

Distinguished Judge's Comment on Writing Quest Prize-Winners

Children in all parts of Australia are now preparing entries for the 1963 NADOC Writing Quest—details of which appear elsewhere in this issue.

The sponsors expect a record contest and are confident that children in New South Wales schools this year will play their biggest part yet.

Top honours in the 1962 short story competition went to such far-flung places as Roper River Mission in Northern Territory and Palm Island mission off the North Queensland coast.

The judge, Mr. Donald McLean, a distinguished author and former Editor of Publications for the Department of Education, described the stories submitted as "generally of a high standard of narration and formal English".

Mr. McLean said: "Most of them would compare quite favourably with those of other Australian children and their teachers are to be congratulated on the freedom of expression which their pupils have achieved. It is gratifying to note that the stories generally deal with aspects of the children's own environment. This probably accounts for the easy style of writing".

In the Essay Section, first prize (over 18 years) went to Mrs. Ruby Langford of Gunnedah Hill, Coonabarabran.

Dawn takes great pleasure in publishing the following prize-winning stories:—

SHORT STORIES

First prize over 14 years of age

An Aboriginal Camp Story



By David Daniel (16),
C.M.S. Roper River
Mission, via Darwin, N.T.

In one of our legends there is a story told to many aboriginal boys and girls in my district about three brothers.

One day the three men went away from their people to a place where they had been told by the old men not to go because it was owned by a witch. They were

told by the old men that if they dared to cut any sugarbag in the trees the old woman would surely come out from the bush and kill them. This the three men forgot and immediately started chopping down trees for the sugarbag. When they got the sugarbag they put it all in coolamons and started eating.

Later that day the old witch did come. As she came near the men she smelt the sugarbag and started shouting in a loud voice "umininulu umininulu, gniree ga-ga muji" which means "why are you stealing my sugarbag?"

When the brothers heard this they got up and started to run but the witch staggered two of them with her stick. One of the two who were killed ran into a rock in the water, but his feet were sticking out. The third ran back to his tribe and the next day a crowd of warlike men came to fight the witch.

All the men threw a spear at the witch, but not one touched her except one thrown by a very short man who was left-handed. This man threw his spear with all his might and killed the witch. When she was dead the men made a big fire and burned her.

Special prize in the over 14 age group

An Aboriginal Story



By Evelyn Nemo (16),
Palm Island, via Townsville,
(St. Michael's School)

Once there was an old aboriginal who was the chief of all the aborigines.

One day it was very dry and the chief said "we must leave today and travel where there is food for our people". That afternoon they travelled northward. It was getting dark so they had to camp and in the morning they ate some food.

They had to walk again and they came to a creek, went across it, and just before dark the men had to find food. They caught one kangaroo and two emus. That night they had a feast. The people sang corroboree and danced all night long until daybreak. In the morning they came to a big river where they saw kangaroos and emus.