

REPORT OF RAPPORTEUR

As this conference is rapidly approaching its conclusion it is now my responsibility to present the report of the rapporteur. As I understand it, the task of a rapporteur is essentially to sum up and summarise the presentations and discussions that have taken place during the past four days. In that sense a rapporteur is rather like a clerk in a Westminster-style parliament who is required at various stages through the debates on legislation to read the bills that are being proposed. It is said that the parliamentary clerk does that to remind politicians what it is they are supposed to be debating!

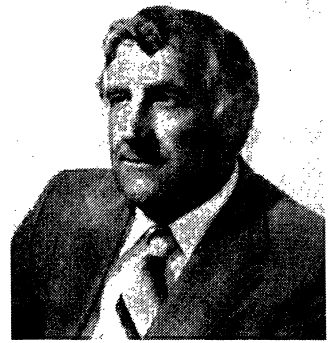
I am not suggesting that anyone here would have forgotten what it is that we have been discussing for the last four days, but over that time we have listened to a broad spectrum of papers, comments and discussion and in order to aid our digestion of such a rich diet of ideas and information a brief synopsis at the end of a conference such as this may possibly help us to develop an overall view.

I have always seen the task of a rapporteur as being a little broader than that of just summing up as I believe it is legitimate for a rapporteur to endeavour to develop a synthesis of the views that have been presented and in doing this he inevitably exercises his personal judgment and incorporates his own ideas. To the extent that that is a legitimate understanding of my task I make no apologies for the fact that some of the things that I will say will be based on my own views.

As you will no doubt recall, the National President of the Australian Crime Prevention Council, His Honour Judge Grubb, welcomed us to this conference on Monday morning and he was followed by the President of the Queensland Branch, The Honourable Mark Hoare, who introduced the first speaker, The Honourable Mr Justice Muirhead, Vice-President of the Council. Mr Justice Muirhead presented a wide-ranging and provocative address which raised a number of issues for discussion. Mr Justice Muirhead had some difficulty, or at least pretended to have some difficulty, in determining the appropriate focus for the conference theme 'The Alienated Generation?'. He pointed out that this title was neither a question nor a statement and he was unsure about what particular generation we should be talking about. He made a point that large-scale marketing involved what he called 'age deception' and to that extent it may be older people rather than the young who are alienated. He reminded us, however, that it was always the young who were seen to be leading the social change and he assumed that it was young people who were to be the subject of our discussions. He also pointed out that in his view the young today are as healthy and as positive in their attitudes as were their forbears.

Broadening the range of his presentation Mr Justice Muirhead expressed strong support for the use of juries in criminal trials and he made the general point that the law and the formal justice system can do little to facilitate the prevention of crime. He suggested that current public attitudes towards crime and the criminal justice system were now moving back towards support for more traditional approaches and methods. Whereas 20 years ago there was great enthusiasm for after-care, probation and parole and alternatives to imprisonment, he pointed out that, due to increasing fear of crime, public expenditure was now being directed towards detection and prosecution of offenders rather than towards their rehabilitation.

Mr Justice Muirhead expressed disappointment at the



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continuing delays in our court system and also with the pace of penal reform. He made the point that courts of appeal reflect the views of the general community when they impose condign punishments on offenders despite the views of individual judges who may be more inclined towards leniency. He also suggested that the use of large and outdated prisons may influence the patterns and styles of crime in the community.

Possibly Mr Justice Muirhead's most provocative and hard-hitting remarks were made in relation to Aborigines. He saw them as not only an alienated generation but an alienated people. He strongly supported the availability of Aboriginal legal aid and pointed to some areas of increasing mutual understanding between Aborigines and the predominant non-Aboriginal community. He suggested that Aboriginal crime was almost always related to alcohol and that, even though drunkenness was no longer a crime in the Northern Territory, drunkenness has devastating effects on health, social life and education and even intruded into Aboriginal ceremonies. He argued that alcohol and petrol sniffing were of such profound consequences that they may undermine the progress that had been made in relation to land rights and the re-establishment of pride in Aboriginal people. He concluded by making a call for the establishment of a national task force to examine all facets of alcohol and its effects on Aboriginal life.

In discussion of this paper Mr Don Simmonds, former Chief Secretary of South Australia, made the very important point that, unlike the unemployed in the Great Depression, today's unemployed young people believe that humanity may be facing extinction and this significantly colours their attitudes towards the future.

