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**FROM SEGREGATION TO INTEGRATION
THE DEVELOPMENT OF SPECIAL EDUCATION IN QUEENSLAND**

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CONTENTS

Abstract	i
Acknowledgments	iii
Declaration	iv
CHAPTER	PAGE
1 INTRODUCTION	1
2 ATTITUDES TO DISABILITY	16
3 SOME EUROPEAN ANTECEDENTS OF EARLY AUSTRALIAN SPECIAL EDUCATION	23
4 QUEENSLAND IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY SOME SOCIAL AND EDUCATIONAL ISSUES	35
5 QUEENSLAND CHILDREN AT THE NEW SOUTH WALES INSTITUTION FOR THE DEAF, DUMB AND THE BLIND	47
6 JOHN WILLIAM TIGHE (1858-1909)	55
7 BEFORE 1893 AND AFTER	63
8 FURTHER BRITISH AND EUROPEAN INFLUENCE	78
9 INTO THE TWENTIETH CENTURY	93
10 QUEENSLAND SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF AND BLIND 1926-1953 A MORE HOPEFUL PERIOD	114
11 SOCIAL EFFICIENCY AND THE TWENTIETH CENTURY	137
12 THE BACKWARD	151
13 THE DECLINE AND REFORM OF THE OPPORTUNITY CLASSES	173
14 THE EDUCATIONAL REVOLUTION OF THE FIFTIES AND THE INFLUENCE OF FRED SCHONELL (1900-1969) AND ELEANOR SCHONELL (1902-1960)	197
15 THE FIFTIES AND THE SIXTIES REVISITED	218
16 VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATIONS I THE SERVICE PROVIDERS OF THE FIFTIES	232
17 VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATIONS II POWER TO THE PARENTS	267
18 NEW DIRECTIONS AND NEW DIMENSIONS	284
19 CONCLUSION	306
References	315

ABSTRACT

FROM SEGREGATION TO INTEGRATION

THE DEVELOPMENT OF SPECIAL EDUCATION IN QUEENSLAND

The initial chapters deal with the nature of special education and the boundaries of the study are defined. The study is concerned with the provision of education for children with a disability in the state of Queensland, first settled by Europeans in 1824, independent colony in 1859 and constituent state of the Commonwealth of Australia in 1901. These events provide a framework for reviewing the early development of education with a particular focus on the identification of children with a disability and their limited prospects. The dependence on trends and developments in other places, particularly in the United Kingdom and the United States of America is acknowledged.

Details are given of Queensland's first special education provision which entailed sending children who were either deaf or blind to the New South Wales Institution for the Deaf, Dumb and the Blind until 1893 when the Queensland Institute for the Blind, Deaf and Dumb opened.

The efforts of two significant pioneers of special education in Queensland, John William Tighe (1858-1909), itinerant blind teacher of the blind and Edith Bryan (1872-1963), a trained teacher of the deaf who brought with her considerable experience and knowledge from the United Kingdom, are also acknowledged.

Following the pattern in other places a school for the blind and the deaf was the only special provision until 1924 when the efforts of John Faulkner Bevington (1871-1944), Inspector of Schools organized Classes for the Backward, a name changed in 1926 to Opportunity Classes. This was the only state initiative for decades.

The inter-relationship of medicine and special education is brought to notice, for instance, the consequences of rubella (German measles) and poliomyelitis (infantile paralysis) are detailed. Information about the eugenics movement and the development of the school health services is also given.

The education revolution of the fifties and the influence of Fred Schonell (1900-1969) and Eleanor Schonell (1902-1960) which heralded a period of professional growth and development are seen as a high point. It was also the time of the appointment of William Wood (born 1911) and the establishment of the Research and Guidance Branch and tighter centralized control of special education and reform of the existing facilities.

Recognition is given to the expanding role of voluntary organizations whose service and advocacy dimensions are quintessential aspects of special education in Queensland. Some reference is made to the infusion of Commonwealth money during the seventies marking a period of enormous expansion in all aspects of special education.

Enabling legislation is discussed where appropriate as are available policy documents. Where available some comments from former students, parents and teachers have been included.

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former teachers and students and many parents who willingly shared information about their experiences with special education.

DECLARATION

I certify that this work has not been submitted in whole or in part to any other educational institution for marking and assessment either previously or concurrently. I also certify that I have not received any outside help and that unless otherwise attributed the material presented is all my own original work.



Geoffrey Swan

31 December 1996

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

What happened in special education in Queensland over the span of a century bears an inherent resemblance to developments in other parts of the world at an earlier date. What is extraordinary is that this should be so, given Australia's geographic isolation, Queensland's further remoteness within that continent and a sparsity of population with limited means of communication. In time and places very distant from Queensland specific handicaps were identified, community attitudes revealed and the perception of certain men and women, now seen as pioneers in their respective fields, highlighted. The earlier chapters will be concerned with these origins setting Queensland in the national and international context. Later chapters will focus more specifically on the development of special education in Queensland.

THE NATURE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION

Although described as a somewhat "fuzzy" concept¹ special education nevertheless has a history which may be distinguished from that of general education. During the present century especially, there has developed in this field an extensive body of theory, research and description linked to practice that warrants close analysis.

The twentieth century has been a period of rapid growth and change in all areas of education and special education no exception. Special education reflects the needs of the

special student whom it strives to serve, and is now part of most school systems reflecting current community values and attitudes.

As a separate professional division within education administration, however, special education dates back only to the middle thirties in the U.S.A and much later in Australia when a sufficient number of schools warranted administration by a central authority.

The identification of administrative practice in any organizational system must obviously await the development and institutionalisation of the basic activity requiring administration.²

Some, namely, Pritchard³ (1963) and Hurt⁴ (1988), see the establishment of special schools as humanitarian and progressive. Without special schools appropriate techniques, knowledge and skills may not have developed and students with a disability would have continued to be excluded. The special school demonstrated that students with disabilities could benefit from education. Trying to progress from the consequences of ignorance and apathy is not easy for the disadvantaged.

THE ORIGIN OF THE TERM SPECIAL EDUCATION

Alexander Graham Bell (1847-1922), perhaps better known as the inventor of the telephone, was also a dedicated educator of the deaf. He visited Australia in 1910 to advise the Australian Government on the development of telecommunications paying a short visit to the Sydney Institution for the Deaf in July⁵ and to the Victorian School for the Deaf in August.⁶ It was he who first used the term "special education" in an address to the United

States National Education Association in 1902 when he formally moved to have a Department of Special Education within the National Education Association. In an earlier address to the N.E.A. in 1898 Bell first used "special" in a very significant way.

Now all we have said in relation to the deaf would be equally advantageous to the blind and to the feeble minded. We have in the public school systems a large body of ordinary children in the same community. We have there children who cannot hear sufficiently to profit instruction in the public schools, and we have children who cannot see sufficiently well to profit by instruction in the public schools, and we have children who are undoubtedly backward in their mental development.

Why shouldn't these children form an annex to the public school system, receiving special instruction from special teachers, who shall be able to give instruction to little children who are either deaf, blind or mentally deficient, without sending them away from their homes or from the ordinary companions with whom they are associated?⁷

Bell did not conceive special education as a discrete subsystem; in recently disclosed correspondence with Helen Keller and her teacher and her family he makes a plea for normalization.⁸ Although this term would not have been familiar to him, he obviously understood the concept and its implications. Bell maintained that exclusive groupings of "defective children" should be avoided at all costs because this type of association would intensify and aggravate peculiarities differentiating them from other people. He stressed the need to keep such children in constant and personal contact with their friends and relatives, and with other normal people; it would, he claimed, be much better to send teachers to the children than children to the teachers. Bell's ideas on education

at the time were not nearly as well accepted as his ideas about telecommunications.

SPECIAL EDUCATION IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

In the United Kingdom, special education as a discrete subsystem commenced about a decade or two after the passing of the **ELEMENTARY EDUCATION ACT 1870**. Before this time there were some private initiatives, generated as a rule by fee-paying schools for pupils from affluent families. Chapter 2 of the **WARNOCK REPORT** contains a succinct introduction to the history of special education with emphasis on its relatively recent origin at an institutional level.

The very first schools for the blind and the deaf were founded at the time of Mozart; those for the physically handicapped awaited the Great Exhibition; day schools for the mentally handicapped and the epileptic arrived with the motor car; whilst special provision for delicate, maladjusted and speech impaired children is younger than living memory. Even so, the early institutions were nothing like the schools we know today and were available only to a few. As with ordinary education, education for the handicapped began with individual and charitable enterprise. There followed in time the intervention of government, first to support voluntary effort and make good deficiencies through state provision, and finally to create a national framework in which public and voluntary agencies could act in partnership to see that all children, whatever their disability, received a suitable education. The framework reached its present form only in this decade⁹

The public, professional and philanthropic pressures to assist children with physical, mental or sensory impairments were neither uniform nor well articulated. A hierarchy of disability developed with the most obvious but least grotesque, that is the blind and the deaf, being the first to receive attention. It will be shown that this pattern was followed in Queensland.

HISTORY OF CHILDHOOD

Throughout history, little attention has been paid to the concerns of children. Indeed one may say that because of a child's lack of involvement in political and military affairs, the historian has directed attention solely to the activities of adults, even there establishing history as a public record of events rather than of social concerns of the individual.

The history of childhood is a nightmare from which we have only begun to awaken. The further back in history one goes, the lower the level of child care, and the more likely children are to be killed, abandoned, beaten, terrorized, and sexually abused.¹⁰

Books about children and legislation relating to children are a modern phenomenon. There is, however, a very early publication in English about childhood illnesses written by Thomas Phairst in 1545. In this book Phairst lists 'many grevous and perilous diseases' among them¹¹

the falling evell
the palsy
styfness of limnes
scabbynesse and ytche

About the same time as the publication of this book came the first legislation in which children were mentioned, namely the **Poor Law, 1536**, wherein parishes were given the power to take begging children between the ages of five and thirteen and apprentice them. These early initiatives acknowledging the existence of children with disabilities and the passing of legislation about begging children (many who would have been handicapped) did little

to improve the lot of children. Later legislation, particularly that of the eighteenth century, indicated that the "harshness of the parent was paralleled by the harshness of the state....and on no one did it press so hard as on the child who according to law and custom was held to be an adult."¹² It was, however, during the nineteenth century that the groundwork was laid for improving the lot of children.

The exact birth date of the field of special education and the significance of changes in society vary with the perspectives of the historian reporting them.¹³

Special education did not develop in a vacuum but as an integral part of the social surround. The growth of a schooled society began with the passing of the 1870 Education Act in England and a similar Act in 1875 in Queensland. Prior to these acts education was conducted by a few individual people for profit or by church or philanthropic bodies who saw education as a means of moral improvement for the children of the working class. It is useful to conceive of special education as part of the history of concern for children reflecting the handicaps of the special children it strives to serve. In this study of the development of special education - which is essentially an historical study - it will be necessary to look at some aspects of the history of education generally and at the history of childhood. This will provide appropriate reference points and set the context of the study.

A history of special education through the eyes of the recipients would be most revealing. Their responses to

the school, the teachers, curricula and teaching methods would provide an excellent basis for evaluation. However, most of our knowledge of the child's perceptions and attitudes nearly always comes, alas, from adult interpretations of them.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

1. to trace the development of special education in Queensland with particular reference to the role of the Department of Education which until 1957, was called the Department of Public Instruction;
2. to identify individuals and organizations which have been advocates for the provision of special education, or for change in the manner and nature of that provision and to analyse the nature of that contribution, keeping in mind that more recent events and the people concerned will need to be reviewed at greater depth and with greater objectivity in time to come;
3. to review legislation relating to education and to explore its effect on the education of children with disabilities;
4. to investigate how contemporary attitudes towards education have generally affected provision for children with disabilities, with segregated special schools being promoted by professional and personal commitment to a particular group of children;
5. to explore how the development and provision of special education in other parts of the world may have influenced developments in Queensland;

6. to attempt to unravel some of the myths, prejudices and confusions contributing to the uneven and often inconsistent provision for children with certain kinds of disability;

7. to provide a continuous historical narrative within a socio-ecological perspective in order to enhance the understanding of education in Queensland with specific reference to children with special needs.

SOME DEFINITIONS OF SPECIAL EDUCATION

In the United States where the administration and the history of special education seem to have received more attention than in other parts of the world, attempts have been made to define "special education". These attempts at definition commenced in the sixties and seventies, sometimes referred to as exceptional decades for exceptional children.

Kidd (1970) said that the term had become part of the jargon of education, and had caused confusion and resentment.¹⁴ The same writer defines special education as

those services, including instruction, which should be provided by the school to exceptional children and youth - they being those whose disabilities and/or super-abilities are such to warrant elements and types of school services for the development of their educational potential which are not needed for the average child.

Two years later Kirk (1972) centred on the child in his definition:

....a child who deviates from the average or normal child (i) in mental characteristics, (ii) in sensory abilities, (iii) in neuromuscular or physical characteristics, (iv) in social or emotional behaviour, (v) in communication abilities, or (vi) in multiple handicaps to such an extent that he requires a modification of school practices, or special

education services, in order to develop to his maximum capacity....¹⁵

The focus in Dunn's (1973) definition is the child's time at school:

An exceptional pupil is so labelled only for that segment of his school career (i) when his deviating physical characteristics are of such a nature as to manifest a significant learning asset or disability for special education purposes; and, therefore (ii) when through trial provisions, it has been determined that he can make greater all round adjustment and scholastic progress with direct or indirect special education services than he could with only a typical regular school program.¹⁶

About the same time Gearheart (1972) also attempts to define special education in terms of the child needing it:

The exceptional child shall be considered to be one whose educational requirements are so different from the average or normal child, that he cannot be effectively educated without the provision of special education services, facilities or materials.¹⁷

Smith and Neisworth (1975) claim that the foregoing and similar definitions have led to inappropriate labelling of the child, delineating important instructional needs, and have emphasised the management problems without over concern for the future disorder or the elimination of circumstances that prevent handicap. In historical study it may be appropriate to view directions and dimensions as changes occur. Smith and Neisworth in attempting to lessen the stigma of labelling look at the profession:

Special education is that profession concerned with the arrangement of educational variables leading to the prevention, reduction, or elimination of those conditions that produce significant defects in the academic, communicative, locomotor or adjustive functioning of children.¹⁸

Stephen Jackson (1966) in Britain said that:

Special education refers to the many and varied schools and services that exist to provide suitable education for pupils who have any disability of mind or body. It includes not only special schools for the

deaf, the blind, the epileptic etc., but also the services of a host of professional people, such as surgeons, psychologists, speech therapists, and the use of drugs, artificial limbs and other aids.¹⁹

Jackson goes on to remind his readers that it is necessary to note two important aspects of special education, these being the kind of teaching given and the conditions under which the teaching is received.

Britain's early attempts at special education provision, and similarly most early attempts in other countries, were for those children whose educational failure was due to some physical disability. Early legislation and the regulations associated with it listed the categories of pupils who might receive special education. Over the years the categories increased and were revised, and by 1962 there were the blind, the partially sighted, the deaf, the partially hearing, the educationally subnormal, the epileptic, the maladjusted, the physically handicapped and the delicate. It is interesting to note that Scotland never defined any children as "delicate".²⁰

The specific categories were replaced by the 1981 Act which resulted from recommendations of the Warnock Report (1978): a child was considered to have special educational needs if he/she had a "learning difficulty" which called for special educational provision.²¹

The **EDUCATION (SCOTLAND) ACT 1969** defines Special Education as:

education by special methods appropriate to the requirements of pupils whose physical, intellectual, emotional or social development cannot in the opinion of the education authority, be adequately promoted by ordinary methods.²²

and UNESCO (1973) says:

Special Education is that provided to students who for physical, or psychological reasons do not fit comfortably into regular schools, and that if it were not for this special education intervention, the student would live well below the level of his/her potential.²³

For the purpose of this study, after consideration of the foregoing definitions, special education will cover those attempts to meet the educational needs of students with a disability which may have prevented them from attending a regular school. Their inability to attend a regular school may have been imposed on them by social attitudes, or by the physical nature of the school building. This study will not cover the educational services to aboriginal, islander, migrant or gifted children, although at various times in Queensland, administration of such services has been bracketed with services for children with disabilities.

TERMS AND TERMINOLOGY

In the interest of historical accuracy it is appropriate to use the terminology of the period. Terminology in special education during the sixties and the seventies has been described as a "galaxy of euphemisms". Nomenclature presents problems when applied to any deviant or minority group, in that unpleasant and often inappropriate connotations are built up with popular usage. Regrettably, any term seems in time to acquire its own odium and a quarter of a century seems to be the limit of its useful life.

The Queensland Parents of the Disabled in their newsletter (October 1986) endorsed the use of W.H.O. terms:

IMPAIRMENT as an anatomic or functional abnormality which may result in a disability.

DISABILITY as a loss or reduction of functional ability which results from impairment.

HANDICAP as a disadvantage caused by impairment or disability. Handicap represents the social and environmental consequences to the individual stemming from the presence of an impairment or disability.

Impairment may be the organic condition; disability the functional consequence and handicap a social consequence.²⁴

Every attempt has been made to define terms with due regard to the sensitivity of students with a disability, and their families.

METHOD

For this study, primary sources were used whenever possible. Minutes of meetings, correspondence, memoranda from Government Departments and diaries have been perused, and the material interpreted. Because much of the development and consolidation of special education has occurred in the last four or five decades, some of the people involved have been available for interview; these oral sources were also used considering the content in relation to other sources.

Use was also be made of secondary sources. Newspaper and journal accounts of some aspects of special education were available and these have been weighed for their reliability. The few theses which have been written on aspects of special education, and the limited number of

books on the topic have also been used. Voluntary organizations have played an important part in the development of special education and their publications perused.

In this study it seemed appropriate to heed Kerlinger's advice:

Historiography has a necessary relevance to all social sciences, to the humanities, and to the formulation of public and private policies, because (1) all the data used in the social sciences, in the humanities, and in the formulation of public and private policies are drawn from records of, experience in, or writing about the past; because (2) all policies respecting human affairs, public or private, and all generalizations of a non-statistical character in the social sciences and in the humanities involve interpretations of or assumptions about the past; and because (3) all workers in the social sciences and in the humanities are personalities of given times, places and experience whose thinking is consequently in some measure conditioned by the historical circumstances of their lives and experience.²⁵

SCOPE AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The study focussed on the development of special education in the state of Queensland, the second largest state in Australia with an area of over 1.7 square kilometres occupying the north-eastern portion of the continent and 22.5 per cent of the land mass. It lies between 10 and 29 degrees south latitude and between 138 and 154 degrees east longitude; its greatest length is 1200 kilometres and greatest breadth 1450 kilometres. The population of Queensland was in 1993 nearly three million with slightly over half a million students enrolled in state and non-state schools. The south-eastern corner of the state is the most densely populated.

Queensland came into being on June 6, 1859 when Queen Victoria signed Letters Patent creating the new colony.

This is now celebrated as Queensland Day. On December 10, in the same year, once celebrated as Separation Day, Sir George Ferguson Bowen, the first Governor, read the Proclamation from the balcony of the temporary Government House, now the Deanery of St John's Cathedral, Brisbane.

The existing laws of the parent colony of New South Wales continued until a government was elected. The Statute Book of 1860 contained a **PRIMARY EDUCATION ACT** and a **GRAMMAR SCHOOLS ACT** that provided for the establishment and maintenance of schools. These Acts were remarkable since public expenditure on education had, in most countries at that time, a low priority.²⁶

It was thirty-three years before a special school was established in Queensland but developments elsewhere would have an impact on the new colony.

¹ Elkins, J., 1985 Disability and Disadvantage: Special Education in Australia - past, present and future. **MELBOURNE STUDIES IN EDUCATION** Melbourne University Press. p.163.

² Sage, D., 1981 Administration in Special Education in Kauffman, J.M., and Hallahan, D. M., **HANDBOOK OF SPECIAL EDUCATION** Prentice Hall, New Jersey. p. 311.

³ Pritchard, D.G., 1963 **EDUCATION AND THE HANDICAPPED 1760-1960** Routledge & Kegan Paul, London.

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- ⁴ Hurt, J.S., 1988 **OUTSIDE THE MAINSTREAM A History of Special Education** B.T. Batsford, London.
- ⁵ Thompson, V., 1990 **A GIRL LIKE ALICE The Story of The Australian Helen Keller** North Rocks Press, Sydney. p.77.
- ⁶ **THE BIRTH OF A SCHOOL** The Early History of the Victorian School for Deaf Children. 1995 History Room, 597 St.Kilda Road Melbourne.
- ⁷ Gearhart, B.R., 1967 **ADMINISTRATION IN SPECIAL EDUCATION** Charles C. Thomas, Illinois. p.3.
- ⁸ Blatt, B., 1985 Friendly letters on the correspondence of Helen Keller, Anne Sullivan And Alexander Graham Bell. **EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN**, 51.1 pp. 405-409
- ⁹ Warnock, M., 1978 **SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS Report of the Committee of Enquiry into the Education of Handicapped Children and Young People.** H.M.S.O., London. Mozart lived 1756-1791, the Great Exhibition was held in 1851 and the first petrol driven car appeared in 1884.
- ¹⁰ de Mause, L., 1974 Editor **THE HISTORY OF CHILDHOOD** The Psychohistory Press, London.
- ¹¹ Phaire, T., 1545 **THE BOKE OF CHILDREN** reedited by Neale, A.V. and Wallis, N.R.E., 1957 Livingstone, London.
- ¹² Bryce, Q., 1982 An historical review of child safety legislation. in Pearn, J., 1982 **THE PREVENTION OF CHILDHOOD ACCIDENTS** Australasian Medical Publishing Co., Ltd., Sydney.
- ¹³ Tarver, S.G., 1977 in Foreword to Kneedler, R.D. and Tarver, S.G., **CHANGING PERSPECTIVES IN SPECIAL EDUCATION** Charles E. Merrill, Springfield.
- ¹⁴ Kidd, J.H. 1970 in Foreword to Meisgeir, C.H., and King, J.D. **THE PROCESS OF SPECIAL EDUCATION** International Text Book Company, Scranton, Pennsylvania.
- ¹⁵ Kirk, S.A., 1972 **EDUCATING EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN** Houghton-Mifflin, Boston. p.4.
- ¹⁶ Dunn, L.M. 1973 **EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN IN SCHOOLS** Holt, New York. p. 7.
- ¹⁷ Gearheart, B.R., 1972 op. cit., p.7.
- ¹⁸ Smith, R.M. & Neisworth, J.T., 1975 **THE EXCEPTIONAL CHILD: A FUNCTIONAL APPROACH** McGraw-Hill, New York. p. 13.
- ¹⁹ Jackson, S., 1966 **SPECIAL EDUCATION IN ENGLAND AND WALES** Oxford University Press, Oxford. p.5.
- ²⁰ Warnock, M., 1978 op.cit.
- ²¹ *ibid.*
- ²² *ibid.*
- ²³ U.N.E.S.C.O., 1973 **THE PRESENT SITUATION AND TRENDS OF RESEARCH IN THE FIELD OF SPECIAL EDUCATION** UNESCO, Paris.
- ²⁴ **NEWSLETTER, QUEENSLAND PARENTS OF THE DISABLED.** October 1986.
- ²⁵ Kerlinger, F.N., 1964 **FOUNDATIONS OF BEHAVIOURAL RESEARCH** Rinehart & Winston, New York. p.698.
- ²⁶ Wyeth, E.R., 1949 **HISTORY OF EDUCATION IN QUEENSLAND** A.C.E.R., Melbourne.

CHAPTER 2

ATTITUDES TO DISABILITY

AFTER SURVIVAL?

Deviance is not a property inherent in certain forms of behaviour, it is conferred upon such forms by audiences which witness them.
Erickson, 1966.¹

Deviancy is being different in one or more dimensions, and valued negatively by society.
Wolfensberger, 1976.²

The analogy of a swinging pendulum was used by Hewett and Forness (1974)³ when looking at the manner in which people with a disability are seen by the community. The pendulum swings from total rejection of the disabled person by society through various stages to complete integration into society. The perception of disability often determines the level of acceptance and support but the causes are not always easy to identify. Just what accounts for one kind of disability being more acceptable than another and why some societies are more tolerant than others could be due to one or a number of factors depending on the nature and structure of that society, its rational and irrational beliefs about life and its purpose within that culture, its religion, social, economic and political conditions and informed knowledge about the disability.

Children in a primitive society who survived infancy with a disability, often had to endure various cruel manifestations of superstition. Even the more advanced societies of Athens, Sparta and Rome practised infanticide in an attempt to maintain the purity of the race and the welfare of the community.⁴ Any member of these societies

who because of disability hindered the essential activity of the rest of the group was eliminated. To facilitate the abandonment of unwanted children in Athens, stone jars were sold in the market place; in Rome, reed baskets were used to place infants in the Tiber. There is now a road sign near Sparta which says "the law giver of Sparta threw deformed and invalid children for the good development of the human race."⁵

Judaic and later Christian Law helped change some of the attitudes and practices towards disabled people but changes were slow in coming and even today pockets of long standing prejudice persist. Examples of infanticide and demonology are occasionally reported today and the consequences of beliefs in the purity of the race and the need to control defects thought to be caused by heredity have sometimes inhibited the delivery of services to the disabled.⁶ Harsh treatment and exile which were typical of the pre-Christian era have not completely disappeared from the most modern society. No period in social history is completely distinguishable from another and even today attitudes towards the disabled vary within societies and nations. Judge (1987)⁷ and Winzer (1994)⁸ both claim that acceptance and understanding of those with a disability grew with advances in medical and scientific knowledge.

When Taylor and Taylor (1967)⁹ on behalf of the World Health Organization and the International Society for the Welfare of Cripples reviewed the education of the physically handicapped in Europe over the previous century and a half they claimed that the changes in attitudes and provision reflect the dynamic influences of the industrial

revolution and of nationalism; "liberty, equality and fraternity have come to apply to the handicapped as well as to the normal"¹⁰ They saw the advances as resulting from:

- 1.a belief in the desirability of education for all;
- 2.recognition of the desirability of extending educational advantages to the handicapped;
- 3.a parallel development of educational and health services, with problems arising concerning the integration of these services;
- 4.a steady trend for local, provincial, or national governments - or all three in co-operation - to take over the services and institutions which had been established and maintained by private individuals, voluntary organizations, and religious groups. This occurred when the need for services reached a magnitude such that only governments could command the resources necessary, to provide them on a scale commensurate with the national interest.

The move towards a more accepting society and the provision of appropriate education has been slow and frustrating for children with a disability and for their parents. Many parents have found that the success of their advocacy came too late to benefit their own children, by then past school age. There are now a greater number of advocates for disability, among them, interest groups with professional direction whose just and well demonstrated needs and concerns governments are less likely to ignore. The efforts of parents and advocates have been encouraged and reinforced by the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons 1983-1992 and UNESCO's publications and activities specifically concerned with special education. The communication gap between countries has narrowed considerably and in the last few decades international conferences and reports emanating

from them have enhanced knowledge and understanding of many minority groups.

Early efforts in the provision of special education did not embrace all the children with a particular disability. The earliest provision, that is, for those who were deaf or blind, excluded some children with additional physical problems as being beyond the capabilities of the teachers. Later provision was made for "educable" children and those outside this classification were excluded. When voluntary organizations started making provision they too had admission criteria which excluded some children. The term "borderline" was used and good luck rather than good management played a significant role in deciding who received help and who was excluded. Advice offered to the parents of severely disabled children in the fifties was "put them away" and the State provided institutions for this purpose. This banishment, Blatt (1987)¹¹ says, "robs the person of human affiliation, of a purpose in a community of dignity, of a reason for behaving as a human being, of a reason for living." Some such institutions still exist and give parents and certain members of the community reasons for concern. Winzer (1993)¹² drawing from Wolfensberger (1975)¹³ and looking at early special education in North America which could apply to other parts of the world and most probably Queensland, speaks of the excluded:

.....children who were severely or multiply handicapped, seriously crippled, not toilet trained, or considered to be ineducable were not provided with schooling. Those with handicapping conditions such as epilepsy or paralysis (cerebral palsy) were seen as potential hindrances to the existing programs because of the individual care they needed. When discussing

the student population of his Massachusetts experimental school for feebleminded and idiotic children, for example, Samuel Gridley Howe was quick to point out that "the institution is not intended for epileptic or insane children, nor for those who are incurably hydrocephalic or paralytic." Moreover asserted Howe "any such shall not be retained, to the exclusion of more improvable subjects".¹⁴

Perhaps the greatest influence for change in attitudes towards the disabled has come from the prolific writing and research of Wolfensberger. Born in 1934 in Nazi Germany he moved to the United States where he received most of his education. The term **normalization** was first used in Denmark and the principle was successfully implemented in Scandinavian countries. Nirje (1979), who visited Australia in 1985, defined normalization as "making available to all mentally retarded people patterns of life and conditions of everyday living which are as close as possible to the regular circumstances of society".¹⁵

Nirje introduced the term to North America where it was readily taken up by Wolfensberger who developed his theory of normalization while at the National Institute on Mental Retardation in Toronto, Canada and later at the University of Syracuse in New York State. Wolfensberger was further influenced by his mentor Tizard at the Institute of Education, University of London. Wolfensberger, sponsored by Minda Incorporated, South Australia, first visited Australia in 1980 to conduct workshops on the principle of normalization and the use of his **PASSING**¹⁶ instrument. It was interesting to note that his visit was sponsored by an organization that had provided segregated facilities for the intellectually disabled for almost a century and that the workshop consisted of representatives from similar

organizations in all other States as well as members of Government Departments and academics. Wolfensberger as the archpriest of normalization claimed that social elements and social attitudes have greater power than technology and suggested that change-agents must focus on the positive aspects of different, devalued, minority or handicapped persons.

