

SKY PILOT NEWS

APRIL—MAY,

1979

Published monthly by Marella Mission Farm Ltd.

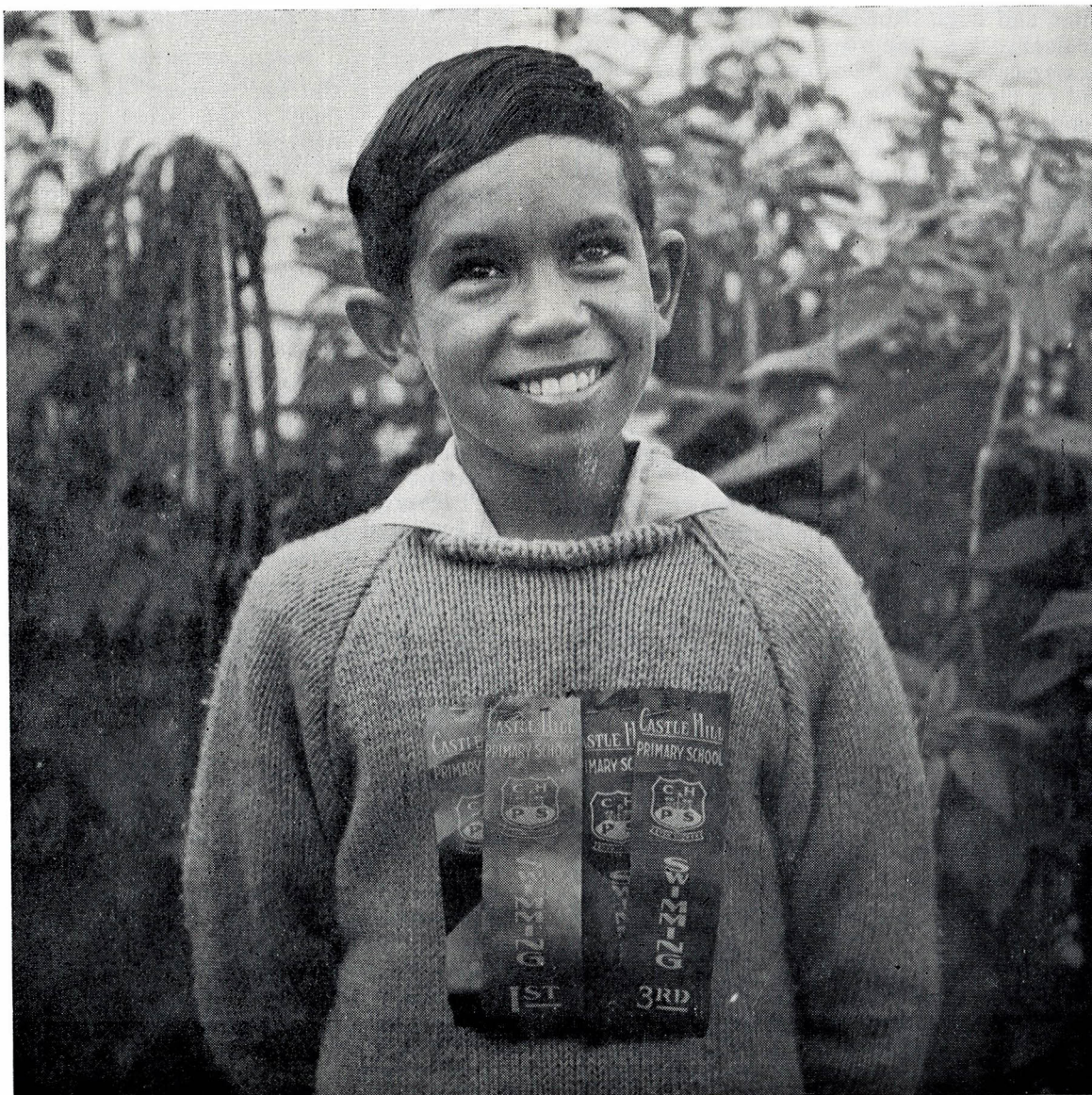
MAILING ADDRESS: P.O. Box 29, Castle Hill, N.S.W. 2154. Telephone 629-1555.