The second major address to the conference was presented by Inspector Barbara Oldfield of the Victoria Police who spoke on 'Strategies for Involving the Community in Crime Prevention'. I believe that she was only half joking when she opened her address by saying that in her view it was the police themselves who were alienated . . . rather than young people in our community. She pointed out that police, in Victoria at least, had found themselves to be out of line with community expectations of their role and this had resulted in a collapse of morale within the police force itself. She pointed out that policing had become almost totally reactive, faceless and authoritarian, exactly opposite of the historical basis of modern policing which saw police men and women as acting for and on behalf of the community rather than against the community. She pointed out that re-active policing leads to a spiral of increasing demand for more police services which in the current economic climate cannot possibly be met.

Inspector Oldfield argued that policing should be on the basis of a negotiated contract with the community and that proactive policing needed greater emphasis and resources. She pointed out that the organisational philosophy of the Victoria Police now embraced a pro-active or crime preventive role.

Inspector Oldfield then described in some detail a pilot project in police-community involvement in the Frankston

district which was based on the slogan 'Working Together to Fight Crime and Disorder'. She explained that 13 police were appointed to Frankston in the pilot squad and that they had developed a wide range of programs or projects which were concerned with school appraisal, primary and secondary school students' perception of the police role, bike education, bike identification, an anti-shoplifting program, safety house program, elderly citizens programs, small business security, alcohol and drug counselling, victims of crime, neighbourhood watch, and considerable activity in relation to off-road recreational motor cycles. She concluded her presentation by showing an extremely interesting film of the latter program.

Inspector Oldfield urged that the effectiveness of this range of community involvement activities was shown by a dramatic change in the local press coverage as far as police were concerned. She also suggested that the ultimate success of this program would be measured by the extent to which the public feel secure from attack and other crime, and she indicated that public opinion surveys would be used to assess the extent to which this aim had been achieved.

If I might intrude a personal comment at this point I feel compelled to say that this program, notwithstanding its obvious attractions and highly probable success, can only be justified if it is seen as a technique for changing the attitudes and practices of the total police force. The fact is that no government these days can afford to put an extra 13 police men and women in each district to carry out these functions, and therefore it must be seen as a demonstration project, an illustration of what police can do to achieve their aims rather than as a permanent addition to the normal police strength in that district. I speak with some feeling on this matter. As a member of the current Committee of Inquiry into the Victoria Police I am acutely conscious of the enormous, well nigh prohibitive, costs of policing in Victoria and elsewhere. If this project is to be more than a highly successful public relations exercise then it seems to me to be essential that the lessons learned from it are translated through the recruit and in-service training systems into the general run of police practices. I guess that the inevitable final result of this development will be a carefully considered and justified balance of re-active and pro-active police practices which will be shown to be cost effective.

After lunch on the first day the keynote address to the conference was presented by The Honourable Sir Edward Williams of the Supreme Court of Queensland. Sir Edward had no difficulty in identifying youth as the intended subject of discussion as the alienated generation but he pointed out that many people in their 50s who were suddenly unemployed felt alienated and they too were in need of our sympathy. He suggested that the bulk of youth today are satisfied with their lot, even though they may be facing chronic unemployment. He went on to suggest that they could be seen as disadvantaged because at no time in their lives had they been subject to any rigorous form of discipline. He asked how we can help them when they have lost the habit of work.

Sir Edward argued that no-one should leave school as a failure even if they only achieved success in totally non-academic areas. He argued that we need to think very carefully about which of the many disadvantaged groups in our society are most in need of assistance and support, and he suggested that the question of priorities should be determined on the basis of cost-benefit analysis. He lamented the absence of meaningful statistics in all critical areas of social concern and suggested that without such statistics it was impossible to assess the effectiveness of programs of remediation. Their key word that he emphasised was **accountability**. There should, in his view, be a much higher degree of accountability in all areas of government expenditure, but especially in the funding of community service organisations.

