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# WRECK BAY ROUND UP

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## STATION CHILDREN VISIT CANBERRA

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by D. G. YATES, Manager

Although realising how hard it is to write of such a visit and capture the anticipation, excitement and interest which accompanied us all the way—little parts, such as the lyre birds playing on the road in the cold light of dawn high on the Cambewarras or the German field gun which the boys found still operated—the day was packed with such things that on paper refuse to appear as exciting as they were, nevertheless we shall attempt to relive the day, briefly, for the boys and girls who have yet to experience such a trip.

Firstly, the aim—To broaden outlook, kindle ambition, provide anticipation, educate, and demonstrate to the children in a practical manner that the community sincerely wishes to accept them.

When discussions about such visits first took place, the Y.W.C.A. of Canberra City immediately offered all aid and it was this kindness, interest and hard work by the ladies of this Association that allowed the day to be so successful.

At 6 a.m. on a bleak cold morning the Station Kombi departed, bearing ten children of age group 11 to 14 years. Several differences had to be settled as to places in the Waggon—however, once it was ruled that all change places at Goulburn, everybody was happy.

Canberra arrival time 10 a.m., where the children were met at Y.W.C.A. Headquarters which had been made the base of operations. While the ladies served the children hot soup, Miss Campbell, Secretary of the Association detailed the programme which had been arranged for the day.

Promptly at 11 a.m. the party arrived at Parliament House where it was met by Mr. J. Fraser, M.H.R. for the A.C.T., who then conducted the children on a very personal and highly entertaining tour of Parliament House. No feature was overlooked and no trouble too great for Mr. Fraser and the Officials of the House. Each child was given the opportunity to sit in the Speaker's Chair in the House of Representatives and gaze out at the seats and benches where normally sit all the Ministers and Members of Parliament. No nook or cranny barred the way of the party—Members' Library, Senate Chamber, Prime Minister's Office, Cabinet Room, The Mace of Parliament—all inspected. One remark made by Mr. Fraser to the children is well worth repeating for the benefit of boys and girls not fortunate enough to be with us, it was "This Parliament is yours as well as everyone else's and I am your Representative here".

From Parliament House the party then proceeded to Yarralumla School in company with Mr. D. Sheahan who was former Headmaster at Wreck Bay and now

teaches at Yarralumla. They were able to compare this modern School with their own which incidentally isn't far behind.

Back to Headquarters for a delicious luncheon prepared and served by the ladies of the Y.W.C.A. then off again this time to the Australian War Memorial to meet Major McGrath, Administrator of the Memorial. The Major spared what must have been valuable time to personally conduct a tour of the Shrine of Remembrance, explaining the significance of the various structures. Another remark well worth remembering was when Major McGrath explained that the Memorial was in memory to those who had fallen in wars for Australia, and included in the fallen were many of the same blood as the children listening so intently.

Then came the guns, tanks, aeroplanes, etc., which form such a part of the Memorial and it was with great reluctance the group were finally prised away some two hours later. On the return trip to Headquarters deviations were made so that such sights as the American War Memorial, Foreign Embassies, Swimming Pool could be observed.

Having a little time to spare before dinner the children were allowed a short shopping spree in Civic Centre as it was apparent several had hot coins which had been burning holes all afternoon.

Another fine meal provided by the ladies, and at 6 p.m. places were taken for the return home. Fortified by a parcel of chocolates thoughtfully forwarded by Mr. Fraser and lusty in voice, (every song on the hit parade was sung) the portion between Canberra and Goulburn whipped by. After this point the voices flickered and died like candles and on arrival at Wreck Bay at 10.30 p.m. not a sound was to be heard, and then to bed.

*Summing up.* Worthwhile? Definitely. The children saw and learnt they are part of and not in a great young Nation and that there are people everywhere who sincerely desire to accept them as same, proving this desire by their interest, kindness and willingness to help.

It is now up to you Patsy Brown, Maureen McLeod, Dawn Chatfield, Elaine Ardler, Kenny Brown, David McLeod, Donald Chatfield, Larry Ardler, Eric Ardler, Ross Moore. Work hard, at your lessons, at your sport, at your life, so that you can accept the challenge and take this part offered.

*A Future Target.* The Australian Iron and Steel Company's Works at Port Kembla.