Director: K. Langford-Smith, A.M., Th.C., F.R.G.S. Secretary: Mrs. Norma K. Warwick, B.A. Litt. B. Th.C

Residential Address: Acres Road, Kellyville.

Donations of \$2.00 and upwards are deductible for taxation purposes. Quote No. A.F. 1595C/SF3380.

Subscription: 50 cents per annum. Registered at GPO Sydney, for transmission by post as a periodical — Category A



Mervyn when he first came to us

WASTED EFFORT 1. From the Sky Pilot's Log, 2CH Broadcast.

We were sitting round the camp fire at Jim's mustering camp. That afternoon Jim had killed a bullock. The beast had been skinned and the meat cut up and salted — except for a small amount that reasonably could be expected to keep for a few days. Now the lubras were busy with frying pans cooking the beef for our tea. Strips of quivering meat, still pulsating as if alive, were tossed into the hot fat. As they were cooked the lubras forked them out of the frying pan and put them into a large tin dish standing near the fire.

A camp dog, more enterprising than the rest of his kind, grabbed a piece of meat from the dish and made off with it, followed by a pack of lubras and dogs. Round and round they raced till finally they trapped the dog between two packing cases and a lubra brought a stick down hard on the dog's nose. The mongrel yelped and dropped the meat, which the lubra calmly returned to the dish. I glanced at Jim, who was our host. He had been watching but he made no remark. I shuddered and made a mental note of the position of that particular piece so that I could avoid it later. Joe's next remark made me wonder if he too had seen the incident.

"It takes a while," he said, "to get used to watching the lubras cooking. I often wonder if they are — well, reasonably clean. What do you think Jim?"

"Well," Jim replied, "I can't say I've ever thought about it much. Some lubras are worse than others, but most of them are reasonably clean."

There was a pause. Each of us was busy with his own thoughts. Then the English gentleman, who had arrived only that morning, and whom we knew as Henry, broke the silence.

"By jove!" he observed, "I wouldn't call any of the lubras clean, if you ask me. Just look at their hair! Tangled and matted like nothing on earth. They are positively repulsive!"

"I wouldn't say that, Henry," Jim protested. "Of course I've been used to them all my life and it must be a new experience for you. In the bush we don't bother about table napkins and tools when we're eating."

"Tools? I am afraid I do not grasp your meaning."

"Forks and spoons and things," Jim replied. "Mostly a man uses a jack knife and that does in place of a fork and he can use it to stir his tea if there are no clean twigs about."

Joe interrupted. "Now you're getting onto table manners. I wasn't talking about **manners**, I was talking about personal cleanliness. It's not the same thing at all. I still don't think these lubras are clean enough to do the cooking."

"You're too fussy, Joe," Jim told him. "Of course I'm all with you for cleanliness — unless

you go to extremes, of course. These lubras have a bath, or a 'bogie' as they call it, in the river every day so they're reasonably clean; but take old Andy, for instance; he's really in need of a bath if ever a man was."

Henry joined in the conversation by saying "And who, may I ask, is Andy?"

"He's an old swaggie who's camped by the creek. Jim's right about him needing a bath. He puts on a new suit of clothes every Christmas and takes it off — what's left of it — the following Christmas. Palmer was going to use his old suit as a scarecrow — the pants stood up by themselves, they were so thick with dirt — but it brought too many flies, so he dumped it in the river. Then all the fish floated to the surface unconscious."

Jim chuckled. "That's a bit of an exaggeration — about the fish, I mean — the rest is true enough. Andy is the laziest, dirtiest old metho drinker that ever I set eyes on. He's sunk so low he could walk under a duck without bending his knees. Would you like to see him, Henry?"

"Eh—no thanks! I have no wish to make the acquaintance of such a fellow as you describe. No wish at all."

"Well, if you change your mind you can find him by following your nose. Of course, a camp of a few thousand flying foxes might get you confused, so maybe it would be better to follow the flies. There ain't so many flies in a flying-fox camp. Flying-foxes are clean animals compared to Andy."

"I won't change my mind, never you fear. I'll keep well away."

