

14/9.
EMBARGO : NOT FOR RELEASE BEFORE 6.30 PM (EST)



PRIME MINISTER

MACQUARIE NETWORK WEEKLY BROADCAST

BY THE PRIME MINISTER, THE RT. HON.
WILLIAM McMAHON, CH, MP

EDUCATION AND CHILD CARE

Interviewer: Paul Lynch

14 SEPTEMBER 1972

Q. Prime Minister, in the Budget Speech of Mr Snedden last month, it was announced that the amount the Commonwealth Government will spend on education is to be \$426 million, which is an increase of approximately 20 per cent on the figures for the current year. First of all, why have you decided on such a large increase - 20 per cent - for education?

PM: Because we give education very high priority in our social welfare programme and we think that every Australian in every Australian school is entitled to a decent education. That is why we agreed to the increase of \$72 million in this year.

Q. How is the extra \$72 million to be spent?

PM: In very many ways. Probably the first one I should mention is the universities and colleges of advanced education. That is, we make grants to the States so that assistance can be given in these two quarters. We are also giving very substantial assistance to the States relating to capital grants for school construction, secondary school science laboratories and libraries, technical colleges and teachers' colleges, and we are also giving per capita grants for independent schools. Could I go back a little and just remind you that on May 11, of course, we embarked on a totally new programme when we decided to give unmatched capital grants for the public schools and per capita grants of about...oh, a substantial amount that would take up to 40 per cent of the cost of educating a child at a private school.

.../2

Q. Prime Minister, you put one foot in the pool of child care - pre-school child care - with this current Budget. You announced that you will spend \$5 million to benefit children from low-income and other special need families. What is the thinking behind that?

PM: We believe that people in need who have to go to work and who have children have a right to have those children looked after while they are at work. And, consequently, we have given priority for admission to kiddies who are in special need. That is in the case of single parent families and to the children of sick and incapacitated people. Now what we have done here - we have given a subsidy so that the cost to the person sending the child to the school can be reduced. We will give unmatched capital grants to non-profit organisations so that they can equip the schools and we will also provide staff subsidies. In other words, this is concentrating on the area of greatest need and to ensure that the kiddy is looked after.

Q. Earlier I used the phrase - "putting a foot in the pool," Prime Minister because it has been suggested by organisations such as the Women's Electoral Lobby that you could go much further in this area. Could you see that happening in future years and in future Budgets?

PM: Yes, of course I could, but do you mean child care, or...

Q. Yes, child care.

PM: Child care...well, this is a good start, and so far as I can make out - and I was one of those who pushed this relentlessly to ensure that it came into the Budget - I believe it is a very, very good start, but of course we would only regard it as the beginning of a process.

Q. Prime Minister, the matter of giving State aid to private schools is still a controversial one. We have had a number of calls on this station from people calling in saying the Government should not do this because it steps over the margin of separation there should be between Church and State. What is your response to that?

PM: I don't agree with that. My attitude is clear and so is the attitude of the Government. And I stated it a few moments ago. We believe in giving aid to all children, irrespective of their denomination or whether they go to a church school or not, whether they go to a public school or whether they go to an independent school. And why shouldn't we? They are Australian kiddies. They are entitled to be looked after. They are entitled to have a good education.

Q. And you feel if there were no State aid for these children, they would in fact be penalised?

PM: Well their families would obviously be severely penalised, and in many, many cases, the kiddies themselves would be penalised. But I wonder if I can come back to one of the subjects you mentioned earlier of what we were doing, because I think there are two areas where it is not yet understood about the kind of assistance we are giving and the extent of it. And that is in universities - that is, the scholarships at universities that we have increased to 20,500 per annum, and in the case of secondary scholarships where we have increased them from 10,000 to 25,000 per annum. I think more should be known about these scholarship because it will be of great help to the people who will be able to go, not only for the secondary scholarships but for the open entrance university scholarships, the later year scholarships and the advanced education scholarships. This is a wonderful reform.

Q. Prime Minister, thank you very much.
