

Thursday, February 18, 1965

Facing up to facts

TO many people in this country the campaign by students of Sydney University through New South Wales country areas, drawing attention to discrimination against Aborigines, must be regarded as a provocative and unnecessary act.

While this reaction is understandable, it is, unfortunately, one which is not in the best interests of Australia.

It does not recognise that there is in Australia widespread discrimination against Aborigines.

Partly, this discrimination is overt, being expressed in laws which deprive Aborigines of equal treatment, as in matters like equal pay for equal work.

Partly, it is covert discrimination.

It is to this latter type of discrimination that the students' action is principally directed.

There are important reasons why discrimination of all kinds against Aborigines should be removed.

The principal reason must be a moral objection to the continued treatment of Aborigines as inferior people who are to be refused equal opportunities to live a full life in their own country.

To be able to hold up our heads in the world, we must improve our domestic practices.

Growing up

It is important for us in Australia to be able to hold up our heads before other nations, showing that we do not have any dirty racial practices which we are trying to keep hidden from the rest of the world, where many nations are having to face racial issues squarely and honestly as part of an attempt to grow up.

Australian discrimination against, and generally shabby treatment of, Aborigines is becoming increasingly well-known and discussed around the world.

Any sensitive traveller can report his own experiences of being closely questioned on this matter.