The next chapter reviews the work of some early European educators who in their time, like Nirje and Wolfensberger in this century, saw the need to change attitudes by positive intervention.

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- ¹⁵ Nirje, B., 1979 Changing Patterns in residential services for the mentally retarded in Meyen, E.L. **BASIC READINGS IN THE STUDY OF EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN AND YOUTH** Love Publishing, Denver. p.173.
- ¹⁶ **Program Analysis of Service Systems Implementation of Normalization Goals.**

CHAPTER 3

SOME EUROPEAN ANTECEDANTS OF EARLY AUSTRALIAN SPECIAL EDUCATION

There are individual people who have helped to determine and to shape attitudes and practices concerning the disabled. This chapter attempts to identify a few of those who during the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries developed some of the ideas and concepts which have dominated the field of special education. The pioneers were not always teachers; some were medical practitioners. "Every profession and professional person is dependent, whether recognized or not, on past contributions of pioneers."¹

A few sensorily disabled people were the first to receive what we now consider special education. The primitive state of knowledge about causes and prevention and the absence of documentation and incidence figures make it impossible to estimate the extent of the problem. The few known pioneering efforts, however, provided inspiration for later generations of special educators.

During the seventeenth century Kenelm Digby (1603-1665), "diplomat, privateer, courtier, poet, critic, stylist, philosopher, collector and binder of elegant books, and scientist of some attainment"² visited Spain as part of the entourage of Charles, Prince of Wales. In Madrid Digby observed Luis de Velasco, the deaf younger brother of the Constable of Castile who had been taught to read and write and to speak and lip read. Twenty years later Digby wrote of this experience and also made the observation that muteness was an accidental consequence of deafness and not

as physicians at the time thought pathologically related to deafness. Digby gave credit to the teacher Juan Pablo Bonet (1579-1633) who wrote the first known book to deal with the education of the deaf. It was Digby's account rather than Bonet's book that provided the inspiration to British teachers.³ Bonet had succeeded a brother Benedictine, Pedro Ponce de León, as teacher. Whereas León used the sign language, developed by the monks during the rule of silence, Bonet enhanced the signs with a manual alphabet and published in 1620 what is regarded as the first practical treatise on the art of teaching the deaf: **SIMPLIFICATION OF THE LETTERS OF THE ALPHABET, AND A METHOD OF TEACHING DEAF MUTES TO SPEAK.** The work did not appear in English until 1890 but a Spanish version arrived in England in 1644.⁴ Winzer says that perhaps Pedro Ponce de León was the first special educator and that 1578 was the year in which special education really began.⁵ Wright (1969) in his remarkable **DEAFNESS AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY** says that systems of finger spelling and expressive formal gesture were in use long before they were in use as a means of communication for the deaf.⁶ Winzer⁷ and Lane⁸ make similar observations.

Further activity in the education of the deaf took place in France where the first school in the world for the deaf was opened in Paris in 1755. The founder, the Abbé de l'Epée (1712-1789) explained his method of instruction in **THE METHOD OF EDUCATING THE DEAF AND DUMB CONFIRMED BY LONG EXPERIENCE.** He also commenced a **DICTIONARY OF SIGNS** but this was completed by his successor, the Abbé Sicard (1742-1822). The school was declared a national

institution and is still in existence. Its medical adviser in 1799 was Jean-Marc Gaspard Itard (1775-1850) whose contribution to special education took another direction and about whom more will be said.

Valentin Haüy (1745-1822) was greatly impressed by the work of de l'Epée and when he was offended by the grotesque behaviour of a group of blind musicians in Paris he set about establishing a school for the blind. In 1784 after some successful experimental teaching and demonstration with a blind boy he had encountered in the street, Haüy set up the first school in the world for the blind.⁹ "The cultured, humane Frenchman and the ragged blind boy seated at his feet...now stand sculpted in stone in the Boulevard des Invalides."¹⁰ As a result of the political upheaval in France Haüy, because of his family connections, had to flee first to Prussia and later to Russia where he helped establish schools for the blind. It was in the school established by Haüy that the young Louis Braille (1809-1852) was enrolled in 1819 but the school had changed somewhat: the founder was banished by the new Director and the young Louis Braille and his fellow students were subjected to an appalling rigorous schedule, severe discipline and strict supervision.¹¹ Despite the spartan educational and living environment Braille at sixteen years devised the reading and writing system now used universally because of its easy adaptation into any written language or musical notation or mathematics. Two years after Braille's death his old school adopted the system, and American schools eventually began using it. It is remembered with some regret that

Braille's system was twenty years old before it was used in Britain. In 1952, a century after Louis Braille's death, his contribution was formally recognized by the removal of his bones from the village of Coupvray, his birth place, to the Pantheon. The Braille system was gradually accepted in Australia and the first reference to the use of Braille in Australia appeared in the Annual Report of the New South Wales Institution for the Blind, Deaf and Dumb in 1888 when the Superintendent Samuel Watson mentioned that "a valuable consignment of embossed books (Braille type) has been received from England". He added "in my opinion the Braille type will gradually and deservedly supersede the other rival systems" and "books on various subjects are being embossed for this society by ladies of leisure and independence."¹² Townsend House ¹³ in South Australia started teaching Braille in 1887 and John William Tighe ¹⁴ in his itinerant role in Queensland taught Braille. The Association for the Blind which Tighe helped establish had a lending library of a thousand books in the Braille and Moon¹⁵ type. Moon type with its embossed letters was easier to learn for some people.

About the same time as the Abbé de l'Epée commenced his work in Paris, Thomas Braidwood (1715-1806) of Edinburgh commenced teaching the deaf son of a wealthy merchant from Leith. The Braidwood family were to dominate the education of the deaf in Britain for the best part of the eighteenth century. Braidwood's house was known locally as "Dumbiedykes" and was visited in 1773 by Johnson and Boswell who described the school and its activities in **JOURNEY TO THE WESTERN ISLANDS OF SCOTLAND**. "There

is one subject of philosophical curiosity to be found in Edinburgh, which no other city has to shew; a college of the deaf and dumb, who are taught to speak, to read, to write, and to practice arithmetick.....it was pleasing to see one of the most desperate of human calamities of so much help."¹⁶ Braidwood was very secretive about his methods of instruction which were essentially oral. His was a fee-paying school and in 1783 he moved to London where he occasionally taught American pupils. An attempt to set up a similar school in the United States was unsuccessful and the Braidwood family's rejection of the attempts of Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet to learn the methods did not endear Braidwood or his family to the Americans. The life and work of Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet (1788-1851) was commemorated in the United States with the change in name of the National Deaf Mute College established in 1864 to Gallaudet College in 1894. Two sons of the Gallaudet family were also special educators. Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet's early attempt to educate the daughter of a neighbour, Dr. Mason Cogswell, led him to read the works of de l'Epée, thus beginning an educational movement that has had great benefit for the hearing impaired in the United States and the rest of the world. Samuel Watson in 1905 reported to the Annual Meeting of the new South Wales Institution that he had visited Dr.E.M.Gallaudet in the United States.¹⁷

The uncompromising oralist practice in teaching the deaf was probably established by Samuel Heinicke (1727-1790), described as "strong-willed, tenacious and resolute"¹⁸ In 1778, Heinicke set up the first state school for the deaf

in Leipzig and was totally opposed to any form of signing. He embarked upon a vigorous debate with de l'Epée (carried on in Latin because of the unwillingness of both to use either French or German) about the virtues of oralism, and is probably responsible for the oral system being called the German system. Heinecke passed on his method to Friedrich Moritz Hill who had been given his initial teacher training by Pestalozzi. Hill adapted teaching methods for young deaf children and indicated that they learned best in the natural environment of the home.

When Jean Marc-Gaspard Itard (1774-1838) was appointed medical officer to the National Institute for Deaf-Mutes in Paris in 1800 to advise the Abbé Sicard on the consequences of deafness and to examine the organs of speech and hearing of the students, he was diverted from his main task by the discovery of Victor, the wild boy found living in a feral condition in the forest near Aveyron. Father Bonnaterre to whom Victor was taken after his capture wrote of the encounter:

When I took him affectionately by the hand to lead him to my house, he resisted strenuously. But a series of caresses and particularly two hugs I gave him with a friendly smile, changed his mind, and after that he seemed to trust me.¹⁹

Victor first went to an orphanage in Saint-Affrique and after some communication with the Abbé Sicard he was moved to the National Institute for Deaf-Mutes. Here Itard began his structured program of instruction based on the belief that Victor's lack of experience made him appear idiotic.²⁰ The systematic training of Victor had five main objectives:

1. To render social life more congenial to the boy by making it more like the life he had recently kept.
2. To excite his nervous sensibility with varied and energetic stimuli and supply his mind with the raw impression of ideas.
3. To extend the range of his ideas by creating new wants and expanding his relations with the world around him.
4. To lead him to the use of speech by making it necessary that he should imitate.
5. To apply himself to the satisfaction of his growing physical wants, and from this lead to the application of his intelligence to the objects of instruction.²¹

Itard worked for five years with Victor providing intensive stimulation and environmental interaction in an attempt to develop speech. After five years Itard gave up in frustration and considered his work a failure but the French Academy of Science in 1806 commended Itard's work for the progress that had been made through "ingenious modes of teaching". Some consider Itard's work with Victor as the beginning of modern special education.²²

A younger colleague of Itard, Edouard Onesimus Seguin (1812-1880) was to further influence the education of the intellectually disabled. He, like his mentor, rejected the accepted medical opinion of the day:²³

Idiots are what they must remain for the rest of their lives. Everything in them betrays an organization imperfect or arrested in its development. No means are known by which a larger amount of reason or intelligence can be bestowed upon the unhappy idiot even for the briefest period.....

and:

It is useless to combat idiocy. In order to establish intellectual activity it would be necessary to change the conformation of organs which are beyond the reach of all modification.

"Seguin was unwilling to wait for medicine to cure the retarded, but rather tried to do as teachers of the blind and deaf did - to give the retarded the benefits of education".²⁴ Seguin organized classes in Paris, the first

at Salpêtrière in 1839 and later at Bicêtre in 1841. Space was provided by the French Government and later Seguin established his own school. His work earned him the title "The Apostle of the Idiot" and in 1848 because of the political climate he emigrated to the United States of America. This move to the New World was of considerable significance and influence since Seguin continued his advocacy for the education of the retarded and was active in the formation of an organization which eventually became the American Association of Mental Deficiency. So too was the American Journal of Mental Deficiency born. In 1866 Seguin published **IDIOCY AND ITS TREATMENT BY THE PHYSIOLOGICAL METHOD** and described in detail his interpretation of Itard's methods. Seguin is also credited with inspiring Samuel Gridley Howe (1801-1876) "a firebrand, political and social reformer, a champion of humanitarian causes and emancipation"²⁵ who was instrumental in founding the Perkins School for the Blind in Massachusetts, U.S.A.

The work of Itard and Seguin so inspired Maria Montessori (1870-1962) that she withdrew from active work, gave herself over to meditation and deeper study and translated by hand their writings in order that she "might have time to weigh the sense of each word and read in truth the spirit of the authors."²⁶ Montessori drew heavily on the ideas of Itard and Seguin to develop her sense training methods for young children. Montessori in 1896 was the first woman in Italy to graduate in medicine. She was an assistant doctor at the Psychiatric Clinic within the University of Rome. It was part of her duty to visit

asylums for the insane to select suitable subjects for the clinic and it was during these visits she was led to a more involved interest in the education of idiot children. She saw mental deficiency as a pedagogical problem rather than a medical one.

That form of creation which was necessary for these unfortunate beings, so as to enable them to re-enter human society, to take their place in the civilized world and render them independent of the help of others - placing human dignity within their grasp was a work which appealed so strongly to my heart that I retained it for years.²⁷

At a pedagogical conference on Moral Education held in Turin in 1899 Montessori claimed that "defective children are not extra-social beings, but are entitled to the benefits of education as much as if not more than normal ones."²⁸

When classes were proposed for "backward children" at the first conference of Australian Directors of Education in Adelaide in 1916 the motion read:

In the larger centres of population it is desirable to provide a special school of the Montessori type, to which children who are mentally deficient may be sent for special instruction.²⁹

In Queensland some action was taken - seven years later!

Although not specifically directed towards special education the work of Friedrich Froebel (1782-1852), and Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (1746-1827) also provided inspiration. Froebel had fought in the Napoleonic Wars and upon his return was encouraged by a friend who had been influenced by Pestalozzi to become a teacher. Froebel coined the word "kindergarten" and the Queensland Department of Public Instruction in the latter part of the last century employed an itinerant teacher to give lectures and demonstrations.³⁰ Unfortunately shortage of

funds prevented the full implementation of Froebel's methods and it seems that little other than mat weaving and sewing cards made their way into this century. Pestalozzi's compassion and concern for the individual and his belief in the intrinsic abilities of the child and the need for a stimulating environment to facilitate learning places him in the forefront of education pioneers.

The thinking generated by the pioneers provided hope and optimism for generations of teachers.

"It isn't possible to read the works of Itard, Seguin, and their contemporaries without being captured by the romance, idealism and excitement of their exploits."³¹

Unfortunately for the new colony of Queensland, the subject of the next chapter, education was at such a basic level that the concepts and new developments in special education in Europe and America had little relevance - as yet.

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- ³ *ibid.* p.349.
- ⁴ Winzer, M.A., 1993 **THE HISTORY OF SPECIAL EDUCATION FROM ISOLATION TO INTEGRATION** Gallaudet University Press, Washington.
- ⁵ *ibid.* p.32.
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- ⁷ Winzer, M.A., 1993 *op.cit.* p.53.
- ⁸ Lane, H., 1984 **WHEN THE MIND HEARS** Penguin, London.
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- ¹³ Barkham, L.F., 1974 **THE STORY OF TOWNSEND HOUSE, THE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND, DEAF AND DUMB 1874-1974** Griffin Press, Adelaide.
- ¹⁴ Lamond, A.J. **HISTORY OF THE QUEENSLAND BLIND, DEAF AND DUMB INSTITUTION 1883-1913** Typescript, Undated.
- ¹⁵ Moon type was devised by Dr. William Moon (1818-1894) who gave his time without cost. The system is composed of embossed letters of the Roman alphabet with some modifications. Moon type is still used by some people who have difficulty with Braille. Moon began to lose his sight when he was about four and became completely blind when he was twenty-one. For his services to the blind he was awarded an honorary doctorate from the University of Philadelphia. He printed the material himself and his work was carried on by his daughter until her death in 1914. From Pritchard *op.cit.*
- ¹⁶ Pritchard, D.G. 1963 **EDUCATION OF THE HANDICAPPED 1760-1960** Routledge & Kegan Paul, London.
- ¹⁷ **ANNUAL REPORT 1905** New South Wales Institution for the Blind, Deaf and Dumb, Sydney.
- ¹⁸ Pritchard, D.G., *op.cit.*, p.82.
- ¹⁸ *ibid.* p. 7
- ²⁰ Potts, P., 1982 **ORIGINS** The Open University Press, Milton Keynes.

²¹Shattrick, R., 1980 **THE FORBIDDEN EXPERIMENT** Quartet Books, New York. "Idiot" meaning severely intellectually retarded, a term dating back to the fifteenth century continued to be used well into this century.

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²³Cole, L., 1959 **A HISTORY OF EDUCATION: SOCRATES TO MONTESSORI** Rinehart & Co., New York.p.542.

²⁴Crissey, M.S., 1975 Mental Retardation, Past Present and Future. **AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGIST** August 1975. p.800.

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²⁸ibid. p.7.

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CHAPTER 4

QUEENSLAND IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

SOME SOCIAL AND EDUCATIONAL ISSUES

SCHOOLING IN THE SETTLEMENT 1824-1859

Survival was foremost in the minds of the first European settlers in 1824 in the Moreton Bay District, eventually to become in 1859 the colony, later in 1901 the State, of Queensland. The Europeans comprised convicts and soldiers to guard them. Most of the thirty convicts were second offenders and some had appropriate skills such as carpentering, brickmaking, sawing and shoemaking. Guarding the convicts were a sergeant, corporal and twelve privates and their wives and a commissariat storekeeper who was also to act as a surgeon. ¹

Because of mosquitoes and a poor supply of fresh water the first settlement at Red Cliff Point (now Redcliffe) was abandoned after several months and the entire party moved to a site on the Brisbane River.

The **SYDNEY GAZETTE** of 7 September 1827 provided a list of places where schools were to be established. Moreton Bay was the last place on the list. The conditions of admission to the school were also listed: ²

All children may be admitted gratis, until they have attained the age of ten years, and for a longer period, on special occasions. They will be taught the Elements of Reading, Writing and Arithmetic; and the Girls plain needlework in addition. After the age of ten years, each child will be required to pay threepence per week to the Master, or, in default thereof, be excluded from the School.

In the same year some provision was made for teaching the children of the soldiers at Moreton Bay. The first teacher, Esther Roberts, was the wife of a soldier Charles

Roberts, and was described by Wyeth as someone who "wrote very badly and appears to have been comparatively young".³ When in 1993 it was proposed that a school be named in her honour it was suggested that this might not be appropriate as a report published anonymously in 1836 described her as a "loose and profligate woman who has a large family of children"; she was accused of "having possession of the district surgeon, Mr. Cooper, the son of the Rev. W. Cooper, who neglects his duty, gets drunk habitually and destroys the tranquillity and quietness of the hospital". Cooper (or Cowper) served his apprenticeship at the Sydney Hospital and after a short time in England became the first person to graduate in medicine in Australia.⁴ The report does not say anything about Mrs Roberts and her teaching duties and her demanding family life - or was this another Mrs Roberts? ⁵ The first teacher, who had also to give religious instruction as there was some difficulty in finding a clergyman to come to Moreton Bay, worked six days a week and her school was supplied with six Meditations (Stanhope), one dozen serious Exhortations, six Psalters, together with Prayer Books and Catechisms.⁶ The early plans of the settlement do not show a building specifically designed for school purposes any more than do the religious books supplied, but in 1827 a room in an apartment building was used. Later in 1829 a small hut near the wharf and later again in 1838 a room at the northern end of the prisoners' barracks was allocated for school purposes.⁷

In 1829 the school was attended by the children of the Commandant, and those of the Chaplain, (the Rev. John

Vincent who spent less than a year in the Colony). Charles, Mary and Ester (sic) the children of the teacher also attended as did "Military Children", "Free People's Children" and "Prisoners' Children".⁸ When Mrs Roberts resigned because of increasing family responsibilities she was replaced by soldiers, the only people available.

In 1836 Foster Fyans, the commandant of the Moreton Bay colony, wrote to the Colonial Secretary requesting that no more children be sent to the colony as they were growing up in an atmosphere of vice. Some of the children were the illegitimate offspring of female prisoners who in 1837 were moved from the main settlement to Eagle Farm where there was perhaps the first segregated education provision. The Convicts' Children's School lasted until 1839 when Moreton Bay ceased to be a convict settlement.

There was a period of uncertain dates when there was no school. Constance Petrie wrote about her grandfather and what happened to him:⁹

At that time Tom was the youngest son of the Petrie family, and there being of course no school to go to, his father used to take him two or three days in the week to the lumber yard to his office, there to get lessons from his clerk. This clerk was called "Peg-leg Kelly" because he had a wooden leg but grandfather himself said he was a very good scholar.

In 1843 a correspondent from Moreton Bay complained in the **SYDNEY MORNING HERALD** that the numerous children in the district were receiving no instruction. The provision of schools was the responsibility of the Church and eventually a number of schools were set up around the colony, most of which because of lack of suitable teachers did not last very long. It was not until the Governor of New South Wales, Sir Charles Fitzroy set up the National

Schools Board and the Denominational Schools Board, one to provide assistance for the establishment of national schools and the other to allocate funds to the schools conducted by the Anglican, Roman Catholic, Presbyterian and Methodist Churches.¹⁰

At the time of separation in December 1859 Queensland had one National School at Drayton with 78 pupils, six Church of England Schools totalling 387 pupils, four Roman Catholic Schools totalling 354 pupils and thirty private schools totalling 698 pupils. Of the 1517 pupils attending school all but 180 were living in the towns and most of the schools were in poor buildings and were overcrowded.¹¹ Of the beginnings of universal State Education in Queensland Wyeth comments on the fact that there was only one building in utter disrepair (Drayton), another uninhabited (Warwick), and a third (North Brisbane) not yet completed. "...the unfinished, the decrepit, the untenanted, each unlovely in its own way, were the foundations upon which Queensland was to build its system of State education".¹²

The early period was marked by debate, often acrimonious, between various church leaders most of whom opposed the idea of a national system of education. The protagonists were clergymen and politicians and a few parents - the majority of parents were probably too busy eking out a living in a frontier society where survival depended not so much on book learning but on cunning basic instincts motivated by poverty. James Swan, the editor of the **MORETON BAY COURIER** who had successfully championed the cause of separation of the Colony of Queensland now turned

his attention to the provision of a national school system. Wyeth says of Swan..... "a man of vision. Time and again he thundered against the evils of transportation; he urged separation continuously, and his repeated statements on education gave unqualified support to the national system."¹³

THE NATIONAL SCHOOL SYSTEM

The first school established in Queensland after separation was the Brisbane Normal School. The term "normal" was used in Scotland, and some of the earliest Department of Public Instruction bureaucrats were Scots, but the term is probably French in origin. The *école normale* was a primary school for the training of teachers and refers to the "norm" or "standard". The Brisbane Normal School was for a while the only place where pupil teachers were instructed and as such had a profound effect on education in the colony. It opened in 1862 and occupied a site bounded by Adelaide, Edward and Ann Streets until it closed in 1927. During this time it had James Semple Kerr (1836-1915) as Head Teacher for thirty-two years, 1874 until 1906. It was in the year he began his long association with the school that he reported that "an idiot was taught with the other children, and the only fear was that he might kill someone some day or other as he became excited; still the children are very kind to him".¹⁴ This was an isolated reference to one child with a disability. Where were the others? Were they kept at home or had they been charged with being a neglected child and placed in an orphanage or in one of the large asylums at Woogaroo Creek (Goodna) or Sandy Gallop (Ipswich)? The

confusion about and between the intellectually disabled and the mentally ill lasted well into the twentieth century.

Local communities had to take the initiative to establish a school and initially they had also to find one-fifth of the cost whilst having little authority or control. As late as 1894 District Inspector Canny wrote in his Annual Report to Parliament:¹⁵

Concerning local committees, I find little to report in Justification of their existence. Only in rare instances do they visit the school or examine the records. Mostly they are lifeless, and in some instances they afford opportunities for local busybodies to interfere unduly with the teacher's work. It will be a pity for the teacher of independent mind if ever the principles of local government extend to the control of our public schools..

Participation of parents in their child's education had to wait many years.

The Compulsory Clause of the 1875 Act was not enforced until 1901 when several truant officers were appointed but the General Return, however, which teachers had to complete during the unannounced annual visit of the District Inspector of Schools had a column headed "Number of Retarded Pupils" and the instructions for the completion of this stated "Pupils are to be regarded as retarded when they have been longer than the correct number of months in the grade or draft". The Inspector of Schools was also required to ascertain the number of neglected children, that is, "the number of children in the neighbourhood between the ages of five and fifteen who are not educated up to the standard and do not attend any school". The General Instructions do not indicate what action, other than counting them, should be taken about

"retarded" or "neglected" children. The General Return for one school in 1874 gave the following information:

Children on Roll at Inspection	531
Examined	476
Number on Roll who attended 4 days out of 5	326
Neglected Children	46

The school¹⁶ was the largest in the inspectorial district, and despite the number of neglected children, and what could be regarded as poor attendance, the ubiquitous District Inspector described the discipline as excellent, the general condition as highly satisfactory, and the progress as very good.

ORPHANS AND DESERTED AND NEGLECTED CHILDREN

Children who had been abandoned, or who had lost a parent, often a mother, became the responsibility of the authorities. Among the earliest institutions established in the Colony of New South Wales were the Male Orphan School and the Female Orphan School to be replaced some years later by the notorious Female Factory at Parramatta. At Moreton Bay as in other parts of the colony, orphans, deserted and neglected children were accommodated in hospitals until orphanages were built. Dr Barton, the Medical Superintendent of the Brisbane Hospital notified the Colonial Secretary in 1861 of his intention to discharge two deserted children whom he classified as "idiots" though labelled by some as "incurable lunatics" and not proper cases for treatment in a hospital. "They are troublesome and expensive and from their being also noisy are undesirable for an institution not intended for them."¹⁷

In 1865 sixty children were transferred from the Brisbane Hospital to the buildings previously used as a Quarantine Station at Dunwich on Stradbroke Island.¹⁸ Dunwich, the out-station to which the husband of Esther Roberts, Queensland's first teacher, had been transferred in 1826, had been established in the same year as an unloading place for ships too large to sail up the Brisbane River. It was also used for the secondary punishment of convicts. In turn it became the Quarantine Station and eventually the Benevolent Asylum. "Queenslanders had turned to the phenomenon of the natural prison exploiting the availability of some of the many islands their long coastline provided to banish its many social deviants - aged, insane, chronically ill as well as leprous, Aboriginal, inebriate or venereal disease sufferers".¹⁹ The children were returned to Brisbane some weeks later when a migrant ship arrived with a typhus case on board. The children were given temporary shelter in what had been the Fever Hospital situated near what was to become the Roma Street Railway Yards. The building was renamed the Diamantina Orphan School after the Countess Diamantina Roma, the wife of the first Governor, Sir George Ferguson Bowen. The Diamantina Orphanage was moved to South Brisbane in 1883 on a site of twenty-four acres; a school was included in the plan but was never constructed. The buildings were later used as a hospital for the incurably ill and eventually became the site of the Princess Alexandra Hospital.²⁰ Later the Orphanage again looked to Dunwich to accept children who were "cases of mental and physical incapacity". In 1866 Mr Douglas of

the Orphanage Board admitted that he did not know where "two or three imbecile children" would be "provided for when they grew up." (That is, reach twelve years of age to be considered for boarding out.) "They will have to be sent to Woogaroo (then known as the lunatic asylum) or the Benevolent Asylum at Dunwich". The problem persisted for in 1892 Charles Horrocks, the Inspector of Orphanages spoke of difficulties of

"disposing of crippled children who through physical and mental defect cannot be sent out to service. Crippled boys may be capable of earning a living by tailoring or bootmaking, but all efforts to provide for them in this way have proved futile as employers do not care to be troubled with such children".²¹

One commentator wrote some time later that "forty-one comparatively young paralysed and crippled inmates kept at Dunwich in 1893 raised little comment."²²

The **PROSERPINE**, an old hulk moored at the mouth of the Brisbane River had been used as a prison until another island in the Bay, St Helena, was established as a gaol. The hulk was then used as an Industrial and Reformatory School for Boys from 1871 until it was replaced in 1881 by new buildings at the river mouth and now known as Lytton. In 1900 the Reformatory was removed to Westbrook on the Darling Downs where it continued until closed in 1994. The first superintendent, James Wassell, also accepted the task of teaching the boys. He did this until 1879 when the Department of Public Instruction appointed John Brown. Brown who had come from Ireland as an infant had commenced duty as a pupil teacher of the South Toowoomba State School before he was fifteen years old. He resigned from the teaching service in 1877 without having completed the

requirements for classification but was readmitted two years later to teach the boys incarcerated on the **PROSERPINE**.²³

Orphanages were also established by the State in Rockhampton and Townsville in 1878 and were administered by local committees, always male, with the Chairman of the Committee acting as Superintendent of the Orphanage. In Rockhampton it was the Police Magistrate and in Townsville it was the Sub Collector of Customs who performed these duties.

