

“ NO BASIS IN FACT . . . ”

Welfare Board Chairman Decries Theory Put Forward on Education

The Chairman of the Aborigines Welfare Board, Mr. A. G. Kingsmill, in a special message to *Dawn*, condemns as completely false the suggestion that “aboriginal children, as a whole, do not possess an intelligence quotient comparable to that of their white counterpart.”

“This is a theory which has been quoted by some people in the community when giving their views on aboriginal children and their education,” Mr. Kingsmill said.

“The theory has no basis in fact and is a view which has never been held by the Board or its officers.”

Continuing, Mr. Kingsmill said: “By an unhappy circumstance, reference to this theory made in the Board’s annual report, tabled in Parliament late last year, was misinterpreted in some quarters.

“I hastened to correct any wrong impression it might have created in a Press statement issued last December.

“Subsequently, however, the original report in its unclarified shape gained further publicity. This led to the New South Wales Teachers’ Federation setting out their views on the theory and on education generally.

“I feel *Dawn* readers will be interested in the letter from the Teachers’ Federation and the Board’s reply which follows it below.”

Mr. M. Kennett, acting general secretary of the Teachers’ Federation, in his letter, said of the theory:

“The implication is that the aboriginal people are an inferior race and this erroneous contention can be used to justify all kinds of discrimination and repression. In fact, carried to the extreme, theories of racial superiority have been used to justify the most monstrous crimes against humanity.

“The statement is in the sharpest conflict with the conclusions of the UNESCO Statement on Race: ‘According to present knowledge there is no proof that the groups of mankind differ in their innate mental characteristics, whether in respect of intelligence or temperament. The scientific evidence indicates that the range of mental capacities in all ethnic groups is much the same.’

“The UNESCO statement is borne out by the findings of many eminent research workers in the field of intelligence testing.



Mr. Kingsmill

“Thus the Research Bulletin of the Educational Testing Service, Princeton, New Jersey, in 1953, provides a survey of literature relating to the effects of cultural background on test scores. Its report states that ‘there is an increasing amount of evidence in the literature supporting the view that cultural factors do affect intelligence scores in many instances to a significant extent.’

“A similar view is expressed by the authority Klineberg who states: ‘The net result of all the research that has been conducted in this field is that there is no scientific proof of innate racial difference in intelligence: that the obtained difference in test results are best explained in terms of factors in the social and educational environment.’