
SPEECH

BY

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

ON THE

SECOND READING

OF THE

**UNIVERSITIES (FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE)
BILL 1965**

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

Sir ROBERT MENZIES (Kooyong—
Prime Minister) [8.1].—I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

In October 1963, the Parliament passed an act to provide finance for universities in the various States during the calendar years 1964, 1965 and 1966. In November 1964, the Parliament amended that act to make some additional provision for higher academic salaries in State universities during 1964. The present Bill is for the purpose of amending the previous legislation in order to make more Commonwealth funds available in respect of the three years 1964, 1965 and 1966. More finance is necessary to increase the capital grants to universities following the Government's acceptance of the recommendations in the Tertiary Education Committee report, and to provide for increases in recurrent costs resulting from acceptance of the increases in academic salaries which were recommended last year in the Eggleston report. Funds are also required to give effect to the Government's

decision to support an increase in fees paid to part-time academic staff, and to provide further amounts for research in State universities.

As recommended by the Tertiary Education Committee, the Commonwealth will meet half the cost of certain additional capital works to be undertaken during the next 18 months at the following universities—Macquarie, La Trobe, Bedford Park, Newcastle, Townsville University College—and for a start on a second university institution in the Brisbane area. The total value of these works is £2,450,000 of which the Commonwealth will pay £1,225,000. The Bill makes provision for the Commonwealth contribution. Honorable members will recall that in November 1964, following consideration by the Parliament of the Eggleston report, an amendment was made to the Universities (Financial Assistance) Act 1963 to permit payment of the estimated cost of increased academic salaries during 1964. We have since obtained from the

Australian Universities Commission precise figures for each State university for each of the years 1964, 1965 and 1966, and the present Bill revises the interim grants for 1964 and increases the grants for 1965 and 1966.

The Government has now decided to support higher fees for part-time academic staff commencing from 1st July 1965. The Commonwealth is prepared to join with any State in providing funds to support a maximum fee of £6 per hour for part-time lecturers, together with appropriate rates for other part-time academic staff. Where a State decides on a lower fee, that will be the limit to our support. This decision is in accord with the advice of the Universities Commission and the revised First Schedule to the Act incorporates the higher rates for both full-time and part-time academic staff. In October 1963, the Parliament also provided £500,000 as the Commonwealth's half share of funds to be specially set aside for research in State universities. This money was used during 1964 for post-graduate research activities, which are closely bound up with post-graduate training. The Government is now proposing that a like amount be provided for the same purposes during each of the years 1965 and 1966. The total cost to the Commonwealth over the three years will be £1.5 million, and the distribution among the State universities will be as the Universities Commission has recommended.

The final provision in this Bill to which I wish to refer is the recognition of the University of Newcastle in its own right. It

will be remembered that in response to a request from the Government of New South Wales, the Government has agreed to recognise the independence of Newcastle from 1st January 1965. The Bill does this by making provision in the schedules for the University of Newcastle to the extent contemplated when that institution was part of the University of New South Wales, and the sums set aside for the University of New South Wales have been adjusted accordingly. The amendments now before the House require Commonwealth grants for State universities of £6,947,000 above those originally made for the years 1964, 1965 and 1966. The total Commonwealth contribution to State universities over those three years will now be about £64 million.

In conclusion I point out to the House that we are not proposing any funds in this Bill in support of teaching costs in medical hospitals. I shall explain why that is so. A report from the Universities Commission was presented to the Government a few days ago, but there has been no opportunity to take decisions and carry them forward into this Bill. Nevertheless, I assure the House that the Government will deal with this matter promptly, and I know that the House will agree that when we are ready to announce our decisions we should do so for the benefit of all concerned, without waiting for resumption of the Parliament. Honorable members will see what I mean by that. Normally, one would wait until the House was sitting, but as there will be an interval, the sooner these decisions are made known, the better. I commend the Bill to the House.