Denominational Orphanages were also established and the Government paid ten pence a day for each child. Schooling was part of the daily routine, the teaching usually undertaken by a staff member whose qualifications for the job were never questioned but "essential requisites" were provided by the Department of Public Instruction. Part of the day was spent in school and the other part in domestic work for the girls and farming, gardening and outdoor work for the boys.²⁴

There is an almost inseparable link between poverty, ignorance and crime, that if we bring up a race of paupers, we bring up at the same time a race of criminals.....to avoid this girls were taught all ordinary household work - plain cooking, washing, ironing, sewing, mending, kitchen cleaning, while the boys learned to master the rudiments of outside servile and manual occupations.²⁵

There were some name changes: reformatories became industrial schools and orphanages became receiving depots indicating that the "boarding-out" scheme was preferred by the Government.

It is not difficult to see why handicapped children were anathema to this system, for their incapacity destined them for pauperism.²⁶

THE IMPACT OF THE ECONOMIC CLIMATE

The last decade of the nineteenth century was marked by an economic decline. Expenditure on education was dramatically reduced and likewise the salaries and allowances of teachers. Classes for teachers in kindergarten, drawing and drill were abandoned. Miss Mary Agnew, Head Teacher of Kangaroo Point Infants' School and Queensland authority on Froebel, was appointed to instruct teachers in kindergarten in 1889 but returned to classroom duty in 1893.²⁷ Children under six years were no longer admitted to schools and secondary school scholarships to the Grammar Schools were reduced from 120 to fifty-two. The population of Queensland at the end of the nineteenth century was close to half a million and 122,723 of these were enrolled in school.

Bank failure, drought and floods and general depression dominated the State's history for the last decade of the nineteenth century. However, for some Queensland children, deaf or blind, special education was being provided at the New South Wales Institution at the Colony's expense.

¹**BRISBANE COURIER** 3 February 1893. Steele, J.G., 1975 **BRISBANE TOWN IN CONVICT DAYS 1824-1842** University of Queensland Press, Brisbane. p.7.

²**BRISBANE COURIER** 3 February 1893. Steele, J.G., op. cit. p.88.

³Wyeth, E.R., 1955 **EDUCATION IN QUEENSLAND** Australian Council for Educational Research, Melbourne. p.40.

⁴Quoted by Steele op.cit. from **THE FELL TYRANT OR THE SUFFERING CONVICT** by William R. and published in London in 1836.

⁵**EDUCATIONAL HISTORIAN** 1994, Vol.7 No.2, p.4.

⁶Wyeth, E.R., op.cit. p. 41.

⁷Wyeth, E.R., op.cit. p. 42.

⁸Holthouse, H. 1975 **LOOKING BACK The First 150 Years of Queensland Schools**. Department of Education, Brisbane. p.4.

⁹Petrie, Constance C., 1904 **TOM PETRIE'S REMINISCENCES** Watson, Ferguson & Co., Brisbane. quoted by Steele op.cit. p.255.

¹⁰Barcan, A., 1980 **A HISTORY OF AUSTRALIAN EDUCATION**, Oxford University Press, Melbourne. p.102.

¹¹Wyeth, E.R., op.cit., p.79.

¹²Wyeth, E.R., op.cit. p.58.

¹³Wyeth, E.R., op.cit. p.95.

¹⁴Department of Public Instruction 1950 **SEVENTY-FIFTH JUBILEE HISTORY** Typewritten Script, History Unit, Department of Education.

¹⁵Q.P.P., **ANNUAL REPORT DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION 1893**.

¹⁶Mt.Morgan Primary School.

¹⁷Morrison, A., 1966 **Colonial Society 1869-1890 QUEENSLAND HISTORY JOURNAL 1966**. Dr Barton probably used "idiot" meaning "severely retarded" but his use of "incurable lunatics" is puzzling. Were these children severely disturbed as well as severely retarded?

¹⁸Department of Children's Services 1979 **CENTENARY OF CARE FOR CHILDREN** Government Printer, Brisbane.

¹⁹Dickey, B., 1980 **NO CHARITY THERE** Nelson, Melbourne.

²⁰**CENTENARY OF CARE FOR CHILDREN** op.cit.

²¹Evans, R.L., 1968 **CHARITABLE INSTITUTIONS OF THE QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT** Unpublished M.A. Thesis, University of Queensland. quote from Q.P.P.1902.

²²ibid. p.151.

²³Savige, A., 1992 **Rascals and Renegades: The Proserpine Reformatory for Boys 1871-1881**. in Logan, G. and Watson, T., **SOLDIERS OF THE SERVICE** History of the Queensland Education Society, Brisbane.

²⁴Rules and Regulations for the Management and Supervision of Industrial and Reformatory Schools. **QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT GAZETTE** 1871 p. 1068.

²⁵Quoted by Evans op.cit. from Votes and Proceedings 1902.

²⁶ibid.

²⁷Grieshaber, S., 1992 **Preschool Pioneer: Mary Agnew and the Development of Kindergarten Method in Queensland State Schools 1890-1910** in Logan, G., and Watson, T., op.cit.

CHAPTER 5

QUEENSLAND CHILDREN AT THE NEW SOUTH WALES INSTITUTION FOR THE DEAF, DUMB AND THE BLIND

The **SYDNEY MORNING HERALD** of 15 October 1860 contained the notice:

Deaf and Dumb Institution, 152 Liverpool Street, near South Head Road - this Institution is to be conducted by Mr Thomas Pattison, late secretary and treasurer of the Edinburgh Deaf and Dumb Benevolent Society. The School will open on Monday the 22nd October. The Religious Meeting of the Mute Adults commences on Sunday the 28th instant. Worship at 2 p.m. and 6 p.m.¹

Thomas Pattison had arrived in the colony of New South Wales in 1858, the year before the separation of Queensland from New South Wales. He was fifty-two years old and was profoundly deaf. He appears to have been a man of considerable drive and initiative for within two years of his arrival he founded an institution that is still functioning, at one time providing services for children from all parts of Australia and New Zealand.² After retirement Thomas Pattison moved to Melbourne where he lived until he was ninety-eight. He had some association with the Melbourne Institute which was founded some months after the Sydney one by another deaf man, Frederick Rose (1860-1920)³.

Within a decade the Sydney Institution expanded its activities to include the blind, setting the pattern in Australia of teaching and training the deaf and the blind in the same establishment.

Pattison travelled about the colony of New South Wales and the southern part of the colony of Queensland locating deaf children and collecting funds. He found fifty children but the institution opened with only seven

children, some of these day pupils and the others boarders.⁴

The admission records for the first ten years contain the names of children from Queensland:⁵

Thomas Love, Rockhampton
Alexander Pollock, King's Plain
John Murphy, Ipswich
Archibald Jamison, Ipswich

When provision for the blind was made in 1869, two blind children from Queensland were enrolled:

John Driscoll, Rockhampton
George Allison, Brisbane

There were also children from New Zealand and Tasmania at the Institution.⁶

Queensland children attended the New South Wales Institution at the expense of the Queensland Government until 1892. They would have travelled to Sydney by ship before the railway link between Sydney and Brisbane opened on January 17, 1888. Some may have travelled by Cobb & Co. coach, enduring similar discomfort to that of the English writer Anthony Trollope who commented "the wonder of the journey was in the badness of the roads and the goodness of the coachmanship".⁷

There was a regular mail service between Sydney and Brisbane so written contact could have been maintained between children and their parents. The telegraph line which had been in operation since 1861 could have been used but in the nineteenth century this would have been only in dire emergency.

LINKS BETWEEN THE NEW SOUTH WALES INSTITUTION AND THE QUEENSLAND INSTITUTION

The links between the New South Wales and Queensland Institutions continued after the establishment of the Queensland school in 1893. In seventy-five years the New South Wales Institution had only two superintendents, Samuel Watson from 1870 until 1910 and Harold Erlam from 1910 until 1945. Watson would have known the Queensland children who travelled from the northern colony and stayed for periods ranging from two to eight years. His annual reports provide insights into attitudes and methods of instruction.

Samuel Watson (1840-1911) had been recruited by a member of the committee visiting England in 1869. He had not yet qualified for membership of the English College of Teachers of the Deaf and Dumb but rectified this after some time in Sydney.⁸ His ten years' teaching experience at schools in Ireland facilitated his acceptance of the position of Superintendent of the New South Wales Institution.⁹ He wrote in the Report of 1886 that he had occasion to write for a magazine for the deaf in England:

The methods of instruction adopted in these Australian schools for the Deaf are very much in harmony with those employed in England and America. In each institution the Oral Method is being attempted. For nearly six years the Committee of the Sydney Institution has had a teacher who was trained at the Ealing College. The results attained are satisfactory - in a few cases they are beyond the most sanguine expectations.¹⁰

The deaf students at Darlington were given instruction in imitating the movement of the mouth in order to learn the various elements of speech. In addition, the students learnt to feel the different vibrations that the throat produced during speech production by touching the throat. After the forty-seven sounds of the Phonetic Alphabet had been mastered, the students were then taught spoken and written language.¹¹

The "German" or "oral" method was regarded as the better way of instructing the deaf and this was emphasised in the Annual Reports. The 1891 Report contained a picture of the children standing in a line observing the teacher and accompanying the picture was a long description of the method. The teacher in the picture was Miss Kernohan whose arrival had been announced in the Report of 1880 together with the fact that she had trained at the Ealing College (the College established to train teachers in the oral or German method). "Miss Kernohan's particular task is to teach lip-reading and articulation."¹²

Watson may be considered the first "oralist" in Australia. He also wrote in the Annual Report of 1886 that his experience of twenty-five years convinced him that teaching the Deaf and the Blind in the same institution had "wholesome moral benefits" although there was some considerable difference of opinion about this situation.

The Hon. Sir Arthur Renwick (1837-1908) physician, philanthropist and politician, who had been connected with the Sydney Institution for thirty-nine years of which twenty-seven were as President of the Committee, and after whom the recently established Renwick College an affiliate College of the University of Newcastle was named, reported at the Twenty-fifth Annual General Meeting that¹³

the Institution had lost a considerable amount of support from Queensland, in which colony up to the present time no effort of a direct character had been made for the maintenance and the care of the deaf and the dumb and the blind children who had as a rule, been sent either to this colony or to Victoria - principally to this colony. But now an effort was being made - and he was glad to know it - by the colonists of Queensland to erect an institution for themselves. That was a move in the right direction,

and he congratulated the people of Queensland on the efforts being made in that direction. The Government of Queensland had granted a considerable area of land for that purpose, and he understood that a building would shortly be erected.

The Annual Reports also contained information for parents about the conditions for admission. These were similar to those later used in Queensland.

- 1.No child deficient in intellect, subject to fits, or unable to wash and dress himself can be considered a fit subject for admission.
- 2.No child younger than seven nor older than twelve except under special circumstances will be admitted.
- 3.A medical certificate must accompany all applications for admission.
- 4.Parents will be expected to provide clothing as listed.
- 5.A fee of forty pounds a year is payable at the beginning of the year.
- 6.There will be a vacation of five weeks at Christmas and one week during mid-winter.
- 7.Parents and friends of children may visit once a fortnight and between 2 and 4 p.m. Children may visit friends once a month.

HOW WE SPEND A DAY HERE

Samuel Watson, Superintendent 1892.

School work commences at 8:30 a.m. and continues until 10 o'clock, when forty minutes recreation is given, during which time games, such as tennis, cricket, or other congenial amusement occupy the pupils' time.

School opens at 10:40 a.m. and goes on till 12:30 when there is another interval for dinner and recreation.

At 1:45 afternoon exercises commence and proceed up to 3:15 p.m. at which hour day school terminates.

Drawing and carpentry lessons now engage the elder pupils on alternate days for two hours each day - Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays up till 5p.m. after which there is another break of nearly two hours for recreation and tea up to 7 o'clock. The junior pupils now retire to the dormitory; the elder ones proceed to evening school up to 9, when they too retire.

The above description or Time Table applies on the whole to the blind pupils except that Music lessons and practice, with one lesson, each evening in Latin occupy their spare interest pretty fully.

Harold Erlam (1872-1947) who succeeded Watson as Superintendent of the New South Wales Institution in 1911

was also a member of the College of Teachers of the Deaf and Dumb and had been interviewed for his position in New South Wales by the same family who had interviewed his predecessor.¹⁴ He brought with him, in 1911, refreshing ideas: he advocated compulsory education for the deaf and the blind, introduced day attendance for those students who lived near the school because he thought family life important, and generally encouraged students to live as normal a life as possible. Erlam (who worked until his seventy-fourth birthday) was also responsible for the training of teachers, two of whom, Stanley Edward Holle (1897-1953) and Arthur James Lobb (1909-1994) became Principals of the Queensland School for the Deaf, Holle in 1926 succeeded by Lobb in 1954. Erlam was also responsible for a report on the Queensland School in 1924 which brought about changes. He was regarded as the doyen of educators of the deaf in Australia and his aim was to make the New South Wales School "not only the first in Australia, but the first in the world."¹⁵

The New South Wales Annual Report in 1891 announced that a Committee was working in the interest of the blind and deaf in Queensland and in the following year the Annual Report announced the return of eighteen children to Queensland. Some regret was expressed that funding in fees and donations from Queensland would be discontinued. Money collected was always listed in the Annual Reports and people in the towns from which Queensland children came seemed to have been generous contributors - perhaps parents were active collectors? Contributions from the Queensland Government were also acknowledged.

At the end of 1892 Queensland children were returned to their homes for the summer holidays. Most of them were to become the foundation pupils at the Queensland Institute for the Blind, Deaf and Dumb.

**QUEENSLAND DEAF CHILDREN AT THE NEW SOUTH WALES
INSTITUTION 1892**

NAME	HOME	AGE	ADMISSION
Nash, Herbert	Maryborough	8	March 1889
Shanks, Annie	Ipswich	7	Jan. 1883
Campbell, Henry	Banana	7	Dec. 1885
Holzapfel, Mary	Mt Cotton	9	Feb. 1887
Morisset, James	Port Douglas	9	Feb. 1888
Hall, Sarah	Nundah	8	March 1889
Wood, Hy. St John	Maryborough	8	July 1889
Potts, John	Ipswich	11	July 1889
Miller, John	Maryborough	9	Feb. 1890
Smith, George	Gympie	13	Feb. 1890
Friik, Fritz	Clifton	12	July 1891

**QUEENSLAND BLIND CHILDREN AT THE NEW SOUTH WALES
INSTITUTION 1892**

NAME	HOME	AGE	ADMISSION
D'Arcy, Ida	Brisbane	8	March 1880
Beetham, Emily	Ipswich	8	March 1888
Flanigan, Mary	Queensland	10	Dec. 1892
McLetchie, James	Herberton	7	Sept. 1891
Turner, Robert	Brisbane	8	Sept. 1891
Aird, Dora	Sea Hill	9	Feb. 1892
Crowley, Lawrence	Charters Towers	5	Sept. 1892

For the Queensland children at the beginning of 1893, the well ordered day at the New South Wales Institution would be replaced by perhaps a less ordered one at the smaller Queensland Institution, with fewer children and only one teacher for the deaf and the blind together. Some children would be able to see their families more often and the children from distant parts of the State would not have to travel as far.

Before the foundation of the Queensland Institution is described, acknowledgment must be made of the remarkable pioneering work of a blind man, John William Tighe.

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- ¹ Plowman, J., 1985 **WE GREW UP TOGETHER** North Rocks Press, Sydney. p.1.
- ² *ibid.* p.2.
- ³ Burchett, J. H., 1964 **UTMOST FOR THE HIGHEST, THE STORY OF THE VICTORIAN SCHOOL FOR DEAF CHILDREN** Hall's Bookstore, Melbourne. and **HISTORY ROOM, VICTORIAN SCHOOL FOR DEAF CHILDREN** 1995.
- ⁴ Plowman, J., *op.cit.*,p.2.
- ⁵ *ibid*, p.141.
- ⁶ *ibid*, p.141.
- ⁷ Trollope, A., 1873 **AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND** Chapman and Hall, London. p.77.
- ⁸ College of the Teachers of the Deaf and Dumb, **ANNUAL REPORT 1892** London.
- ⁹ Plowman, J. *op.cit.*p.15.
- ¹⁰ New South Wales Institution for the Deaf and Dumb and Blind, **ANNUAL REPORT 1886.**
- ¹¹ Crickmore, B.L., 1990 **EDUCATION OF THE DEAF AND HEARING IMPAIRED: A BRIEF HISTORY** Education Management Systems, Mayfield,N.S.W.
- ¹² **ANNUAL REPORT** *op.cit.*
- ¹³ **ANNUAL REPORT 1886**
- ¹⁴ Plowman, J., *op.cit.*, p.25.
- ¹⁵ *ibid.* p.25.

CHAPTER 6

JOHN WILLIAM TIGHE

(1858-1909)

John William Tighe must receive the accolade for pioneering special education in Queensland. He was blind and has been described as being "driven by a formidable personality".¹ Having successfully launched a facility for the training of the blind in Queensland, Tighe moved to New Zealand where in 1889 he is credited with providing the real impetus for establishing another facility for the blind. According to the authors of **PIONEERING A VISION** even the staid wording of the newspapers of the day gave some evidence of Tighe's "intensity, emotion and sheer driving force."

a tall man with bushy red hair and an Irish temper.....a hard worker.....boundless energy and enthusiasm who never let blindness stand in his way.²

John William Tighe was born in Tobbercurry, County Sligo, Ireland in 1858 and died in Sydney in 1909.³ His death certificate states that he spent five years in Queensland, eighteen years in New Zealand and twenty-seven years in New South Wales. Piecing together the fragments of information it would seem that he came to Australia when he was about a year old, probably with his parents as part of the mass Irish migration after the devastating great famine of 1858. An article in **THE NEW ZEALAND GRAPHIC** of Saturday 11 August 1900 says "Mr Tighe possessed the finest sight imaginable till early in his twenties when he met with the affliction of his life."⁴

Tighe, according to A.J. Lamond, came to Queensland in 1883 and in the light of the information in the newspaper, which was probably written with Tighe's approval, one may question the accuracy of Lamond's claim that he had been a pupil at the Sydney Institution and had come from New Zealand.⁵ In another article, appearing in the newspaper **THE AUCKLAND STAR** Tighe is reported as saying that he became blind when he was twenty and that his own teacher had been a Mr Prescott, an old New Zealander. Tighe's name does not appear as a pupil at the New South Wales Institution and his work did not start in New Zealand until after his departure from Queensland in 1888. Lamond does not appear to know a great deal about Tighe outside Queensland, neither do the authors of material about the establishment of facilities for the blind, but credit is given to Tighe for his having established work for the blind in Queensland.⁶ Tighe had braille reading and writing skills and was competent in teaching these as well as being able to offer instruction in traditional blind crafts. The Anglican Bishop of Brisbane, Matthew Brogdan Hale⁷, received a letter of introduction from Tighe and established a Board of Advice consisting of The Bishop, The Rev. Ian Stewart, described as a city missionary and a Mr. Alex Costello, a business man. Tighe spent 1883, his first year in Queensland, travelling throughout the colony meeting 150 blind people and collecting one hundred and fifty-two pounds. He also established a workshop under his house at New Farm where he taught halter making to a small group of men.

Mr Tighe was a very clever masterly man, a born manager and organiser. It was wonderful to see the way he could get about with the assistance of a boy guide. To watch him reading, writing and keeping accounts it was hard to believe he was blind.⁸

Tighe's work was also acknowledged in the Legislative Assembly. During the supply debate of 1884 the Member for Gympie, W. Smyth said, "I have come into contact with Mr Tighe a great deal and know the work he is doing".⁹ The Legislative Assembly was debating a proposal to pay Tighe one hundred and fifty pounds a year as an itinerant instructor of the blind. Up until this time Tighe was dependent on public subscriptions and fees from the blind and their families and Smyth thought that this was an inappropriate way of supporting Tighe's work. In his speech Smyth mentioned that on the previous Saturday he had met him on his way to instruct a blind child at the Diamantina Orphanage. The Member for Balonne, B. D. Moorehead expressed some misgivings about the employment of an itinerant teacher for the blind and suggested that the money might be better spent by increasing the contribution to the Sydney Institution for the Blind, Deaf and Dumb. The Honourable Member claimed that he did not object to the vote but he would like to know upon what recommendation Mr Tighe had received his appointment and how he came into contact with blind people. He also said "I have known blind men who have been the greatest rogues and imposters I have ever seen".¹⁰

The Minister for Public Instruction, Sir Samuel Walker Griffith (1845-1920) in winding up the debate and in an

attempt to reassure the Member for Balonne is reported in Hansard to have said:

.....the teacher visited the blind in different parts of the colony as an itinerant teacher. The only other alternative would be for the blind to come to him, which would involve the establishment of a blind institution, which they did not propose to do at present, certainly. A blind institution was good for children, a great many of whom were sent to the Institution at Sydney. There were several adults who were here who could be, nevertheless, made much more useful to the colony, and a great deal might be done in that way by Mr Tighe. Mr Tighe came to him with recommendations which were satisfactory, and he had no doubt as to his ability or character.¹¹

The **BRISBANE COURIER** of 22 May 1888 reported the proceedings of the Fifth Annual General Meeting of the Blind, Deaf and Dumb Institution of Queensland: this meeting was the first to be held after the establishment of the workshop at South Brisbane.¹² The report said that "the city of Brisbane and Queensland generally are to be congratulated upon the formal opening of respectable buildings for the education of the blind which may afterwards be enlarged for the inclusion also for the deaf and dumb". The report also states that the institution was a "remarkable illustration of what may be achieved by the enterprise and energy of one man, and under the most discouraging circumstances". The meeting was informed that Mr Tighe had travelled over five thousand miles in the colony and had met 150 blind people. The Governor of Queensland attended the meeting and congratulated the committee on its success. He also said, quaintly perhaps, that there would have been a greater number of blind people had it not been for the "British habit of cleanliness".

Another speaker and active worker for the blind, the Rev. Ian Stewart, paid tribute to John William Tighe's successful efforts to establish an institution for the blind.

Unfortunately Tighe tendered his resignation later in 1888 and this was accepted by the committee of management. There had been according to Lamond, some disagreement about the dismissal of a sighted foreman and the withholding of some information by Tighe. Tighe and his wife and three children moved to New Zealand and "his energy and ability that gave promise of great usefulness was lost to Queensland".¹³

In Auckland, Tighe, with his successful Queensland experience behind him again set about travelling great distances, meeting blind people and teaching them braille and traditional crafts. His work in New Zealand is acknowledged in **PIONEERING A VISION**.¹⁴ After successfully establishing another facility for the education and training of the blind Tighe again resigned and again the reasons for this are somewhat clouded. There are few first hand accounts of all aspects of this remarkable man's behaviour. There are, however stories of his gambling, of keeping a race horse on the Auckland premises for the blind and even of being involved in a scheme to paint a race horse with intent to defraud!¹⁵ There are stories too about his saintly wife who assisted him as housekeeper and matron at the Institution in Auckland:

She was remembered variously as "long-suffering", 'of a bright and cheerful spirit' and "deeply religious".

Hardworking she certainly would have been, considering how labour intensive housework was in those days, with the additional burden of ministering to twenty handicapped children.¹⁶

His refusal to use corporal punishment sets him apart from his contemporaries and the fact that he pioneered education and training for the blind in two countries makes him a unique figure in the annals of special education. Tighe moved back to Sydney where he died when only fifty-one years old. It is not surprising, considering his great drive and energy that he died suddenly from acute heart failure.¹⁷ His occupation at this time was recorded as "storekeeper". His wife, Amelia Jane nee Suter and five children survived him.¹⁸

J.W. TIGHE AND THE AUCKLAND JUBILEE INSTITUTE FOR THE BLIND

John William Tighe and his wife, whom he had married in Sydney the year before coming to Queensland in 1883 moved with their three sons to Auckland where Tighe's efforts successfully established the Jubilee Institute for the Blind, named in honour of Queen Victoria whose sixtieth jubilee accession to the throne was celebrated in the year of its foundation. With Tighe's departure Queensland lost a dynamic and progressive advocate for the blind.

The writer of an article in **THE NEW ZEALAND GRAPHIC** described his approach as Superintendent of the Jubilee Institute:

Mr. Tighe...promptly acceded to our wish, and no words can convey an adequate impression of the jovial good nature and unwearied kindness with which this gentleman put himself about that we might see and photograph everything of interest.¹⁹

The writer of the article goes on to describe the environment of the Institute which seems so removed from the Victorian atmosphere of similar establishments not only of the time but of part of the twentieth century:

The obedience of the children to Mr Tighe is extremely noticeable, but it is the obedience bred of love, not of fear. (There is) the tone of his voice as he speaks to them, the bright, trustful, affectionate manner in which they answer, or tumble over one another in anxious rivalry to do his bidding and win his approval. Corporal punishment of even the boys is unknown.

The active participation of children in sports is mentioned as is the availability of hot or cold water, the ventilation and heating of the dormitories, the happy family relationship and the feeling of independence imparted.

All too often, at such establishments there is a rigid code of laws, such a curtailing of all liberties, such a living by dull rote and routine, with such an endless round of all work and no play, that the life is almost that of a prison, and the dread of such places is only second to the workhouse. Here there is nothing of the sort.

It is disappointing to read much later in the Jubilee History that Tighe became increasingly authoritarian and autocratic and that he retained his position mainly because of the hard work and sweet nature of his wife. He resigned in 1905 and moved back to Sydney.

Tighe's endeavours during his five years in Queensland raised an awareness of the needs for the blind and eventually for the deaf. He established the workshop for the blind at South Brisbane, and a school for the deaf and blind came as a consequence after his departure.

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- ¹ Catran, K., & Hansen, P., 1992 **PIONEERING A VISION: A History of the New Zealand Foundation for the Blind 1890-1990** Royal New Zealand Foundation for the Blind, Auckland. p. 7.
- ² *ibid.* p. 8.
- ³ New South Wales Death Certificate 3165, 2 March 1909.
- ⁴ **THE NEW ZEALAND GRAPHIC** 11 August 1900, p. 249-254.
- ⁵ Lamond, A. J., 1913 **THE STORY OF THE QUEENSLAND BLIND, DEAF AND DUMB INSTITUTION 1883-1913** Typewritten Script Queensland Special Education Archives.
- ⁶ *ibid.* p.3.
- ⁷ Matthew Brogdan Hale (1811-1895) , Bishop of Brisbane 1875-1885 translated from Perth.
- ⁸ Lamond. *op. cit.* p.3.
- ⁹ **QUEENSLAND PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES** VOL. 44, 1844 P. 1609.
- ¹⁰ *ibid.* p. 1610.
- ¹¹ *ibid.* p. 1610.
- ¹² **BRISBANE COURIER** 22 May 1888, p.4.
- ¹³ Lamond, A. J. *op. cit.* p.8
- ¹⁴ Catran, K., & Hansen, P., 1992 *op. cit.* p.19.
- ¹⁵ *ibid.* p. 8
- ¹⁶ **THE NEW ZEALAND GRAPHIC** *op. cit.*
- ¹⁷ Death Certificate *op. cit.*
- ¹⁸ Three sons were born in Brisbane, John 1884, George 1885 and Lewis 1888. John Oxley Library Record of Births. William 1890 and Amelia 1893 were born in New Zealand.
- ¹⁹ **THE NEW ZEALAND GRAPHIC** *op. cit.*

CHAPTER 7

BEFORE 1893 AND AFTER

The **Brisbane Courier** of Thursday 2 February 1893 was preoccupied with the excessively heavy rain and the possibility of flooding in and around the town. The years leading up to what could be regarded as one of the most disastrous decades in the new colony's economic history were pock-marked by flood, economic depression, drought and bank closures. It was a most unlikely year to take a social and educational initiative such as the establishment of a residential school for the deaf and the blind but the local committee did not retreat from what they regarded as duty and responsibility. Even the most pessimistic journalists on the **BRISBANE COURIER** did not envisage the flooding of 5, 12 and 19 February. The paper's editor, however, permitted other items of local news and one of these on 2 February 1893 was headed :

Deaf and Dumb and Blind Institution.

