

Friday 19th July 1935, Maryborough, Qld.

Youths Reprimanded "Pack of Young Loafers Being Reared" - Judge Brennan's Comments

"You are only young boys. I do not want to put a blemish on your characters. The trouble is that children are sleeping in bed while the mother is setting breakfast. They will then 'rouse' on the mother because she does not bring a good breakfast to bed to them. Some of the young fellows would remain in bed and send their fathers to the nearest shop to buy cigarettes for them. A pack of young loafers is being reared". It was in these terms that Mr Justice Brennan, in the Maryborough Circuit Court, addressed George Burgum (18) and Cecil Henry Klein (17), who had pleaded guilty to a charge of having stolen two watches and certain other goods, the property of Stuparts Limited, and then broken out of the premises. Mr S. L. Weir appeared on behalf of Klein. The Crown Prosecutor said that on the date of the offence the police found certain goods stored in a lane alongside Stuparts Limited about 9 o'clock.

His Honour: What did they find?

Mr O'Driscoll: Soaps, shoes, and articles of that nature. They had been placed there, and both accused were inside the building. The police subsequently chased the prisoners from Stuparts over roofs and found them concealed in the cellar of a nearby cafe. They subsequently admitted to the police that they had taken the goods and broken out through a door at the back of the shop. They explained that they had been accidentally shut in and then succumbed to temptation.

His Honour: How were they shut in?

Mr O'Driscoll: They were on the top floor.

His Honour: Were they working there?

Mr O'Driscoll: No.

Mr O'Driscoll said that up to that time both accused had borne good characters. Burgum was a very good trades man as a sign writer and Klein was being taught the trade by him. They were sleeping in the room occupied by them as a place of business.

His Honour: Why?

Mr O'Driscoll: It might have been more convenient for their business.

His Honour: What rot!

Mr O'Driscoll said that they also assisted in operating a picture machine, which forced them to keep late hours.

His Honour: Even if they were not operating at the

theatre they would be out till a late hour. We are breeding a nation of young owls.

Mr Weir asked for leniency for his client on account of his extreme youth.

His Honour: I would not mind sending him to the reformatory.

Mr O'Driscoll: He is just over the age for that to be done.

Mr Weir said that Klein had left school only last year and he had been one of the present generation of unfortunate lads who found it, hard to obtain employment. His Honour said that these lads were not unfortunate. There was employment in the country, but their parents would not send them there. The parents were, therefore, to blame. The people who left the Old Country came thousands of miles and made their homes here and had been good citizens. These young upstarts were ruined by their parents, who ought to be ashamed of themselves. Mr Weir said that at the time of the offence he did not think that either of the boys realised the seriousness of it, and they had yielded to temptation. He viewed their action as a childish prank.

His Honour: That is very childish. They hid until they were locked in. It is a lie to say they were locked in by mistake.

Mr Weir: I would ask your Honour to take into consideration their previous good character.

His Honour: I will take into consideration their age, but what am I going to do with them?

Burgum says he is a sign-writer. There are all sorts of fancy occupations now to allow them to loaf. If they were in Germany today they would be given work.

Mr Weir said that in the period that had elapsed since the offence was committed the boys had had ample time to reflect and now realised the gravity of their offence. His Honour said that he would like to make an example of the accused for the sake of other children, and then, possibly, some of the parents might appreciate what they were doing by keeping their children in the cities. He asked Burgum if he could make a living at sign writing.

Burgum: I have been offered a permanent job by Mr Moore, of Ipswich.

In reply to his Honour, Mr O'Driscoll said that all the stolen goods had been recovered. His Honour ordered each defendant to enter into a recognisance of £10 to come up for sentence if called upon in two years.