

FIRSTLY it was necessary to create within the individual a spirit of self reliance and dignity.

SECONDLY that personal behaviour and personal relationship should be according to the Golden Rule and other maxims of Christian behaviour. That cleanliness—personal hygiene and pride in one's appearance are necessary social attributes—their absence could raise barriers.

THIRDLY, that we should lead them sufficiently along the road to success in some field at least, whereby they would win recognition from others, and to build up a feeling of personal confidence in place of the natural one of inferiority so apparent amongst the aborigines in particular.

FOURTHLY, to widen their horizons by taking them further afield—beyond the isolation of the La Perouse Peninsula, so that their contact with the outside world would help remove inhibitions arising from life in a sheltered community.

Allied with this proposition every endeavour was to be made to introduce visitors to our school.

We do not wish to weary you with all the details of our early crusades.

The city bookshops responded to appeals for library books—a collection of worthwhile pictures was begun—adequate equipment for self activity was gathered—handwork material was obtained and interest in pottery, book-binding handcrafts such as basketry, leatherwork, puppetry, etc., meant that new avenues of interest were opened up.

It was realised quite early that the natural prowess displayed in sporting activities provided a clue for boosting the morale of the individual, the team, and the school. All possible branches of sport were pursued. Care was taken to have our teams arrayed in first rate attractive uniforms. The parents co-operated readily—the project assumed community importance. As successes followed, so did the enthusiasm lift, whilst confidence and pride of achievement became evident. *The tone was on the rise.*



Then came the new building. We had many feelings of trepidation. How would children from an underprivileged area with no training and background, treat a modern building with pastel-coloured walls, glass and new furniture.

Would the food-preparation room be a nine days' wonder and then become a white elephant?

There was no need for worry! The response has been magnificent and points a moral for critics who decry the provision of such amenities in sub-standard areas.

With the new school came the chance for our cultural idealism.

The library, though not sufficiently equipped—the Assembly Hall with its puppet theatre, piano, movie projector, stage and venue for dramatic work, choir and dancing—adequate space for pictures of artistic merit—suddenly became a reality. The uplift was instantaneous. A new zeal and enthusiasm spread through the staff and pupils alike. There was no need for repression now, there was every opportunity for expression and for the satisfaction of the diversity of human interests. Problems relating to absenteeism, irregularity of behaviour and disinterestedness were fast disappearing and in return children had to be hunted out of classrooms and had to be sent home from school after the day's work was done.

Again, the brightness and newness were reflected in the improved appearance and attitude of the children. Work in keeping with the surroundings became the order of the day; pride in achievement replaced casualness and the old spirit of *laissez-faire* . . .

A new deal in a very tangible form, was the provision of suitable and adequate toilet facilities—a septic tank system replaced the old objectionable one of pans (there is no defacing of lavatory walls and problems relating to outhouses is nil).

The improved health of our school has been striking proof of the soundness of planned amenities. The provision of free milk, the supply of suitable lunches and food from the Oslo Lunch Room has resulted in the disappearance of once familiar sores and now we have the presence of youngsters who, without doubt, appear just as sturdy as those in more favoured parts of the Metropolitan area.



One problem however, still worried us. There was a general reluctance, amongst those ready for post-primary education, to leave La Perouse. Should WE embark upon post-primary activities within the school, or make a bid to have them attend the neighbouring secondary schools. Obviously the child's own welfare was bound up in the latter course. It was necessary to issue an edict at the beginning of 1954, that the selected scholars MUST GO to their appointed schools at Daceyville, Maroubra, etc.

Fortunately, due largely to the fact that they were moving in group formation and also as they were known in those centres from football, basketball, soft-ball activities, they took the leap. (We made certain beforehand that their reception at the appointed centres would be most cordial.)