Opening of Children's Home

Speech by the Colonial Secretary

"The opening of the home for the deaf, dumb and blind children took place yesterday in the presence of a few warm supporters of the institution who braved the heavy rain and wind that marked the occasion. It was suggested earlier in the day that the ceremony should be postponed but the committee have so many children at hand seeking admission that they deemed it best to carry out their arrangements."¹

In the absence of the Governor of the Colony, Sir Anthony Musgrave and the President of the Society, Sir Charles Lilley (1827-1897) who by this time was long gone from parliamentary life and about to retire as Chief Justice, the chairman for the occasion, Mr Oxley, in outlining the

history of the institution paid tribute to the work of John William Tighe and introduced the Colonial Secretary, the Hon. Horace Tozer who again gave a history of the organization and the government's generous contribution over the years since Tighe began his workshop at New Farm. Lamond in reporting the opening of the Institution said "only those who have worked with Mr Tighe can fully appreciate the value of his energy and enterprise in a work that would tax the mind and strength of any man possessed of all his faculties."²

Some activity had preceded the official opening. In 1886, under the provision of the Hospitals Act, ten acres fronting Cornwall Street had been vested in the trustees of the Blind, Deaf and Dumb Institution and a workshop for the blind was erected on this site.³ The Government Gazette of 19 October 1889 gave notice of the excision of one acre of land for school purposes from this reserve.⁴ This one acre had to be vested in the name of the Minister for Education.⁵ The trustees were Sir Thomas McIlwraith, Mr Justice Mein, The Hon. W.H. Wilson and Mr Thomas Finney. McIlwraith⁶ and Mein⁷ were significant figures in Queensland history: McIlwraith was a member of Parliament from 1870 until 1897 and Cabinet Minister and Premier at various times; Mr Justice Mein was a trustee of the Brisbane Grammar School from 1874 until 1889 and honorary acting Head Master in 1875 while waiting for the arrival of Reginald Heber Roe (1850-1926)⁸. He took more than a passing interest in the movement to establish the University of Queensland whilst taking direct charge of the examinations for entrance to the University of Sydney.

Some distance from the main centre of population, the Institution was located next to the Diamantina Orphanage, close by the Boggo Road Gaol and a stone's throw from the Dutton Park or South Brisbane Cemetery. The local committee which had successfully established the workshop consisted of leading citizens. The founding chairman was Sir Charles Lilley and the Secretary the Rev. Ian Stewart, described in the newspaper of the day as a "city missionary". After Tighe's departure Isaac Dickson (1848 - 1933) became the superintendent of the workshop and secretary of the organization. Isaac Dickson was to dominate the organization from 1889 until his retirement in 1932.⁹ He was a forceful personality, an elder of the Presbyterian Church, a Sunday School Superintendent and a very active freemason. Harold Dickinson (1909-1983), a pupil of the School from 1915 until 1924, wrote much later that Mr Dickson "exercised supreme supervision of the entire institution"¹⁰ and said that he always carried a cane to dispense summary justice when making his rounds of the school.¹¹ Dickson's correspondence with the Department of Public Instruction preserved in the Archives suggests competence and efficiency.¹²

A library was already in existence: it had been established by Tighe and consisted according to Lamond, of a thousand books in braille or moon script of which 774 were on loan throughout the colony. It is doubtful if many of the books would have been useful for school children but they certainly would have provided recreational reading for the seventy good braille readers

who lived in different parts of the colony, many of whom had been taught by Tighe.

In 1889 the Secretary of the New South Wales Institution for the Deaf, Dumb and the Blind wrote to the Under Secretary of the Queensland Department of Public Instruction "requesting 600 brochures be sent to all schools to bring to the notice of Head Teachers the existence of the school and appealing for afflicted children." The conditions of entry were listed as were the clothing requirements; the fees were quoted at forty pounds a year.¹³ The letter was acknowledged and annotated "distribute brochures with pay cheques provided they do not delay delivery".

The Inspector of Orphanages, Charles C. Horrocks, seems to have been somewhat impatient when he wrote in his Report to Parliament.

There were thirteen children in the Deaf, Dumb and Blind Institute in Sydney at the end of the year: one was admitted and four discharged during 1888. These children cost thirty-six pounds per annum each, thirty pounds for maintenance and six pounds for clothing. The sum of 442 pounds 10 shillings was sent out of the Colony to support them; this money will be retained and spent here, as soon as the committee erect the necessary buildings at Woolloongabba.¹⁴

QUEENSLAND'S FIRST SPECIAL SCHOOL

Wyeth in one of his two references to special education in his **EDUCATION IN QUEENSLAND**¹⁵ mentions that the Minister for Public Instruction, J. Donaldson, received a deputation on 5 March 1889 to ask for the provision of a school for the blind, deaf and dumb. It was suggested that at such a school useful trades like basket weaving and mat making could be taught in addition to the ordinary

school work.¹⁶ The Rev. Ian Stewart and Messrs Woolnough and Patterson formed the deputation and some time later the Minister for Works, Hodgkinson, issued instruction for

1. preparation of plans of a school for thirty children.
2. teacher residence.
3. contingencies - including fencing.
4. estimates of the cost.¹⁷

The Government would pay four-fifths of the cost as it usually did for the establishment of all provisional schools in Queensland but no assistance would be given towards the building of the home as no provision in the Estimates existed for homes, nor was there likely to be, under the **EDUCATION ACT 1875**. The **QUEENSLANDER** of 30 June 1888 reported that a deputation led by Sir Charles Lilley reviewed the plans prepared by Mr. J. Ferguson of the education office and "unanimously adopted them". The article also claimed that there would be accommodation for thirty children.¹⁸

THE TELEGRAPH of Saturday 25 June 1892 carried the notice:

BLIND DEAF AND DUMB INSTITUTION OF QUEENSLAND

His Excellency the Governor has kindly consented to lay the Foundation Stone of the New Buildings of the abovenamed Institution, at the site Cornwall Street, off Boggo Road, South Brisbane, This (Saturday) Afternoon, June 25 at 3 o'clock.

All friends of the movement are cordially invited.

James Stewart
Honorary Secretary

A copy of the newspaper, the architect's sketch of the completed building and some coins were enclosed in a tin box and placed under the foundation stone.¹⁹ These were unearthed without ceremony in 1963 when the building was being demolished to be replaced by another building which

had been in the planning stages long enough to be outmoded by the time construction had been completed.

Lamond in his quaint way described the activity at the Cornwall Street site in 1892;

All was now bustle and activity about the grounds. The Education Department in fulfilling a promise commenced the erecting of the school house and the teacher's residence and the contractor for the erecting of the Home had a number of men at work, the sound of saw, hammer and trowel was heard continually for several months. The grounds were cleared by a squad of prisoners from the adjacent gaol and Mr. Sulttan of the Acclimatisation Society, superintended the laying out of the grounds and provided a number of trees and shrubs for planting and a broad road for the use of the workers and vehicular traffic was formed, running from the workshops in a curve to a pair of gates erected near the corner of the frontage near the railway.²⁰

The residential building was completed early in 1893 but as a modified version of the original plan. These modifications reduced the cost from three thousand pounds to two thousand two hundred pounds.²¹

SPECIAL EDUCATION IN THE OTHER COLONIES

The Victorian School for Deaf Children opened in 1866 still occupies six acres at 597 St. Kilda Road, Melbourne. It cost eight thousand pounds donated by the State Government and was extended in 1872 with further Government support at a total cost of twenty-three thousand pounds.²² Another building, now at 557 St Kilda Road, was erected on four acres in 1868 for the Blind. It was known as The Victorian Asylum for the Blind for two decades and in 1891 received Royal assent to be known as the Royal Victorian Institute for the Blind.²³ Both buildings have limited use today and are memorials to the Victorian concept of charity rather than an indication of the care and concern for children with a disability. The

Sydney Institution was also moved to a grand building opened in 1872 on five acres at Newtown and built with considerable Government assistance. It is now known as the Institute Building and is part of the University of Sydney having served the Blind and the Deaf for seventy years. The sale of the building enabled the Institution to move to more suitable premises at North Rocks.²⁴ The much more modest Queensland building says much about the financial condition of the State, the size of the population, the function of charity and the role of its leading citizens.

1893-1901 THE EARLY YEARS

The Inspector of Orphanages had much to report in 1893. The Diamantine Orphanage next to the new Institution for the Blind, Deaf and Dumb was closed to children and changed its function to accommodate the patients from the flooded Woogaroo Mental Asylum. The children were moved into foster homes under what was known as "boarding-out", a scheme used in the south, and much approved by the Inspector who clearly indicated with figures that it was also cheaper. He was also foreshadowing legislation that would allow greater use of the boarding-out system and amendments to the "obsolete and ill-adapted" **ORPHANAGES ACT OF 1879**. Extracts from letters from grateful children and lady visitors were also included in the report as was the following:

The Blind, Deaf and Dumb Asylum, at Boggo Road has at last been opened, and the Queensland children have all been withdrawn from the Sydney Institution, and after the majority had spent the holidays with their relatives, they rejoined on the 6 February, 1893 to the number of 13. The buildings are very suitable and the site is healthy and well drained. It is expected

that during the year the number of inmates will be considerably increased, when it becomes known that these afflicted children need not now leave the colony to receive the necessary instruction.²⁵

One wonders what the children thought about their new surroundings. The children who had been pupils at the rather grand Sydney Institution would have found a smaller building and fewer staff. Education in Queensland was in a pretty parlous state - both Lawson²⁶ and Wyeth²⁷ paint a dismal picture of the social and economic condition of the colony of Queensland and the Eighteenth Report of the Department of Public Instruction²⁸ also makes depressing reading. There was a considerable decrease in the expenditure of the Department in an effort to balance the budget: the building program was curtailed, teachers' salaries and allowances cut, and inservice training classes in drawing, kindergarten and drill abolished. Children under the age of six years were no longer admitted to school and the number of teachers was reduced by not replacing those who had resigned or retired. Consequently the pupil-teacher ratio increased.

Queensland had a population of 392,116 at the time of the 1890 census and by 1895 this had increased to 443,064 with about one-fifth living in Brisbane and about one-fifth enrolled in State and Provisional Schools. Most of the people lived then, as now, in the south-eastern corner of the colony. There was considerable dependence on rural industries and these had been affected by the drought. There was also some dependence on mining but the profits went out of the colony to the southern colonies.

The twenty-two children at the Queensland School for the Blind, Deaf and Dumb in 1893 would not have known of the

world's contemporaneous events: suffrage for women in New Zealand, Tchaikovsky's tragic death, or Beatrix Potter's first story about Peter Rabbit. Such was the restricted and sheltered nature of institutional life in the nineties. Local events however, such as the floods and the loss of the Victoria Bridge and the Queensland Navy, (both ships "Gayundah" and the "Paluma" swept by flood waters into the Botanical Gardens) would have provided some interest. A description of life in the Institution had to wait some years until Harold Dickinson wrote and spoke about it.²⁹ How did the children in this sheltered environment experience the failure of banks, the depression and its accompanying poverty and unemployment? Lawson wrote "the standard of education attained by the average Brisbane child during the 1890s was low. Moreover, the depression of the decade brought a temporary retrogression rather than a much-needed advance".³⁰

The twenty-two children in the Institution at the end of the first year cost the government over six hundred pounds for their maintenance.³¹ Miss Sharp, the first Head Teacher "a lady who had considerable experience in the teaching of both blind, deaf and dumb children" reported (how objectively?) at the end of the year:

There were twenty-two children of both sexes from age four to seventeen some blind some deaf under care. Six blind children had never received any training and four of the deaf and dumb children were absolutely untaught. The others had either received some training at home or had been in the excellent Asylum in Sydney and gave less trouble but their education had not progressed to any extent. The other children were absolutely untutored, their minds were blank and one or two of them were almost as wild and not so intelligent as savages. All have now developed into bright intelligent beings and their faculties have been cultivated with much success.The manual system is the most popular but the oral system is of

more service to the more intellectual. The combined systems of manual and oral is generally adopted, and only those who prove to be mentally suitable are selected for the purely oral system.³²

Also reported was that some children were reading both Braille and Moon script and that all were learning to write Braille. The need for funds for an extension to the building was mentioned as was the offer of a Mrs Barlow of Toowoomba to transcribe material into Braille. The ladies' committee, whose membership to obviate any conflict was restricted to the wives or daughters of the Committee members, was commended for fund raising activities.

1895 saw the opening of a new wing which doubled the residential accommodation; the Misses Jefferies were appointed to teach violin and piano, establishing a tradition that continued for nearly a century; Miss Hill, a teacher, was also to act as forewoman in the basket weaving section. Those children unable to return home for the school vacation were given a change of scenery:³³

During the last holidays, through the kindness of the President, the Hon. Horace Tozer, the children with the teachers and matron and her assistants were taken by Government steamer to Peel Island, and the Quarantine buildings were fitted for their occupation and they spent a very enjoyable holiday.

The committee also expressed determination to introduce the oral system combined with the manual system of instruction for the deaf children as soon as room was available to separate the deaf classes from the blind classes. There was some delay in providing additional school accommodation and Isaac Dickson wrote to the Department of Public Instruction:

.....hurry up the Works Department to start the building.

The school room is getting unbearable and the Committee are compelled to refuse any further admissions until the extension has been made.³⁴

In 1897 two schools were established with Miss Sharp as Head Teacher of the Blind School and Mr. Thomas Semmens from the Victoria Institute as Head Teacher of the Deaf School. Semmens brought with him a determination to establish an oral school. The Government continued to pay subsidies on all funds raised and when the new dormitory wing was opened by the Governor, Lord Lamington, on 11 May 1897 the **BRISBANE COURIER** reported:

The Hon. Horace Tozer in asking His Excellency to formally declare the additions open said, the institution lived by sympathy and it preferred to live under such a system rather than become a government institution, and hoped it would long remain and continue to flourish."³⁵

One of the few existing documents (held in the John Oxley Library) is the Annual Report 1898. The school staff is listed with Mr Isaac Dickson as Superintendent and Secretary. The thirty-five children in the Blind School were taught by Miss C. Sharp as Head Teacher and two pupil teachers, Miss M. Kearns and Miss D. Aird. The twenty-three pupils in the Deaf and Dumb School were taught by Mr. Thomas Semmens with Miss Tryphenia Adsett as Assistant Teacher and Miss Hall as pupil teacher. It is interesting to note that there were more children with visual defects than there were deaf children. We know little about the teachers. The pupil teacher Dora Aird had been a foundation pupil at the Queensland School and had started her schooling at the Sydney Institution. Her father was a lighthouse keeper on Curtis Island in Keppel Bay and

Harold Dickinson said that she was one of the most interesting readers that he had been privileged to hear.³⁶ He also added, "one of the earliest pupils of the school, she had remained as a pupil teacher, studying with an inadequate supply of books, and finally securing appointment as assistant teacher."³⁷ Dickinson also refers to her untimely and tragic death in 1923. Thomas Semmens appears in the list of teachers at the Victorian Institute³⁸ and he retired because of ill health in 1899. Pupil teachers at the Institution could sit for the State examinations and qualify as teachers as a result of Isaac Dickson's request to the Department of Public Instruction in a letter of 13 September 1898.³⁹

ADVICE TO PARENTS AND FRIENDS 1898

The Annual Report also contained information for parents and in the light of modern information seems most appropriate:

Suggestions to the Parents of Blind Children

It is much better that they be sent to some school even if they do not learn much. It will still be found that a great benefit is derived from associating with other children and from learning in school habits of attention and obedience.

Encourage the child to become acquainted with every part of the house and the immediate neighbourhood. Let the child dress itself, black its own boots, and in the case of girls, dress their own hair,

Uneducated Deaf and Dumb Children

Such children could easily be taught to write on a slate, or otherwise in their own homes, or with their brothers and sisters in the common school of the neighbourhood.

The Annual Report 1898 also mentioned that sixteen of the deaf pupils were receiving oral instruction and that the

remaining seven "being too dull to benefit by the oral system are being taught by the finger system."

INSPECTOR OF SCHOOLS

The Department of Public Instruction provided an Annual Inspection of the school section of the Blind, Deaf and Dumb Institution. The first inspectorial visitor was John Shirley (1849-1922), who was to become Chief Inspector and then in 1914 foundation Principal of the Teachers' Training College. It was Shirley who recommended the use of Departmental workbooks, attendance books and time tables in the school and when he moved to another District the task of inspecting the school was handed on to Senior District Inspector Platt who wrote with some concern to David Ewart, the Under Secretary:

On the list of schools to be examined by me there appears the "Blind, Deaf and Dumb Institution". I have been considerably exercised in mind as to examining and reporting on this school. I know nothing of teaching the blind and deaf and dumb by experience and shall be quite unable to gauge their progress or the merits of their teachers. May I respectfully submit for consideration whether it is well that I attempt to do so? If it be determined that I should make a report, will you kindly give me any available information, or hints that may be of use to me?

Ewart's annotation on the letter indicated quite clearly to Mr Platt "the object of the inspection was not so much as to find out whether they were working to our regular standards and how they are succeeding in doing so, but as to whether the instruction is carried on with zeal and energy, so as to merit the payment to the Trustees of whatever subsidy they get from the government to advance the education of these peculiar pupils, help them to enjoy life, and help them work for a living".⁴⁰

Lamond wrote in 1904 that the schools had been visited by District Inspector Platt who reported that they were "organized and governed with sound judgment and skill".⁴¹ Problems of finding suitable staff seemed to persist and it was resolved to advertise abroad for a Head Teacher. Thanks to public support, first for the blind and the deaf, as in other places, special education in Queensland had now begun.

¹ **BRISBANE COURIER** 3 February 1893.

² *ibid.*

³ *ibid.*

⁴ **QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT GAZETTE** 19 October 1889, page 574.

⁵ Lamond, A.J., 1913 **HISTORY OF THE QUEENSLAND BLIND DEAF AND DUMB INSTITUTION 1883-1913**. Typescript S.E.A. p.5.

⁶ Murphy, D.J. & Joyce, R.B., 1978 **QUEENSLAND POLITICAL PORTRAITS 1859-1952** University of Queensland Press.

⁷ Stephenson, S., 1923 **BRISBANE GRAMMAR SCHOOL ANNALS 1869-1922** Government Printer, Brisbane.

⁸ Lamond, A.J. 1913 *op. cit.*

⁹ Forrest, Rhona 1983 **HISTORY OF THE QUEENSLAND INDUSTRIAL INSTITUTION OF THE BLIND** Queensland Government Printer.

¹⁰ Dickinson, H., 1982 **OVER THE NEXT HILL** Boolarong Press, Brisbane. p.34.

¹¹ Personal communication 1982.

¹² **QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT ARCHIVES** Bundles EDU A 285 - 287.

¹³ *ibid.* Bundle EDU A 285 , Letters 05754 and 06095.

¹⁴ **VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT 1889** p.1295.

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- ¹⁵ Wyeth, E. R., 1949 **EDUCATION IN QUEENSLAND** A.C.E.R., Melbourne. p. 143.
- ¹⁶ Lamond, A.J., 1913 op. cit., p.7.
- ¹⁷ **S.G.A.**, Bundle EDU/A285.
- ¹⁸ **QUEENSLANDER** 30 June 1888. p. 1020.
- ¹⁹ **SPECIAL EDUCATION ARCHIVES.**
- ²⁰ Lamond, A.J. 1913, P.7.
- ²¹ **S.G.A.** Bundle EDU/A 285.
- ²² **VICTORIAN SCHOOL FOR DEAF CHILDREN** 1994, History Room.
- ²³ **PUBLIC EDUCATION BULLETIN NO 1** 1994 Royal Victorian Institute for the Blind.
- ²⁴ Plowman, J. 1985 **WE GREW UP TOGETHER** North Rocks Press, Sydney. p.12.
- ²⁵ **ANNUAL REPORT OF THE INSPECTOR OF ORPHANAGES FOR THE YEAR 1892.** Q.P.P. P.1343.
- ²⁶ Lawson, R., 1973 **BRISBANE IN THE 1890'S** University of Queensland Press, St. Lucia.
- ²⁷ Wyeth, E.R., 1953. op. cit.
- ²⁸ **VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS 1893.**
- ²⁹ Dickinson, H., 1982, op.cit.
- ³⁰ Lawson, R., op.cit. p.156.
- ³¹ **DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION ANNUAL REPORT 1893.**
- ³² Lamond, A. J., op.cit. p.19.
- ³³ *ibid.* p.13.
- ³⁴ **S.G.A.** Bundle EDU/A 285.
- ³⁵ **BRISBANE COURIER** 12 May 1897.
- ³⁶ Dickinson, H.C. op.cit. p.28.
- ³⁷ *ibid.* p.65.
- ³⁸ Victorian School for Deaf Children, History Room 1995.
- ³⁹ **Q.G.A.** Bundle EDU/A 285.
- ⁴⁰ *ibid.*
- ⁴¹ Lamond, A.J., op.cit. p.37.

CHAPTER 8

FURTHER BRITISH AND EUROPEAN INFLUENCE

The difficulty in obtaining teachers with appropriate training and experience beset special education in Queensland in its early days. Other states had recruited teachers from overseas and Queensland's need to follow suit was very apparent.

EDITH BRYAN

On 13 September 1901, Edith Bryan, the recently appointed Head Teacher of the school section of the Queensland Institution for the Blind, Deaf and Dumb, embarked at Southampton on the **DUKE OF PORTLAND**, a ship of 3472 tons. The ship's log states that she occupied a second class cabin and described her as "a lady of thirty-one years".¹ Unfortunately there are no diaries or personal reminiscences to reveal her thoughts as she sailed into the English Channel leaving her country of birth for the second time. Did she think of her previous departure for Australia in 1895 and the subsequent tragic death of her husband two years later?² Or did she think of the opportunities in the new position to which she was appointed by the Agent-General for Queensland? Australia was not unknown to her and she had some experience and training in the work she was about to undertake. There would have been ample time to think about her life and work since the ship took nearly nine weeks to reach Brisbane.

Edith Bryan was born in 1872 at Friargate in Derby, a cathedral town about 180 kilometres north of London. She

was the eldest of six children of a tailor, William Lloyd and his wife Mary.³ Edith Lloyd commenced teaching at the Derby School for the deaf in 1887, a school which had been established in 1874 and which was later to receive Royal Patronage and be known as the Royal Derby Institution for the Deaf and Dumb. The school is still functioning as the Royal School for the Deaf, Derby.⁴ In 1891 Edith Bryan qualified for membership of the College of the Teachers of the Deaf and Dumb,⁵ moved to the Glasnevin School in Dublin and then to the Jews' Home for the Deaf in London.⁶ In 1895 Edith Lloyd journeyed to Adelaide and on 29 June married Cecil Charles Bryan, a teacher who had also trained at Derby and who had qualified for membership of the College of the Teachers of the Deaf and Dumb the year before his wife.⁷ C.C.Bryan had been appointed senior teacher at the South Australian Institution for the Blind, Deaf and Dumb at Brighton, later named Townsend House in honour of one of the founders.⁸ In January 1897 when only twenty-nine years old C.C.Bryan died after a short and debilitating illness.⁹ His widow returned to England and commenced teaching again, this time at the Bristol Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, Tyndall's Park.¹⁰

On 12 November 1901 Edith Bryan arrived in Brisbane. Her employer was the charity known as the Queensland Institution for the Blind, Deaf and Dumb and her supervising officer was Isaac Dickson (1863-1933), Superintendent of the Home and the School, Manager of the Workshop and Secretary of the Committee. It was not until 1918 when the Queensland Government assumed responsibility

for the school that Edith Bryan became an employee of the State.¹¹

Personal and professional information about Edith Bryan is not readily available. Her employment file in the Department of Education could not be found and her staff card carries only a brief reference to her previous teaching experience before coming to Queensland.¹²

Edith Bryan commenced teaching on the day she arrived in Brisbane and was Head Teacher of the School until 1926 when there were some administrative changes. She accepted responsibilities for the Deaf School until she retired in 1937. Edith Bryan's brother and two sisters migrated to Australia and in 1933 the family returned to England for an extended holiday. While in England Mrs Bryan took opportunity to visit some schools for the deaf.¹³

Even after retirement Edith Bryan worked in a voluntary capacity for the adult deaf community. Many of its members had been taught by her during her thirty-seven years at the school.

Mrs Bryan's knowledge of the deaf of Queensland is naturally very great and "ask Mrs Bryan" is a common saying when anyone wishes to know about one of their number.¹⁴

She was an active member of the Queensland Deaf and Dumb Mission which she helped establish in 1902.¹⁵ She was also responsible for organizing a parents' support group. The Minutes of the Deaf Society contain frequent references to Mrs Bryan's involvement as an interpreter for deaf people visiting doctors, dentists and lawyers.¹⁶ She knew the deaf community well and was held in very high regard by them; they had implicit trust in her honesty and

integrity. At the Council meeting of the Adult Deaf Society in October 1948 it was decided to name the recently built hostel in her honour:

The President asked Mrs Bryan for permission to use her name.....Mrs Bryan thanked the Council and said that she felt proud and honoured in being recognized in this way. Mrs Bryan possesses all those attributes which go towards success in work with the deaf - kindness, ability to obtain discipline without repression of any kind, a keen knowledge of their psychology and above all an infinite fund of patience. Above all this we find a great sense of loyalty for those with whom and for whom she is working.¹⁷

In the brochure distributed at the official opening of the Hostel Edith Bryan was described as "one of the world's foremost workers for the deaf" and as having been a teacher of the deaf for fifty years and a worker for deaf people for sixty-three years.¹⁸ At the time of her retirement from the Department of Education, Inspector of Schools W. F. Bevington spoke of the pleasure he always derived from his annual inspection of the Deaf and Blind Schools and particularly when he visited Mrs Bryan's classes where children first received their idea of language. S.E.Holle, Principal of the School, acknowledged Mrs Bryan's "unswerving loyalty and the value of her advice on all matters pertaining to the deaf" and the President of the Deaf and Dumb Mission spoke of the "inestimable value of her splendid work."¹⁹

To appreciate Edith Bryan's contribution to the development of Special Education in Queensland (and further references will be made to her), one must consider influences on her early professional life and some of the movements in the education of the deaf. These will be discussed under the headings:

1. Thomas Arnold
2. The College of the Teachers of the Deaf and Dumb
3. The Milan Conference of 1880
4. The Royal Commission on the Blind and Deaf and Dumb and others in the United Kingdom 1889
5. The Elementary Education Act (Blind and Deaf Children) 1890

THOMAS ARNOLD

The dominant figure in deaf education in England during the nineteenth century was Thomas Arnold. Lane describes him as the "intellectual leader of his profession in Britain"²⁰ and the first volume of his **EDUCATION OF DEAF MUTES A MANUAL FOR TEACHERS** would have been used by Edith Bryan in her preparation for the admission examination for membership to the College of the Teachers of the Deaf and Dumb.²¹ The second volume **HISTORY AND EXPOSITION OF METHODS** appeared three years later, 1891, and although Arnold was an uncompromising oralist it contained an "account of the nature and principles of the sign systems".²² Both books were used by pupil teachers who were trained by Edith Bryan at the Queensland school. Thomas Arnold was born in County Antrim in Ireland in 1815. A precocious child, he eventually became a teacher working at schools for the deaf in Liverpool and Doncaster²³ and later a Congregational Minister. He migrated to Australia in 1859, the year Queensland was separated from New South Wales and the year before the foundation of New South Wales Institution for the Deaf and Dumb. Arnold was a minister of the Balmain Congregational Church in Sydney until 1868 when he returned to England.²⁴ It is hard to believe that a man of Arnold's ability and personality was not involved in the organization of the

New South Wales Institution but his name does not appear in the early reports. Perhaps as a totally committed oralist he would have rejected the idea of a deaf man such as Thomas Pattison establishing a school for the deaf and using sign language exclusively. He did however become involved in the education of Samuel Ellis Holt, the deaf son of the Hon. Thomas Holt, member of the Executive Council and member of the Committee of the Congregational Union. Arnold took Samuel Holt back to England continuing his formal education and taking him on tours of the continent.²⁵

Arnold established a school for the deaf in Northampton which eventually became the Northampton High School for the Deaf. It was never a large school, but it was the only one in Britain for eighty years catering for secondary education for boys. One of Arnold's successful pupils was Abraham Farrar who had been with Arnold from the age of seven until he was twenty when he matriculated to the University of London where he qualified as a surveyor and an architect. Farrar was a successful oral student, taught with Arnold and wrote **ARNOLD ON THE EDUCATION OF THE DEAF**. This book was also used by Edith Bryan in instructing her teachers.²⁶ Like Arnold's books it is essentially a text on the oral method but in the Preface Farrar acknowledges, perhaps not too enthusiastically, that oral instruction may not be suitable for all deaf children. Farrar's achievement and work were commemorated with the establishment of an independent oral school in Sydney in 1946, which was

eventually purchased by the Government in 1952 to become the Farrar Public School for the Deaf.²⁷

THE COLLEGE OF TEACHERS OF THE DEAF AND DUMB

The College of the Teachers of the Deaf and Dumb was formed as an examining body in 1885.²⁸ The examination for membership of the College was based on the syllabus for pupil teachers then operating in conjunction with schools for the deaf at Fitzroy Square and in Ealing, both in London. These schools had been established by supporters of the oral system. It was from the Ealing School that the New South Wales Institution recruited its articulation teacher Miss Kernohan in 1880²⁹ and it was to this establishment that Miss Beaumont from the N.S.W. school was sent for training in 1901.³⁰ The Fitzroy Square School (founded in 1872) governed by the Association for the Oral Instruction for the Deaf and Dumb was encouraged and supported by the Baroness Rothschild and other notable personages. The Baroness also helped found the Jews' School where Edith Bryan taught for a short time. The Principal of the Fitzroy Square School was William Van Praagh who had been brought to London in 1867 to take charge of the Jews' Deaf and Dumb Home.³¹ The Patron of the Ealing School was St. John Ackers the father of a deaf child, an influential barrister, member of Parliament and the Squire of Huntley. The School was controlled by the Society for Training of Teachers of the Deaf and the Diffusion of the German System.³² These establishments eventually amalgamated but the awarding of certificates was restricted to their fee paying students. The need for an examining body to enhance the professional standing of

teachers of the deaf in other schools was met by the founding of the College of Teachers of the Deaf and Dumb. Thomas Arnold was one of these founders. The Board of Education did not recognize any of the College's qualifications until 1909.

