

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

SPEECH

BY

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

ON THE

SECOND READING

OF THE

STATES GRANTS (SCIENCE LABORATORIES) BILL 1965

[From the "Parliamentary Debates," 18th May 1965]

Sir ROBERT MENZIES (Kooyong—
Prime Minister) [8.8].—I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

This Bill seeks authority for the Government to continue, during each of the next three financial years, grants to secondary schools for the construction and equipment of science laboratories. Such grants were first made in the present financial year by authority of the States Grants (Science Laboratories and Technical Training) Act 1964. Operations in this year have demonstrated the value of this form of aid and have resulted in assistance in varying amounts being given to an impressive number of secondary schools.

State Governments have been paid £3,618,900 for provision of laboratories in State schools and this grant, since it was made on condition that State Governments did not reduce their own contributions, has resulted in the States being able to under-

take programmes to provide science laboratories and equipment in 293 more secondary schools than would otherwise have been possible. New South Wales intends to provide facilities in 80 schools, Victoria in 167, Queensland in 11, South Australia in 18, Western Australia in 7 and Tasmania in 10. The States have not, for their own good internal reasons, been able to spend in this year, all the money made available to them. However, they have committed it and the assurance of a three year programme which the Bill will give, will enable them to plan for accelerated spending in the knowledge that they are assured of the necessary finance.

In the case of independent schools, £1,334,000 was provided this year for independent schools in the States and £47,000 for independent schools in the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory. Of this total sum,

£1,200,000 has already been paid to independent schools and by the end of June virtually all the funds provided will be in the hands of the schools and be represented by laboratories which have been finished, laboratories which are under construction, or by modern equipment. In all, 189 independent schools will have been assisted, 120 by way of grants for laboratories and equipment and the remainder by grants for equipment only. At present 708 independent schools are registered with the Department as being interested in receiving assistance.

Here again the provision of a three year programme will enable independent schools to plan their building programmes ahead in the knowledge of the amount of assistance they will receive and the year in which they will receive it. The scheme has been greatly assisted by the co-operation of State Governments most of which have, amongst other helpful actions, agreed to provide equipment to independent schools through the same channels as those through which they provide equipment to Government schools, thus ensuring equipment being purchased at the lowest possible cost.

The Government has been greatly helped, too, by the advisory committees in the States which have recommended priorities among the many independent schools which have sought assistance under the scheme. The Advisory Committee on Standards has made a most significant contribution to the success of the programme in independent schools. This Committee has developed a series of laboratory plans and its members, who all have much experience in science teaching, visit applicant schools and give advice on the most suitable laboratories to meet their individual needs. Broad proposals for the next three years have been submitted to the Commonwealth but have not yet been agreed in detail. The programme will provide £5 million for science laboratories and equipment over each of the next three financial years.

With the permission of the House I would like to have incorporated in "Hansard" a table showing the distribution of the proposed grants among government and independent schools for each of the next three financial years.

STATE GRANTS (SCIENCE LABORATORIES) BILL 1965

SCIENCE BUILDINGS AND EQUIPMENT IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS—ANNUAL DIVISION BETWEEN STATES AND TERRITORIES

State	Government Schools	Independent			Total
		Roman Catholic	Other	Total	
	£	£	£	£	£
New South Wales	1,355,000	377,700	121,700	499,400	1,854,400
Victoria	1,022,600	237,900	139,100	377,000	1,399,600
Queensland	524,200	109,900	83,300	193,200	717,400
South Australia	337,700	60,300	64,200	124,500	462,200
Western Australia	258,500	58,400	36,900	95,300	353,800
Tasmania	120,900	25,100	19,500	44,600	165,500
All States	3,618,900	869,300	464,700	1,334,000	4,952,900
Australian Capital Territory and Northern Territory	47,100	5,000,000

I commend the Bill to the House.