In this regard, if I might again interpose a comment of my own, I wonder how organisations such as this Australian Crime Prevention Council or the much more expensive Australian Institute of Criminology can meet their obligations for accountability when they are committed to wide-ranging and diverse objectives. Accountability is in effect another word for evaluation. It is an attempt to answer the question, what works, or what value are we getting for our money? At the Institute in Canberra we have paid a lot of attention to the issue of evaluation in criminal justice and the results of this attention can be quite frightening. We have found, for example, that the thorough evaluation of a relatively cheap and apparently effective drunk-driver treatment program can be many times more expensive than the program itself. I am all in favour of the fullest possible accountability, the most accurate measurement and statistics and the most sophisticated evaluation, provided that we don't get to the stage of being afraid to do anything until all the answers are in. Evaluation and accountability itself must be accountable in terms of cost-effectiveness. It was I believe Samuel Butler who argued that 'The art of living is the art of making adequate decisions on the basis of inadequate information'. In criminal justice we will never have adequate information (even though we must always strive for it) and we must therefore always endeavour to make the best possible decisions on the basis of the information that we have.

In saying that I am not in any way expressing disagreement with the views of Sir Edward Williams. I admire and support the thrust of his argument but, like all things, the demand for accountability must be kept in perspective. Sir Edward concluded his address by making a plea for greater cooperation and communication between agencies and departments, both Federal and State. He said that his experience had taught him that this was essential in the area of drug abuse but it was also true in many other areas of social concern. He also suggested that, despite the development of computers and new technology there was a continuing need for hard-working and honest police officers to carry out their duties in the traditional manner. Finally, he observed that as one of the paradoxes of the current economic climate, our resources are becoming more limited as our needs and demands are becoming greater. His was in every way an inspiring and stimulating keynote address.

The formal opening of the conference was then conducted by The Honourable Mr G.H. Muntz, Minister for Welfare Services in Queensland. In his brief address the Minister pointed out that he was responsible for prisons (which housed the people who were totally alienated) and for children's services (which were concerned with the causes of alienation, child neglect and abuse, for example). The Minister suggested that government departments are often seen as remote, inflexible and distant and that they must endeavour to improve their communications with the public in order to avoid creating a split between the haves and have nots: the powerful and the alienated. The Minister concluded by commending the work of the Council in organising this conference which he saw as endeavouring to answer the fundamental question: What are the causes of social disharmony?

The final speaker on the first day of the conference was Commissioner Frank Hayes, 'the old man of the Council', who spoke on 'Young Offenders — Rethinking Traditional Methods'. Mr Hayes opened his lengthy and well-developed paper by pointing out that it was impossible to provide total answers to the numerous questions about the appropriate treatment of young offenders or about the causes of alienation. He pointed out, however, that unemployment was obviously a significant factor as 87 percent of young people recently admitted to remand centres in New South Wales were unemployed. He quoted such authorities as John Irwin and

Donald Clemmer as supporting his view of the uselessness of traditional imprisonment. He made a plea for imprisonment or detention to be seen as a measure of last resort and he argued that benign warehousing of offenders was not enough. The time spent in institutions must not be a complete waste, he argued, and efforts must be made by all levels of staff and volunteers to achieve an acceptable degree of reconciliation between the offender and the community. His support for the use of volunteers in institutions was based not only on the need to save money but also because of their greater effectiveness. He gave as an example of the effective use of volunteers the work of civil rehabilitation committees in New South Wales.

Mr Hayes concluded his paper by describing a young offender reparation scheme which he had seen in Nova Scotia and he argued that the notion of victim compensation or reparation needed to be explored and developed within institutions as well as as an element in non-custodial programming.

The first commentator on Mr Hayes' paper, Alasdair Webster, provided a number of practical examples of the things that can be and are being done with seriously disturbed and criminal youngsters in New South Wales institutions. He described arsonists being inducted into a bushfire brigade and others who had committed offences against handicapped people undertaking group therapy and providing assistance for a riding school for the disabled. He also mentioned the use of volunteers in father and son camping and canoeing trips.

The second commentator on Mr Hayes' paper, Mr Bill Langshaw, repeated the point that there are no general answers in this field and that individual differences must be recognised. Mr Langshaw provided some statistics on the numbers of young persons in custody in New South Wales, which were showing a declining trend in recent years. He pointed out, however, that the number of young Aborigines in custody had not shown a similar decline. Mr Langshaw also presented a detailed profile of the young offenders in his care which in terms of family breakdown, alcohol and drug abuse, prostitution and lack of self-esteem was probably the most graphic description we had received until that point of what alienation really means. In answer to a question from the floor Mr Langshaw pointed out that, contrary to popular opinion, the vast majority of children who had been processed by his department did not proceed to adult crime and imprisonment.

