

BIRDSVILLE REVISITED—Cont'd from page 2.

There is a very fine type of bush policeman in Birdsville, Sergeant Barlow. I have great respect for our bush police, and I have had a great deal to do with them, in the last fifty years.

In this town, Sergeant Barlow is the leading man and he organises almost everything.

He is also keen on the co-education of white and aborigine children. There are 18 children in the Birdsville school, and only five are white.

Altogether, Sergeant Barlow has 20 different jobs and is also the local Protector of Aborigines.

I spent the evening talking to him, and he told me that no adult non-exempted aborigine under his care had less than £140 to his credit in the bank. The Sergeant told me that the pictures cost £400, and the money was raised, as one resident told me, by all throwing-in £20. That is the spirit of those tiny bush towns, where there is the real community effort.

From Birdsville I journeyed by truck with Mr. Bill Coates, the clerk of the Diamantina Shire Council, and he was also able to give me some excellent information as we made our way up to Glengyle Station, which is the Kidman Estates head station.

We had with us an old Kinchela boy, Miles Herbert Lalor, who told me he appreciated what had been done for him at Kinchela. At Glengyle I met an old aboriginal woman, Lizzie, who must now be well over seventy years of age, and who said she remembered me. She said, "I been knowem you long, long, long time, when you been boy."

When I ask about the aboriginal boys, with whom I had grown up on the edge of the Simpson desert, she said, "You make me sorry fellow, for all about are dead now."

The aborigines have nearly all died out in that country.

I also saw old Kitty, the last of the real old Simpson Desert aborigines. There has been complete and silent revolution in the standard of living in that out-back country.

In the past 50 years there are no drab over-worked women there now, for they have washing machines, electric light, refrigerators, wireless, flying doctors, and the school of the air.

The wages to me seem almost fantastic. Where I once worked for 15s. a week, white and aboriginal boys are now paid £16 a week, and £3 16s. 6d. a day for Sunday work, and old Lizzie, was told by Constable Hale in Bedourie, has to her credit £300.

But the rate of production is still low, ranging from one beast to the square mile down in the Lake Eyre country, to about three beasts to the square mile in the Channel country.

How to improve the rate of production is a long and difficult story—a story that must wait for another time.

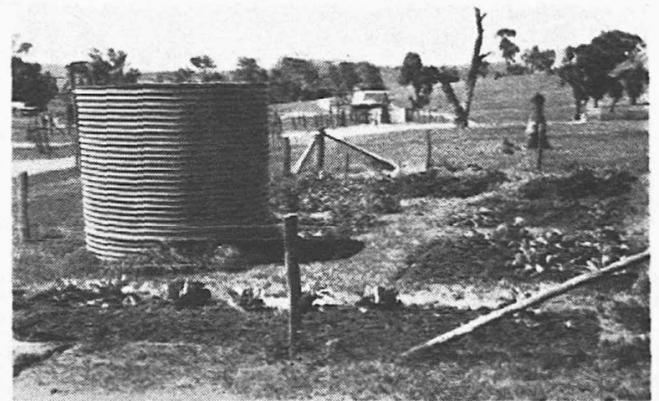
GARDEN COMPETITION

The Runners-Up

Nanima School lost the Garden trophy this year but they were certainly not disgraced in getting second place.



A group of youngsters from Nanima School.



This section of Nanima's garden had potatoes, onions, corn, pumpkins, cabbage and spinach.



Another view of the Nanima School Garden showing its elaborate layout of well-kept beds.