

SMOKE SIGNALS

► Early in September, the Sun-Herald carried a report of how an English doctor tried to build a super-boomerang which he claimed could behead a kangaroo at 300 yards. Later, a Mr C. Burwell of Dora Creek wrote in to the paper claiming that in 40 years of boomerang throwing and making, he had never seen a boomerang thrown more than 100 yards. He added: "Beheading a kangaroo at 300 yards? What utter tripe!" The photo of the English doctor throwing his boomerang showed that his grip of the weapon was entirely wrong.

Meanwhile, the Sun-Herald sent to England for a couple of the super-boomerangs. They took them out to La Perouse to be tested by Joe Timbery. After a trial, Joe declared the super-boomerang the most dangerous weapon he had ever used. He had to wear a glove to protect his hands. This had never been necessary with Australian boomerangs, he said. The English weapon was "hard to control" commented Joe, and "it's thick and thin in all the wrong places and it doesn't cut the air the way it should." The two super-boomerangs were later destroyed.

► Studies were started in South Australia recently to see if any of the state's Aboriginal reserves have big enough kangaroo populations to allow kangaroo farming by the Aborigines who live on the reserves. The 'roos would not be herded like cattle but allowed to live and breed normally. When they reached a stage of over-population the excess only would be killed. The carcasses would be sold to pet food factories and the furs to tourists. The farming would be run as a commercial venture to help Aborigines gain management experience.

Joe Timbery, trying out the Super-Boomerang that wasn't
photo courtesy of the Sun-Herald.



► The other day, I was nosing around somewhere or other (I'm always doing that—"Sniffy" they call me . . .). I heard some Aboriginal kids discussing an intelligence test that they had taken. This led me to think about the terrific damage done by loose thinking about the whole intelligence test business. People are made to feel bad if they think they did not do as well as the next fellow. It is important to know though:

- these tests are made for white middle class kids only. They *cannot* accurately measure the intelligence of children from a different background.

- No intelligence test takes into account the mood of the person being tested. If he feels resentful, or shy, or feels that the person testing him expects him to do badly, he *will* do badly. It is no measure of his true intelligence. If the same test is given without the student realizing that it is an *intelligence* test, then he will often do a great deal better, for then the human ambition to do well takes over.

- If the person being tested is bored, he will do badly. I remember, as a high school student playing with a test which I felt was only silly. Yet on the basis of that test's results, I was told to leave school and do a commercial course. I was not felt to be bright enough to go through high school! Well somehow I managed. So don't take this stuff too seriously, huh?

► Mysterious footprints said to be made by a "Spinifex Man" have been found in the Western Australian desert near Lake Wells, about 90 miles north-east of Laverton. The tracks were photographed by a white dingo trapper, Peter Muir, who has lived with the Lake Wells Aborigines for more than 20 years. Muir is an excellent bushman who has been through all the Aboriginal rituals. He has deep initiation scars on his chest and arms. The tracks that he photographed are like the tracks made by a young camel, but with a broad, flat toe more than 8 inches long with a large claw at the end. Local Aborigines believe the tracks belong to Tjangara, a legendary 10 feet tall monster which they say clubs humans to death before eating them. Tjangara, they say, has roamed the area for thousands of years.

Various people have suggested that the prints could have been made by a kangaroo, a deformed camel, or something bumping along behind a car. These ideas have been rejected. Museum experts have been shown the tracks and admit that they are baffled by them.