Edith Lloyd received her certificate of membership at the Annual General Meeting in 1892 after passing the examination set by the College:³³

The Subjects for Examination

1. The history of education of the Deaf and Dumb.
2. The principles of education.
3. The individual method of teaching elementary language.
4. The method of teaching advanced language.
5. The practical instruction of a class with blackboard illustrations.
6. The mechanism of speech with the anatomy and physiology of the organs.
7. The methods of teaching articulation.
8. The making and understanding of natural signs.
9. The ability to read finger spelling.

The examination in the last two subjects was optional on the part of the candidate. If Edith Bryan did not take these then she must have acquired, at some time, considerable skill in finger spelling and signing as she became a very reliable and much sought after interpreter for the deaf community in Brisbane. For her time Edith Bryan was well qualified in her profession. The first Commonwealth Conference of Superintendents and Teachers of the Deaf was held in Melbourne 7-11 January 1935 and teacher training was discussed. From this Conference and the succeeding one the Australian Association of Teachers of the Deaf was founded and an examining body was appointed. Success in the examination remained the only

award available in Australia for teachers of the deaf until 1954.³⁴

THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE DEAF AND DUMB, MILAN 1880

According to Lane the officers of the Milan Congress - like the location, organizers, exhibitions, and membership - were chosen to ensure an oralist outcome.³⁵ The resolution carried at the Congress, with only the delegates from the United States dissenting, has been used by supporters of the oral/aural methods of teaching the deaf ever since.

The congress, considering the incontestable superiority of speech over sign, for restoring deaf mutes to social life and for giving them greater facility in language, declares that the method of articulation should have preference over that of signs in the instruction of the deaf and dumb. Considering that the simultaneous use of signs and speech has the disadvantage of injuring speech, lip-reading and precision of ideas, the congress declares that the pure oral method ought to be preferred.

However one deaf leader in the United States claimed that "1880 was the year that saw the birth of the infamous Milan resolution that paved the way for foisting upon the deaf everywhere a loathed method, hypocritical in its claims, unnatural in its application, mind-deadening and soul-killing in its ultimate results".³⁶

The British delegation led by St. John Ackers, founder of the Ealing School, included Thomas Arnold who spoke and claimed that "articulate language is superior to sign". He was supported by Mrs St John Ackers who was listed as the "mother of a deaf child".³⁷

The resolution had a profound and immediate effect on schools for the deaf in Britain, and indeed the rest of the world with the exception of some parts of the United

States where the work of the Gallaudet family has long since been vindicated.

It gave the oral movement considerable credibility and infused its leaders with an almost messianic belief in the rightness of the approach. Gallaudet described the Milan conference as a "stacked deck" in favour of oralism.³⁸

Edith Lloyd would have been aware of the impact of the Congress. She taught in schools dedicated to oral methods but in Queensland she was much more pragmatic. Two of her pupil teachers described how she tried to establish in the child's first year whether or not oral or signing would be the preferred method of instruction.³⁹

Arnold in his first book, says that the Milan Congress did "much more than affirm the principle of oral instruction by bringing representatives of the National Institutions together to compare notes, to hear expositions and exchange literature.....Congress made the education of deaf mutes an international question."⁴⁰

Lane over a century later reminds his readers that the only properly accredited delegates were the Americans led by the two Gallaudet brothers (and they represented fifty-one schools and six thousand pupils - more than all the other delegates put together) and that attendance at the Congress was by payment of a fee.⁴¹

THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON THE BLIND THE DEAF AND DUMB AND OTHERS OF THE UNITED KINGDOM

At the 1890 Annual General Meeting of the Deaf and Dumb Institution of New South Wales the Superintendent, Mr Samuel Watson reported that he had just received a copy of the Report of the Royal Commission on the Blind and the Deaf and Dumb and that the Appendix would be arriving

soon. Mr Watson described the Report as being rather long, 876 pages in fact, and that his brief (sic) reference to the Report would be appropriate,

"since its issues and decisions are likely to have considerable weight with all engaged in the government and support of institutions such as yours. The meetings of the gentlemen composing the Commission and the examination of so many experts and others interested in the deaf and blind have elicited so much information, and developed a large amount of interest in these classes throughout the British Empire. Even the American and Continental institutions, some of which were representative examinees, have watched eagerly for the results of this enquiry; we too may profit by the many valuable hints which its perusal is calculated to afford".

Mr Watson went on to explain that the Commission sat from December 1885 until July 1888, that 155 witnesses were examined and

To expect that it has given universal satisfaction is hardly possible, especially when its decisions had reference to such disputed - one might almost say burning questions as the Oral or German method compared with the Manual System of teaching the Deaf;.....the Commission is strongly in favour of the Pure Oral Method.....whilst on the other hand many of the older Head Masters of institutions both in England and America are of the opinion that the views of persons other than experts have unduly influenced the examiners in arriving at their conclusions.⁴²

The Royal Commission referred to by Mr Watson was initially to deal only with the blind. At the time there were more blind children than deaf children. The Conference of Managers, Teachers and Friends of the Blind in Great Britain held in 1883 asked the Government of the day to appoint a Royal Commission to investigate provision for the blind. There was a further meeting in 1884 and a year later a Commission was appointed under the Chairmanship of the Duke of Westminster. Lord Salisbury, the new Conservative Prime Minister, received yet another deputation led by Lord Egerton of Tatton, Chairman of the

Manchester School for the Deaf. The Deputation was concerned about the need for education for all deaf children and for the training of teachers.⁴³ Lord Egerton was rewarded for his interest by being appointed chairman of the Royal Commission to replace the Duke of Westminster.

The brief of the Royal Commission was extended to report on opportunities for employment and educational changes needed to increase qualifications for the blind and the deaf and because of increased lobbying by voluntary organizations for reform, consideration was also to be given to "such other cases as from special circumstances would seem to require exceptional methods of education".⁴⁴ Potts maintains that it "was a matter of bureaucratic convenience to brief one committee rather than two"⁴⁵ and Pritchard says that in 1930 Dr. J. M. Ritchie, a sincere and selfless worker for the blind, described the extension of the terms of reference of the Royal Commission to include the deaf as "unfortunate in that it gave state recognition to the vicious bracketing of blind and deaf".⁴⁶ Edith Bryan upon accepting the position at the Queensland Institution would have known that the practice of educating the blind and the deaf in the same school was well established. The children had been separated into blind or deaf teaching groups two years before her arrival but they were accommodated in the same building sharing dining and dormitory space and using the same playground. It was not until 1963 that a completely separate school was established for the blind and some years after that, separate accommodation arrangements made.

**THE ELEMENTARY EDUCATION (BLIND AND DEAF CHILDREN)
ACT 1893**

The Royal Commission recommended, among many other things, the compulsory education for the blind from five years to sixteen in board or other approved schools, and for the deaf from seven to sixteen in separate schools or classes. Scotland had an Act some years earlier, the **1890 EDUCATION OF BLIND AND DEAF MUTE (SCOTLAND) ACT**. The reason for the delay in England was, according to Potts, the need for delicate handling because of the contentious issue of additional finance.⁴⁷

In the year that Queensland opened its first special school England was already introducing legislation for compulsory education. Edith Bryan formed part of the deputation to the Queensland Minister for Public Instruction in 1912 armed well with the knowledge of the English and Scottish Legislation but despite this knowledge and her position as Head Teacher it would not have been appropriate for a female to lead a deputation requesting an extension of the compulsory clauses of the 1875 Act. It was not until over a decade later that Queensland had its **BLIND, DEAF AND DUMB INSTRUCTION ACT 1924**. The introduction of this Act meant an increase in numbers; older boys would be staying at the school longer and consequently the position of Head Teacher would be better filled by a male!

Many of the European ideas are reflected in developments in Queensland as a result of Edith Bryan's professionalism and calming and gentle influence upon the deaf community and their supporters.

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- ¹ Ship's Log **Duke of Portland** John Oxley Library.
- ² Death Certificate No 165 District Registry Office South Australia 11 January 1897.
- ³ Information from Miss Mary Lloyd, Birmingham. Personal Correspondence and **Australian Dictionary of Biography** Vol 13, No 1.
- ⁴ Royal School for the Deaf, Derby, Official Opening Brochure 28 June 1973.
- ⁵ **ANNUAL REPORT 1892 COLLEGE OF TEACHERS OF THE DEAF AND DUMB.**
- ⁶ Program Official Opening Edith Bryan Hostel 3 June 1950.
- ⁷ *ibid.* and **A.D.B.** entry.
- ⁸ Barkham, L. F., 1974 **THE STORY OF TOWNSEND HOUSE** Griffin Press, Adelaide.
- ⁹ C,C.Bryan died from dysentery and exhaustion.
- ¹⁰ **QUEENSLAND DEAF AND DUMB MONTHLY NEWS 1937-1938.**
- ¹¹ Order-in-Council **QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT GAZETTE** 12 January 1918. Q.G.A. Bundle Edu.285. Letter A4727.
- ¹² Edith BRYAN, Staff Card, Department of Education.
- ¹³ Personal correspondence Miss Edith Lloyd. *op. cit.*
- ¹⁴ **QUEENSLAND DEAF AND DUMB MONTHLY NEWS 1937-1938.**
- ¹⁵ *ibid.*
- ¹⁶ Minutes of the Queensland Adult Deaf and Dumb Society.
- ¹⁷ *ibid.* 19 October 1948.
- ¹⁸ Program Official Opening Edith BRYAN Hostel 3 June 1950.
- ¹⁹ **QUEENSLAND DEAF AND DUMB MONTHLY NEWS 1937-1938.**
- ²⁰ Lane, H., 1984 **WHEN THE MIND HEARS A HISTORY OF THE DEAF** Penguin, New York. p. 391.
- ²¹ Arnold, T., 1888 **EDUCATION FOR DEAF MUTES, A MANUAL FOR TEACHERS** Printed by Wertheimen & Co., London for the Committee of the College of the Deaf and Dumb and supplied at their office, Stainer House, Paddington Green.
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- ²³ Pritchard, D. G., 1963 **EDUCATION OF THE HANDICAPPED 1760-1960** Routledge & Kegan Paul, New York, p.88-89.
- ²⁴ Walter, Jean, Undated, **THE HISTORY OF THE N.S.W.SCHOOLS FOR THE DEAF**, Typewritten script Royal New South Wales Institute for Deaf and Blind Children.

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- ²⁵ Pritchard, D.G., 1963 op.cit., p.88.
- ²⁶ Farrar, A., 1923 **ARNOLD ON EDUCATION OF THE DEAF** National College of Teachers of the Deaf, London, Reprinted 1954.
- ²⁷ Crickmore, B.L., 1990 **EDUCATION THE DEAF AND HEARING IMPAIRED: A BRIEF HISTORY**. Education Management Systems Pty. Ltd., Sydney. p.90.
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- ²⁹ **ANNUAL REPORT 1880** New South Wales Institution for the Blind, Deaf and Dumb.
- ³⁰ **ANNUAL REPORT 1901** New South Wales Institution for the Blind, Deaf and Dumb.
- ³¹ **THE BRITISH DEAF MONTHLY** No. 6., 1897.
- ³² Prichard, D. G., 1963. op.cit.
- ³³ Brochure of the College of Teachers of the Deaf and Dumb 1888.
- ³⁴ Report of the Conference to the Department of Public Instruction by S. E. Holle. Q.G.A. Bundle Edu.288, Letter dated 4 March 1935 and
- ³⁵ Lane, H., 1984. op.cit. p.395.
- ³⁶ *ibid.*
- ³⁷ *ibid.*
- ³⁸ Winefield, R., 1987 **NEVER THE TWAIN SHALL MEET, BELL, GALLAUDET AND THE COMMUNICATIONS DEBATE**. Gallaudet University Press, Washington, D.C. p.35.
- ³⁹ H. Linning and G. Ferguson Personal communication 1993.
- ⁴⁰ Arnold, T., 1888 op.cit. p.110.
- ⁴¹ Lane, H., 1984. op.cit. p.395.
- ⁴² Annual Report, 1890 Blind, Deaf and Dumb Institution of New South Wales.
- ⁴³ Pritchard, D. G., 1963. op. cit. p.93.
- ⁴⁴ *ibid.*
- ⁴⁵ Potts, P., 1982 **ORIGINS** The Open University Press, Milton Keynes, U.K. p. 22.
- ⁴⁶ Pritchard, D. G. 1963 op. cit. p. 95.
- ⁴⁷ Potts, P., op. cit. p.24.

CHAPTER 9

INTO THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

On Monday, 1 January 1901, ceremonies were held all round Australia to inaugurate the new Commonwealth Queensland being one of the six States. The new tier of Government assumed some responsibilities but education continued to be a State responsibility - the Commonwealth incursions came much later. Expansion and development of education in Queensland was restricted because of the state's rural based economy now savagely affected by drought and flood which, says Wyeth¹, "brought more uncertainty and unhappiness." Major problems were masked by a fierce debate about saluting the flag, an issue confused further by the question "Which flag, the new Australian flag or the British flag?" One can rest assured that with Empire loyalist Isaac Dickson at the helm the chosen flag would have been honoured regularly by the children at the Queensland Institution for the Blind, Deaf and Dumb. The newly arrived Head Teacher, Mrs Edith Bryan would have been conscious of the wave of patriotism resulting from the Boer War but may have been confused as many of the locals were about the flag debate.

COMPULSORY EDUCATION FOR SOME

The compulsory clauses of the 1875 Education Act were eventually proclaimed in 1900. From the Government point of view the proclamation placed further strain on the new State's finances. Attendance at regular schools increased, according to Wyeth, by 4.2%. The reasons for the delay in

implementation - the Department's inability to provide sufficient schools and teachers as a consequence of Ministerial inertia, the need for child labour (unpaid) on the farms and the difficulty of enforcing and policing the compulsory clauses - no longer seemed valid. Truant officers were appointed but they lasted for only a short time and their duties were taken over by the police. The deaf and the blind, however, had to wait over two decades before compulsory education was considered for them and other children with disabilities had to wait fifty years after that! All Australian States through voluntary organizations with Government assistance and encouragement had, by the end of the nineteenth century, made some special provision.

SPECIAL EDUCATION PROVISION IN NINETEENTH CENTURY

AUSTRALIA

1860 New South Wales Deaf and Dumb Institution; provision for the Blind followed in 1869.

1860 Victorian Deaf and Dumb Institution and the Royal Victorian Institute for the Blind.

1876 The South Australian Institute for the Blind, Deaf and Dumb.

1893 Queensland Institute for the Blind, Deaf and Dumb.

1894 Tasmanian Institution for the Blind, Deaf and Dumb.

1896 The Western Australian School for Blind and Deaf Children and in 1897 Industrial School for the Blind.

The various states, following overseas trends, made provision for the more "socially acceptable" disabilities, namely blindness and deafness. These groups responded to instruction and were easier to define.

Neither condition was offensive to look at and the mortality rate at the time was not as high as for other disabilities. It was administratively convenient even though instructionally irrelevant to make provision for both groups in the one institution.

THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

Difficulties in finding and keeping teachers seemed to be one of the problems confronting the management of the Queensland School for the earlier part of the century. Fund raising was also a continuing activity and in 1903 "in view of the support from various schools with donations"² Isaac Dickson wrote to the Department of Public Instruction seeking permission for Miss Dora Aird, a foundation pupil of the school and now a pupil teacher, accompanied by a blind pupil, to demonstrate how the blind were taught. The dour, difficult J.G.Anderson must have been having one of his gentler moments when he wrote in the margin:

I've no objection to the granting of this request, which may serve not only to instruct and interest the ordinary school children, but also to awake their sympathies with the unhappy blind little ones.
(The) Writer might show this letter of permission to Head Teachers who will be at liberty to make arrangements for a demonstration not exceeding half an hour in duration.

In 1905 William Reinhold, the local Member of the Legislative Assembly and Government representative on the committee of the Institution, interviewed the Under Secretary of the Home Department and requested "the teaching section of the Institution be placed under the control of the Department of Public Instruction." During the interview he indicated that the 150 pounds a year did

not cover the salaries which amounted to 470 pounds a year. Concern was expressed about control and inspection and the request was rejected.³ The subsidy had remained the same since it was provided for in the estimates for 1897-98 under the Orphanages Vote. The notes on the letter express some concern about control:⁴

Institution is subsidized by the Home Department to about 160 pounds a month twenty-three shillings for every twenty shillings raised, there is no control but there are two government representatives on the board.

If the institution is to be regarded as a state school then the subsidy should be paid by this Department but if it is to continue under the category of "Hospital and Charitable Institutions" then the Home Department should pay.

I do not think that the liabilities of this Department in regard to the Institution should be increased until our responsibilities have been clearly defined and we know precisely what relation we stand in respect to the institution and what voice we are to have in the management of the institution and the appointment of teachers.

In response to an application for a blind boy Herbert James Meacock to sit for the State Scholarship Examination in 1908 the margin notes indicate a lack of enthusiasm on the part of the Department of Public Instruction:

There was some opposition to the idea that the boy should sit for the scholarship examination from the Department for which he could not avail himself. What use would passing the exam be? Could not lead further. School regarded it as a sort of diploma or certificate.⁵

Meacock was ranked 39th on a list of 271 and as only 25 scholarships were awarded he was not successful. His ranking was considered by the school however as an outstanding achievement, especially at a time when the academic expectations and aspirations of disabled pupils were low and their post-school destination seen as the workshop or unskilled or semi-skilled trade.

RECRUITING TEACHERS

Another request in 1909 for the Department of Public Instruction to take control and introduce compulsory education met with the same fate as previous requests. The letter⁶ set out the number of children in the Institution and the costs involved. The letter also contained information about compulsory education in New Zealand and Tasmania.

My opinion is that matters should go on as they are. The control should remain with the committee of management. Making education compulsory is a matter of public policy.

An attachment to the letter claims:

there would be an increase in numbers as a result of compulsory attendance and the costs would increase which the State would have to meet - and if it was seen that the State was involved people would no longer subscribe.

A further request of 31 May 1911 asking for compulsory education for children aged six to sixteen years received the recommendation of J.D.Story. Story asked that a copy of the Victorian Act be obtained and that the request be kept in view "in connection with the consolidated Education Act".⁷ No Government action resulted.

Difficulties in obtaining teachers persisted and in September 1911 Isaac Dickson again wrote to the Under Secretary of the Department of Public Instruction to accept control of the teaching staff⁸

My committee think that the inducement they can offer and the scope for advancement so very limited, that to secure the best kind of a trained teacher is almost beyond their power. They are of the opinion that if the Department took over the teaching staff, it would select from their larger staff teachers of the requisite attainment to undertake this work, this could be readily done in the blind school where the

chief requirements are trained teachers with a well developed patience in dealing with the weak and afflicted. The deaf school presents more difficulties as articulation teachers require a special training. In addition to the ordinary school hours, there is night duty. The night duty and companionship is considered in all institutions a most essential feature of the work.

The annotations which were sent in letter form indicated that the Department was unwilling to take charge of the school part as this would lead to duality of control which teachers might find confusing. The Department was willing however to place a notice in the Education Office Gazette and would permit the selected teacher to resign from the Department and be readmitted if the work was uncongenial or if the person was found to be unsuitable. Dickson responded immediately with a draft notice for the Education Office Gazette where it appeared in October 1911:

Wanted by the Queensland Blind, Deaf and Dumb Institution, South Brisbane a Head Teacher (Lady) for the Blind School. Salary 110 pounds per annum with board residence and laundry.

The following qualifications are necessary:

1. System.
2. Considerable patience in dealing with afflicted pupils.
3. Ingenuity to enable teachers to convey knowledge which without sight it might be difficult for the pupil to acquire.
4. Sympathy.

A knowledge of the Braille system is not essential, as this system can be easily acquired.

A pupil teacher of the second class is also required. Salary 18 pounds per annum with board, residence and laundry.

The successful applicant for the pupil teacher position was Lyndall Williams (1896-1993) and in an interview in August 1991 she recalled her pupil teacher days during 1912-13 at the School for the Blind. She wanted the challenge of teaching blind children. The braille writing

skills she acquired were later used in her retirement as a transcriber for the Braille Writers Association. At the time of the interview she was ninety-five years old and was still involved in braille transcription. Lyndall Williams had been a pupil-teacher at Chermside State School where her father was Head Teacher. She found the horse bus journey from Chermside to Cornwall Street rather tiring and time consuming as she had only every second Saturday free. Later some rearrangement was made to enable her to go home for every second week-end. Weekend duty involved accompanying the children to church, supervising play and during the summer taking the girls to the local swimming pool with Mrs Bryan, whom she remembers with great admiration. Lyndall also spoke of her pupil teacher studies supervised by the ageing, tired, overworked Head Teacher of the Blind School, Miss Tryphina Adsett "who more often than not went to sleep while I read my work to her". The pupil teachers were instructed after or before a day's work, sometimes both and the requirements were very demanding.⁹ Lyndall Williams stayed just two years at the School for the Blind before returning to continue her pupil teacher studies at Fortitude Valley Girls' and Infants' School and to live at home to help nurse her ailing father who had had to retire.

The outbreak of World War I caused further staffing difficulties at the school. The two male teachers on the staff had enlisted and the schools were maintained by female teachers for the duration of the war.

In a letter dated 4 August 1915 Isaac Dickson wrote:

Over a year ago a deputation from the Adult Deaf and Dumb Association and the Committee of this Institution waited on the Home Secretary urging the necessity of an amendment to the Education Act making it compulsory for Blind, and Deaf and Dumb children to attend some school where special means of instruction are available.

This time the Minister agreed and passed the matter on to the Minister of Public Instruction but for some reason the draft amendment to the Act was omitted.

This letter contained the names of thirty-nine children over the age of twelve years who had been admitted to the school and a list of twelve names of children who had never been to school. It was also mentioned in the memorandum that "fifteen mentally deficient children had been sent away from the Deaf School and seven away from the Blind School."¹⁰

T.J.Ryan (1876-1921), Attorney General and later Premier received a deputation on 14 November 1916 but no action to take over the Institution resulted.¹¹

In 1918 because of difficulties in fund raising and because of the poor conditions in the school, home and the workshop, the Institution for the Blind Deaf and Dumb passed from a Board of Management to the Department of Home Affairs and the teachers became employees of the State. They were not however subjected to the State Teachers Award.

In recommending the transfer of the Institution to the Home Department the Under Secretary listed the advantages and the authority under which the Minister could take such action:¹²

Under The Charitable Institutions Management Act of 1885 the Minister could take control of the Blind, Deaf and Dumb Institution with the following advantages:

1. Systematic Inspection.
2. Standard of education could as far as possible be made consistent with State Schools.
3. Consistent policy with regard to compulsory education.
4. Regular medical and dental inspection.
5. Religious Instruction as in State Schools.
6. Consistent policy with regard teachers.
7. Parents would be pleased - charity tag would be removed.
8. School returns would be submitted to the Department.

The Control of the Institution by the Home Secretary from the 1 January 1918 was approved by an Order-in-Council dated 9 January 1918 and published in the Queensland Government Gazette of 12 January 1918.

On 12 February 1918 Mrs Bryan wrote to the Home Secretary John Huxham requesting his "earnest consideration.....to bringing our salaries in line with those of teachers in other schools and institutions." There was no action until November 1920 when the teachers joined the Queensland Teachers' Union and the excessively demanding out of school hours duty was reduced and award salaries were paid. Mrs Bryan's letter detailed the experience and qualifications of Queensland's first State employed special educators.¹³ It is interesting to note that the teachers were employed by the Home Department and not by the Department of Public Instruction and that the Minister responsible was John Huxham.

SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS IN 1918

Mrs Edith Bryan, Head Teacher of the School for the Deaf, Diploma of the College of the Teachers of the Deaf and Dumb and teaching experience in Derby, London, Dublin and Bristol before coming to Brisbane in 1901. (*Mrs Bryan remained at the School until 1937 and her career is dealt with in Chapter 8*)

Miss Dorcas Mitchell, studied as a pupil teacher and classified in 1910 and thirteen years experience in the school. (*Miss Mitchell remained at the school*)

until she retired aged seventy in 1958 and then in her retirement worked in a voluntary capacity at the Edith Bryan Hostel.)

Miss Jane Symth, studied as a pupil teacher and classified in 1911 and eleven years experience in the school. *(Resigned to marry)*

Miss Gladys Shepherd, College of Preceptors Certificate and Certificate of the College of Teachers of the Blind four years teaching experience in Sheffield and Liverpool and five years in Brisbane. *(Retired from the school and is remembered as a kindly lady)*

Miss Ethel Taylor, Head Teacher of the School for the Blind, L.R.A.M. Certificate, and thirteen years experience in Sheffield, Brighton and Bradford and four years in Brisbane. *(Resigned to marry and moved to live in Sydney; she kept in regular communication with Harold Dickinson)*

Miss Dora Aird, foundation pupil of the School for the Blind, and successful pupil teacher with twenty years experience at the school. *(Dora Aird died aged forty, and was remembered by Harold Dickinson in his book)¹⁴*

Harold Dickinson, a blind boy who entered the school on 6 April 1915, wrote of his experiences over sixty years later in his autobiography **OVER THE NEXT HILL**.¹⁵ Entry into the boarding section of the school was vividly recalled by Dickinson whose stammer incurred constant nagging by the teachers with frequent threats to "knock it out of him". These recollections suggest there was very little in the way of gentleness or kindness. All the children had to be boarders, a practice that continued for decades. Those children who lived in or near Brisbane and close to public transport went home for weekends, others for the school vacations but there were some who remained at the Institution for their entire school lives.

These lonely little children spent an average of ten years away from the care and love of home, in austere, almost primitive surroundings, where even basic foods were considered luxuries unnecessary for children.¹⁶

Prior to 1921 when the rail line was extended, any child who lived north of Rockhampton had to travel by ship, an expensive and frightening journey. Dickinson, who became a more than competent violinist, a successful business man and leader in the blind community, tells of his early music lessons, his learning to read and to write and the joy of acquiring knowledge. He mentions also the frequently used corporal punishment, the squabbles with the deaf boys and the obvious unhappiness of some of the children and indeed of some of the teachers. These memories were to remain with Dickinson for the rest of his life.

**A BILL TO MAKE BETTER PROVISION FOR THE INSTRUCTION
OF THE BLIND, DEAF AND DUMB CHILDREN IN QUEENSLAND
1924**

Scotland and then England introduced compulsory education for the blind and the deaf following the release of the four volume report by the **Royal Commission on the Blind the Deaf and Dumb and Others of the United Kingdom** in 1889.¹⁷ The **Education of Blind & Deaf-mute Children (Scotland) Act 1890** and the **Elementary Education (Blind & Deaf Children) Act 1893**¹⁸ provide some guidelines for the Queensland advocates for compulsory education for the blind and the deaf. Edith Bryan, the Head Teacher of the School for the Deaf, would have been aware of the United Kingdom Royal Commission and the outcome. She was always a part of any recorded meeting or delegation about compulsory education. On 27 August 1923 a deputation waited on the Minister for Home Affairs, John Huxham. Some days later on 12 September 1923 the leader of the deputation, Mr. R. F. Tunley sent a

letter to the Minister outlining the purpose of the meeting:¹⁹ The letter also provides an insight into the way in which the committee viewed its work:

The object of this deputation is to impress upon you the urgent necessity of amending the Education Act so as to include blind and deaf children under its compulsory clauses.

