

# *Mothers to Generations of Aborigines*

When parents have emotional problems, trouble in adjusting to life, and find it impossible to provide a stable home for their family, what happens to the children? When marriages break up and home becomes a hell of insecurity, excessive drinking and screaming rows, what happens to the children? One answer to this question is provided by the United Aborigines Mission at Bomaderry, near Nowra, N.S.W.

Three women here have dedicated their lives in an attempt to create a substitute home for neglected children. The Bomaderry Children's Home has a long history. It started in a now disused cottage in 1905. The three present "mothers"—Miss Alice Barker, Miss Laurie Hogg and Miss M. Kennedy—began their work in 1942, 1949 and 1953 respectively. Each is in charge of a cottage which takes a maximum of eight children. The cottages—Ebenezer, Maranatha and Bethel—are run exactly as normal homes are run. Each "mother" does the cooking, cleaning, washing and ironing for her "family". At present the U.A.M. is building an administrative cottage. They are hoping to have a married couple in it, who can take over most of the administrative work from Matron Kennedy. This would relieve her to devote her full time to her family.

The whole place is geared to giving the children a normal home. The "mothers of Bomaderry" try to instil a sense of belonging and of security in the youngsters. Each child is helped individually as the "mothers" strive to build them up physically and spiritually and give them the warmth and affection they need.

Some of the children who arrive at the Home are emotionally wrecked. There have been extreme cases. For example, one child was *so* tied up, that it couldn't even cry. It took Matron Kennedy months to unravel this child.

*Above right: Matron Kennedy, Sister Barker and Alice Adams. Alice has lived at the U.A.M. Home since she was a baby*

*Middle right: The original U.A.M. cottage*

*At right: Someone trying to see and not be seen—at Bomaderry*