The whole of the second morning of the conference was devoted to a consideration of juvenile justice in South Australia which was led by His Honour Judge Kingsley Newman, Senior Judge of the Children's Court of South Australia. Judge Newman pointed out that since its first settlement in 1836 South Australia had always been a social laboratory. This was exemplified by its early granting of votes for women, its Torrens land title system, and its early recognition of the need to treat juvenile offenders differently from adult offenders. Judge Newman argued that one should see the current developments in juvenile justice in his State as a continuation of this historical background. He pointed out that there were special reasons for children to receive different treatment. These reasons included the fact that much juvenile delinquency was transient, the offenders were immature and less responsible and their perceptions of time were quite different from the perceptions of adults. This meant, he suggested, that sentences should be shorter and, as home background was vitally important, detention should be used as sparingly as possible. Judge Newman pointed out that over half of the charges that were laid against juvenile offenders in South Australia did not result in court appearances. They were dealt with either by police warnings or by appearances before children's aid panels. He also argued that juvenile court judges need a vast array of sentencing options. He also pointed out

that the costs of secure detention of young offenders in South Australia ranged from \$41,000 to \$43,000 per year. He defended the use of children's aid panels, comprising police and Community Welfare representatives, which were informal and had no power to enforce orders, but resulted in a success rate of 83 percent.

Judge Newman then described in some detail the various treatment programs provided in South Australia by the Department of Community Welfare and, overall, he gave the impression of a highly developed and sophisticated system which may well be the envy of other States. After comments and discussion contributed by Mr Bill Langshaw of New South Wales and Detective-Sergeant Dougal Macmillan of Queensland, the session concluded with the showing of a film which illustrated the operation of the South Australian system. While several members of the audience had previously gained some information about the South Australian juvenile justice system, it is probably fair to say that the work of the conference on this morning constituted the most detailed and comprehensive analysis of that system that had been available to a national audience up until this time.

The afternoon of the second day of the conference was chaired by Mr Ron Redmond, Assistant Commissioner of Police in Queensland, who expressed great interest and support for the work of the speakers in his panel. Without any disrespect or denigration of other speakers throughout the conference those who addressed us on Tuesday afternoon, in my view, provided the highlight for the conference. The three speakers came from different backgrounds, were all highly articulate and expert in their own fields and provided an example of interdisciplinary communication at a positive and constructive level which is the essence of what the Australian Crime Prevention Council stands for. The three speakers who have each earned my personal award of merit were Mr Simon Petrie, Lecturer in Education, Brisbane College of Advanced Education, Detective-Sergeant David Jefferies of the Queensland Police and Brother Paul Smith, the director of Boys' Town at Beaudesert.

It is impossible to adequately summarise these papers or convey the sense of commitment and purpose expressed by these three speakers. Mr Petrie gave us some of the results of some research which he had been undertaking in a Queensland high school. He referred to schools which develop a 'low institutional pride syndrome' where both the teachers and the students become alienated. He suggested that when such a syndrome developed, the school's reputation became negative and this not only was very hard to change but tended to become self-perpetuating due to its effects on staff stability.

Mr Petrie pointed out that crime and delinquency can occur within schools, but much more important than that, were the effects of schools on crime and delinquency in the wider society. He suggested that schools and their styles of management played a major part in the process of defining deviant behaviour. In the high school which he was studying punishment became purposeless and meaningless. The truancy rates in the school were very high but, as attendance records were grossly inaccurate, there was no real measure of the extent of truancy, nor any indication of its profound effects.

Mr Petrie suggested that the educational technique of streaming, or creaming, guaranteed that 80 percent of the students were to be perceived as failures in terms of academic achievement. In answer to this he argued that life-skills objectives must be pursued and accepted rather than the traditional goals of academic excellence. This, he suggested, was a more realistic approach in view of the situation of chronic unemployment facing so many school-leavers. The discussion that followed his address was, as might be expected, vigorous and lively.

The second speaker of the afternoon was Detective-Sergeant Jefferies of the Juvenile Aid Bureau of the Queensland Police. He opened his address by pointing out that while juvenile offenders, child abuse cases and street kids could all be seen as alienated, so could members of some minority groups and so were, in some senses, the police themselves. In this and other comments he made, he was echoing the views expressed by Inspector Barbara Oldfield the day before. Sergeant Jefferies explained that the shortage of police had resulted in the closure of many local police stations and that this had resulted in more impersonal, re-active policing. He argued strongly for a return to a pro-active style of policing which involved police spending more time in high schools and endeavouring to overcome the conflicts of goals and priorities that exist between police and social service agencies. He cited with approval the proposal of John Avery of New South Wales for the creation of public safety councils based on local government areas.

