

# COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.

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## SPEECH

BY

The Rt. Hon. SIR ROBERT MENZIES,  
K.T., C.H., Q.C., M.P.,

ON

## UNIVERSITIES (Financial Assistance) BILL 1964. Second Reading.

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[From the "Parliamentary Debates," 11th November, 1964.]

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**Sir ROBERT MENZIES** (Kooyong—  
Prime Minister) [12.25].—I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

This Bill, and the States Grants (Universities) Bill, which I will introduce shortly, relate to the same subject—academic salaries—and I propose Sir, with your permission, to deal with both Bills in this speech. Last October I announced the intention of the Government to establish an inquiry to recommend the level of university salaries which we should support for grant purposes from the beginning of the current triennium, namely 1st January 1964. I said then that, as an interim measure, the Commonwealth would offer to the States for recurrent expenditure by the universities grants calculated on the basis of a professorial rate of £4,600 per annum. This rate would be payable from 1st July 1963. As it was higher than the rate upon which the 1963 legislation was based, I undertook also to introduce amending legislation to provide the supplementary funds required on the Commonwealth's part to support the new salary levels.

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The Government asked Mr. Justice Eggleston to inquire into university salaries. His report has been received and was tabled yesterday. All honorable members will agree, I feel sure, that we are much indebted to Mr. Justice Eggleston, and to those who assisted him, for the thorough and lucid report which has been furnished to the Government.

Mr. Justice Eggleston has recommended a standard salary of £5,200 for professors and a standard salary of £4,300 for associate professors and readers. The Government has decided to accept these recommendations. In addition, however, in the process of arriving at his recommendations Mr. Justice Eggleston assumed that a reasonable minimum of the salary range to be paid to a lecturer would be £2,400 per annum, and a reasonable maximum of the salary range to be paid to a senior lecturer would be £3,800 per annum. Having noted that Mr. Justice Eggleston recommended a single salary for an associate professor or a reader, and not a salary range, we accept his suggestions for the salary ranges of lecturers and senior lecturers.

It is now necessary to do two things. The first is to amend the States Grants (Universities) Act 1960-1963 to provide Commonwealth support appropriate to a basic professorial salary of £4,600 per annum for the period 1st July 1963 to 31st December 1963. This is to cover the original provision. The second Bill does this by providing an additional £175,000 of Commonwealth money on condition that £318,000 is provided in additional fees and State grants. This is the usual formula.

The second need is to amend the Universities (Financial Assistance) Act to provide for our acceptance of Mr. Justice Eggleston's proposals. That is the purpose of the first Bill, but I emphasise that this is an interim measure only. We received the report on 30th October. Therefore there has been insufficient time to obtain from the States the detailed information necessary to enable accurate figures to be inserted in the First Schedule for recurrent expenditure in each of the years 1964, 1965 and 1966. This Bill provides provisional figures for 1964 only. These indicate an increase of £1.3 million in the Commonwealth offer to a new total of £12.3 million. The corresponding figures for fees and State contributions are a £2.4 million increase to a new total of £22.8 million. As soon as practicable the Universities Commission will recommend final figures for 1964 as well as new figures for 1965 and 1966. It will do this on the basis of information received from the universities and the States, including information about the levels of salaries adopted. I think it is appropriate that I emphasise once more that the salaries actually paid in a State university are ultimately a matter for each university and the State Government under whose authority it has been established.

A State university may, in fact, pay salaries either higher or lower than those approved for grant purposes by the Commonwealth. If higher salaries are paid, no assistance will be forthcoming from the Commonwealth toward the cost of the excess. It would by my understanding that if salaries lower than the levels approved by the Commonwealth are paid, the amounts payable by the Commonwealth in respect of academic salaries would be limited to our share, according to the established

formula, of the salaries actually paid. I think that all will agree that it would not be reasonable for Commonwealth money, specifically offered as our share of the cost of higher salaries, to be used for other purposes, should salaries be adopted below the level on which our offer was made.

I should add at this point that the Government views sympathetically the suggestion made in chapter 6 of the report that limited provision should be made for additional funds from which loadings to professorial salaries should be paid in certain individual cases where there is a desire to recognise particular merit. This is distinct from the established practice of paying differential salaries to holders of certain Chairs. The Act to which we are now giving our attention applies only to State universities, but I take this opportunity of saying that, so far as academic salaries at the Australian National University are concerned, the Government will adopt a similar policy to that which I have just described. In broad terms this means that in the School of General Studies in that University we shall recognise for grant purposes the four salary points already mentioned. In the Institute of Advanced Studies we would envisage a continuation of a loading broadly similar to that now paid, giving a basic professorial salary of £5,700 a year. The details of salaries at the Australian National University will be settled in consultation with the Council of the University and with the advice of the Universities Commission.

There is another matter not related to the Bills now before us, but arising from the report, on which I take the present opportunity to indicate Government policy. Our experience with the recent inquiry has convinced us that this kind of machinery is perhaps the most satisfactory means we can devise for arriving at a measure of academic salaries for the purpose of fixing the level of Commonwealth grants for university purposes. Therefore, as suggested by Mr. Justice Eggleston, we stand ready to employ this kind of machinery again; we are not, however, prepared to adopt any specific period between reviews. That must depend on circumstances. I commend this Bill to the House.