

N.A.D.O.C. Essay Results . . .

JUDGE PRAISES HIGH QUALITY OF ENTRIES

A 15-year-old part-Aboriginal boy from Coraki (N.S.W.) won the 14 to 21 years section of the essay competition organised by the National Aborigines' Day Observance Committee (N.S.W.).

The successful young essayist is Keith Morgan, who traces his early ancestry to the Gullibal, Bunjalung and Waka Waka tribes of the Richmond River area and to the north and west of Brisbane.

The prize in the under 14 section of the competition was awarded to 11-year-old Malcolm Davis of Forster (N.S.W.), also a part-Aboriginal.

The theme of the essays was "My Ancestors, the Aborigines".

Integrated with its overall aim of stimulating community-interest in Aboriginal problems, the National Aborigines' Day Observance Committee seeks by competitions and other means to highlight aboriginal skills and abilities.

For this reason, entry in the essay contest was restricted to Aboriginal or part-Aboriginal competitors, and N.A.D.O.C. was gratified by the promising potential these young writers revealed.

The prizes for the competition were donated by the Rural Bank.

As first prize-winners, Keith Morgan and Malcolm Davis will each be given a five-day conducted coach tour to the Snowy Mountains and Canberra. In addition, Malcolm won a copy of the book "Spotlight on Australia", presented by the Australian Publicity Council.

The boys will take their tours during the August-September school holidays, accompanied by a suitable older companion.

Travel tickets for their tours were presented to Keith and Malcolm by the President of the Rural Bank, Mr. John C. Fletcher, at the N.A.D.O.C. annual ceremony on July 10.

Keith Morgan, the older prize-winner, is a son of Mr. Jim Morgan, full-blooded member of the Aborigines Welfare Board.

The younger boy, Malcolm Davis, was in Taree hospital with an arm broken at football when he received news of his win.

Commenting on the prize-winning essays, Mr. Donald McLean, Editor of Publications, N.S.W. Department of Education, who judged the competition, said one very pleasing aspect was the "dual pride" shown by the young people.

Allied with a pride in their native Australian background and an appreciation of the ability of their ancestors to live and survive in primitive conditions was evidence of a genuine pleasure that they themselves were able to make a contribution to the modern community into which they had been born.

He found in the essays, said Mr. McLean, no trace of any feeling of inferiority. This gave him—and it must give all other interested Australians—great satisfaction, that here were young people who retained their proud awareness of their ancient traditions while themselves being integrated into the Australian community today.

This aura of dual pride made it specially fitting that the two first prize-winners would have an opportunity to see such notable examples of national development as the Snowy Mountains hydro-electric scheme and the Australian Capital.

Mr. McLean commended the high standard of writing in both Keith Morgan's and Malcolm Davis' essays, as well as the organisation of their material. Although it was an easy matter to select the first prize-winners, he added, there were many other essays of merit.

Mr. McLean said: "Since the essay competition was first conducted in 1960 there has been a noticeable improvement in the standard of composition and writing amongst the competitors. Parallel with this there has become evident through their essays a much deeper interest in their origins and a pride in the resourcefulness and social traditions of their forefathers.

"Many of the competitors have referred to the systems of consanguinity grouping and taboos which were invented for the preservation of the Aboriginal community. They have also referred quite often to the rich heritage of legends which their ancestors handed on to them.

"It is very pleasing to read so many essays which reveal no trace of a feeling of inferiority, but treat with dignity and understanding the histories of their families.

"It is quite remarkable how many have written their opinion that they would very much prefer to be living under the circumstances they enjoy today than to have faced the hardships in the lives of their forefathers.

"Since the topics set in recent years have all been related to the lives and traditions of Aboriginal children, the essays have been much more interesting and natural than they were at a time when the choice of topics was less closely concerned with their lives."

Here are the winning essays: