

Meet the Chairman!



[Photo by courtesy Sunday Telegraph]

I regard my appointment as Chairman of the Aborigines Welfare Board as an honour and privilege, particularly as I succeed Mr. C. J. Buttsworth who was so sincerely devoted to the welfare of the aboriginal people of this State.

So far, I have attended only one meeting of the Board but have already learned at first hand how devoted your Board really is in promoting your welfare and achieving its objectives of seeing the aboriginal people assimilated into the structure of the general community and taking their place side by side with their white brothers and sisters.

Last May I had the pleasure of making a tour of the North Coast with the Superintendent of Aborigines Welfare, Mr. Saxby, and visiting Taree, Kempsey, Nambucca Heads, Woodenbong, Tabulam and Cabbage Tree Island. On that trip I had my first real opportunity of meeting groups of aboriginal people, seeing their children at work in the schools and appreciating how far they have progressed, with the aid of the Board, along the path of assimilation. It is difficult to pick out individual occasions, as there are so many, but I shall never forget the pleasure of hearing the beautiful singing of the children at the Tabulam School, the care and devotion which Mrs. Simon and Mrs. Marr

of Taree lavished on the little Church on the Station, and the pride and happiness of the Williams family who had been established in a home in the town of Casino. In so many places we visited we saw abundant evidence that the advice of the former Chairman, Mr. Buttsworth, the Board itself and its officers, was being taken and high standards and habits of living being maintained.

Of course, in quite a number of homes which I visited, the conditions were, unfortunately, not so good, but it was clear to me that the aboriginal people were capable of winning the respect of the general community. With the aid of religion and the backing of social and public spirited organisations in the community, it should be possible to help those who are now lagging behind on the road to assimilation to equip themselves for acceptance by the general community.

I hope to visit more Stations before very long and I look forward to meeting more of you. I hope you will regard me as you regard other members of the Board, as

Your sincere friend,
A. G. KINGSMILL.
Chairman, Aborigines Welfare Board.