It must be remembered that a deaf child does not begin to learn to talk until it comes to school and that the later it comes, the more difficult it is for the child to learn, and the teacher to teach.

The National College of Teachers of the Deaf, London in their circular declare that provision is made for deaf children to commence school at two years of age but no deaf child should be kept from school after the age of five.

At the Queensland Blind, Deaf and Dumb Institution the children are well trained, are happy and contented and well looked after. Education and the intercourse which they have with their friends makes their lives ever so much brighter and they are better off in every way for coming to school.

There are a number of deaf and blind children in Queensland of all ages, not going to school and we wish to make it compulsory that they be educated. The matter is urgent because some of them are eleven, twelve, thirteen and fourteen years of age, and will get no schooling at all unless compelled.

During the discussion with the Minister a letter signed by sixty deaf citizens requesting compulsory education was presented. The Minister was told that amongst the men who signed the petition were French polishers, bailers, storemen, carpenters, cabinet makers, blacksmiths and other tradesmen, along with deaf ladies employed as machinists, dressmakers and milliners.

The Minister was also told about a young man of twenty-six who had never been to school, who lived on a pension and would be a "burden to himself, his people and would be an expense to the Government for the rest of his life.....had he gone to school he would be a producer instead of a drag"! Other examples of failure to send children to school were given: the boy from Redbank whose

father spent most of his time gazing over the school fence resulting in his son's withdrawal from the school, and the girl from Rosalie who was "growing up totally ignorant". The deputation saw and convinced the Minister that the prevention and remedy for these problems was compulsory education.

The following year a parent, W.H.Kihner wrote to the Premier requesting "that the Deaf Institution at Dutton Park be placed under the Education Department and that compulsory education be introduced".²⁰ In his reply the Minister stated *inter alia*:

There are difficulties in the way of this, and, of course, any such system of compulsory education or for that matter the mere transfer to the Education Department would involve considerable additional expense on the part of the State. There would also be the difficulty of enforcing compulsion.

Attached to the copy of the letter there were several notes and items of correspondence with the Government of New Zealand where education was compulsory until twenty-one for the blind or deaf person.

The Premier of Victoria wrote:

Education Act 1915 (No 2644) provides "that parents of blind and deaf and dumb children shall cause such children to be efficiently educated and regularly instructed from the age of seven to the age of sixteen years".

and the Premier of South Australia wrote:

Section 47 of the Education Act of 1915 "it is the duty of every parent of a blind, or deaf and dumb and mentally defective child to provide efficient and suitable education for such children between the ages of six and sixteen years"

And an anonymous public servant advised:

An amendment of our Education Act would be required, and extra accommodation would be necessary at the Blind, Deaf and Dumb Institution.

It is estimated that fifty-six children would have to be provided for, and that the cost of additional accommodation would be 2185 pounds. The cost of maintenance would be 3052 pounds making a total of 5237 pounds.

On the 26 June 1924 the Minister sent a memorandum to the Parliamentary Draftsman with instructions to "prepare a Bill to provide for the Compulsory Education of the Blind, Deaf and Dumb."

The Minister was able to announce in Parliament on the 10 October 1924:²¹

.....the House will, at its next sitting resolve itself into a Committee of the whole to consider of the desirableness of introducing a Bill to make better provision for the Instruction of the blind, deaf and dumb children of Queensland.

Compulsory education for this group of children could have been achieved by amending the State Education Act 1875. It is not clear why a separate Bill was necessary. During the second reading debate the Minister used material presented during the deputation the previous year and members heard about those who had failed to benefit from education. The success of several blind students (one of them Harold Dickinson) in music examinations, was mentioned as was the effectiveness of compulsory education in other states and New Zealand. The Minister also said:

The Blind, Deaf and Dumb Mission have been striving by conciliatory methods to try and get parents to bring their children to that Institution. They have failed in some cases, and the object of this Bill is to endeavour to force the parents in such cases to give their children an opportunity of acquiring the necessary education to fit them for the battle of life."

One Member (Conroy) described the Bill as a "very humane measure and also a very necessary one" whilst another

Member (Kerr) thought that "many of our problems today are caused by over education". However he did support the Bill, citing "over ninety workers doing excellent work in the manufacture of baskets, brushes, and millet brooms to the value of many thousands of pounds".²²

To show gratitude to the Minister, James Stoppard, for the successful passage of the Bill, an illuminated address was prepared and presented to him:

The various societies represented by the undersigned have been anxious to express to you in some permanent form their high appreciation of your valued services in connection with the passing of the Amendment of the Public Instruction Act by the Queensland Parliament.

We have reason to believe that the passing of this Act by Queensland will not only prove of incalculable benefit to afflicted children in this State but is already serving as a powerful stimulus towards similar reform in other parts of the Commonwealth.

The illuminated manuscript contains photographs of pupils of the school with a scroll emblazoned with the words Charity, Education, Self-aid, Industry. It is now held in the History Unit of the Education Department. The Bill was assented to on 28 October 1924 and was to become effective on 1 July 1925. Definitions in the Bill include:

"Blind" - Too blind or deficient in the power of sight to be able to read the ordinary school books used by children.

"Deaf" - Too deaf to be taught in a class of hearing children in a primary school.

"Child" - A child of not less than seven nor more than sixteen years of age.

and were broad enough to cover all children with sight or hearing problems. The Bill however allowed the Minister "to make Regulations to effectively administer the Act"..... The Regulations were thus applied to exclude a number of children, namely, "those of low intelligence

or those suffering from an infectious or contagious disease or subject to fits". In October 1926 there was a further amendment to the Regulations:²³

.....any blind or deaf and dumb child from four to twelve years of age may be admitted as a pupil, irrespective of the creed or nationality of such child:

Provided, however, that the Superintendent may admit any child over twelve years of age as a pupil if in his discretion the special circumstances of such child warrant him so doing; and, further, that the following classes of children shall not be eligible for admission:-

(a) Children whose intelligence coefficients are below 80.

(b) Children suffering from any contagious infection or offensive disease.

(c) Children subject to fits.

Provided further that children dumb, but not deaf, shall be taught in a special class at the Institution.

The implications of these changes will be discussed later.

JOHN SAUNDERS HUXHAM 1861-1949

In social and educational reform in Queensland a significant figure was "Honest" John Huxham, Minister for Home Affairs 1919-1924 and Minister for Public Instruction 1919-1924. Huxham was born in Devon, England, of an illiterate mother and attended a "harsh and desolate dame school" at Ivybridge in Devon. When he first came to live in Australia he worked for a time in one of Sydney's Ragged Schools (schools maintained by voluntary effort to save neglected and delinquent children), later moving to Queensland where he conducted a successful music store and became involved in Labor politics. During his Ministry Huxham was responsible for a number of administrative actions relating to special education. In 1918 he directed the transfer of the Blind, Deaf and Dumb Institution to the Department of Home Affairs, established

the Willowburn Home for Epileptics in 1919 with classes attached and was the Minister responsible for the opening of Backward Classes in 1923.

In the broader field of education Huxham was able to persuade the Government to open the Primary Correspondence School in 1922, to establish vocational training classes and later to extend these classes to isolated areas by means of travelling railway classrooms.

One of Huxham's daughters, Dorothea, was a foundation teacher of the Backward Classes and another, Mabel (blind as a result of meningitis), was a pupil and later a pupil teacher at the School for the Blind.

Huxham after leaving Parliament became Agent General in London. He left a considerable part of his estate to establish the Helen Huxham Hostel for Blind Girls in memory of his second wife.²⁴

SUPERINTENDENT ERLAM'S REPORT

A set of documents now held in the Queensland State Archives labelled **Supt. Erlam's Report** by the filing clerk, brought about considerable changes to the Queensland Institution for the Blind, Deaf and Dumb.²⁵

Isaac Dickson expressed concern to the Under Secretary of the Home Department about the possible influx of pupils as a result of Compulsory Education and also about the "crude signing used by children in the playground when supervised by the domestic servants". He also thought that with the possibility of older boys at the school a more authoritative person, preferably male, should be in charge even though this was not stated in writing. It was only after the requested visit by Harold Erlam and the

subsequent report that Dickson intimated his preference for a male Principal. The Queensland School had been inconsistent in its mode of instruction for the deaf and according to Lamond each change was seen as an improvement:²⁶

Method of Deaf Instruction 1893-1913

Queensland

Foundation teacher Miss Sharp taught the blind and deaf together and for the deaf used manual or combined methods. Classes eventually separated.

1904-1908 Exhaustive enquiries from southern institutions as well as leading schools in the old land indicate finger spelling and sign language enhance written language.

1909-1913 Some finger spelling but greater emphasis on oral methods and separate classrooms to facilitate this. In 1911 Dickson recommended and the committee decreed that all communication between the deaf should be either speech or finger spelling.

Mrs Bryan, the Head Teacher of the School for the Deaf, had trained as an oralist but accommodated finger spelling for those children unable to learn to speak and to lip read. On Dickson's instruction in 1916 Mrs Bryan visited Sydney to observe methods at the Sydney Institution. On her return she was to eliminate the inappropriate use of gesture.

Erlam's report was a comprehensive one and Mrs Bryan in her response to it claimed that "on the first reading it struck me as a most unfair reflection on the organization and management of the school. On a second reading however, it seemed to me that he (Erlam) had merely stated some of the defects of the school and pointed out the main causes of the defects". Erlam wrote:

The general appearance of your children is very satisfactory. They are generally of good type; their

condition is a quite sufficient evidence that, as a home, the Institution fulfils its functions admirably. The children have every appearance of being well nourished and well cared for.

From their general attitude it is also quite obvious that they are thoroughly well treated. There is an entire absence of harsh or unkind treatment, and the relationship between the children and those in whose charge they are placed appears to be an entirely pleasing and happy one.

Erlam commented on the inadequate out of school hours supervision by "domestic officers"; the admission of children who were "dumb" but not "deaf"; the inadequacy of the staff in numbers and experience and the fact that some "mentally defective children who were neither, blind, deaf or dumb" were admitted to the school contrary to the regulations.

Recommendations to correct these defects were made as was the recommendation for more teachers and the appointment of a Head Teacher, preferably male, who would supervise the school and not have the responsibility of a class.

Erlam's other suggestion about the elimination of slates was also adopted, thirty years before they disappeared from regular schools.

District Inspector Platt of the Department of Public Instruction concurred and also suggested that Erlam select the next Head Teacher. Mrs Bryan graciously accepted the decision and agreed to continue at the school in a subordinate position.

The floods that marked the school's opening, spelling economic hardship for the state were followed by equally costly droughts. A further drain on resources was World War I which in addition disrupted the continuity of the teaching staff. The eventual state assumption of control

of the school, not yet by the Department of Public Instruction but by the Department of Home Affairs, meant that the School for the Blind, Deaf and Dumb was no longer dependent on charity - the only state controlled school for the deaf and blind in Australia.

With an Act of Parliament at last in place, making education for the deaf and blind compulsory (as had been the case for twenty-four years for children without a disability), a more hopeful period was soon to follow.

¹ Wyeth, E.R., N.D., c.1953, **EDUCATION IN QUEENSLAND** A.C.E.R., Melbourne. p.156.

² Letter dated 17 April 1903 in Bundle EDU/A285 Q.S.A.

³ Note dated 9 June 1905 and numbered 10668 in Bundle EDU/A285 Q.S.A.

⁴ Letter No.11325 in Bundle EDU/A285 Q.S.A.

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- ⁵ Letter 3922, 5 September 1908. Bundle EDU/A285 Q.S.A.
- ⁶ Letter 4728, 23 June 1909. Bundle EDU/A285 Q.S.A.
- ⁷ Letter 13830 31 May 1911 Q.G.A. Bundle 4728.
- ⁸ Letter dated 14 September 1911 No. 23249 Q.S.A. Bundle EDU/A285.
- ⁹ The E.O.G. contained requirements for the various levels and the past examination papers were published to assist candidates in their preparation.
- ¹⁰ Letter 27970 in Bundle A 4728 Q.S.A.
- ¹¹ Q.S.A. Bundle EDU/A 285.
- ¹² Q.S.A. Bundle EDU/A 285.
- ¹³ Letter dated 12 February 1918 in Bundle EDU/A285 Q.S.A.
- ¹⁴ Taken from Mrs Bryan's letter op.cit.
- ¹⁵ Dickinson, H.C., 1982 **OVER THE NEXT HILL** Boolarong Publications, Brisbane.
- ¹⁶ *ibid.* p. 29.
- ¹⁷ Pritchard, D.G., 1963 **EDUCATION AND THE HANDICAPPED 1760-1960** Routledge & Kegan Paul, London. p.100.
- ¹⁸ *ibid.* p.105.
- ¹⁹ Letter in Bundle EDU/A 285 Q.S.A.
- ²⁰ *ibid.* Letter is numbered 02560 and was from the Chief Secretary's Office.
- ²¹ **Q.P.D. 1924** p.805.
- ²² *ibid.* p. 985.
- ²³ **Queensland Government Gazette** No.119, 30 October 1926.
- ²⁴ **A.D.B.** Huxham entry and discussion with Harold Dickinson, op.cit., c.1980.
- ²⁵ Q.S.A. Bundle EDU/A 286.
- ²⁶ Lamond, A.J., 1913 **THE STORY OF THE QUEENSLAND BLIND, DEAF AND DUMB INSTITUTION 1883-1913** Typewritten Script Queensland Special Education Archives.

CHAPTER 10

QUEENSLAND SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF AND BLIND 1926-1953 A MORE HOPEFUL PERIOD

STANLEY EDWARD HOLLE

Stanley Edward Holle (1897-1953) at age twenty-nine became Principal of the Queensland School for the Blind, Deaf and Dumb on 13 March 1926. He had been a teacher on the staff of the New South Wales Institution and was recommended for the position by the Superintendent of that Institution, Harold Erlam. Erlam had been given this task of selecting the Principal by the Queensland Government after his visit to the Queensland School in March 1925 and his subsequent report.

Holle was a forceful character and dominated the special education scene in Queensland for several decades. His assertiveness gave rise to much speculation about his training and background. He had trained as a student teacher at the New South Wales Institution between the years 1916-1920 and continued to be employed as an Assistant Teacher from 1920 until 1924 when he went to the United States to extend his experience at the Berkeley School for the Deaf in California.¹ The New South Wales Department of Education phased out pupil teacher training from the beginning of 1905 but it seems the New South Wales Institution for the Blind, Deaf and Dumb continued this method of training teachers for some decades.² Both Holle and his successor at the Queensland School, Lobb, received their initial teacher training in this way. There are no records of Holle having attended either the

University of Sydney or the Sydney Teachers College³ although in a publication **MEN OF QUEENSLAND** he appears as having a Dip. Comm. (University of Sydney). Holle was one of a few educators listed in this rather pretentious, privately printed publication funded by the men who appear in the book.

Holle was employed by the Queensland Government; he was not answerable to a committee and was not dependent on public funding for his salary or for the support of the school. This made his position unique amongst his counterparts in the other states. His arrival presented some problems for Isaac Dickson who had been Superintendent, Manager and Secretary of the Blind, Deaf and Dumb Institution for nearly thirty years and whose area of administration and control was considerably reduced by the State Government's acquisition and separation of the school from the domain of adult activities. Dickson was reluctant to move from the official residence and Holle had to use make-shift quarters until the end of the year when he married and moved into what was now termed the Principal's Residence.⁴ Holle commenced his work in Queensland with energy and enthusiasm. The teaching staff had little experience of regular schools - neither had Holle. They had all trained or were being trained within institutional settings for the deaf or the blind. Up until the passing of the **1924 THE BLIND, DEAF AND DUMB CHILDREN INSTRUCTION BILL**, 148 deaf children and 120 blind children had been enrolled at the school. The teaching staff in 1926 consisted of ten teachers (seven female, three male) with a school

enrolment of seventy deaf pupils and twenty-four blind pupils. The decline in the number of blind pupils resulted partly from the successful treatment of trachoma, one of the major causes of blindness at the time. Most of the children lived at the school. Not until much later, and then only when parents insisted, were children allowed to attend the school as day pupils.

In June 1926 Holle prepared an article about the school:⁵

....the state refuses to allow false conception of kindness and affection to stand in the way of the child's intellectual development....

....every child enters the kindergarten and is placed under oral instruction and surrounded with an atmosphere of English. A great many deaf children learn to speak quite well; some owing to inferior mentality, organic defect or late admission do not. These children are placed in a special class where the methods of instruction employed are finger spelling and writing only. But persistent effort is made to give all the children the use of English and the ability to read lips.

The course of study is based on the primary school syllabus the greatest difference being the time it takes the deaf to cover the course. This is due to the fact that the deaf enter school with no language at all, and at least four years are required to give them an English vocabulary.

Holle in reviewing the Regulations prepared as required by the **1924 BLIND, DEAF AND DUMB CHILDREN INSTRUCTION BILL** was successful in having changes made. Children as young as four could now be admitted to the school. He also received approval for the admission of children who were "dumb, but not deaf" to be taught in a special class - this was one of the earliest references to children who were possibly aphasic or autistic; more accurate terminology came much later with better diagnoses. Erlam in his report had condemned the practice of admitting such children. He had thought they should be in a school with

"a normal speech and hearing environment".⁶ Children with "intelligence coefficients" of less than eighty could also be excluded. Nowhere is there any reference to the use of intelligence tests nor to the means as to how this score was obtained; neither is there any reference to alternative schooling for children excluded under the Regulations. Holle became involved in the Opportunity School Teachers Association where he seems to have been highly regarded. In a report of one such meeting, W.F.Bevington referred to the importance of the contributions to the Association of various professions and people..."it needed the assistance of psychologists like Mr Holle (sic) of the Blind and Deaf Institution".⁷ Holle's confidence, energy, enthusiasm and ability to speak authoritatively about his work impressed people. He had been at the school only three years when W.F.Bevington wrote in his Annual Report:⁸

Blind, Deaf and Dumb School. This year I paid my first official visit to this institution and was much impressed. The sympathetic manner shown by the teachers, the happy tone, and the high quality of the work generally caused me to feel that there is at least some silver lining to the dark cloud which overshadows these poor unfortunates. The difficulty of removing the reluctance on the part of parents to send their children has been practically overcome, and parents now realise the immense advantage of the educational facilities here afforded. At the time of my visit 28 blind children and 70 mutes were attending.

CHANGE OF ADMINISTRATIVE CONTROL

From 27 January 1931 the administrative control of what was referred to as Blind, Deaf and Dumb Institution (Juvenile Section) was transferred from the Home Department to the Department of Public Instruction. In

preparing the report the Chief Inspector, assisted by S.E. Holle, made the following observations:

The resources of the ordinary home are insufficient to secure the desired development.

The ordinary school and the ordinary home cannot develop the afflicted child as he should develop.

The school can demonstrate to parents and to the public generally that blind children and deaf and dumb children can be and are definitely benefited by special care and instruction.

The most successful of the teachers engaged in the work display something of the missionary spirit and the concerns of the Home Department do not permit of easy selection of the most suitable (teachers).

It would appear to be reasonable to assume that a department whose functions are wholly educational could administer special schools more conveniently and perhaps more efficiently though not necessarily more sympathetically than a Department whose only other educational responsibilities are those in connection with schools for aboriginals and a reform school.⁹

The Annual Report to Parliament expressed similar views¹⁰ and the Inspector also commented on "the cleanliness everywhere, the neatness and brightness of the dormitories, the fine grounds, and the spacious sports areas." There were twenty-six blind children taught by three teachers and eighty-three deaf children taught by nine teachers at the time of inspection. The school was the first special school administered by the Department of Public Instruction and as such seemed to enjoy considerable independence.

THE AUSTRALIAN ASSOCIATION OF TEACHERS OF THE DEAF

The first Commonwealth Conference of Superintendents and Teachers of the Deaf was held at the Victorian Deaf and Dumb Institution in Melbourne from 7-11 January 1935. Melbourne was selected as the first meeting venue as part of that State's Centenary Celebrations. It was the first national gathering and the resulting organization, the

Australian Association of Teachers of the Deaf, was to play a significant role in the professional development of its members. Holle, according to Lund, was a leader in its planning. and later responsible for the dissemination of some of its recommendations.¹¹ The reports of the meeting would support this.

Probably the most significant outcome of the new Association was the formation of an examining body within the organization and the awarding of a teaching diploma. The concept was based on the English College of Teachers of the Deaf and Dumb, established in 1885, which provided the only formal qualification for British teachers for many years. Some Australian teachers also qualified for this award and most of the migrant teachers of the deaf from the United Kingdom held this diploma. Mrs Bryan (q.v. Chapter 8) was one of these.

The first Australian diplomas were awarded by examination held in conjunction with the second conference of the Australian Association of Teachers of the Deaf in Sydney in 1937. This was the only award offered until 1952 when a training centre for teachers of the deaf was established in Melbourne.

In his report to the Department of Education at the conclusion of the first Conference Holle referred to the resolutions:¹²

School Age Period of compulsory schooling should be for eleven years.

Curriculum Should be similar to those children in ordinary schools.

Aphasic Children As there are no other provisions, aphasic children who are not mentally defective should be admitted to schools for the deaf for at least an experimental period.

Finger Spelling That this Conference is of the opinion that finger spelling should not be prohibited in any school for the deaf.

Compulsory Notification of the Deaf All doctors and nurses should notify deafness or partial deafness.

Hearing Tests should be standardised throughout Australia.

Intermarriage Instruction should be given to senior children about the possible consequences of the marriage of deaf people.

Salaries Because of the difficult nature of the work the scale of remuneration should be in advance of teachers in primary schools.

Holle's concluding paragraphs in his report must have given considerable satisfaction to Departmental officers:

We feel, very sincerely, that our present happy position would never have been achieved had our school not been an integral part of the State's educational system, and we are very grateful for all that has been done to further the interests of the blind, deaf and dumb children in our state.

Taking everything into consideration it is felt that the conditions existing in Queensland for the educational and maintenance of blind and deaf children at least equals, and in some cases excels the conditions existing in other States.

CORRECTION OF SPEECH DEFECTS

During 1939 Holle, with the approval and support of L. D. Edwards (1884-1965) the Director General of Education, was given the task of organizing a survey of metropolitan school children to discover the extent of defective speech. The urbane, intellectual Lewis David Edwards probably the most outstanding Director General of Education in Queensland, was most enthusiastic about effective and efficient communication and the aesthetic nature of speech. It was reported both in the Annual Report to Parliament¹³ and in the **REVIEW OF EDUCATION IN AUSTRALIA 1939**¹⁴ (the reports are identical!) that early in the 1939 school year a survey in Brisbane was carried

out and 368 children were found to be suffering from speech disorders.

...the most common defect was the substitution or elision of consonants, resulting in either completely unintelligible speech or persistent baby talk. Stammering was also noted, the degree of stammer varying in intensity from cases of hesitancy to others of severe stammer accompanied by facial distortion. The remainder of the children suffered some organic disability.

Centres were established in ten city schools and the speech correctionists were required to travel. The Annual Report to Parliament gave details of the work during 1946:

A total of 2,607 children were in attendance at Speech Correction Classes - an extra-mural activity of the Blind and Deaf School - during 1946. Of these 199 were stammerers, 20 were cleft palate cases, and 1,848 other speech defects - mainly substitution and elision of consonants.

Five teachers are engaged upon Speech Correction duties in the metropolitan area - classes being held at twenty-eight State Schools, The Teachers' Training College, The Hospital for Sick Children, and Montrose Crippled Children's Home. In addition these classes have been established at Rockhampton and Ipswich, ten schools being visited by a trained teacher in each District.¹⁵

Holle was assisted in this work by recent graduates of the Teachers' Training College. The selection of teachers for speech correction work was undertaken by the Principal of the Teachers' Training College, James Alexander Robinson (1888-1971) and Holle. Although there was no speech therapy course in Queensland, speech therapy was an emerging profession in the forties and fifties both in the United Kingdom and in the United States of America. The teachers selected for this task (always female) had performed particularly well in their College course and had completed, or were in the process of completing advanced studies in Speech and Drama as required by the Australian Music Examinations Board or the Trinity College

of London. The later completion of advanced studies in education, and moves to other positions indicate the outstanding calibre of the teachers selected for this work.¹⁶

In April 1952 the administrative responsibility for the the six speech correctionists was transferred from the Principal School for the Deaf to the Principal Guidance Officer who was also responsible for further recruitment and expansion of the work. Holle was not pleased about the transfer. The service had been his responsibility for thirteen years; it was an activity he had established and of which he was very proud. In 1966 Graduates of the recently established Speech Therapy Course at the University of Queensland replaced the speech correctionists.¹⁷

WORLD WAR II AND THE SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF AND BLIND

The early years of World War II saw the staff depleted by the number of eligible male teachers who enlisted. Pupil numbers decreased as country parents chose to keep their children at home rather than expose them to the possible dangers of enemy attack on the capital city, and teachers in residence were vexed by the sixpence a week levy on radios in their rooms. The school was closed for an indefinite period on 18 December 1941 and leave for all domestic staff was cancelled.¹⁸ The buildings were to be prepared for use as an emergency hospital.

The only special provision for the children was correspondence lessons prepared by the teachers under Holle's direction. Samples of these lessons were sent to

the Director General with a comment from Holle that he was not unduly optimistic about their effectiveness.

There was however a move to establish a branch school in the country and had this been pursued it would have provided a useful and valuable extension of the work of the school in post war years. Murgon, a small country town about 200 kilometres from Brisbane, was considered as an appropriate place for a branch school and some of the children surveyed for placement had "certain defects additional to deafness which render their instruction and care more complex than it was visualized" -

Snell is mentally subnormal,
Bory is a halfcaste suffering from a purulent discharge of the ear,
Schweitzer suffers from some head injury and consequent sub-normality.

A school for such pupils would be expensive and inefficient.¹⁹

As an alternative Holle suggested that the older pupils aged 13-16 years could be boarded out. R.M.Riddell, the Senior Inspector wrote:

....of the pupils whose deafness is not associated with any other defect, mental or physical, that is, whose physical condition does not demand institutional care and who are in the last three years of their required attendance at a School for the Deaf, in accordance with the provisions of The Blind Deaf and Dumb Children's Instruction Act of 1924 there would be only three.

These three could be boarded with two teachers and the Principal at thirty shillings a week.

A gesture of the Government's interest would have been made.

A District Inspector of Schools visited Murgon to interview prospective host parents and responded "they were more concerned about profit than caring for afflicted children."

...considering all circumstances these children would be much happier and make much more progress in every way, were they to live together, under the supervision of an understanding Matron. They could converse with one another, and understand one another, and be more en rapport in every way.

The Inspector went on to state that there was no accommodation available for classes of deaf students in the school but that the Oddfellows Hall was available and suitable. (The irony of the name of the hall and the proposed use will not be lost on today's integrationists).²⁰

The Queensland Adult Deaf and Dumb Mission and the Deaf Circle of the Catholic Daughters of Australia were anxious to restore educational facilities and made approaches to the Minister. The Adults wanted a school in the country, and the Catholic Daughters wanted the names of and addresses of Catholic boys: "we think we may be able to make some provision for them while the school is closed".²¹ The school in the country was already being considered but the Catholic Daughters were refused such information on the grounds of confidentiality.

The anxiety about an enemy invasion lessened and the school at Cornwall Street reopened at the beginning of 1943 so that the need for an alternative location no longer seemed necessary.

