



*KIMBERLEYS PADRE Rev. Arthur Cottrell swims with some of the children. Foreground: Alma Lilly (left) and **Dolly Dimples**.*

### ***Never-Never children discover the sea***

Eighteen children from Hall's Creek, in the Kimberleys of Western Australia, have just had an eight-day seaside holiday they will long remember. The holiday was at Darwin, and for some it was the first sight of the sea.

THE children live during the school year at the Australian Inland Mission hostel at Hall's Creek, under the supervision of Mrs. Lois Hurse, formerly of Melbourne, who was in charge of the holiday camp.

Their homes are on cattle stations in an area 650 miles east to west and 490 miles north to south. Their nearest beach is at Wyndham, 230 miles away - a beach impossible for swimming because of crocodiles, mangroves, and mud.

(To give an idea of how far away in the Never-Never some of them live: Two of the 18 at Darwin have a 12-mile pack-horse ride to the nearest air-strip, and then three changes of planes from home to Hall's Creek.)

Four of the holidaymakers had never seen the sea before, and half had never swum in salt water.

The eighteen children, ranging in age from seven to twelve years, made the most of the eight days at the United Church camp at the sloping beach at Lee Point, about eight miles from Darwin.

Their day began with a swim before breakfast, and sometimes not even the inducement of a projected visit to the pictures was enough to get them out of the water to change into "town" clothes.

Duties in the camp were light. Mrs. Hurse and her offsider, Miss Sue Sandral, also from Melbourne, did the cooking, while the children helped with the washing up and made their own beds.

One very big day included visits to the R.A.A.F. station, a wild-life sanctuary, the wharves, a picnic lunch, meeting the Mayor, Mr. L. D. Richardson, at the Town Hall, and afternoon-tea at the Residency with the Administrator, Mr. Archer, and Mrs. Archer.

Another day the children went for a harbor cruise in a Naval vessel, and on the Sunday they attended the United Church service.



*PLAYING GARAGES are Italian Rocky Magnoli (left), Jackie Shore, and Tiger Bennett. Generally, the boys made cattle stations instead of the traditional sand castles.*



*WASHING-UP HELP is given Sue Sandral, assistant to Mrs. Lois Hurse at the Lee Point camp, by two of the girls. The camp was affiliated with the Far North Children's Health Scheme.*

The Hall's Creek holiday was the result of Mrs. Hurse's visit to the Lee Point camp during a recent stay in Darwin. The United Church minister in Darwin, the Rev. C. Pearce, who showed Mrs. Hurse the camp, casually suggested the idea. She was enthusiastic because an existing scheme for sending Central Australian children to Adelaide for a seaside holiday had always neglected the too far-away Kimberleys children.

The Education Department in Perth permitted the camp to be held during the school term. This was necessary because parents otherwise see their children only during the holidays.

The trip meant an alteration of schedules of the MacRobertson Miller Airline Company, which flew the hostel's weekly consignment of fresh fruit and vegetables on to Darwin as its contribution.

Bulk of the funds was raised by A.I.M. supporters in the south.

"Full air fares were paid for those whose parents could not afford it, and £7 of the fare for the others, and pocket-money for all of them," said Mrs. Hurse.

A good percentage of pocket-money, incidentally, was spent on ice-cream on sticks, never seen in Hall's Creek.

Swimming togs were donated by a mail-order firm in Perth.