In support of this style of policing he pointed out that approximately 70 percent of police work was service oriented and that it may be more appropriate for them to be known as 'peace officers' rather than police. At present their training was too heavily geared towards law enforcement when most of their time either was or should be devoted to work with the community. He ended his address by making a plea for the knowledge gained at this conference to be shared with a wider community.

The final speaker for the afternoon was Brother Paul Smith who won the hearts and minds of all of the audience with his sincerity, commitment and brilliantly direct communication style. He gave us some basic facts about the institution which he runs, but had us all totally captivated by his brief case histories of John and Bill who had been rejected by their mothers and had nowhere to go when their time to leave Boys' Town came. He suggested that 'the alien' was not always the young offender; it may be the offender's parents or even the broader middle-class society which projected values of materialism and the lack of trust and love in relationships which were the real problems.

Brother Paul suggested that many young people were not only alienated from their parents and from the broader society but also alienated from themselves, and he argued that the essential element of salvation for them was for them to see themselves as lovable. In answer to a question he suggested that it was ridiculous and counter-productive for a youth worker or a probation officer to say to an offender 'I am your friend'. One had to wait until the young people themselves decide whether you are or are not a real friend to them. Brother Paul made many other provocative and profound comments and our reaction is perhaps best summed up in the words of one participant who said from the floor 'We were threatened, challenged and encouraged by this address'.

The final speaker of the afternoon was Inspector Frank Rynne who presented to us a detailed statistical analysis of two groups of young offenders who had been dealt with by the Juvenile Aid Bureau in Queensland over the last two years. Without endeavouring to summarise his findings, I would like to suggest that this type of data collection and analysis is highly commendable and should be undertaken by all police and criminal justice agencies working with offenders. This is not research of high academic quality, and Inspector Rynne made no such claim, but it is important that all of us, as Sir Edward Williams pointed out, have accurate statistics which at least describe the phenomenon we are dealing with.

Having devoted perhaps too much time to the speakers in the first half of the conference I propose dealing with the latter group much more briefly. The third day of the conference opened with a paper presented by Sergeant Macmillan on the

subject of caution or charge. He outlined the work of the Juvenile Aid Bureau in Queensland and argued that there were many good reasons for preferring proceeding by police caution rather than subjecting a child to the process of finger-printing, photographing and court appearance. He suggested that cautioning was less cumbersome than court appearance, quicker and not counter-productive. It also did not label the youngster as an offender and most complainants preferred this approach to be taken. He also suggested that the cautioning program by experienced officers resulted in improved police-community relations.

Sergeant Macmillan recognised that there was an opposite point of view and pointed out that some police would argue that if they undertook this type of activity they were usurping the role of the courts, making judgments for which they were not trained and acting like social workers rather than police. Personally, he rejected those arguments and found support for his approach in the Australian Law Reform Commission report which dealt with child welfare in the Australian Capital Territory. He pointed out that the Juvenile Aid Bureau in Queensland which was established originally in 1962 now comprised 91 officers sited in many different areas and he saw the work of this bureau as productive and purposeful. He mentioned the SCAN teams of police, health and children's services workers dealing with suspected child abuse and concluded his remarks by referring to the fact that cautioning in Queensland would soon have a statutory base in new legislation. He also pointed out that cautioning was now being used for elderly offenders over the age of 65 years.

The first commentator on this paper was Mr Ray Kidney from South Australia who made a plea for the spiritual needs of people not to be neglected. He also outlined some of the work of the Offenders Aid and Rehabilitation Services of South Australia of which he is the director.

The second commentator, Mr Robert Bleakley of the Queensland Health Department, made some provocative comments on the points raised by Sergeant Macmillan. He argued that cautioning may be satisfactory but that panels may be better. He also suggested that children are not as fragile as some people imagine and that, in his view, there was nothing wrong with more young offenders being required to appear in court or before other relevant tribunals. In response to this Sergeant Macmillan cited statistics which suggested that the Queensland cautioning program was highly successful.

