

222 Children Enter Savage Club Art Competition

Entries from 222 Aboriginal children throughout Australia in an art competition organized by the Sydney Savage Club were judged to be "generally high and in some cases, excellent."

The exhibition of entries in the Bank of New South Wales gallery was attended by the Chief Secretary, Mr E. A. Willis, late in February.

To the pressmen and club members present Mr Willis said that one of the most satisfying things he had seen since becoming Chief Secretary was the growing interest in community awareness of Aboriginal affairs.

"I heartily commend the Savage Club for its newest endeavour—this most successful art competition for Aboriginal children," Mr Willis said.

"There is a false impression in the community that Aborigines have lower intelligence, aptitude and ability than Europeans. But experts have shown that a cross section of the Aboriginal population has the same abilities as Europeans, and tends to excel in things such as art.

"We must remember that their skills are thousands of years old. It is only in recent times that we have seen, in the work of Albert Namatjira and others, the Aborigine's ability to adapt his natural talents to depict his interpretation of his environment in the glorious colours of the Australian countryside.

"I am not surprised to see so many vividly coloured landscapes in the style of Namatjira.

"I hope this competition will become an annual event, because it will help to bring out the latent talent of Aborigines and extend their self reliance and expression.

"Only recently I received a phone call from Los Angeles asking if I knew an agent who could purchase bark paintings in quantity. The American said there was a great market for them in the U.S.A.

"I asked him how many barks he wanted, and he said his initial order could be for 50,000 to 100,000.

"I believe Australia's annual production of bark paintings is about 500, so there should be strong demand for them for quite a few years."

The exhibition was opened by Savage Club president Mr David Hunter, M.L.A. The club was formed in 1934, and consists of many prominent

men in all walks of life who feel that the development of art, music, literature and the sciences is important to the community in Sydney and Australia.

For many years the club has sponsored scholarships for singing and musical accomplishments, and has made awards for cartoons and films.

Mr Adrian Ashton, club secretary and one of the judges, said it was strange that the club had not previously initiated an Aboriginal art competition because the club's motifs and badge were based on Aboriginal art. He thanked the people and authorities who assisted the club and announced the names of the winning entrants.

PRIZE WINNERS

Colour Section

First (\$30)

Rosemary Elizabeth WASSA (aged 14)

Umeewarra Mission, Port Augusta, South Australia

Title: "The Bluff" (watercolour)

Second (\$20)

Roderick BEDFORD (aged 14)

Halls Creek, Western Australia

Title: "The Never Never Land" (watercolour)

Third (\$10)

Eva WILLIAMS (aged 15)

Umeewarra Mission, Port Augusta, South Australia

Title: "View of the Flinders Ranges, S.A." (watercolour)

Three Special Prizes (\$5) each

Dorothy GUWALKUWAL (aged 12)

Methodist Mission, Milingimbi, via Darwin, N.T.

Title: "I was making a picture about pattern" (crayon)

Joe NEPARRJA (aged 13)

Methodist Mission, Milingimbi, via Darwin, N.T.

Title: "At the Plantation" (crayon)

Victor SEBASIO (aged 12)

Bamaga State School, via Thursday Island, Qld.

Title: "Corroboree" (crayon)

Black and White Section

First (\$15)

Benedict JACKSON (aged 16)