letts, member for the Victoria River District, introduced a Bill to amend the Firearms Ordinance at the last sitting of the Legislative Council.

Paragraph 3(1) (b) of the Bill refers to the issuing of a licence if the Registrar is satisfied that a person "is able to read and write the English language". The Bill is due to be debated during the November Sessions of the council.

The reason for this clumsy and discriminatory proposition would need to be revealed. It is almost certainly aimed at Aborigines where, as a minority group, the degree of illiteracy in English would be the highest in the Territory. Fear of irresponsibility in the use of firearms is an out-noded folk belief, so the reason is more likely to be connected with matters of ecology.

Mr Letts' proposed legislation, if passed into law, would bring about a very significant reduction in the numbers of firearms on reserves. Perhaps Mr Letts has some evidence that the depredations of Aboriginal hunters are making inroads into the fauna populations of reserve areas.

This is all pure speculation, so we must wait until someone questions his motives in introducing the legislation.

In Mirage Issue no 162 of 1972, Mr Goff Letts MLC replied as follows:

/ Your vol. 153 under the heading "Look Out" criticised amendments proposed to the firearms Ordinance and my motives for introducing them.

My words taken from Hansard were, "in a fairly recent incident a party of men were shooting at a popular recreation place where people were camping and swimming. A nearby landholder drew the attention of the offenders to a notice which said 'No Shooting'. They were apparently newly arrived migrants ... whose excuse was that they could not read and understand the sign. On hearing this story I recalled that under the Motor Vehicles Ordinance a person seeking a licence for a Motor Vehicle - which is another form of lethal weapon - is required to understand the road traffic laws of the Territory and be able to read signs and notices. The same principle should apply to firearms and that is what this Bill sets out to achieve."

There was no intention to use the law to discriminate against Aborigines' hunting on reserves. I realised later that the wording used by the legal draftsmen may have unintentionally produced this result and he has been instructed to write suitable amendments for further consideration in November. If necessary the Bill can be adjourned.

I cannot agree with your correspondent that "fear of irresponsibility in the use of firearms is an outnoded folk belief." Hardly a week passes without evidence of indiscriminate shooting of livestock wildlife and road signs in the Territory. The trend throughout Australia is to tighten firearms laws. However, the special circumstances on reserves will be kept well in mind.

G.A.LETTS (MLC)

I draw to your attention that Ordinance No 56 of 1973, assented to on 3/10/73 (Section 7), amended section 13 of the Principal Ordinance by omitting paragraph (c) of sub-section(2) and inserting in its stead:-

"(c) an applicant for a permit to purchase a high power firearm:-
 (1) is a person who has attained the age of sixteen years
 (ii) understands the law relating to the registration and use of firearms,
 (iii) is able to read and write the English language; and
 (iv) is a member of a rifle club."

Needless to say Section 13 of the Principal Ordinance sets out the criteria for the granting of permits to purchase high power firearms.

In view of the contents of para 3 of Dr Letts' letter (10th November 1972) I draw this matter to your (and his) attention. Perhaps he would care to comment.

J. Hunter.

Editor's comment: We are sending Dr Letts a complimentary copy of this Mirage. We undertake to provide him with space in which he can explain why what he said would happen (the removal of discrimination against Aboriginal people) didn't happen.

The Editors

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Vocational Training Courses applications are invited for the following courses:

<u>COURSE</u>	<u>PERIOD</u>	<u>VENUE</u>	<u>APPLICATIONS CLOSING DATE</u>
Motor repair	7/8-6/12/74	Dun High School	16/9/74
Motor repair	5/8-4/10/74	D.C.C.	22/7/74
Carpentry	7/8-4/10/74	Dn Primary School	"
Bricklaying	5/8-4/10/74	"	"
Trainee cooks	16/9-6/11/74	BUFC	2/9/74
Building maintenance	16/9-7/12/74	"	8/7/74
Office Assistants	15/7-6/12	2	8/7/74
Sewing Assistants	15/7-6/12/74	"	8/7/74

Interested persons may contact S. Roberts or J. Hunter for details of prospectus etc. Note the closing dates please;

J. Hunter

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JUMBLE SALE FRIDAY 3.00PM AT SCHOOL!!

THANKS, FOLKS!

We offer our sincere thanks and appreciation to those who contributed so much to the smooth flow of events during Mr. Whitlans visit. Jack Gardiner especially.

Silas Roberts
 Billy Yirinyin.

FOR SALE:

- 1 Pioneer PL 50 Turntable with Empire 999NE/X Cartridge \$150 o.n.o.
- 1 Pioneer QL 8000A 4 channel amplifier (needs new switch. On order) = \$150 o.n.o.
- 1 Sansui AU 505 amplifier \$150 o.n.o.
- 1 Sansui 350 receiver amplifier \$100 o.n.o.
- 1 Sansui R500 reverberation amplifier \$100 o.n.o.
- 1 Sony TC 160 Cassette Deck \$150 o.n.o.
- 1 Akai 4400D tape deck \$200 o.n.o.
- 4 Sansui S.P. speakers \$80 ea
- 1 set SS + 2 headphones

The whole lot for \$1000 All in A.1 condition,
plus approx 60 L.P.'s 30 cassette \$50 the lot

Contact Bob Olsen, Housing.

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!!CHURCH AS USUAL THIS SUNDAY!!

Many thanks to all the people
who helped at the school fete.

Big thanks to Chris Cox & Molly
for the beautiful sewing they did.
The fete was a great success!

Maningrida Mirage

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"Maningrida Mirage Volume 3 Issue 34" June 28th, 1974.

Maningrida Mirage NT Maningrida Community

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