HEARING AIDS AND THE COMMONWEALTH ACOUSTICS

LABORATORY

During 1947 group hearing aid equipment was installed in some classrooms at the School for the Deaf. These aids provided for the amplification of sound and compared with today's equipment were clumsy and required frequent

repair. The Minister's Report to Parliament for the year painted a most optimistic picture:

As a high proportion of deaf children possess varying degrees of residual hearing, my Department has taken advantage of modern developments in the field of acoustics and has installed at the School six Group Hearing Aids - instruments which electrically amplify sound and compensate hearing loss. The value of these Group Hearing Aids is ultimately related to the experiences given the child in sound interpretation, and, of course, to the degree of residual hearing. A number of portable hearing aids has been ordered to enable those of the children considered likely to benefit from their use to continue to receive aural stimuli in out-of-school hours,²²

The Commonwealth Acoustics Laboratory was established to assist ex-servicemen whose hearing was impaired as a result of war service but in 1944 became interested in the problems of children with impaired hearing. Acoustic Laboratories were set up in each State so that in Brisbane and between 1946 and 1949 Telex individual aids with moulded ear pieces were fitted on children at the Queensland School for the Deaf. In most cases the aid was fitted to the better ear. There was an expectation amongst some parents that hearing would be restored with the fitting of an aid. The Director of Primary Education at the time met with disappointed parents to explain the limitations of aids.²³

In 1949 the Calaid, a more sophisticated aid, was produced. It was smaller and was fitted with a moulded ear piece. Any child who was known to be deaf was fitted free of charge and supplied with batteries as needed. The fitting of these relatively simple aids also marked the movement of deaf children into special classes in regular schools. The first such classes were formed in West Australia in 1946 and in the same year New South Wales

tried placing children with impaired hearing wearing an aid in regular classes. The report commissioned by the Commonwealth government in 1957 wrote of

....a planned attempt to give the child the assistance of a hearing aid in a normal active environment under a sympathetic teacher. The teacher was expected to give a certain amount of individual attention at playtime.²⁴

In 1948 the New South Wales Department of Education established Opportunity D Classes to meet the needs of the rather larger than usual number of partially hearing children who required schooling. A national committee was formed to investigate this phenomenon with Holle as a member.²⁵ Holle and the Department of Public Instruction do not appear to have followed the pattern of trying to integrate children although there were some attempts by individual parents.

Holle's successor at the Queensland School regarded the classes as a great mistake. Classes in regular schools for children with impaired hearing came later as did the approved integration of children into regular schools. Hearing aids also improved with the use of transistors.

RUBELLA

Rubella was identified as a disease in Germany in the eighteenth century and given the name *Roteln*. The name is derived from the Latin *rubellis* meaning reddish and it was first thought that the condition was benign causing only minor discomforts. The highly contagious virus infection causes an enlargement of the lymph nodes in the neck and a widespread pink rash, hence its name.

The identification of rubella as a possible cause of deafness was first noted by the Australian Government statistician in 1927:²⁶

The age incidence of the deaf-mutism varies in such a manner that it is apparent that the cause of the disability is of variable intensity, and there is some evidence to suggest that the increase in deaf-mutism at certain ages synchronises with the occurrences of epidemic diseases such as scarlet fever, diphtheria, measles and whooping cough.

Further observation of the data collected by the census of 1933 again discussed the possibility of deafness being caused by an infectious disease. A review of enrolments at various schools for the deaf around Australia led to the conclusion that

Deafness has appeared in epidemic form in Australia in the past, notably among children born in 1899, 1916, 1924, 1915 and in 1938-41. There is some presumptive evidence that all these epidemics, with the exception of that in 1916, were caused by antecedent epidemics of rubella.²⁷

In 1941 an Australian ophthalmologist, Dr McAlister Gregg, recognized the relationship between babies suffering from congenital cataracts and contact with rubella by their mothers in the early months of pregnancy. This was followed by further studies by Swan, Patrick and others who found that other disabilities could result from mothers having had rubella. The Queensland study carried out by Dr Ross Patrick of the School Health Services explained increased enrolments at the School. The study was carried out by questionnaires distributed by School nurses.²⁸ Patrick's study gained not only local but international attention.

The Annual Report to Parliament explained the increase in numbers at the School for the Deaf and Blind:²⁹

There has, unfortunately been a very considerable increase in the number of deaf children enrolled at the School for the Blind and Deaf, Dutton Park; the present enrolment being 145 deaf children and 10 blind. Ninety-eight of these deaf children were born in the years 1938 (57) and 1941 (41). Both State and Federal Health Authorities consider that this extraordinary increase in the incidence of deafness in the child population is due to maternal rubella or German measles contracted by the mother during the early months of pregnancy.

The development, in the 1950s, of a vaccine to protect children from Rubella and an effective education campaign reduced the number of children born with a defect.

THE VISIT OF SIR ALEXANDER AND LADY EWING

At the fourth Conference of the Australian Association of Teachers of the Deaf held at the Queensland School for the Deaf, S.E.Holle as President of the Association announced the proposed visit of Sir Alexander Ewing and Dr Irene Ewing. There were some voices of dissent since "the Ewings were not experts in all departments of deaf education" but as the State and Federal Governments were sponsoring the visit, the Ewings spent three months visiting every state from 20 June until 23 September 1950.³⁰

Sir Alexander Ewing was Director of Audiology and Professor of Education of the Deaf at the University of Manchester, the only University in the Commonwealth with such a Department. Dr Irene Ewing was a lecturer in the same Department. Dr Ewing as Irene Goldsack was the foundation lecturer at the University from 1919 - the Chair was established much later in 1934.³¹ The Ewings dominated the study of education of the deaf, creating a very successful teacher training department and "by

pioneering an auditory oral practice established audiology as an academic discipline within teacher training".³² The Ewings in the manner of evangelists, zealously favoured oralism and their report led to a resurgence of oralism in Australia. Some States received damning reports from the Ewings but S.E.Holle's work in Queensland was seen in a favourable light and Holle himself received an invitation to study at Manchester which he accepted during 1952. He used his long service leave to take up the offer with the Department of Education assisting him only with travel expenses. Unfortunately Holle became ill while at Manchester and had to return home. He died the following year.

One of the Ewing Report's recommendations was that a national centre for the training of teachers of the deaf should be established at the Sydney Teachers' College or the University of Sydney. The Victorian Government which had received a most damning report on the education of the deaf decided to act quickly and sent six teachers to Manchester for training. Upon return some of these helped establish a Centre for training teachers of the deaf at Glendonald School in 1954. From its foundation until 1971 eighteen teachers went from Queensland to undertake the course. Other states also sent teachers to Glendonald.³³

A TEACHER AND SOME OF THE PUPILS

One of the first teachers transferred to the school under Holle's management was Elizabeth Maude Davison (born 1906) interviewed at Caloundra on 24 April 1990. Elizabeth Davison had been a student at the Queensland Teachers'

Training College in 1922 and had taught in several schools as an Assistant Teacher and as Head Teacher of several one-teacher schools.³⁴ In August 1928 she was transferred to the School for the Blind upon the recommendation of the District Inspector of Schools, W.J.Trudgian, who was at that time also responsible for the inspection of the School for the Blind, Deaf and Dumb. Elizabeth Davison said the school encouraged sport and she often accompanied the deaf girls to tennis competitions. One aspect of the school that still disturbed her was its lack of warmth towards children feeling distressed about being so far away from home. The Principal, she said, "disapproved of any suggestion or sign of affection". One pupil especially remembered by Elizabeth Davison was Kathleen Mercy Griffin (born 1919) who successfully passed the State Scholarship in 1932. K.M.Griffin, now Dickinson, remembers with great affection her teacher and her days at the School for the Blind, although she describes some aspects of the school as Dickensian, "it was not as much a Dotheboys Hall as it was in my husband Harold's time". Mercy Griffin lost her sight as a result of meningitis when she was seven. Looking back she says "it would have been wonderful just to have continued at my local school, but such was never considered and much to my parents' distress I became a pupil at the Queensland School for the Blind. I just loved being at school again." When asked about sitting for the scholarship examination Mercy Griffin agreed with her teacher in that it was "serendipitous". One morning when I was reading an essay I had written for an eisteddfod Mr Holle happened to walk

into the classroom to listen. After I had finished he said to my teacher, 'I think we'll nominate her for the scholarship examination'." After passing the examination Mercy continued to live at the School while attending the Brisbane State High School and upon matriculation became a foundation student at Duschene College within the University of Queensland from which she graduated with a B.A. Later Mercy tutored students at the Teachers' Training College, returned to teach at the School for the Blind, and received a Fullbright Fellowship to study in New York. Mercy Dickinson was also honoured with an A.M. in 1984 and made a Doctor of the Queensland University of Technology in 1994.³⁵

Another pupil, Margo (born 1933) diagnosed deaf at an early age was admitted to school a month before she was four. Her father wrote of his distress at the separation from his daughter:³⁶

.....it is almost like looking back into the Dark Ages to remember how little advice and assistance were available sixty years ago.....

When Margo was about three, it was suggested that she go to the Deaf School at Dutton Park. It seems so heartless to have placed one so young in boarding school, but as much as we anguished over the decision, we felt compelled for her own sake, to take the advice which was avowed to be "the Best".

Many times when Margo was small, I would detour from the normal course of my day's work to drive past the school and pause a while outside, just hanging on to the fence railings. Margo did not know I was there. I felt as though I was the one in prison. we missed her so very much. It hurt badly.

The teachers told us that taking the child home every weekend was not only disruptive, but also cruel because it was so hard for the youngster to readjust to boarding school life. There seemed no alternative and Margo spent ten years there. Holidays and rostered weekends out were precious times.

The parents of sister Fleur (born 1940) and brother Ian (born 1946) refused to have the children attend the school as boarders. When it was found that Fleur was deaf the parents were living over a thousand miles away from Queensland's only school for deaf children. The mother made the journey to Brisbane and approached the Principal of the School for the Deaf for help:

Mr Holle was most sympathetic and helpful providing us with practical guidance for teaching her the basic understanding of speech.

The family moved to Brisbane and Fleur attended the school as a day pupil, her mother accompanying her to and from school until she could travel alone. She excelled in sport, used speech spontaneously and became an excellent lip reader. She spent ten years at the school. When her younger brother was born and his deafness was diagnosed the parents were devastated and again sought help from the School. Ian was not an appropriate candidate for oral instruction and with the appointment of a new Principal in 1955 whose brief it was to convert the school into an oral establishment his parents removed him from the School for the Deaf to attend the school where his father was Head Teacher. Ian passed the State Scholarship examination, attended secondary school and became a draftsman now employed by the City Council. Ian preferred sign language and as an adult he resents the amount of time spent in what he regards as useless speech and speech reading exercises when he could have been learning more useful things. His father was reprimanded by the Director of Primary Education for removing his son from the school.

It was regarded as disloyalty and ingratitude. Both children became self supporting, independent citizens, marrying and having children. They are well integrated in the community but depend mostly on the deaf world for sport and social activity. I feel my actions were appropriate as the children integrated well into secondary school with a lot of assistance from home.³⁷

A TRIBUTE TO S.E.HOLLE

During the 1951-52 Supply Debate in the Queensland Parliament, V.C.Gair (1902-1974) the Member for South Brisbane and President of the Parents and Citizens Association of the School for the Deaf said with feeling,

I rise chiefly for the purpose of paying tribute to Mr Holle and his staff of teachers, as well as to the matron and domestic staff for the excellent way in which they are discharging the responsibilities of educating and caring for these afflicted children at the School for the Blind and Deaf.

The work of the school is of an extremely high standard. The parents of those children who come from all parts of the State must be appreciative of that service, and I was very glad that the Government, on my representations, saw fit to relieve the parents of the charges for maintaining the children while being boarded at the school.

It is true that where parents were unable to pay they were not pressed for payment but we believed that there were others who made real efforts to pay because they felt a moral obligation to do so, and for that reason it was decided to relieve all parents of any financial strain for the maintenance of their children in these schools.³⁸

V.C.Gair saw himself as a patron for the special schools in his electorate, and as a regular visitor responded to their needs. In his speech he mentioned the increased enrolment due to the rubella epidemic and the resultant need to provide additional accommodation.

In viewing the work of S.E.Holle there is a greater emphasis on the education of the deaf and less discussion about the blind. The number of children with a sight

problem dropped considerably; medical intervention reduced the incidence and severity of trachoma in Western Queensland and the use of drugs in the treatment of *ophthalmia neonatorum* was mentioned in the Report to Parliament.³⁹

Helen Keller, the deaf-blind American who visited the school in 1948, pointed out some years previously that deafness also means "the loss of the most vital stimulus - the sound of the voice that brings language, sets thoughts astir, and keeps us in the intellectual company of men".⁴⁰

Holle in his work at the Queensland School for the Deaf and Blind did not neglect the needs of the smaller number of children with visual problems but found the needs of the hearing impaired much more demanding.

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- ⁴ Personal communication with Mrs Holle about 1985.
- ⁵ Q.G.A. Bundle EDU/A287.
- ⁶ Q.S.A. Bundle EDU/A 285.
- ⁷ Report of meeting in the **QUEENSLAND TIMES** 26 September 1926.
- ⁸ Q.P.P. 1929, p.786.
- ⁹ Memo. dated 24 December 1930 and numbered 61719 in Bundle EDU/A287 Q.S.A.
- ¹⁰ Q.P.P. 1933, p.693.
- ¹¹ Lund, E., op.cit.
- ¹² Letter 09143, 4 March 1935, Q.G.A. Bundle EDU/A288.
- ¹³ Q.P.P. 1939, p.830.
- ¹⁴ **REVIEW OF EDUCATION IN AUSTRALIA 1939** Edited by Cunningham, K.S., & Pratt, J.J., A.C.E.R., Melbourne.
- ¹⁵ Q.P.P. 1947-48 p.615.
- ¹⁶ Swan, G., 1992 **Early Speech Correctionists** in **THE EDUCATIONAL HISTORIAN** Vol. 5 No.3, 1992.
- ¹⁷ **TWENTY-FIVE YEARS OF SPEECH THERAPY IN QUEENSLAND EDUCATION 1966-1991** Department of Education, Queensland.
- ¹⁸ Letter 63642 in Bundle EDU/A 289, Q.S.A.
- ¹⁹ Letter dated 13 August 1942 Bundle EDU/A289.
- ²⁰ Letter 32628 G.R.Hendren 14 July 1942 Bundle EDU/A289.
- ²¹ Letter 20668 Catholic Daughters of Australia 18 May 1942 Bundle EDU/A289.
- ²² Q.P.P. 1947/48 p.615.
- ²³ G.K.D.Murphy Personal communication about 1986.
- ²⁴ Brereton, Beatrice LeGay, 1957 **THE SCHOOLING OF CHILDREN WITH IMPAIRED HEARING** Commonwealth Office of Education.

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- ²⁵ Letter 50806, Bundle EDU/A 287. Q.S.A.
- ²⁶ Lancaster, H.O., 1951 Deafness as an Epidemic Disease in Australia: A Note on census and Institutional Data **BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL** 15 December 1951. p.1429-1432.
- ²⁷ *ibid.* p.1432.
- ²⁸ Patrick, P.R.,1981 **PROUD OF THE PAST History and Development of School Health Services in Queensland** Typescript, S.E.A.
- ²⁹ Q.P.P. 1946-47 p.615.
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- ³¹ Pritchard, D.G.,1970 **EDUCATION AND THE HANDICAPPED 1760-1960** Routledge & Kegan Paul, London.
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- ³³ Duerdoth, P., & Vlahoginnis, N., *op.cit.* p.226.
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CHAPTER 11

SOCIAL EFFICIENCY AND THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

PROGRESS AND THE PROVISION OF EDUCATION IN QUEENSLAND

Wyeth, in 1955, described the early decades of this century as the most progressive in the development of education in Queensland.¹ Under the leadership of John Douglas Story (1869-1966)² six State High Schools (Warwick, Gympie, Bundaberg, Mt.Morgan, Charters Towers and Mackay) were opened in 1912; the Education Act was amended to raise the school leaving age to fourteen and the requirement of the local contribution of one-fifth of the cost of establishing a school was abolished. The University of Queensland with Reginald Heber Roe (1850-1926)³ as the foundation Vice Chancellor received its first students in 1912 and two years later likewise the Teachers' Training College with Dr. John Shirley (1849-1922)⁴ as Principal. Domestic science classes for girls and manual training for boys were initiated; rural schools commenced agricultural courses (but only for boys - social advances had not yet changed the strictly gender bound nature of many occupations); medical and dental examination and treatment of school children followed the pattern established in Tasmania, Victoria and New South Wales. For the first time the Directors of Education from each of the Australian States met in Adelaide in 1916 marking the beginning of what was to become the Australian Education Council.⁵

Many of the educational changes had been prompted by the doctrine of social efficiency which had received considerable impetus from the followers of Social Darwinism and the propaganda of the Eugenics Society. These movements also influenced the development of special education.

NATURE VERSUS NURTURE, EUGENICS AND SOCIAL DARWINISM

Francis Galton (1822-1911) was responsible for the phrase "nature versus nurture" but placed greater emphasis on the "nature" (heredity) aspect which Galton saw as being far more influential than "nurture" (environment) in the causation of human behaviour. Queensland teachers in studying for their Class II examination would have studied Sir Percy Nunn's **EDUCATION ITS DATA AND FIRST PRINCIPLES** and the particular chapter headed **Nature and Nurture**. This book from the first edition in 1920 was the set text until the abolition of the Class II examination thirty years later.

Galton also coined the term "eugenics" from the Greek "eugenes" meaning "good in stock". Galton's theories are an extension of Darwin's as propounded in **ORIGIN OF SPECIES** (1859) and the **DESCENT OF MAN** (1871). Darwin's exposition of the "survival of the fittest" and "natural selection" began as a study of genius prompted by the idea that "good" genes run in "good" families. (Both Galton and Darwin came from gifted families.) Later came the corollary "bad genes run in bad families", soon to become a popular catchcry.

Eugenics began not at all as a proper detailed study of the epidemiology of mental retardation; that did not come till some years later; but eugenics began as a study of the epidemiology of genius.⁶

The work of Gregor Mendel (1822-1884) added to the debate following the results of his experiments of crossing seeds and formulating theories about inherited characteristics in plants. The theories and ideas promoted by the writings of Galton and Darwin in England and the experiments based on Mendel's work at the Moravian monastery in Austria set the foundation for the establishment of the Eugenics Society in Britain, North America and in Australia. Bacchi speaks of the social climate determining the extent to which a country adopted the theory.⁷ America, concerned as it was about the growing number of immigrants and the influence of the African-American former slaves, came down heavily on the side of nature. The American stance was also reinforced by the now discredited histories of the Kallikak and the Jukes families.⁸ Britain, concerned about declining national health, set up a Royal Commission to investigate the Care and Control of the Feeble-minded. Sir George Newman, Chief Medical Officer of the English Board of Education claimed:

The growth of a strong and healthy race of children must be.....the aim of any nation which is provident of its future.....the object of medical care.....and treatment of all children of school age is perfectly clear....It is to create and maintain a healthy state.⁹

The United Kingdom and the United States of America were much more active than Australia in advocating eugenic solutions to certain social problems but there were some

vocal advocates in Australia. Sterilization of the unfit was high on the agenda for the eugenic control of the population. Such ideas failed to gain widespread acceptance in Australia and as a result of fascism in Germany in the thirties the idea was further rejected. Some of the States in the U.S.A. and Canada however, according to Winzer, enacted legislation to allow the sterilization of individuals likely to produce "socially inadequate offspring".¹⁰ Segregation into single sex institutions was regarded as the most suitable alternative. Harvey Sutton, the Chief Medical Officer of the Victorian Department of Education and later Professor of Preventive Medicine presented a paper **The Feeble Minded: Their Classification and Importance** at the 1911 Australasian Medical Congress in Melbourne and expressed the need

.....to segregate and provide special training for the "unfit". This would diminish the intensity of many social problems by removing from the community large numbers of recruits such as criminals, prostitutes and unemployables.¹¹

Advocacy for segregated institutions in Queensland was made on numerous occasions: by Dr. Eleanor Bourne in 1915,¹² by Dr. St Vincent Welch in 1929 when he addressed special school teachers in Ipswich¹³ and by Dr. E.A.Orchard at a similar gathering in 1932. These issues will be raised in a later chapter.

Much of the nature/nurture, eugenics, social Darwinism propaganda of the first part of the twentieth century was reflected in the Queensland Parliament leading up to the **1938 BACKWARD PERSONS ACT** "for attending to backward children and giving the Government the power to establish

the required institutions."¹⁴ Expressions such as "inherited condition", "deficiencies of nature" and the "evils of backwardness" featured in the debate. Details of the Jukes¹⁵ family were aired and one member said without interjection, "I say quite plainly that I am in favour of sterilization". He went on to claim that there was a "fecundity of the unfit....without the mental capacity to restrain themselves." World War II (1939-1945) inhibited implementation of most aspects of the Act. As late as 1955 a former Premier of Queensland, V.C.Gair (1902-1976), offered Professor F.J.Schonell, President of the Queensland Sub-Normal Children's Welfare Association, an island in Moreton Bay for a segregated colony.¹⁶ Needless to say such an offer was firmly rejected.

THE EUGENICS SOCIETY

In 1912 the Eugenics Education Society of Great Britain held an International Conference in London. Australia was represented by Sir John Cockburn, former Premier and Minister for Education in South Australia, the Agents General for New South Wales and South Australia, Professor A. Stuart, foundation Professor of Medicine at the University of Sydney and Edith Onians, independently wealthy social worker from Victoria.¹⁷ There had already been considerable activity in Victoria and New South Wales reflecting the concern of members of the British Eugenics Society:

....central to the concern of those most strongly influenced by eugenics was the need to categorise youth, in particular, according to physical and mental abilities. It was seen as important to establish scientifically what were the essential physical and

mental characteristics of the British race so that the young people possessing those characteristics could be encouraged to procreate. Just as it was important to isolate the mental and physical defectives, so that they would not dilute by breeding the positive characteristics of the race.¹⁸

The Eugenics Society of New South Wales was founded in 1912 by Richard Arthur, a Mosman doctor and member of Parliament.¹⁹ In Victoria there was considerable activity but an organization was not formed until 1936.²⁰ The Victorian Society has been seen as the culmination of eugenic activity which had been going on in other organizations prior to its foundation. Both societies had members who were prominent in the professions of medicine, law, science, education and the church, and who received copies of overseas publications and sponsored public lectures. The British Society's **EUGENICS REVIEW** formed part of the subscription to the Victorian Society.²¹

The formidable and provocative John Anderson, Professor of Philosophy at the University of Sydney, was a vociferous opponent of the claims of the eugenics movement. He identified the thinking of the eugenists with the Ku Klux Klan's and accused them of flabby logic:

It is not precisely obvious that people who know more are better members of society than people who know less, or those that have "intelligence" will be able to develop it to the best advantage in a society from which the unintelligent have been removed. What is wanted, to give any sort of provision to the theory, is a positive and not merely a comparative criterion.....if the psycho-physician keeps on eliminating the worst members of society, there will eventually be no one left but himself.²²

Ideas promulgated by the Eugenics Society did not receive wide support in Australia and indeed became extremely unpopular, prompting legislation in some states restricting sterilization. Nevertheless the concept of

segregation of the disabled in various kinds of institutions persisted well into the seventies.

There was a time when it was believed that, with greater genetic control, the world would eventually be rid of idiots, imbeciles, other feeble minded persons, epileptics, psychopaths, chronic alcoholics, paupers, vagrant persons likely to become public charges, beggars, people with tuberculosis or other contagious diseases, criminals, people with low morals, polygamists, anarchists, prostitutes, and others not of good stock or moral worth. It was believed that in some way the world would be rid of defectives, lunatics and dependents. At one time society's goal was to achieve God's design on earth.²³

MEDICAL EXAMINATION OF SCHOOL CHILDREN

The 1907 EDUCATION (Administrative Provisions) ACT in England made it mandatory for the Local Education Authorities to "provide for the medical inspection of children immediately before, or at the time of, or as soon as possible after their admission to a public elementary school, and on such occasions as the Board of Education direct." The School Medical Service in England and Wales commenced activity on 1 January 1908.²⁴ The Interdepartmental Committee on Physical Deterioration in England urged the Government to establish "a permanent anthropometric survey" and the foundation of the School Medical Service provided an opportunity to do this. Prior to this Act teachers were required to initiate admission of children with either a mental or physical disability to a special school. Statistics collected by A.F.Tredgold for the Royal Commission on the Care and Control of the Feeble Minded (The Radnor Commission) indicated that the prevalence of mental deficiency ranged as high as 4.86 per 1000 in some areas and as low as 1.35 per thousand in other areas. It was estimated that about

24 per cent were idiots or imbeciles and 76 per cent were feeble minded. Tredgold also wrote (1908) **MENTAL DEFICIENCY**,²⁵ one of the few texts available to workers in the field at the time. Tredgold constantly revised his text and was responsible for no fewer than eight editions of his book, the last in 1952. The ninth and subsequent editions were prepared by his son, Dr. Roger Tredgold and Dr. Kenneth Soddy. The twelfth edition is a total revision and is a composite text showing the great advances in the field and reflecting the multidisciplinary approaches to the problems associated with mental deficiency. It seems that the earlier readers of Tredgold did not change as he did with the advancement of knowledge.²⁶

When J.S.C. Elkington was Chief Health Officer in Tasmania and W.L. Neale Director of Education, medical examination of children referred by the Head Teacher was made compulsory and in 1907-1908 a medical officer and two part time doctors were appointed.²⁷ The Victorian school health service began in 1909 with the appointment of three doctors led by Dr. Harvey Sutton, the first Australian medical Rhodes Scholar. In 1912 he moved to Sydney to establish the School Health Service in New South Wales. Later in 1930, he accepted the Chair in Preventative Medicine and the Directorship of the School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine at the University of Sydney.²⁸ In 1910 John Simeon Colebrook Elkington (1871-1955) moved from Tasmania to become the Commissioner of Public Health in Queensland,²⁹ a position he held for just three years before becoming the Director of the Federal Quarantine Service. Elkington graduated in medicine from Edinburgh

and Glasgow after having failed to do so in Melbourne. Described as an impressive and commanding personality with a fine, sometimes overbearing personality, Elkington mixed with the Lindsays in Melbourne's Bohemia and introduced Norman Lindsay's work to the "Sydney Bulletin". (Elkington and Norman Lindsay married sisters). Elkington's father had been an inspector of schools in Victoria before becoming Professor of History and Political Economy at the University of Melbourne, the first Australian to hold a chair. J.S.C. Elkington had already experienced work in the area of school health and had written a text book **HEALTH IN THE SCHOOL; OR HYGIENE FOR TEACHERS** ³⁰ and the **HEALTH READER** which was illustrated by Norman Lindsay. The advice offered about the value of fresh air and the need to change underclothes at least once a week, perhaps after a bath, now indicates some social progress as does the very short chapter on abnormal children. Elkington advocated the elimination of "physical causes" and the possibility of correcting these before looking for the "psychical phenomena". He claimed that in the diagnosis of abnormality a great deal of special knowledge was required.³¹

The creation of the position of Medical Inspector of Schools and the appointment of Eleanor Elizabeth Bourne (1878-1957) to that post in 1910 resulted from the Elkington's initiative.

Dr. Bourne became at age thirty-two an influential figure in the health and welfare of Queensland school children. Elkington in making his submission for the appointment suggested that a woman would be most suitable because of

"natural tactfulness, capacity for enlisting the confidence of children, sustained interest in the work, and common sense".³²

Dr. Bourne in her first year examined over 3000 children and found that thirty-one per cent had some physical problem likely to inhibit progress in schools.³³ In her first year Dr. Bourne visited Charleville, Cunnamulla, Thargomindah, Augathella, Eulo, Blackall, Longreach and Barcaldine; in the following year she worked in North Queensland, particularly in the Cairns and Mackay districts. She established principles for the medical examination of children in Queensland and kept records which she incorporated in her carefully prepared and presented Annual Reports to the Minister. The weight and height data on each child was used for comparative purposes many years later by one of her successors, Dr.P.R.Patrick.³⁴

The Medical Inspector's Report for 1913 states that "during the routine examination of the schools a certain number of feeble minded children were detected". Assistant part-time Medical Officers had been appointed from local general practitioners and they helped in the examination of school children and in the collection of the data. Dr Bourne collated the figures and in her 1913 Report wrote:

Australia has not yet waked up to the problem of the feeble-minded - that class whose case is not sufficiently urgent to call for confinement in an asylum for the insane, yet who, left at large, contribute to an extent hardly realized by the man in the street to the records of crime, in which they take the parts both of perpetrator and victim. In addition, this class contributes largely to the multiplication of the unfit of the community, so that the problem progressively increases in magnitude.

The matter is, of course, not one for the Department of Public Instruction to tackle alone. For one thing, feeble-minded persons are not confined to school ages. The solution of this problem will probably lie in the direction of self-supporting colonies of an industrial - preferably an agricultural - character, to which would be attached special schools in which the children would be taught by the Montessori methods, which are suitable for this class of child. The object of these colonies is not only to protect the community at large; it is rather to protect these unfortunates, who are unable to safeguard their persons or their material interests against the onslaughts of the unscrupulous.

