

## The Formation of the Dutch Folk Dancing Group

During the 1950s, Sydney used to have an annual festival - the Waratah Festival. In 1951, a group of newly arrived Dutch immigrants took part in the procession which formed part of the festival. Dressed in typical Dutch Costumes, the group performed some traditional folk dances during a delay in the procession, and were later awarded a prize for their performance. Later that evening, January 29th, 1951, during discussions of the day's events, Dr. Cornelius Wouters came up with the idea of forming a permanent Dutch Folk Dancing group, and so 45 years ago, the dancing group was established.

The founder and driving force behind the group, Dr. Wouters promoted the Dutch culture wherever and whenever possible. He moved through many aspects of our culture and could speak more than 10 different languages. He made great contributions not only to the Dutch community but also to immigrants of many other nationalities: Before his death at the age of 81, he received many distinctions. Among these were the Gertrud Kumm Award for citizenship in 1961, and many knighthoods from various countries, including Knight of the Order of Oranje Nassau (Ridder in de Orde van Oranje Nassau). To this day, the Wouters family has remained associated with the group. Today, the late Dr. Wouters' son Jan has accepted patronship of the club.

The Dutch Folk Dancing Group is open to people of all ages and is an enjoyable family activity. In fact, the club now has members from many ethnic backgrounds, and from 5 years of age to over 60! The club now consists of two sections - the juniors (children's group) and seniors. Many of the current seniors began in the children's group and are now adults with children of their own.

Anyone wishing to join the group, whatever age or nationality, is welcome to find out more about our club by speaking to one of our members this evening, or by phoning Francine Davis (Secretary) on 804-7101 or Theo Boelhouwer (President) on 626-9672.