But circumstances caused Henry to change his mind and the day came when he did visit Andy in his dirty camp by the creek. This was brought about by accident. Jim had been mustering along the banks of the creek and a lot of scrub bulls had been driven out of the lancewood. In those days (1930) these bulls were of no value and only a menace which ruined the other cattle. All of us carried revolvers and we shot these bulls whenever we could. Henry, the Englishman, accompanied us. He was used to fox-hunting but this was something new and exciting. He was game enough, but not used to riding in scrub and he came out the other side with his clothes in tatters and scratched and bruised all over, but still sitting firmly in the saddle. The bull he had been chasing was just ahead. Henry drew his revolver and fired. The bull rolled over and lay still.

Jim chuckled. "Ha, ha, ha, not too bad for an Englishman. You're comin' on fine, Henry. We'll make a stockman out of you yet. By the way do you see that swarm of flies? No, over there on the left. Well, that's Andy's hut."

As he spoke a man slouched slowly towards the stockmen, who had swung out of their saddles and were standing together about twenty yards from where the bull was lying on the ground. A little Aboriginal boy from Jim's mustering camp came racing across the clearing to secure the tail of the bull which the natives used in one of their corroborees. A yell from Andy made us swing round. The bull, which we thought was dead, was on its feet and making a rush for the little boy.

Jim swung into the saddle and drove the spurs into his horse, but it was too late. Henry raised his revolver but the little boy was in line of fire. It was Andy who was in a position to act. He ran between the boy and the bull and next moment was thrown high in the air. Henry's revolver cracked and Jim's horse shouldered the bull away at the same instant. It was all over in a few seconds. The bull lay on the ground — quite dead this time. The boy was safe, but Andy lay on the ground with his leg crumpled under him. In answer to Jim's enquiry Andy grinned sheepishly.

"My leg's broke," he stated simply. "Other wise I'm all right. I'm glad I was in time."

Henry apologised. "It was my fault. I do not often miss, but I should have made sure the bull was dead. I'm frightfully sorry. I thought I could shoot."

"What's to be done now?" Joe asked. "Can you set his leg?"

"Yes, it's only a simple fracture, fortunately. But we can't leave him here; we'll have to shift him to some place where he can be nursed."

"He'd be best off at the Mission and we have more chance of looking after him there. I'll be mustering for the next few weeks; he can have my bed."

Henry moved his position hastily to get to the windward of Andy and his escort of flies. Now he looked up at Joe with amazement. "You would let him have your bed, Joe? Are you in earnest?"

"Of course," Joe replied. "I don't need the bed and Andy does. You get two quiet horses. Jim, while Smithy and I make a litter. Shake it up."

That night, for possibly the first time he could remember, Andy the swaggie lay between clean sheets in a soft bed. We had soaked him in a bath of hot water and rubbed him down despite his protest that water always gave him a cold. It was not possible to remove the grime of years, but at least Andy was, as Jim said, reasonably clean. The mustering was to continue in the morning but we spent that night at the Mission talking while Andy slept. The Englishman brought up the question of Andy's future.

"By the way," he said, "that fellow can't stay here permanently. What is he to do when his leg is set and he is able to get about?"

"I suppose," Jim remarked, "that he'll go back to his camp on the creek and try to forget the soap and water he has been forced to feel while he was here."

"But," continued Henry, "shouldn't we — what is the expression — send round the hat and see if we can give him a new start in life?"

"That's all right in theory," said Jim, "but the fact is that no one in this country has any ready cash. We might throw in something we produce. For instant I wouldn't mind giving him a fat bullock, ready to kill for beef."

Not to be outdone Joe made a generous offer: "I've a couple of spare blankets he can have, and a cushion."

"I'll give him a couple of suits of clothes," Henry added.

"I have a small tent I don't use much," I said.

"That's a good start," Henry remarked. "Joe, will you go round and see what you can collect from the other stockmen in the district?"

"Yes, I'll do that and I know they'll all give something. It's a grand idea."

"Just a minute, you fellows," Jim cautioned. "What will Andy do with the stuff we collect?"

"That's his business; at least we'll give him the chance of a new start."

Jim was not convinced. "It may turn out all right and it may not, I have my doubts. Yes, I have my doubts — knowing Andy."