Exercising my right of independent comment as the rapporteur I would simply like to point out that this difference of opinion is largely the result of none of us having adequate information. The question of what is best to be done with these large numbers of young offenders is an empirical one; it can be answered by reference to adequate research if we had the resources and commitment to undertake that research. I would certainly argue that, as far as possible, in all of these areas we make greater efforts to uncover the real evidence about what works and what does not work rather than expressing subjective points of view.

The final conference session of the Wednesday morning was devoted to presentations by three young people who gave us their views on what was right and wrong with the world. I do not propose to summarise their contributions, except to say that they were all articulate, intelligent and well-meaning. They had many interesting things to say, but in no way can it be suggested that they were representatives of the alienated generation. On the contrary, they were all secure, committed and potentially successful middle-class members of our society. As such, they are perfectly entitled to have a view and express it, but personally I would have preferred at least one of them to have been a drop-out from the sort of high school that was described to us earlier by Simon Petrie.

On the last day of the conference, this morning, we heard from my colleague, Mr Col Bevan, Assistant Director (Training) of the Australian Institute of Criminology. He presented a paper entitled 'In Search of an Alienated Generation'. This paper can best be described as a gripping detective story as he had obviously gone to extraordinary lengths to find the facts and the hard evidence which supported the notion of a particular generation being alienated. His efforts were wide-ranging and, even though he describes them as not exhaustive, they must have been exhausting to him as an investigative researcher.

Mr Bevan first cited at some lengths the work of our colleague, Dr Satyanshu Makherjee, on the lack of an established relationship between crime and unemployment when one looks at the data over a long period of time. Against this, he cited the evidence of research undertaken by the South Australian Office of Crime Statistics which suggested that very high proportions of offenders, especially young offenders, were unemployed at the time of their offences. This apparent contradiction represents a problem familiar to researchers of time series data presenting a different picture to cross-sectional data. There is no doubt in my mind that one can only establish reliable correlations using time series data and the sort of evidence cited from South Australia, while extremely interesting, does not prove any causal relationship.

He then went on to make a number of pertinent comments about the role of the media in depicting matters relating to crime and with considerable insight said 'Criminologists envy the certainty with which journalists pronounce upon criminological phenomena'. It is certainly true that the media generally takes a simplistic, and often sensational, view of critical social issues. Mr Bevan quoted a number of newspaper accounts of violence and suicide and then proceeded to undermine their impact by referring to the results of carefully conducted research and considered expert opinion.

The media certainly has much to answer for in the way it encourages us all to accept half truths as reality.

Mr Bevan went on to make brief comments about Aborigines, white collar crime and organised crime, but then presented at some length his detailed views on declining educational standards. I decline myself to take sides on this issue, but I will say that I would not particularly relish being the referee on a debate between Simon Petrie and Col Bevan on this topic. Such a debate would probably, at all events, be best suited for a forum other than this one.

Col Bevan concluded his paper by referring to the extent of homelessness among youth and the obvious need for action in this area. He supported a proposal made by Duncan Ironmonger for a universal youth allowance which aims to reduce youth unemployment and encourages higher retention rates in secondary schooling. He concluded his paper with a generally optimistic view of the future, and I am sure that all of us are grateful to him for the vast array of data that he gathered together for his paper.

In commenting on Mr Bevan's paper Mr Jay Perkins expressed the view that the term 'alienation' was capable of many different and conflicting meanings. He suggested that the majority of today's youth were capable of controlling their own destinies as they were better equipped and more concerned with social and political issues than were earlier generations. He recognised, however, the acute problems caused by the economy as far as teenage employment was concerned. He concluded by asserting that the real problem was those who have given up; the social drop-outs, or hippies.

The second commentator on Mr Bevan's paper, Mr Alex Lobban, echoed the views expressed by Mr Bevan by suggesting that the topic was misconceived. He asked, on what basis is it suggested that today's youth is an alienated generation? The majority of young people today were not in trouble, he claimed, and his own research had shown a

decrease in serious juvenile crime in recent years. He also echoed Mr Bevan's comments about the media by telling us of the all too familiar situation where a journalist sought information on a complex topic in three minutes.

Mr Lobban concluded his presentation by giving us some extremely interesting information about his experiences at Westbrook Training Centre for juvenile offenders. He described the staff as being demoralised, the inmates rebellious and the escape rate being unacceptably high, but following staff retraining, some physical changes and better programming the absconding rate dropped dramatically, the maximum security section was closed and staff morale improved enormously.

