

Aboriginal Baby Show—*continued.*



Some more of the mothers and their babies.

Ald. Long congratulated the Aboriginal mothers on the way the babies were presented, which indicated that they were fully aware that the babies were something precious to guard.

“I hope the mothers will take full advantage of the assistance and advice given by Sister Hack, for I am sure it will be of benefit.” said Ald. Long, “and I hope you will accept the standards she sets. If you don’t it will be your own fault.”

In touching on the educational advantages now available to Aboriginal youth at Burntbridge and other schools, Ald. Long said any position in Australia was now open to Aborigines if they would only work and take advantage of the opportunities offered.

Mr. A. Norton, Aboriginal Welfare Officer at Kempsey, in extending thanks to the Apex Club and Sister Hack, said this baby show was something of a community assimilation effort, “starting at the bottom”.

Awards were as follows:—

SECTION 1: 6 MONTHS AND UNDER.

Champion Boy, Angus Holten, Greenhill.

Champion Girl, Lena Atkinson, Bellbrook. Best baby—Baby Stroller.

Consolation awards to Ian Ward, Dorothy Vale, Carmen Quinlan, Essie Smith, Dale Russell, Russel Gray.

SECTION 2: 6 TO 12 MONTHS.

Dorothy Smith first, with consolation prizes to Karen Kelly, Rosslyn Silva, Warren Jarrett.

SECTION 3: 1 TO 2 YEARS.

Karen Ward first, with consolation prizes to Alf Moylan, Patricia Donovan, Patrick Quinlan.

SECTION 4: 2 TO 3 YEARS.

John Borger first, with consolation prizes to Connie Smith, Gloria Little, Rosalie Dungay.

Most improved baby since Sister Hack has been visiting Burntbridge, Warren Waters.

The Function of Christian Missions—*continued.*

The change in the spirit of the people is remarkable. They sing at the top of their voices, and they sing beautifully. Previously they were forbidden to dance the native dances as it was thought these were reminders of their old customs, but John Warby encourages them to dance and lets them store the masks under the mission house. The people are magnificent dancers and some of the masks are works of art.

All this new spirit and activity centres around the Lockhart River Aboriginal Christian Co-operative Ltd. When John Warby arrived at Lockhart he realised that the main lack was men to do any needful work. The men were mostly away at Thursday Island working as indentured labour on the trochus boats. Trochus is a large pink conical shell made into pearl buttons, and its present price is £400 a ton. John Warby convinced both mission authorities and the men that their rightful place was working in Lockhart.

They bought the lugger, “Cape Grey”, and after splitting the first year’s profits between men and mission, the mission was able to buy an old blitz waggon and flooring for the new houses. Today there are three boats each with an aboriginal captain and crew.

The Australian Board of Missions, in 1953, sent the Reverend W. A. Clint, Director of Native Co-operatives, to Lockhart. The natives held meetings, the idea of a co-operative was discussed and patiently explained. Directors were elected, the co-operative was registered. Forty per cent. of the gross takings from the trochus boats goes for insurance, upkeep, educational and welfare projects. Forty per cent. goes to the men and they are paid in proportion to the trochus they bring in. Twenty per cent. goes into a reserve fund.

There is today a beautiful new church at Lockhart, the most lovely I know, a church walled with ironbark, with great bloodwood pillars; and it is the centre of the life of the settlement. But the Christian Co-operative is, for the three hundred odd inhabitants of Lockhart, an essential part of their Christian way of life. They are working together for the good of all in fellowship. They have a new self-respect. They feel that they are part of something worthwhile, they are the forerunners of a great movement to uplift their people.