The result of Joe's efforts surprised us all. Besides the stuff already promised Palmer gave a couple of bags of peanuts. Jack donated half a dozen laying hens. Ted gave a sucking pig, George gave a couple of horses and Harry fixed him up with a good saddle. There was a lot of other stuff given freely by the generous stockmen. When Andy had recovered and was able to walk around once more he seemed surprised but he soon entered into the spirit of the thing. He got the stockmen to kill the bullock for him and he cadged enough salt to preserve it. He pickled the pig, borrowed Jim's waggon to carry the rest of the stuff and started off for the township. He promised to return the waggon in a couple of weeks.

Two months later he had not returned and Joe, who had to go to the township, returned with the news: "You remember Andy and all the stuff we gave him? Well he swopped the lot with the publican for a couple of cases of whisky and a drum of metho."

"What about Jim's waggon?" I asked.

"That went with the rest. Then Andy went on a glorious spree. He hasn't seen daylight for three weeks. He's in hospital now but they don't think he'll live. It would have been better if we'd left him alone. Talk about 'casting your pearls before swine!' What a wasted effort it was!"

"Not quite," I said. "We all meant well and we gave freely of what we had. Andy didn't appreciate it but we are all better for having done the best we could. Christ said: 'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.' Our job is to help the needy, not the worthy. All people are not as foolish as Andy, and even if they were, we have done it for Christ's sake and He will not forget."

And the final entry in today's log is taken from the 3rd chapter of Malachi: Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.

WASTED EFFORT 2.

We crossed the Gulf of Carpentaria in the lugger *Iolanthe* and came to an island that nestled in the blue waters of the Gulf. It was a fairy isle; perhaps it should be called an emerald isle, as its greenness was as marked as the blueness of sea and sky. The river we entered was called the Emerald River, as it should be, and the bright green of the pandanus palms vied with the dark green of the mangroves and the varied other shades of green that represented Leichhardt Pines, paperbacks and wild figs or "gooningyarras".

We anchored the lugger and walked inland. It was many years since I had visited this spot — before the war — and it took me a while to find the way. However, despite the jungle which had crowded in, eventually I found the old track and led my friends to what once had been the Mission.

We stood and looked at the skeleton of buildings all overgrown with weeds and creepers. Through Church and store thick saplings had thrust their way and it was hard to realise that once this had been a hive of industry. Happy laughter had echoed through these now empty buildings and the calls and shouts of children had rung in these overgrown streets and compounds. George reverently took off his hat.

"Well," he said, "here it is, boys. Once this was a mission to half-castes; now it is a playground for possums and bats. Well, well, so life goes on, I suppose."

"I worked here for several years," said Joe.

"It breaks my heart to think that all that work went for nothing. The white ants have destroyed most of the buildings and there is little left to remind me of the happy days we spent here in the long ago."

Dick scratched his head. "It all goes to show how puny is man. He comes here and works himself to death and then — well, the jungle comes in and destroys all that he has done. I feel real depressed."

"Men of faith built this station," said George. "They worked early and late and wore out their young lives trying to establish the Mission. It seems a shame that it has come to nothing."

"What did I tell you?" Ted broke in. "All this talk of Christianity is just sheer bunk. Men tried to work wonders with faith in God and they failed. Faith never did anything worthwhile. Look at all the results! White ant eaten buildings, weeds, creepers, jungle grass — nothing to be proud of at all. Men talk about God. If there was a God do you think He would allow this ruin? Of course He wouldn't! Blind silly faith has led to this ruin and if there is a God He must be ashamed of it."

"At least you must respect the men who tried to build this station," Dick observed. "They may have failed, but at least they tried."

"Of course they failed," Ted was bitter. "Who believes in God these days? A few earnest fellows came and wasted their lives here and what was the result? Nothing but decayed buildings and disproved faith. Religion is nothing more than wishful thinking at the best. I'm not a bit surprised at all this ruin, not a bit."

This was too much for George. "You can talk as much as you like, Ted, but this Mission was built up by better men than you. They may have failed — but I don't admit that they did — but all the same they tried to do what they could for the half-castes. What have **you** ever done for the half-castes?"

"He's done nothing at all," Joe put in. "Most of those who criticise are the same. They do nothing and if anyone else tries to do something they only laugh at them."

"I don't need to say anything more," Ted claimed. "These ruins are sufficient to prove my point."

