

VALE! ERNIE SMITHERS

POPULAR OFFICER DIES



Readers of *Dawn* will learn with great regret of the passing of Mr. Ernest Charles Smithers on the 26th September, at the Caroonna Aboriginal Station. Mr. Smithers, who was visiting the Station at the time in his official capacity, was taken suddenly ill and collapsed. He was buried on the 29th September in the Church of England portion of the Rookwood

Cemetery, after a service at St. Paul's Church, Burwood. His funeral was attended by many of his colleagues and friends, the Chairman of the Board, Mr. Buttsworth, and the Superintendent, Mr. Saxby, who were absent in the country, being represented by the Secretary, Mr. Mullins.

The late Mr. Smithers was known and well regarded by aborigines throughout the length and breadth of New South Wales. Many of them helped him in the installation and maintenance of the water supply systems on the various Aboriginal Stations. He always spoke very kindly of them and was unstinted in his praise of the manner in which they worked. He was a genial soul, and he made lasting friendships at every centre which he visited and throughout those Services which had contact with the Aborigines Welfare Board.

Mr. Smithers, who was 68 at the time of his death, joined the Public Service on the 2nd May, 1912, and retired on the 31st December last. During the early period of his service he was Fisheries Inspector at Urunga and, in conjunction with these duties, was Manager of the Aboriginal Station. He transferred to Sydney in March, 1930, as Inspector of Aborigines, and held that designation at the time of his death, although in latter years his work was mainly concerned with the installation and maintenance of the various water supply systems. Mr. Smithers had high qualifications as an engineer, and the water supply systems on the various Stations were all designed and installed by him. When he joined the Board, in 1930, very few of the Stations had what could be regarded as a permanent water

supply. Most of them depended on very problematical tank supplies, and Mr. Smithers then combined his duties as an Inspector with the practical service of ensuring that the aborigines would never be short of that very necessary commodity—water. It was not all plain sailing, however. Funds were limited, but by acquiring second-hand plant, Mr. Smithers, with his own hands, brought these old engines and pumps to a state of efficiency that in the aggregate saved the Government hundreds of pounds.

Mr. Smithers was actually due for retirement in 1949, but his services were retained until the end of 1952. He then decided that he would finally retire, but the Department was not to lose the services of such a useful officer. When the occasion arose or there was a special emergency, his services were called upon in his engineering capacity, and it was whilst he was engaged on one of these jobs that the end came.

The readers of *Dawn* will join with us in extending to his widow and family our sincere condolences.

J.R.M.



A happy young couple face the world. After their recent wedding, Bob Andy and his lovely wife, formerly Valerie Thomas (centre) pose with bridesmaid Harriet Thomas and best man Basil Andy.