

So I went down to the old Board Office in the Domain in Sydney where I saw Mr. Charles Pettitt, who was the Secretary of the old Aborigines Protection Board. I told him that my wife and I wanted to go to Carowra Tank to work among the aborigines.



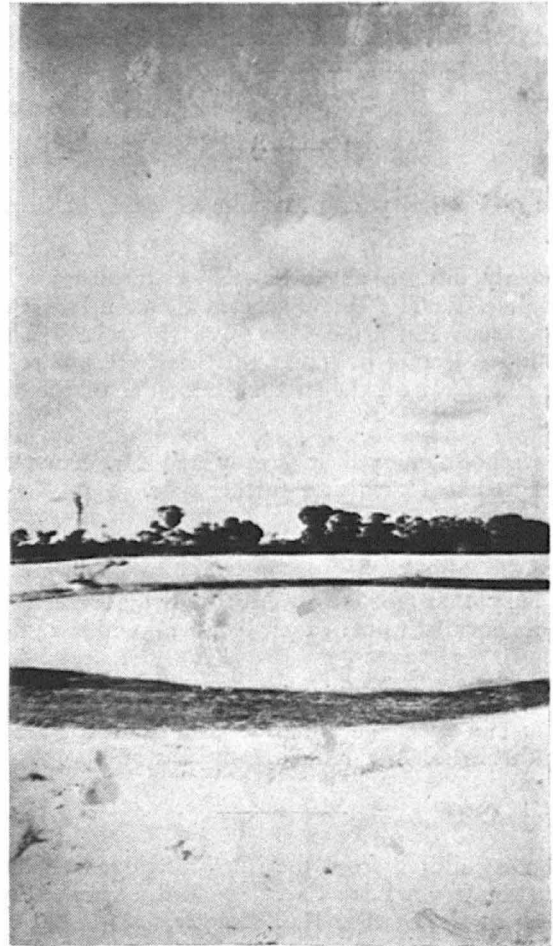
Jimmy Buttons, an old-timer of Corowra.

I had no trouble in convincing Mr. Pettitt that I had had the necessary experience in dealing with people, but he wanted to be quite sure that I could also do road repairs on a "T" model Ford truck. I wasn't at all sure of this, but I told him I thought I could keep it going. Later in the day I went to the Ford people in Sydney and got a Ford Service Manual—a book which told me all there was to know about a Ford. I studied this book until I arrived at Carowra Tank.

After a long and terribly dusty journey on the old Broken Hill Express train, we arrived at Ivanhoe in the middle of the night. No one turned up to meet the train until after daylight. We found our way to the pub and, after shaking a thick coating of red dust from a bed, we lay down to smother in dust for the rest of the night. It was in the middle of January and in the midst of a terrible drought. The fine, dry dust lifted into the air with the slightest breeze.

After a breakfast of goat chops and sand, we went out on to the verandah of the hotel where we were greeted by a clatter of loose bolts and bearings housed

in what we were informed was the "T" model truck I had come so far to nurse. Harry Pettitt, who was driving the truck, introduced himself and the truck, and after explaining that the top gear was the only one which worked, he just said: "There you are, boss. She's all yours. Jump in and drive her home." But it wasn't quite as easy as it sounds. This is the way it had to be started: First, crank the engine. Second, everybody push until the truck was moving at a running pace. Finally, all jump in as the driver pushes the hand brake forward and lets her straight into top gear. Thus I performed my first duty upon entry into the service of the Government of New South Wales.



The tank at Carowra.

The truck is not important to this story. It is important only because it made me learn all about something I knew little of before.

I must leave you now. When I come back next month, I'll be telling you about people whom some of you know very well. You might even be a part of this next story.