"Well," said Dick, "I'm not over religious but all the same I feel that you're wrong. Men couldn't put their heart and soul into this work without having some result."

"That's what I say," George agreed. "You can't judge what spiritual results there may have been."

Ted snorted. "Spiritual results! That's what all you fellows fall back on! You know perfectly well that no one can prove anything by so called 'spiritual' results. I'd sooner see some practical results — something you can measure."

"Well," said Joe, "we brought those half-caste children out of the blacks' camps. They were dirty, miserable and naked. We fed and clothed them, educated them and taught many of them to love and serve God. I wouldn't call that wasted effort."

"And where are they now?" asked Ted. "The fellow who founded this Mission tried to keep the half-castes separate from the rest of the world. He was going to build up a new race of people. Now he's dead and his work is as dead as he is."

"Hold your horses, Ted," George ordered. "Some of us never believed in trying to separate the half-castes from the rest of the world. That wasn't the Government idea neither. The superintendent was wrong in trying to make a new race of people, but he was right in a lot of other things."

"The half-castes are mostly marrying whites or quadroons," observed Dick. "In another fifty years there won't be half-castes at all in this part of the world. They are being absorbed into the white population. That's a big word for me — absorbed — I thought it up myself, too."

"You mean," said Joe, "you've heard it so often you think it's your own idea. But it isn't. Everyone these days talks of the half-castes being 'absorbed' into the white population."

"Yes," sneered Ted. "And what type of whites would marry half-castes? Only the no-hopers. The bad white blood will do more to drag them down than the black blood already in their veins. The half-castes Joe and his mates trained and educated won't lift the men they marry; no, they'll sink lower than they were before."

"You're wrong there, Ted," said George, "but it's no use arguing. Time will prove you wrong. I don't believe the Mission failed altogether, though all the same I'm sorry to see this ruin. Most of these beams were carried into the mission from the bush by the missionaries and the natives on their backs. When they didn't have no horse they pulled the plough by hand — a dozen of 'em dragging the thing along. And where's the garden now? You couldn't find it. The jungle has taken it back again."

"Let's get out of here," suggested Dick. "It fair gives me the creeps. I hate ruins."

★ ★ ★

We sailed down the coast and anchored some distance up one of the great rivers that flow into the Gulf of Carpentaria. White cockatoos rose screaming from the paperbarks that lined the river banks; crocodiles slid down the steeply sloping bank and plunged into the river; startled kangaroos and wallabies bounded away in fear as the anchor chain rattled loudly. Joe looked round and when he spoke it was to no-one in particular.

"What a deserted spot! I don't suppose there's a white man living within fifty miles of here."

"That's where you're wrong," George answered. "There's a white man living not more than two miles from here. A fellow named Andy."

"Andy?" Dick asked. "Did you say Andy? That wouldn't be Joe's friend would it? The fellow they used to call the dirtiest man in the Northern Territory?"

"That's the fellow all right, but I didn't know he was a friend of Joe's."

"He's no friend of mine," announced Joe. "He let me down badly."

Dick explained: "You were away, George, when it happened. We all got caught. Don't you remember giving a couple of horses to a fellow who got tossed by a bull saving a black child? Even Jim lost his waggon that time."

George chuckled. "Ha, ha, serves Jim right for trusting a fellow like Andy. But how did it all happen? All I know is that Jim said he had given away a pair of my horses in a good cause. But I seem to have missed out on a bit of fun."

Joe took up the story. "We were shooting scrub bulls. One was wounded but we thought it was dead. It charged a little Aboriginal boy and Andy ran to save the boy and got tossed."

"First time I've ever heard of that old metho drinker doing anything worth while," observed George. "Was he hurt bad?"

"His leg was broke," Dick added. "Joe took him to the Mission and gave him his own bed — after they'd washed him a bit. They found several shirts, when they were washing him, that had been lost for years."

"Then," said Joe, "I went round and collected something from everyone in the district to give him a new start in life. Andy borrowed Jim's waggon to take the stuff into the township."

"Yes," continued Dick. "Joe gave him a couple of blankets, Jim gave a bullock, Smithy gave him a tent, Henry a couple of new suits and Palmer some peanuts. Everyone joined in and gave something."

George chuckled. "Ha, ha' I can guess what happened."

