

# David Anderson straight down the middle

You probably think I'm a nut. These were David Anderson's last words after the thousands exchanged last night during an interview.

But, why should he be thought out of his head? Even if he were, would it matter all that much?

Here is a man, a 24-year-old part Aborigine, white father, Quadroon mother, who is devoting his life to, as he says, battling against irrationalism all the time.

Twenty-four? He is at once centuries old and yet only a few years of age. His is the mixture of the old Aboriginal ways of living in harmony with the environment and yet having to get among politics, as created by the white man, although he says he has no time for either the Left or the Right. He wants to go only straight down the middle.

Out of all these forces, the creation of David Anderson was inevitable. The only real surprise was that he took so long to appear, among all the argument and struggle.

Is a man mad because he feels so passionately, yet takes no sides? He talks of empathy and world government as daily things. His mood is at once his heaven and his hell.

Up there, he would like to transcend it all and be one with all men. Down there he cannot leave it alone. He sees too much fighting to be done, too much defence against the destruction of the present system: the whole patronising, squabbling, confused, power politics, Uncle Tom, elitist, yes/no, good/bad, black/white total confusion, as he sees it.

David Anderson is a man who works as a clerk at a Moonee Ponds bank.

He is also the member for the Mallee Region on the Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Advisory Council.

Soon he will be leaving his first job, because of his second. He said the bank would not allow him a Friday off a month to attend the council meetings.

David Anderson, who never made it through the proper channels at school, but of whom a letter from the secretary of the Victorian Universities and Schools Examination Board (Mr. T. H. Timpson) says he has reached university entrance standard, anyway.

He says he has read a lot, too. He has pages of the names of people he has covered, many of whom he quotes as he talks. They include: George Orwell, Ralph Nader, Marshall McLuhan, Eric Fromm, Rachel Carson, Vance Packard, Aldous Huxley and Tolstoy.

David Anderson might seem to be confused about his country. He seems to talk from many directions, all at once. The points and concepts come as fast as the many notes, cuttings, pamphlets and names he hauls from his large filing folder.

His apparent confusion even extends to whether he wants to stay on in Australia and work, or go to America and study the treatment of the Indians there.

Actually, this is what he would like to do. He is so keen about it that he has enough air fare to get to New Zealand. He might go there, and start with the Maoris. After that, America.

He said he wants to study the Indian culture and the way the U.S. and Canadian Governments are implementing policies, particularly court of claims handling of economic land situations. Also, he wants to study em-

ployment opportunities and training facilities.

"The day the advanced society arrives in White Australia is when each individual is guaranteed full and regular viable training for employment, so he can shoulder his citizenship obligations. But this is not so at the moment."

He said he had tried both the Victorian and Commonwealth Governments for trips to America. He was refused. He wanted to try for a Churchill Fellowship, but he was too late.

He said he supported President Nixon because of what he was trying to do for the American Indian.

Close down Canberra! Australia's central base should be in Washington! His fist hit the desk many times.

"I am militant, but not in a Left-wing way.

"I just want to right the wrongs in the Age of Reason. I don't believe reason prevails."

Looking up at the clock, he saw that he was late for **Bellbird**.

He said he wanted to play the ball George Orwell style, as a social critic. Straight down the middle.

He talked about how they were trying to get rid of him on the Aboriginal Affairs Advisory Council. He said there was also discrimination because so much of the money for Aborigines was being paid to public servants, rather than black people's needs.

Still talking about what Aborigines did and did not want, he said: "We don't want to assimilate. I am not speaking for all our people, but for my region."

He talked about the mess of the white man's technology, so-called. "Our forebears didn't pollute."

## BRIEFING



John Larkin

26 MAY 1971

Let us, he said, study social sciences as a whole.

Let Aborigines, he said, be given financial compensation, as well as some of their lands back. Let some of the money be used for a fourth university, around Mildura, and let there be international study there.

He quoted Tennyson, in *Ulysses*: "Come, my friends, 'tis not too late to seek a newer world."

He talked of a united world. Then he quoted Gordon Rattray Taylor's *Doomsday Book*.

He talked about Aborigines wanting to grow food organically.

He talked of a non-vested interest in science and medicine.

"We want a work democracy. If I'm anything, I suppose I'm a democratic socialist.

"All you need is the knowledge for work, life, liberty and happiness."

David Anderson has much knowledge, a lot of it from other people. Now he is trying to educate and express himself. He wants his chance. Is he, then, 1971?