The final paper of the morning was presented by Miss Anne McDermott of the Department of Youth Affairs in Canberra who presented a paper on behalf of The Honourable Susan Ryan, the Federal Minister for Education and Youth Affairs. In this paper the extensive consultations conducted by the Youth Affairs Council of Australia were described and these showed high levels of anger and frustration of young people particularly in relation to education and employment. The point was made that different ages of adult responsibility cause confusion among young people and adults. It was suggested that young people wanted a uniform age, either 15 or 18 years, for all matters relating to driving, drinking alcohol, paying full fares, etc.

The point was made in the Minister's paper that disadvantage among young people was not fully spread throughout the community. It was argued that Aborigines, rural youth and girls have disproportionately high unemployment rates. Many young people were caught in the double bind of not being eligible for a job without experience, but not being able to gain experience without a job. It was claimed that the consultation process had shown that insufficient attention had been given to what young people want, especially in education. Young people also feel that they are not respected by older people.

The consultations had also shown that young people felt that they were unfairly treated by the police, that the language used in court was incomprehensible to them, and that the courts did not realise that young people sometimes break the law simply to gain attention. The paper concluded with an outline of the government's policy in relation to encouraging the majority of students by the end of this decade to complete secondary or technical education.

One argumentative participant from the floor, who shall remain nameless, suggested that while the consultation process with youth was highly commendable, because of the inevitable distortion of views caused by self-selection it was an inadequate foundation upon which to develop government policy. Miss McDermott explained that consultation was but one of the methods used by the government to gain information.

The remainder of the discussion then focused on the need to include Aborigines in the consultation process. In this regard it was suggested that Aborigines like to take their time to form a collective view.

The final paper in the formal part of the conference was presented by the Reverend Allan Male who spoke of his impressions and assessment of the United States during his study period as a Churchill Fellow. He argued that the alienation of American youth was a reflection of the traumatic events that had occurred in recent American history and he invited us to draw similar parallels between Australian history and Australian attitudes. For the latter part of his formal address Mr Male presented a detailed and fully documented account of the alleged harms and dangers associated with the smoking of marihuana. To intrude my personal views once more, I feel it necessary to suggest that his presentation of the

evidence was highly selective and that considerably more harm is done by alcohol than by marihuana. Indeed, to be consistent it is necessary for those who advocate the continuation of draconian laws in relation to the recreational use of marihuana to also advocate similar prohibition of alcohol. Whether we like it or not, the fact is that the majority of Australian citizens between the age of 15 and 25 years have at some time tried marihuana. They cannot all be seen as criminals or junkies.

After his formal address Mr Male presented us with a lively and entertaining account of the work that he undertakes in his position as Executive Director of the Shaftesbury Citizenship Centre in relation to both youngsters and adults who need assistance and new directions in their lives. In this aspect of his work Mr Male is to be highly commended and his handling of questions from the floor evoked admiration very similar to that gained earlier in the conference by Brother Paul Smith.

Conclusion

I fear that I have exhausted my time and therefore will have no opportunity now to make any general comments about the outcomes of this conference. I must say, however, that I have been most impressed with the overall quality of the papers and with the high level of discussion which has taken place both formally and informally. It is very rare indeed for an organisation to be able to encourage judges, police, social workers and correctional administrators to speak honestly and openly about their achievements and their shortcomings. That has happened in this conference, as it has in the previous eleven conferences of this organisation. It is to the eternal credit of the Australian Crime Prevention Council that it is able to bring together such divergent views with the overall aim of improving crime prevention and criminal justice policy in this country. I congratulate the organisers of this conference and I wish the Council every success for the future.

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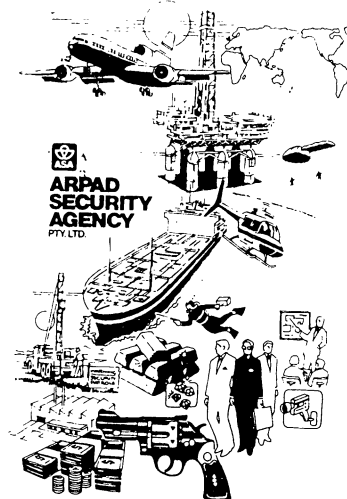
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