"Yes," said Joe. "The dirty cow swapped the lot for a couple of cases of whisky and a drum of metho. Jim's borrowed waggon went with the rest."

"Last we heard," added Dick, "Andy was in hospital in the horrors. Serve him jolly well right."

George laughed. "I might have guessed it. However, I don't suppose you know that Andy is married now?"

"Married!" Joe exclaimed. "I can't believe any woman could put up with the dirt and the metho that goes with Andy. Wherever he walk-

ed he was followed by swarms of flies. I think they bred in his hair!"

"Let's pay him a visit," George suggested. "His hut is only a couple of miles away. I'd be interested to see how he's getting on. You see, he married a half-caste girl from the Mission that closed down, and remembering what Ted said about such marriages I'd like to find out for myself. Come on, let's get going."

Andy's hut was only built of paperbark and saplings and we imagined the state it would be in, knowing Andy. But a stranger came to meet us. A man neatly dressed, hair and whiskers trimmed, face and hands clean and no sign of flies or the smell of metho. George recognised him first and exclaimed: "Well, I'm hanged! Andy! Clothed and in his right mind!"

"Yes, George," replied Andy. "There has been a bit of a change, thank God. It's all due to my wife. She's a treasure! Hulloo, you fellows. I'm glad you've come. I want to thank you for what you tried to do for me before — before I was worth it. By the way, I sent Jim the money for his waggon last mail. I'm doing all right now, thanks to the wife. She's made a new man of me. Come and meet her."

We entered a hut spotlessly clean, and were introduced to a quiet voiced, dusky lass whose eyes shone like stars.

"It's all due to her," Andy continued. "If the Mission had never done anything else it was worth while just to produce her! She's a real Christian, if ever there was one, and believe it or not. I think I'm well on the way to follow her example. Some people say the Mission failed. If Mary's an example of failure it would be a better world for a few more like her!"

And the final entry in today's log is taken from the 11th chapter of Ecclesiastes: "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good."

OUR ABORIGINAL CHILDREN: Because of the continuing support of our friends we have been able to supply the children with a variety of items. When first they left us we saw that they had tables, chairs, beds, with mattresses, blankets, sheets, pillows and pillow cases to spare. There were also crockery, cutlery saucepans, electric frypans, a large deep freezer and enough equipment for 25-30 boys and girls. Besides the foodstuff we sent with them we were later able to send over farm eggs, dressed poultry and Harvest Festival goods from various Churches. From our Building Fund we gave initially \$30,000.00 and a further donation of \$52,500 will be ready about June. If God prospers us, as we expect, this is only the beginning of a ministry to the children from Marella for whom we maintained daily care for so many years.

As mentioned in an earlier leaflet nothing that has been given to Marella for the dark children will be wasted; if it cannot be used by the Church of England Homes directly for the dark children or by the Uniting Church for their youth work on this site, it will be sold and the money passed on to help with the upkeep of the children and the securing of suitable group homes in strategic locations.

The children still keep in touch with us and some of them phone us almost every week. Recently one boy was speaking to Mrs. Langford-Smith on the phone and he asked after "Auntie Norma", as Mrs. Warwick is known to them. At that instant Mrs. Warwick was passing through the room and he was told this. Possibly he did not hear aright, or he became confused, for he hastily hung up his receiver, bust into tears and told the other children: "Poor Auntie Norma is passing away!"

On another occasion one boy remarked to the others at the swimming pool: "You know, fellows, we look just like a bunch of Abos." And he was quite serious about it.

OUR NAME AND ADDRESS: May we repeat that our name and postal address has not changed. Donations intended for Marella Aboriginal Children should be made out to Marella Mission Farm and addressed to "Marella Mission Farm, Box 29, Post Office, Castle Hill, N.S.W., 2154."

OUR NEW OFFICES: As mentioned previously our new offices will be on part of the same property at Kellyville but will be entered by York Road instead of Acres Road. The storage shed has been completed and much of our gear has already been moved to there pending the completion of the house, which is well under way.

