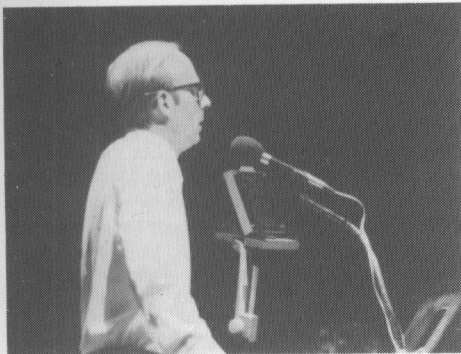




CHILDREN

NATIONAL CONFERENCE 25th - 29th JULY 1988



Alan Kendall

Mr. Alan Kendall, keynote speaker at the conference, addressed the three hundred strong gathering at the Bureau's National Conference.

Mr. Kendall is the Director of Dr. Barnardos North West Division in England

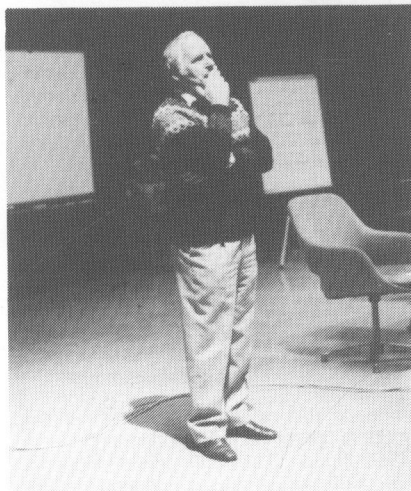


Keith Tronc

Dr. Keith Tronc, well-known Queensland educator, author and broadcaster.

His address to the Conference dinner was a graphic and moving account of how children have been treated in various societies throughout history.

Professor Peter Boss, in reflective pose as he speaks to the conference participants. His paper, "Children in the Fast Lane, Australia" raised the issue of the differing social and economic conditions of 'have and have not' children in Australia.



Peter Boss

The conference which took place at the Bardon Professional Development Centre was only the second such event in the history of the Bureau. It was planned for a year previously and organised largely by members of the Queensland branch ... Lesley Fleming, Gale Hall, Kate Lister, Lee Shenfield, Theo Gard, and their hard-working assistant, Heather Bingham and her colleagues.

Over 300 people attended the conference over the whole or for part of the period, a most gratifying result and surely testimony to its high quality ... and high quality it was with the tone set by a brief but apposite address from the Bureau's patron, His Excellency Sir Ninian Stephen, right across the three keynote addresses and the sixteen electives that were presented.



*His Excellency
Sir Ninian
Stephen,
Children's
Bureau of
Australia-
patron,
opening the
Conference.*

The first keynote speaker was Alan Kendall, Director of Dr. Barnardo's North West Division in England. He took as his theme the journey of hope that Dr. Barnardo's embarked on some years ago to improve the lives of intellectually disabled children by accentuating their strengths and potential for personal and social achievements - there are now no more children in mental hospitals in the north west of that country - a remarkable achievement for which Dr. Barnardo's can take much of the credit.

Alan was sponsored jointly by the Children's Bureau and the Szwarc Trust (V.C.A.S.) and proved to be a highly committed and sincere advocate for the cause of the intellectually disabled.

The next keynote speaker was Lilla Watson, a Murri lecturer in social work at the University of Queensland. She took the place of Margaret Valadian who could not attend having been struck down by the 'flu. Lilla shared with the audience some of the cultural components of the Murri family which are transmitted over the generations. Murri do not use the words "love" or "thank you" - why use sentiments which are the rightful property of people anyway - they are always implicit in action or behaviour.

– THE NEXT CENTURY:



A Commitment for the Future

What a wealth of knowledge and sensitivity was conveyed by Lilla in an all-too-short paper.

Professor Boss was the third keynote speaker with the title of his paper "Children in Fast Lane Australia". This was an essay on the "have" and the "have-not" children of our country set in a socio-economic context; "choose your family carefully at birth" he said "but even so you have one chance in five of drawing the short straw".

The electives ranged widely in subject matter. Topics included respite care for intellectually disabled children; "the first three years"; surviving child accidents; treatment of sexually abused children; future trends in education; preventing family breakdown; legal problems of foster care and adoption; self-image of the child; developmental perspective on children's behaviour problems; culture of Murri people; children in sport. A wide spread indeed which must have included something for everybody.

There was a conference dinner on the evening before the conference's formal opening. The Hon. Peter McKechnie M.L.A., Minister of Queensland's Family Services and Welfare Housing department gave a short address on that occasion, stressing the belief in the family as the proper basic social unit for raising children and the reason for warranting strong community support. The after-dinner speaker was Dr. Keith Tronc, educator, author and broadcaster. He took us through a graphic historical journey of how children were treated in recent history in so-called civilised societies, a story of exploitation, suffering and powerlessness.

A reception by the Lord Mayor of Brisbane, the Right Honourable Alderman Sallyanne Atkinson, provided the right kind of informality. And then of course there was Expo - a unique event for most of us - and a tribute to Brisbane's spirit of enterprise and energy. The Queensland weather was kind to us but gave us cold nights (this writer understands that the word "cold" does not apply to Queensland ever but is a perjorative term used in relation to that State by its Southern neighbours from motives of envy and spite).

Finally, this was financially one of the cheapest conferences around, by booking early it was possible to attend all the three-day sessions for \$90.00. This was made possible by the fact that none of the speakers claimed any fees and the generosity of the Queensland government which contributed substantially towards the cost.

Various papers, including electives, will be published in this journal's next issue, extra copies will be printed to meet anticipated extra demand.



Hon. Peter McKechnie, M.L.A.



Lesley Fleming



Barbara Smyware



John Taylor

The Hon. Peter McKechnie MLA, the Minister of Queensland's Family Services and Welfare Housing, which financially supported the Conference, brought greetings from the Queensland government and strongly supported the need for services which enhance the support of family life in this country.



Neville Turner



Gale Hall

Many people worked extremely hard to make the Conference a resounding success and thanks are due especially to the Queenslanders who conceived of the idea of the conference and executed it so effectively.