



SENATOR BONNER . . .
"blatant prejudice."

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Girls quit ball — 'it's prejudice'

— SAYS BONNER

BRISBANE. — Parents have withdrawn two girls from a debutante ball because they were to be presented to aboriginal Senator Bonner.

Ball convener, Miss Maureen Bain, said the parents were adamant that they would not allow their children to be presented to a black person.

Senator Bonner said today: "I know that racial prejudice does exist in subtle forms, but this is the first time I've seen it so blatant."

The ball, organised by the Rural Youth Organisation, is to be held at Nanango, 124 miles north-west of Brisbane, on July 6.

Five other girls will make their debut at the ball.

Miss Bain said that she rang parents to tell them that Senator Bonner had accepted an invitation to receive the debs.

She said the two girls were then withdrawn.

Miss Bain said the girls were aged 15 and 16. She would not name them.

The parents of the girls had colored people working on their properties, she said.

Miss Bain said the impression must not be gained that Nanango was a racially prejudiced cen-

tre. Most people in the town were very tolerant, she said.

"There is now a certain taint about the ball because of the publicity. But the ball will definitely go on and we are determined it will be successful."

Miss Bain said she believed that the parents of the two girls would still go to the ball.

Senator Bonner said today he was invited some weeks ago to attend the ball and had been proud to accept.

"Naturally. I'm disappointed that two girls saw fit to withdraw but I hold it against the parents, not the young ladies.

"But I'm very proud that the other five families are not that way inclined."

Senator Bonner said he had received debs three times before and had never struck a similar situation.