OUR PRAYER PARTNERS: We do wish to thank our many prayer partners for remembering us so faithfully. For many years it was obvious that something had to be done on a permanent footing for the dark children in our care but every avenue seemed closed. But when at last God started to move things began to fall into place so quickly that it almost took our breath away. First, the Church of England Homes agreed to take all our present children and provide temporary homes for them until the group homes could be built or secured. This meant that those of us who had spent from thirty to fifty years in the service of caring for Aboriginal children could be freed for other work. Second, the Uniting Church agreed to buy most of the property once known as Marella for Christian youth work. Third, we were able to retain five acres of land from the original Marella to build new offices and the other administrative premises we would require for the work

to continue. Now we can look back in retrospect we can see God's guiding hand and at every step of the way some new part of the picture falls into place.

The whole of our Council stood firmly behind us and agreed to carry on the publishing of the Sky Pilot News, the street stalls and the other fund raising activities in order to support the children we have cared for for so many years. We still need your prayers for the tremendous task of moving to another section of Marella (facing York Road) and setting up our new offices there.

It is always difficult moving, especially after 40 years in the same spot, and the devil seems to know how to complicate matters; it is particularly difficult for Mr. Langford-Smith who is still forced to use crutches or a wheel chair. However, in spite of this he has not had to cancel his deputation meetings. Though forced to sit down he recently preached at the Harvest Festival services at Woodberry Village. The matron of Hornsby Hospital, who heard him speak at a dinner she attended, very graciously asked him to speak at the Nurses' Graduation ceremony in May.

MRS. NORMA WARWICK: Because of pressure of office business and illnesses on the staff while we still had the children living here, Mrs. Warwick was not able to take all her annual leave for the past two years. Now, with the children no longer in residence, she is taking this leave, together with three weeks long service leave. She is at present overseas and will be visiting Israel and other countries on a tour conducted by Professor Blaiklock, Professor Emeritus of Classics and a well known Biblical writer. As Mrs. Warwick took both her degrees in classics this holiday will not only provide her with a well earned rest after 29 years of constant work at Marella but it could further her studies and form a background if she goes on to a third degree.

No one has taken her place in the office during these two months but Mr. Langford-Smith will carry on as well as his health permits; with the help of voluntary Workers; if things are not quite up to date this is the reason why. But Mrs. Warwick is due back by the end of May.

CHURCH OF CHRIST: Over the years we have had wonderful support from Churches of many denominations. Besides those recently mentioned are the Churches of Christ. For almost 30 years a record has been kept of the various Churches where we have had deputation or other meetings. One of the earliest entries in the book is that of the Church of Christ, Lidcombe. Of course we have been back there many times in the past 30 years and the support we have

had from this particular Church has been magnificent. But the same might be said of Open Brethren, the Salvation Army, Banksia Free Church and many other smaller organisations. It is impossible to make a complete list without inadvertently omitting some names; however, one of the most pleasant aspects of this work has been the hearty co-operation of all the Christian Churches in our work for the welfare of the Aboriginal children of our own land. Our Deputation Work will continue (D.V.) throughout this year and, we pray, beyond, and we would welcome the opportunity of telling people what Christ is doing for the Aboriginal people of Australia.

CLEARANCE SALE: As we no longer require the farm machinery or the items used in child management or the bits and pieces that have accumulated over the 40 years residence in the same home, we decided to hold a Clearance Sale to turn these articles into money which can be used for the continuing support of the Aboriginal children. Although it was near the city and outside the usual work of Dalgety's the firm kindly undertook to run the sale as a special favour to Marella. They did a magnificent job under very difficult conditions and we are most grateful for their courtesy and efficiency.

We had many voluntary helpers, especially Mr. Gordon Rowe and the Kenthurst Rotary Club; the members of the West Ryde Lions Club; Mr. and Mrs. R. Crossfield and helpers from St. Paul's Church of England, Wentworthville. The catering was in the capable hands of the Wesley Uniting Church Catering Committee led by Mrs. Jones; this was a most important aspect of the sale as many people were here all day even though the official selling time did not commence until 12 noon. Mr. and Mrs. W. McCullough did a fantastic job cleaning up the various rooms and sorting out the saleable items from the "junk". Mrs. Dunne spent many days packing up articles to be moved to the new site and this was a great help to us. Perhaps the most pleasing move of all was the way the Langford-Smith "children" came to the rescue. Ruth Langford-Smith, with the co-operation of her husband, Ken, flew from Perth and spent about 10 days helping sort out some of the most difficult rooms, even going to the local rubbish dump to get rid of unwanted stuff. Bruce Langford-Smith made two trips from Coonamble first to arrange for Dalgety's to organise the sale and secondly to arrange volunteers to lay out the articles for sale and to assist at the sale on the day. Ivan Hinton arranged for his wife, Margaret and their two girls to fly from Inverell to be with us for a long weekend. Margaret (who brought a gift of a lamb from their property) was a great help to her mother and father at this busy time.

