

Children fly off on a Great Adventure

IT was quite a day one Tuesday recently, for four Kempsey children. In brand new dresses, carefully creased trousers; hair slicked back and brushed to a high gloss, they were off to Sydney. Some were going for the first time, but all were having their first air flight.

The children were Aboriginal kiddies from Greenhill and Burnt Bridge, travelling to Sydney to be the guests of the Mosman-North Sydney Apex Club for the next fortnight. Butler Air Transport gave them their air travel free.

There were Ana Smith, 12, James Webster, 12, Rhonda Hoskins, 13, and Gerald Hoskins, 13, barely concealing excitement as they waited for a first glimpse of the aircraft that was to take them south.

Mothers, brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles and others were at the 'drome to see them go and three lads (on a treble "dink") pedalled out from Greenhill to wave goodbye.

Mothers stroked straying locks, patted down flaring frocks and earnestly admonished:

"Don't sniff: blow your nose."

"Don't forget to clean your teeth."

"Don't forget to wash your hands before you eat."

"Don't forget to say 'please' and 'thank you'!"

"Just you behave yourself, or watch out!"

Proud, motherly affection, masking their tension, too.

There were no tears; no goodbyes.

The kiddies went; wide-eyed, silent, grimly clutching tickets and bags and jumpers.

Welfare Officer, Sister D. O'Brien, marshalled them cheerfully to the plane, and they were off as quickly as they came.

The tight tableau of parents, sisters, brothers, uncles aunts and others dissolved and disappeared.

A small boy sighed wistfully: "They're as high up as they've ever been."

They were, in every way. Their great adventure had begun.

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Mr. Kelly was described as one of the most popular and most respected men in Parliament by his political opponent, Mr. Davis Hughes, M.L.A.

Looking across the Council table at the Minister, Mr. Hughes added jocularly, "I don't know whether it is significant that we are sitting on opposite sides of the table again today".

The Chief Secretary, Mr. Hughes added, was a man from the country and knew country problems, and had held the Bathurst seat by the strength of his own personality. As Chief Secretary, he was Minister for Immigration, Minister for Co-operative Societies, Minister for Tourist Activities besides being in charge of Aborigine Welfare.

Responding, the Chief Secretary suggested that his hosts in Armidale had made a mistake in showing him something of the city's chief features. He would be able now to claim similar provisions for his own city of Bathurst!

Returning Mr. Hughes's glance across the table he said, "Mr. Hughes today is sitting on the right hand of the Mayor. I don't like the look of that—the Government side is on the right hand of the Speaker in Parliament.

On this occasion as well the Minister warmly praised the work of the A.A.A.A. "Quite frankly I have never known more outstanding work for the aborigines than you have performed in this centre", he declared. He had seen, he went on, the utter hate and disregard for the feelings of the unfortunate coloured people in Harlem. It was good to get back to a country where there were people who showed a Christian feeling towards others who were also God's creatures.

"The work you are doing cannot be measured in £'s, but nevertheless it is an example to the rest of the world. If it were practised more we would find fewer misunderstandings in the world today," he said.

Subsequently the Minister lunched with the Mayor, Mr Hughes, and leading citizens before going on to the cottage in Chapel Street.