

# The Stud Book

The Stud Book is not, as its name suggests, a chronicle of pedigreed horses.

It is the name by which the Register of Wards compiled by the Welfare Department of the North-

ern Territory is commonly known.

This document is a list of approximately 15,000 wards (a polite name for Aborigines) whose citizenship has been arbitrarily withheld.

This list appeared in the Northern Territory Government Gazette, and is available for anybody to peruse. Similar data regarding non-Aborigines is usually confidential.

When the register was first published on April 18, 1957, the names of all the full Aborigines in the Northern Territory except six were listed.

To camouflage its racial policy, the Northern Territory Administration describes an Aborigine not as an Aborigine, but as a ward; and a ward is defined as follows:

"The Administrator may, by notice in the Gazette, declare a person to be a ward, if that person by reason of—

- (a) His manner of living;
- (b) His inability without assistance adequately to manage his own affairs;
- (c) His standard of social habit and behavior;
- (d) His personal associations — stands in need of special care and assistance."

By 1962, there were 80 full Aborigines who had graduated to full citizenship, and therefore had the honor of being deleted or omitted from this infamous register.

It is revealing to analyse the reasons given for allowing these people full equality with other Australians.

The stated reasons were three in number — marriage (53 cases), ability (19 cases), part-colored (8 cases). By marriage was meant, although it was not stated, marriage to a person not a ward.

Apparently, if a white or part-colored person chooses a full Aborigine for a spouse, then the full Aborigine must be white "at heart".

In the case of "ability", the administration considers in its supreme wisdom that these people are able, without assistance, to adequately manage their own affairs, and to behave themselves.

The inference with the "part-colored" reason is that one drop of white blood is sufficient to elevate these people to complete equality (the possession of some Aboriginal ancestry is regrettable). The part-colored folk earn their citizenship by pot luck in their ancestry, whereas the full Aborigine is required to prove by his standard of behavior and the company that he keeps that he is in fact a member of homo sapiens.

## Yeramba, born 1957

The name of Yeramba, of Mt. Doreen Station, appeared on the list of wards. She was born in 1957, and was therefore less than 4½ months old when she was listed. Why was she so named? Was it because of her manner of living, or her inability to adequately manage her own affairs? Was it because of her standard of social habit and behavior, or her personal associations? It was obviously none of these.

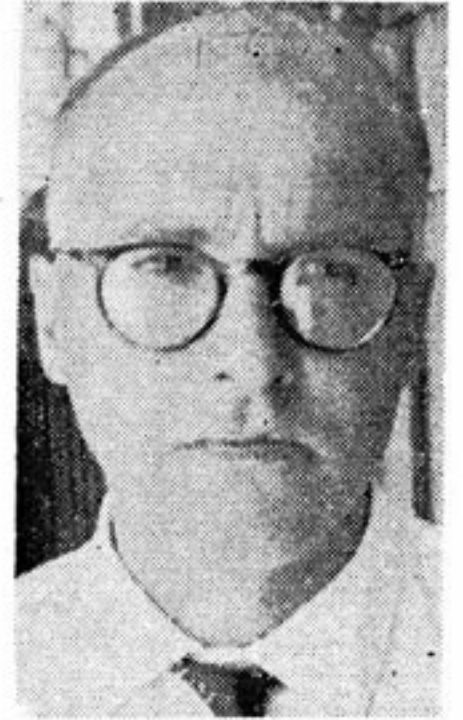
Her skin was black, and when an adult, her wages (unless they are altered by then) will be £1/5/3 per week, plus rations (or 16/3 per week extra in lieu of rations), irrespective of the quality or quantity of work she performs.

The Minister for Territories, at that time, Mr. Hasluck, said that Aborigines were gazetted only after exhaustive enquiries and careful consideration of individual cases — 15,000 of them! Without any additional evidence, this claim is open to serious doubt. To investigate

## AN INSTRUMENT OF TORTURE AGAINST THE ABORIGINES

Last week a Bill was introduced into the Legislative Council of the Northern Territory to grant citizen rights to Aborigines and abolish the degrading "ward" system.

The move is long overdue, as this article by DR. BARRY CHRISTOPHERS (right) demonstrates. . .



15,000 persons exhaustively, would seem beyond even the capabilities of the Northern Territory Administration. There is other evidence to support the doubt: It was found that 16 of the initial declarations as wards were invalid because of existing marriages to persons other than wards at the time of declaration. Eight of the initial declarations were invalid because it was subsequently found that they were part-Aborigines and not full Aborigines.

Mr. H. Brennan, the member for Eusey in the Northern Territory Legislative Council, stated in that council in 1961 that — "A patrol officer would go around and ask any full Aborigine (or one whom he thought was a full Aborigine), What is your name? He would then be declared a ward. That is the way in which this stud book was compiled. There is no doubt about that."

## The name game

The contents of the Stud Book reveal that it is not consistent with the stated policy of the government of assimilating Aborigines on a basis of social and economic equality. It sets out the "European" name, tribal personal name, group, tribe, sex, year of birth, and the sub-district in which each live.

Of the names appearing on this list, approximately 3,000 have no "European" names. Some 750 (6 per cent.) of the "European" names given to the Aborigines are objectionable in a high degree. One finds that 77 of them have registered "European" names which refer to a disability or an illness (for example, Blind Nelly, Ruby Yaws, Hunchback Willy).

Of these, the most degrading surely must be Ruby Yaws. Yaws is a chronic disease caused by the organism spirochaeta pertenuis; and, although it is non-venereal, many lay people do confuse it with syphilis.

Another 91 of the registered names are names of animals (for example, Tadpole, Donkey). Many of the names are to do with food or drink (for example, Whisky and Onion). Other names that appear are Hitler, Strike-a-light, Spieler, Killer, £1,000 Mick, Dago, Spondulicks, etc.

Sir Robert Menzies, our

Prime Minister, is known to some people as Pig-Iron Bob. We in Australia are free to agree or disagree with this nickname. But if his nickname were used in an official government document, then there would be a good chance (and quite rightly so) that the

official responsible for this would be removed immediately from his post and a libel action instituted overnight.

But it is tolerated in the case of 750 Aborigines.

The administration maintained that these names had been retained simply as a means of identification.

This argument is out of keeping with the seriousness of the crime. Three thousand out of the 15,000 have managed to survive without European identification. In the stud book, under the heading of Alice Springs — North-West District, are listed 805 names. The following names appear and their frequency of occurrence is listed:

Dick (11), George (11), Judy (10), Maggie (15), Mary (34), Minnie (13), Molly (11), Nancy (10), Ruby (20), Tommy (17), Jack (21), Jimmy (10), Johnny (11), Mick (11), Nellie (11), Paddy (17), Rosie or Rosy (17), Topsy (18). When these are added together, the total is 268. This represents 30 per cent. of the total. Eighteen names "identify" 30 per cent. of the Aborigines in this area.

If the government had used their own tribal names, groups and tribes, the result would not only have been more elevating, but also more distinguishing.

The European first name or nickname is used to determine the alphabetical order on this list in the stud book. Robert Tudawali's name appears on page 126. He is the 25th name on the page, and is listed under the R's. His European surname of Wilson doesn't count — and even less his tribal name of Tudawali.

Punishment for the inventors of the stud-book — this instrument of mental torture — is not desired.

All that is sought is that it be recognised as an instrument of torture, and scrapped.

Let us hope that the N.T. Legislative Council will do just that.