

## *A Grand Experience . . .*

# SUMMER CAMP CHILDREN ON T.V.

by M. H. SAXBY,

Superintendent, Aborigines Welfare

During the course of the Summer Camp, a number of Children were invited to appear on the children's programme over T.V. Station, ATN, at 5 p.m. on Wednesday, 16th January, 1957.

The children who participated were:—

Stan French, Moree.  
Lawrence Sutherland, Burra Bee Dee.  
Vincent Farrant, Balranald.  
Ronald Smith, Warren.  
Lionel "Bud" Slater, Caroonna.  
Clare Binge, Moree.  
Colleen Toomey, Dubbo.  
Doreen Bennett, Coonamble.  
Robin May, Wellington.  
Margaret Wallace, Coonamble.

They were introduced by Mr. Saxby, Superintendent of Aborigines Welfare, who said:—

"I am sure that you will be interested to learn something of the Summer Camp which is at present being held at La Perouse for aboriginal girls and boys from the western districts of New South Wales, and to see some of the children who are enjoying a holiday there.

For some years now, the Aborigines Welfare Board of New South Wales, among its other activities, has arranged a holiday by the sea for a number of children from distant country centres. For the last four years they have been held on the Board's property at La Perouse where a good kitchen and dining hall have been erected and other facilities provided. The children sleep in tents and each child has its own stretcher and a real "camp" atmosphere is preserved.

You, no doubt, all know where La Perouse is. It is near the spot where, many years ago, Captain Cook first made contact with the aborigines of our land. The aboriginal people who still live at this historic place look forward to the visit of these children each year and do a wonderful job in helping to give them an enjoyable holiday.

This year there are 74 children in camp and some of them came from places well over 500 miles from Sydney. These places are hot and dusty in the summer time and there are often great bushfires raging for many miles. At times, too, the country is subject to severe floods and the children and their parents suffer great inconveniences. They do not enjoy the many pleasures which city children take

for granted. Very few of them have been to Sydney before. They have not seen the sea, or big ships, trams, buses or large city shops.

During their stay they have been taken to the Zoo, Luna Park and theatres. They have had rides on buses, ferries, trains and the underground railway. They have been to the surf at Manly and Maroubra, and also have a swim each day in the calm waters of Botany Bay at La Perouse where there is a lovely beach.

All these pleasures are a great experience for them, and I am sure that the trip to Sydney will live for many years in their memories.

On the other hand, these children have many pleasures which are denied to city dwellers. They enjoy the freedom of the bush and the wide open spaces. They know the birds and animals of our land. They see sights which would be strange to city children. They know the kangaroo and emu well, and the many pretty birds which inhabit our Australian bushland.

They attend school just like you do and many of them do well at their lessons. They love to sing and I have spent many enjoyable evenings with them at camp-fire sing-songs. Perhaps some of you heard the Tabulam Aboriginal School Choir over the air last Wednesday evening.

The people of Sydney have been very good to these children and have given them many nice presents, ice creams and drinks, and provided them with entertainment and other pleasures. They appreciate this kindness very much and are having a real good holiday. They will be sorry to leave Sydney and its hospitality, but just like any other children, will be glad to get home again when it is all over."

The children were then interviewed by Mr. Green, the Officer-in-Charge of the Camp. Each said a little about their home town and gave some impressions of their visit to Sydney.

They played their part well and were perfectly at home in the strange surroundings. Quite a number of people who saw them on the TV screen remarked how well they did their bit, and regarded them as the highlight of that particular programme.

Well done, children!