

# CONGRATULATIONS, RUSSELL VALE

## A WONDERFUL EFFORT

An example of true assimilation was shown recently at Russell Vale Primary School, on the South Coast of New South Wales.

For a week eight aboriginal children, five girls and three boys, ranging in age from 11 to 13 were guests of pupils at the school.

These eight children stayed with the pupils at their homes, made brief appearances in the classrooms and toured the district in the company of their hosts, seeing the sights.

The visiting aboriginal children came from Roseby Park, Wreck Bay, and the Bomaderry Children's Home, all in the Shoalhaven district.

Welcoming the children at a civic reception in Wollongong, the Deputy Mayor of Wollongong, Ald. G. Parker, said it was a wonderful thing that the Russell Vale children should assist with the assimilation of aborigines by inviting them to their homes.

"The world would be a better place to live in if everybody accepted each other like these children have done", said Mr. Parker.

The Headmaster of the Russell Vale Public School, Mr. T. S. Nairns, who organised the visit, said he believed it was the first time a project of this kind had been undertaken in Australia.

Parents of the Russell Vale Children remarked on the cleanliness and presentation of the aboriginal children.

The visit was arranged with the co-operation of the teachers and managers involved—Mr. Gersback (H.M. Wreck Bay), Mr. Shaw (Teacher at Roseby Park), Mr. Leonard (H.M. Bomaderry), Mr. Brown (Wreck Bay), Mr. Lawson (Roseby Park), and Matron Kennedy (Bomaderry). Parents at the school gave every assistance with billets, transport, lunches, and entertainment generally. It is quite possible that this is the first occasion in Australia when a move has been made by a school to bring aboriginal children into white homes for such a period.

The visit has received much publicity, and most surely will do a lot of good.

The reaction of all parents who billeted children and the pupils at this school (250 of them) was most favourable. Each parent billeting a child later said: "I was very pleased to have the child, and I was impressed with the good manners, conduct and appearance of our visitor."

The visitors were given the V.I.P. treatment everywhere. Channel 2 were out for 5 hours one Friday, and the film will appear in some future programme. About 200 feet of film was taken, including one of the children being bidden goodbye from home on his way to school.

One day, Mr. Brown the Manager of Wreck Bay Station visited our school for our special celebrations and brought with him Mr. John Ardler from Wreck Bay, who thrilled pupils and many guests with a display of boomerang throwing. Mr. Brown also presented the school with a boomerang inscribed: "From aboriginal friends in Nowra District". This gesture was much appreciated.

### PROGRAMME OF VISIT

*Sunday, 9th July:—*

Children picked up at Kiama and conveyed to billets.

*Monday:—*

Visit to Australian Iron and Steel, Port Kembla. Lunch provided by the Company. Mr. A. Whitby, teacher at Russell Vale was in charge.

*Tuesday:—*

School Assembly—welcome to visitors by Headmaster and School Captains.

*(Afternoon):—*

Visit to plant of Bulli Spinners. Entertained by staff to refreshments. Mr. A. Blatch, Deputy Headmaster was in charge.

*Wednesday:—*

*(Morning):—*

Normal school activities.

*(Afternoon):—*

Inspection of South Bulli Coal Mine & Southern Mines Rescue Station, Bellambi. Mr. S. Sims, teacher in charge.

*Thursday:—*

*(Morning):—*

Visit to Bulli Lookout and morning tea at Woronora Dam.

*(Afternoon):—*

Visit to Wollongong. Shown over Cole's new store by Manager Mr. Russell—rides on lift and escalator.

Civic Reception at Wollongong Town Hall by Dep. Mayor, Ald. George Parker, Town Clerk, Mr. Wickham, Mayoress, Mrs. Squires, Dep. Mayoress, Mrs. G. Parker and local aldermen for Russell Vale, Mr. Jack Parker also present.

Children given refreshments after being shown mayoral robe and chain and being shown over the building.