THE COVER PHOTO: Many of our former children have grown up and taken their place in the community. It is most encouraging to see that so many of them have made good. We have photos of them when they first came to Marella and at the request of friends we have decided to reprint some of these memories from the past. The cover photo shows Mervyn as he was when he first came to us. This photo was taken ten years ago. Mervyn, like so many Aborigines, excelled in sport. In 1970 he was chosen to represent his school in football and we secured special permission from the Child Welfare Department (as it was then called) for him to make a trip to Canberra for this purpose.

In 1972 Mervyn broke the school record for the hurdle race and he was picked to represent the State in several events. He was offered a scholarship to go to Trinity Grammar School at Summer Hill as a boarder in 1973. Although he was out of training he managed to "make" the swimming team to represent the school at the Associated Schools sports in which Trinity came third. Mervyn has been back to see us several times since he left and we are praying that he will make good in the community. He has had every chance and we are keenly interested in his future.

EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS: Following are a few extracts from letters we have received from our supporters since the changes at Marella took place:

"The Sky Pilot News arrived yesterday but I have only just now had time to read it and am thrilled to read that God has at last answered prayer regarding the future of Marella. You have certainly had to go on in the dark for a long time and by faith accept the fact that the Lord had a plan which He would reveal in His own time—but the actual outworking is far beyond what I thought—and you too, I guess. I do rejoice with you and your fellow workers that you will all be able to relax soon and enjoy the rest you so richly deserve. What a wonderful God we have and to think that He loves us so individually as His own and plans in love for each of us. This news of yours has come as an encouragement to my own faith."

Lindfield.

"For some months now I have been praying about your future and knowing from the previous 'Sky Pilot News' of the necessity for some other body to take the work load, and now with this 'News'. I'm so thankful to read that others will be actually caring for the children and will certainly continue to pray and support your future work when I can."

Halliday's Point.

"Over the years I have appreciated the worthwhile service you have offered the Aboriginal Community and in particular to the needy children you have cared for at the Mission Farm. I would like to thank you for the co-operation given the Officers of my Department over the years and I wish you every success for the future."

Director, Department of Youth & Community Services, Sydney.

"I was so pleased, as always, to receive the Sky Pilot News. The stories are always splendid. I was saddened by the fact that you have to let Marella go as I'm sure it's very close to your heart and always will be. The little dark children will be for ever grateful for all you have done for them I hope they'll all fit in their new home."

Chatswood.

"I find the future plans for Marella very interesting and exciting and send my best wishes to you all in the coming year."

Schofields.

"I wish to convey to you all my sincere greetings and love for the years of dedication to the care of our dark children and pray that the plans for the future care of the Marella children will come to fruition. I have always looked forward to the Sky Pilot News and am so glad that it will still be published. Please keep my name on the mailing list as I wish to continue supporting your wonderful work."

Newcastle.

"The decision to ask the Church of England Homes to care for the Aboriginal children is a very sound one. Mr. & Mrs. Langford-Smith, and you, Mrs. Warwick, have battled against severe illness for long enough,—We all feel sure this is what the Lord wants you to do now. Even though we are on'y a small group of Christians, we can assure you of our continued financial support."

Katoomba.

"Enclosed a donation (\$1,000.00) for the work. Some money the Lord put in my lap, I hope the work load has eased for you and that you are all in better health."

Seaforth.

"Have read in the Sky Pilot News of proposed plans for the children and shall be interested to hear details when the plan is finalised."

Killcare Heights.

"I was delighted to receive the last copies of the Sky Pilot, which is such an interesting publication. When I read of the changes envisaged for Marella my initial reaction was one of sadness but as I look at the whole story the hand of God is so obviously present that I have become full of admiration."

Edgecliff