One notes from reports that in these colonies, where every factor is adapted to their peculiar condition, these persons improve in health and are happier than in the outside world as objects of scorn or pity from those with whom they are unable to compete on equal terms.³⁵

TABLE 10.1

Medical Officer	District	Children Examined	Number Defective	Percent Defective
Dr Buchanan	Brisbane	2019	18	.89
Dr Croll	Brisbane	3038	10	.33
Dr Nisbett	Townsville	856	18	2.10
Dr Sweet	Ipswich	1725	5	.29
Dr Bourne	Brisbane	3068	7	.23
"	West Queensland	1199	4	.33
"	North Queensland	2316	8	.35
"	Toowoomba	2739	6	.22
"	Gympie & Maryborough	1695	8	.47
Total		18655	84	.45

**Medical Inspector of Schools Report 1913
Number of Feeble Minded Children Detected**

No explanation of the table is given in the report, nor is there a definition of mental deficiency. The significantly higher percentage of mentally deficient children in Townsville from the smallest number of children examined poses a number of questions as does the variations within the groups examined by Dr Bourne. The Australasian Medical Congress proposed the national survey of feeble mindedness during 1911 and 1912 but for reasons

about which one can only conjecture, Queensland and Western Australia refused to take part and New South Wales withheld results which were considered misleading. Victoria, however, requested teachers to identify intellectually disabled children and collect figures, this being the first occasion in Australia where teachers were used instead of medical officers who up until this time estimated mental capacity "from head shape or the shape of the earlobe".

Teachers were instructed to make an estimate of the mental capacity of their pupils by comparing the age of their pupils with the class average. If a child's chronological age was two years above the age of the class he was to be regarded as mentally dull..... Accidental cause such as bad environment or irregular attendance was also to be considered.³⁶

In 1914 Eleanor Bourne used part of her annual leave to attend the Australasian Medical Congress in New Zealand and in the same year had some correspondence with Reginald Heber Roe about the need for special classes for mentally defective children.³⁷

World War I intervened and domestic issues were of secondary importance. Dr Bourne enlisted in the Australian Medical Corps in 1916 and left immediately for service in the United Kingdom. She did not return to Australia after the war and even worked in another area of medicine until her retirement in 1937. The work of the School Health Services was severely curtailed and was not revived until 1926 with the appointment of Dr. Leslie St Vincent Welch. By this time the concern of the School Medical Services for the intellectually disabled had diminished considerably.

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- ¹ Wyeth, E.R., 1955, **EDUCATION IN QUEENSLAND** Australian Council for Educational Research, Melbourne. p. 174.
- ² **A.D.B.** John Douglas Story.
- ³ **A.D.B.** Reginald Heber Roe.
- ⁴ **A.D.B.** John Shirley.
- ⁵ Nunn, P., 1920 **EDUCATION ITS DATA AND FIRST PRINCIPLES** Edward Arnold & Co., London.
- ⁶ Judge, C., 1987 **CIVILIZATION AND MENTAL RETARDATION** Magenta Press, Melbourne. p.46.
1914
- ⁷ Bacchi, C.L., 1981 **The Nature-Nurture Debate in Australia** **1900 HISTORICAL STUDIES** Vol. 19, 1980 p.203.
- ⁸ Winzer, M.A., 1993 **THE HISTORY OF SPECIAL EDUCATION Isolation to Segregation** Gallaudet University Press, Washington D.C. p.291
- ⁹ Harries, B., 1995 **THE HEALTH OF THE SCHOOL CHILD A History of the School Medical Service in England and Wales** Open University Press, Buckingham. p. 83.
- ¹⁰ *ibid.* p.302.
- ¹¹ McCallum, D., 1990 **THE SOCIAL PRODUCTION OF MERIT** p. 7.
- ¹² **REPORT OF MEDICAL INSPECTOR OF SCHOOLS 1915. V. & P.**
- ¹³ Reported in **THE QUEENSLAND TIMES**, Ipswich 25 November 1929.
- ¹⁴ **QUEENSLAND PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES 1928** p.1797-1799.
- ¹⁵ Many of the descendants of Jukes a "feebleminded" backwoodsman were either criminals, paupers or prostitutes, most displaying poor physical and intellectual abilities. Richard Dugdale's study in 1877 in the U.S.A. however, disregarded environmental factors. Jukes was a fictitious surname derived from a term of reproach. See Winzer, *op. cit.* p.289.
- ¹⁶ Personal communication.
- ¹⁷ Lewis, J., 1989, **REMOVING THE GRIT, THE DEVELOPMENT OF SPECIAL EDUCATION IN VICTORIA 1887-1947** Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, LaTrobe University, Melbourne. p.25.
- ¹⁸ Bessant, B., 1994, **SPREADING THE EUGENICS GOSPEL IN VICTORIA** Proceedings, Australian New Zealand History of Education Society, Melbourne Conference.
- ¹⁹ Bacchi, C., *op.cit.* p.205.
- ²⁰ Bessant, B., *op.cit.* p.8.

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- ²¹ Bessant, B., op.cit. p.11.
- ²² Quoted by McCallum op. cit. p.67.
- ²³ Blatt, B.,1987, **THE CONQUEST OF MENTAL RETARDATION** PRO-ED Austin, Texas.
- ²⁴ Harris, Bernard, op. cit.
- ²⁵ Tredgold, A.F., 1908 **MENTAL DEFICIENCY** Ballière, Tindall and Cox, London.
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- ³⁶ MacCallum, D., op.cit., p.18.
- ³⁷ **Q.S.A.** Edu.A/15845.

CHAPTER 12

THE BACKWARD

Queensland was represented by John Douglas Story (1869-1966), Under Secretary of the Department of Public Instruction and Reginald Heber Roe (1850-1926), Inspector-General, at the first Conference of Australian Directors of Education in Adelaide in July 1916.¹ The Conference passed many resolutions, most of them to facilitate the uniform collection of statistics, but one in particular aimed at assisting a group of hitherto educationally neglected children:

It was resolved that

(a) in the larger centres of population it is desirable to provide a special school of the Montessori type, to which children mentally deficient may be sent for special instruction.

(b) it is desirable that the children who are lower than normal mentally, in the larger schools, be instructed in ungraded classes.

(c) the question of establishing institutions for the after-care of children who are mentally feeble receive consideration, and that provision be made for the special training of teachers for this type of school.²

Story and Roe already had some information about the need for provision for children with an intellectual disability. The reports of Dr Eleanor Bourne, the State's first School Medical Officer, contained figures showing her estimation of the extent of the problem.³ Both gentlemen would have been familiar with Montessori as they had supported the visit of Queensland teachers in 1914 to the Blackfrairs School in Sydney where Miss M. M. Simpson, who had studied at the Casa di Bambini in Rome, was

Headmistress.⁴ Victoria had already opened its first non-residential school for the intellectually disabled in Bell Street, Fitzroy. The founding Head Teacher was Stanley Porteus, author of the Porteus Maze Test who spent the later part of his life as a Professor of Psychology in the United States. K.S.Cunningham, after an outstanding performance as a student at the Melbourne Teachers' College, became the manual arts teacher at the school. He later became the Director of the Australian Council for Educational Research. Discussions about Bell Street had begun in 1906 and there appears to have been some conflict as to which Department would make the provision.⁵ No action was taken in Queensland until 1923 when classes attached to regular schools were established - a separate school did not open until 1936. World War I and the consequent shortage of teachers probably accounted for the delay. It took the interest and drive of John Saunders Huxham, Minister for Public Instruction and William Faulkner Bevington, Inspector of Schools to take the initiative.

WILLIAM FAULKNER BEVINGTON (1871-1944)

Bevington was born in the Colony of Queensland on 10 June 1871. He was the eldest son of William Joseph Bevington, an Englishman who had been a reader on the staff of the **Brisbane Courier** but who had, after a three month course at the Brisbane Normal School under James Semple Kerr, entered the Queensland Teaching Service in May 1875. Bevington's mother Jane Mary Margaret also taught as an untrained, unclassified teacher with her husband as Head

Teacher firstly at Glamorganvale in 1875 and later in 1879 at Hemmant. The younger Bevington, at twelve years eight months became a pupil teacher at the Sandgate State School (under his father then Head Teacher) on 15 February 1884 and remained there until 31 December 1889. During his pupil teacher training Bevington was described, hardly prophetically, as "a moderate student and a fairly successful teacher". Bevington taught for a short time at Brisbane Central School and then moved upwards on the promotional/country service scale at Alfred, Fernvale, Mulgrave, Goodna and Woolloowin. On 22 March 1920 he became an Acting District Inspector of Schools and in August of the same year he was given a permanent appointment as a District Inspector of Schools.

Bevington's teaching career was most successful. On report on the young teacher read: "very commendable methods are applied with much skill and very promising energy", and while serving as a Head Teacher his mark for "organizing power" was "excellent" for several years in succession. Bevington became Chief Inspector in 1933 retiring four years later, whereupon he became involved with the Queensland Museum and acted as a schools liaison officer, visiting schools to talk about the Museum and talking to groups of children visiting the Museum. It was estimated that during 1938 Bevington spoke to over 100,000 children. He died in Brisbane in 1944.⁶

BEVINGTON'S IMPRESSIONS AND PLANS

Bevington was one of the three Queensland delegates to the Australasian Conference of Inspectors of Schools held in

Melbourne in 1922. (The other Queensland delegates were W.Taylor, District Inspector and B.J.McKenna, Acting Chief Inspector.) He took the opportunity, with Ministerial approval, to study provision for mentally defective children in other states. Part of the study involved visits to the now well established Bell Street School at Fitzroy, Melbourne. On the return journey to Brisbane discussions with Dr Lorna Hodgkinson took place in Sydney. For the purpose of the report and discussion Bevington divided children into four groups:

1. Super-normal, i.e. those above average intelligence.
2. Normal.
3. Sub-normal, i.e. merely dull children, including backward for age. (I.Q. 50 to 75)
4. Mentally-defective, i.e. the worst cases. (I.Q.under 50)⁷

Of groups 1 and 2 Bevington said that he would not refer to them again in the report beyond stating:

...they are being well looked after in all the States, and I do not think such children are unfairly treated when they are kept in reins and not allowed to progress at a pace which is not commensurate with their physical stamina.

Of the groups 3 and 4 Bevington wrote " much needs to be said" and quoted Dr Lorna Hodgkinson as saying Australia is "more behind in the matter of dealing with feeble-minded children than any other civilized country." Bevington described his visit to the Bell Street School, and outlined the activity, or lack of it, in the other states; this information was probably acquired from other delegates at the Conference. Bevington also quoted the definition of "feeble-minded" then "in most general use":

A feeble minded person is one who is incapable because of mental defect existing from birth and from an early age (a) of competing on equal terms with his normal

fellows; or (b) of managing himself or his affairs with ordinary prudence.

Bevington stressed the need to separate "(I) those who are merely of below average intelligence" and "(II) those who reach the state of idiocy".

...a start could easily be made in this State with a view to helping those children who belong to Class I. The cost would not be great, and the resultant good would be incalculable.

Bevington recommended that circulars be sent to the Head Teachers of Brisbane Schools asking them for the names of sub-normal children currently enrolled so as to have these children "psychopathically" (?) examined and tested using the Binet-Simon Tests. He then indicated that the "upper grades of these sub-normal children" be enrolled in classes at nominated Brisbane schools (Valley, South Brisbane, East Brisbane, Eagle Junction). The children would be placed in classes of twenty with suitable teachers instructed "to take essential subjects only".

Dr Hodgkinson pointed out a serious objection to these classes, viz:- that the children would be ridiculed by the pupils of other classes. This seems, however, to be the only objection, and I feel sure that tactful head teachers would be able to prevent anything of this kind. Later on if this experiment proves successful it could be tried at Rockhampton, Townsville etc.

Bevington then offered some advice about the second group of children, that is "those who reach the state of idiocy". His suggestions were similar to those offered by the racial purists and were to be repeated often during the next three decades. He emphasised the children be segregated and "for the sake of society never allowed to return".

Girls in the adolescent stage need special care. It has been found that the more mentally defective girls are, the more susceptible they are to the attentions

of men, and the more easily do they fall prey to the unscrupulous. Terman says that it is this type of girl who supplies the bulk of prostitutes.

I beg to suggest that, as soon as it is possible to obtain funds for the purpose, two homes be established - one for boys, the other for girls. These should be placed in bright, healthy places, preferably close to the seaside and not necessarily in Brisbane. Nurses as well as teachers would be needed, and all should be of cheerful, optimistic dispositions, and possessed of unlimited patience - one teacher to every fifteen pupils. The children should be instructed in hand work, so that when they reached the adult stage they will be able to do a little at any rate for the upkeep of the institutions. Later on of course it would be necessary to make provision for the adults of both sexes.

Bevington also indicated that the responsibility was really a matter of the Home Department but that teachers would need to be provided by the Education Department - "the cost of this undertaking would be to some extent be balanced by a saving to the Government".

Unfortunate girls of this class generally leave illegitimate children to be brought up by the State, and feeble minded men and women seem unable to resist their criminal propensities, and consequently find their way into gaols. Again, if the feeble minded be prevented from propagating, the increase in the number of persons of weak intellect will be stemmed.

Bevington's reference to Dr Lorna Hodgkinson, a pioneer in the field of disability, is interesting. Dr Hodgkinson went from Melbourne to Perth in 1895 to study at Claremont Teachers' College after successfully completing her teacher training she took further courses in Montessori and kindergarten methods. After some teaching experience in Perth, Claremont and Freemantle she moved to Sydney where she taught for three years before taking charge of training delinquent and backward children within the State Children's Relief Department. In 1918 Hodgkinson went to the United States where she was admitted to the Graduate

School of Education at Harvard. Her thesis **A STATE PROGRAM FOR THE DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT OF ATYPICAL CHILDREN IN PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEMS** covered research she undertook at Massachusetts but the finding and recommendations would have had some applicability for Australia. The work for which she is remembered is the Lorna Hodgkinson Sunshine Home at Carlingford in New South Wales. Such homes provided a model for organizations in other states.⁸

THE FIRST CLASSES

"Honest" John Huxham reported to Parliament late in 1922:⁹

Inspectors of schools have been required to furnish in their reports information concerning the number of pupils who might be regarded as naturally subnormal. From the accumulated data submitted I have concluded that it was the duty of this Department to provide special classes for the benefit of the type referred to.

In August last, under my instructions, two teachers proceeded to New South Wales so that they might gain first-hand knowledge of the principles adopted by specialist educators in Sydney schools and gain practical acquaintance with the various modern arts used by them. On completing their course of training, it is intended to employ these teachers in a department of the South Brisbane school and to equip that department with special apparatus. Subsequently, arrangements will be made to extend the system to other metropolitan schools and to schools in provincial centres.

The classes will comprise (1) those intended merely "backward", and (2) those intended to give training to children sub-normal in mental power. In the former, the studies will be confined to the most essential subjects - English and Arithmetic - with the purpose of advancing the pupils to a standard of knowledge usually expected from normal pupils in Primary Schools. In the latter, it is hoped by the aid of special methods and modern apparatus to discover and stimulate individual interests, to cultivate volition and such mental power as may exist, and to provide a variety of manual occupations which will exercise motor activities. In both types of classes, courses of instruction will be pursued quite distinct from that prescribed by the usual Primary School curriculum.

The Minister gave Bevington the task of organizing the classes, a task he accepted with alacrity. The letter assigning him the task was filed under Health!¹⁰

Bevington had decided that the South Brisbane School was an appropriate place to begin:¹¹ classroom accommodation was available and the Inspectors of Schools with the cooperation of Head Teachers of the surrounding schools had submitted the names of a sufficient number of pupils. In the establishment minute Bevington made the following points:¹²

OBJECTS

The object of this class or these classes should be to cause these backward pupils to make such progress as would enable them to return to their places in the ordinary school. The members of the class should not be regarded as "hopelessly lost", but the success of the venture should be measured by the number of children who, having gone through these classes, are able in due course to pass on to regular work.

NAME

Right at the outset I should like to emphasize the absolute need for care in connection with the name given to the proposed venture. I think the name "Mentally Defective" and even "Sub-normal" should not be used. These titles appear to be associated with idiocy, asylums, etc., and, naturally, parents would feel very diffident about sending children to classes bearing such names. Until these classes are properly established, and until parents realise their power for good, there is every danger of antagonising these parents. Once the classes are firmly established and people realise the improvement in the children they will not mind so much the use of such a name as "Special Class for Backward Pupils".

Bevington organized the classes in addition to his work as an Inspector of Schools and was most conscientious in his selection of pupils. He visited the homes of the children to ensure that he saw both parents, he tested the children using the Stanford Binet Test of Intelligence and assessed their performance using tests he had devised himself.

Transport difficulties were also considered. Free tram travel was available to those children who required it. The classes received their first pupils on 1 February 1923 and later in the day Bevington reported to the Minister:¹³

Thirty-one pupils presented themselves this morning. All had been tested and declared suitable. Five selected children did not appear. Some of these may do so during the afternoon or tomorrow morning. Nearly all the pupils were accompanied by mothers, sisters, etc., and a large number of these expressed to the teachers their high appreciation of the Minister's action in establishing the classes and their faith in the success of the scheme. Miss Young has nine boys and ten girls. Miss Huxham has nine boys and three girls. The room is very comfortable and was quite ready when I visited the school at 11 a.m. Work was in full swing. The teachers state that with the exception of a few minor matters, everything is ready to go straight ahead.

In the same report criteria for selection for the classes was given. Of the eighty-eight children selected fifty-five proved suitable. Those children whose I.Q. was less than 55 were rejected as were those with an I.Q. over 90. Children who had very low attainments or those who were already achieving were also rejected. Some children were also rejected because of "bad reputation, want of cleanliness or unfitness generally". A list of the names of the children admitted together with the test results was attached to the memorandum. The ages ranged from six years seven months to twelve years six months and I.Q.s ranged from sixty to eighty-three. What was the perceived homogeneity? The first teachers were Misses Dorothea Huxham and Heather Young who had been to Sydney for a period of observation mostly of Montessori methods at the Blackfriars School.

Bevington refers to them in his 1922 report.¹⁴

Whilst at Blackfriars we met Misses Huxham and Young, two Queensland teachers who were sent to Sydney for the purpose of studying Montessorian methods and the treatment of mentally defective children.

These girls have entered whole-heartedly into their work, and by their tact and enthusiasm have created an excellent impression. They seem to be very popular, and there can be no doubt but that the selection of these girls was a very happy and judicious one.

I think that, as soon as these girls return, others should be sent to Melbourne so that the latest ideas of the other states may also be brought to Queensland.

Miss Huxham was transferred to Coorparoo primary school at the beginning of 1924. She spent just one year as a teacher of the backward class, later moving to Eagle Junction and in 1929 she resigned to marry. Miss Young moved to Brisbane Central in 1926 and she too left the service to marry in 1926. Unfortunately staff cards were missing in the archives of the Education Department as were appointment files. The careers of these foundation teachers had to be traced through appointment, transfer and resignation lists within the Department of Education. Information about their reasons for moving from South Brisbane and their impressions of their pioneering work may never be known. Bevington in his establishment minute wrote, "teachers will need an abundance of sympathy, initiative, perseverance, enthusiasm etc., for the work will be particularly difficult and discouraging" and he went on to state "the two Queensland girls (Missies Young and Huxham) do possess these qualifications".¹⁵

The Executive of the Queensland Teachers' Union wrote to the Under Secretary of the Department after the adoption of a resolution "that special provision be made for the education of the mentally deficient children of the State"

The Union recognises the good work that is being done on behalf of certain mentally retarded children in the

metropolis and urges the Department to extend its activities so as to include the mentally deficient children of the whole state.¹⁶

The reply informed the Secretary of the Union that "inquiries were being made with a view to ascertaining the possibilities of opening classes for mentally retarded children in other centres of the State".

During 1923 the pattern of special class provision at South Brisbane was repeated at Fortitude Valley and New Farm in Brisbane and in the provincial cities of Ipswich, Rockhampton, Townsville and Toowoomba. By the end of the year 240 children were enrolled and thirteen teachers were employed.

During 1924 Miss Kathleen Sheehy became teacher in charge at the South Brisbane Classes. She was to dominate the field for more than three decades. Kathleen Sheehy, according to a former colleague, was also responsible for much of the testing and the field work but Bevington does not acknowledge her contribution in any of his reports.¹⁷

CLASSES FOR BACKWARD BOYS

In 1924 two classes for "defectives" were also opened at Buranda Boys' and Leichhardt Street Boys'. These classes were for boys whom the Minister described in 1922 as "sub-normal in mental power". In his 1928 Report, Bevington expanded on the reasons for boys only:

Only boys are treated in Grade B Schools ("classes"), the difficulty and danger of getting mentally defective girls to and from centres proving a serious obstacle to the establishment of schools for that sex. Then, too, there is not the same incentive for parents of girls. Boys can be taught wood-working, basket-making, boot repairing - something which their fathers cannot teach them; but girls can only be taught cookery, dressmaking etc., and mothers often regard themselves quite capable of teaching these without the risk of sending these girls to school.¹⁸

Some of the boys remained in the classes until they were sixteen years and even older. The reports frequently refer to the need for segregation of the mentally deficient and the lack of success in the teaching program: "they are certainly happy at school, but I am afraid they are not educable and that consequently an Education Department cannot hope for any success with them".

A.J.Nimmo, foundation Principal of Mount Gravatt teachers' College, as a young teacher at Leichhardt Street Boys recalls the Backward Class B in 1926:¹⁹

They were a strange looking lot, many of them older than the primary school children. They used the room near the scholarship teacher who shouted and used the cane a lot and if the backward boys were being a bit difficult the doors between the classes were opened and the observation of the aggressive activity in the scholarship class had a quietening effect.

Bevington reported that this class and the one at Buranda had nineteen boys each and that no children were admitted under eight years while no leaving age had yet been determined:

The boys are much attached to the school and to the teachers and so remain on. Thus the "boys" aged 19, 18:6, 18:4, 17:6, 17:4 years etc. attending. Of the 38 boys, 7 suffer from plumbism, 6 are epileptic cases, 5 are delicate, 4 speak badly, 3 had infantile paralysis, and 2 are defective because of the injuries received. No causes can be assigned for the subnormality of the 11 others.²⁰

The classes at Leichhardt Street and Buranda continued and in one report Bevington restates the eugenicists' theme of segregation and control:

One very sad aspect of this subject is found in the number of pupils who, having reached the age of sixteen years leave the schools. Eight left Leichhardt Street during the year, and now are free to roam about at will. They are not strong enough mentally to obtain positions, yet they will eventually be free to marry and to beget families. The fact that

these mental defectives are permitted to marry must be regarded with great concern by every one who desires to see an uplifting of the masses. The call for the segregation of the worst cases for surgical action is very insistent, but there are some difficulties, and not the least is public opinion.

The Leichhardt Street classes did not reopen in 1933 and in 1933 the class at Buranda also closed. Some of the younger children remaining in the classes moved to other classes.

The opportunity B classes having been established in 1924 continued for a decade without appropriate direction or a suitable curriculum. Reports glossed over the inappropriateness of their management. They are not much more than minding centres.

During the Conference of Directors of Education held in Perth in November 1924 the question of suitable education and training of mentally defective children was discussed. "No State, it was claimed, "is doing all it should do to care suitably for the education and training of the subnormal."

Conference felt that subnormal children judged by expert officers to be non-educable should not be a care upon the Education Department. Rather should they be placed in charge of one of the sub-branches of the Lunacy Department in the absence of any special provision for institutional care.

On 1 July 1926 the "backward classes" became the "opportunity classes" and this change of name and the reasons for it were published in the Education Office Gazette. Head Teachers were instructed to read the dictum to the assembled teaching staff and to "impress upon the teachers the necessity for the avoidance of referring to the opportunity classes in derogatory terms". The notice

was referred to in Bevington's Annual Report as having had a salutary effect and that "teachers had shown themselves to be much more sympathetic and helpful".

When in 1927 the Head Teacher at Wilston requested the establishment of an opportunity class at his school, Bevington advised "schools should look after their own backward pupils, and only extreme cases should be treated in opportunity schools". Wilston, which had an enrolment of 600, would have according to Bevington "only twelve children suitable for opportunity schooling and already some of these are in attendance at Fortitude Valley".

Bevington's records of the classes indicated each year the number of "returns", that is, the number of children who responded to the intensive teaching in the classes and who could return to their school. In 1926 he commented about the decreasing percentage of "returns" and made special provision for these children at South Brisbane, Petrie Terrace and Ipswich. He also listed what he considered the causes of retardation and the numbers of children in each category. Low mentality accounts for the greatest number of children; delicate state of health, lack of concentration, nervous condition and defective speech account for many of the others, but children who have plumbism (lead poisoning), infantile paralysis and epilepsy are also listed. He did not list any children with multiple disabilities.

In his last report before assuming the responsibilities of Chief Inspector, Bevington summarized the work of the classes since they were established:

During the years 1923-33 the number of individual children treated was Ipswich (365), South Brisbane

(341), Petrie Terrace (333), New Farm (126), Toowoomba (143), Rockhampton (174), Fortitude Valley (298), Townsville (58), Buranda (83), Leichhardt Street (74). Of the total (1995) 504 pupils were so much improved that they returned to normal classes in their own schools, 801 made some definite progress.²¹

Each year Bevington made a comment about what he regarded as the "worst cases" and recommended the provision of "an institution to which they could be sent" his last report was no exception:

1. Mental deficient, placed in an Institution are freed from the unfair competition to which they are subjected when forced to compete against persons of normal intelligence. People are not likely to employ deficient if they can obtain individuals of average mentality.
2. Mental deficient when placed in an institution are shut away from temptations which their disabilities make them unable to resist. Thus crime is lessened and tragedy averted.
3. Mental deficient, when segregated, are prevented from marrying, begetting children of like mentality, and bringing into the world those tragedies of society - illegitimate deficient.
4. Many mental deficient, if placed in an Institution, would be trained (especially if taken early) to do useful work.
5. Mental deficient so cared for could be made very happy - games, music etc. - far happier than if left to be the prey of unscrupulous persons in the cities.
6. In a home mental deficient would have medical and dental treatment. Possibly proper treatment might have beneficial effects on them mentally.
7. Mental deficient, if placed in an institution, would cease to be a source of worry and anxiety to parents or guardians.

During his time as organizer of the classes Bevington received support for these ideas. In 1929 Dr E.A. Orchard in an address to opportunity class teachers said that after leaving school "mental defectives drifted away and became vicious, nuisances to themselves and society". He said he was strongly in favour of segregation "on an island, or in some place where their relatives could visit

them. Once segregated they should never be allowed to come back and be a menace to society". At the same meeting after a speech recommending a segregated institution, Dr St Vincent Welch, the Director of School Health successfully moved that:

...this meeting of teachers of the children attending schools for the physically or mentally deficient is of the opinion that the time has arrived when action should be taken towards the establishment of an institution for the care of mentally deficient children and that a deputation wait on the Minister for Public Instruction.²²

The deputation was to include Messrs Bevington and Daly (the Member for Ipswich), Mr Holle of the School for the Blind and Deaf and Dr St Vincent Welch. Efforts to establish such institutions were inhibited by the outbreak of war in 1939. Severely intellectually disabled people were frequently incarcerated in Mental Hospital.

DUTTON PARK OPPORTUNITY SCHOOL AND

KATHLEEN SHEEHY (1892-1981)

Kathleen Eileen Sheehy successfully trained as a pupil teacher at the Gympie Convent of Mercy and entered the Department of Public Instruction as an Assistant Teacher, Class III Division 3 on 9 April 1912.²³ Her career within the Department began two years before the opening of the Queensland Teachers' Training College and two years after the establishment of the University of Queensland.

Kathleen Sheehy's first appointment in the state system was to Blair Athol thence to Gayndah and later to Bowen Bridge Road (now Windsor). In 1916 she was transferred to Woolloowin State School where William Faulkner Bevington was Head Teacher. This was the beginning of a long

personal and professional friendship. When Bevington was appointed Acting Inspector of Schools Sheehy also moved from Woolloowin firstly to Breakfast Creek, thence Petrie Terrace Girls' and Infants' and eventually Leichhardt Street Boys'. For a period during 1923 Miss Sheehy was seconded to Head Office to undertake what was described on her staff card as "clerical duties". According to a former staff member she was busy testing children for admission to the planned "backward" classes.²⁴

It was Miss Sheehy who suggested the name change to "opportunity" in 1926. "Who", she recounted many years later "would want to attend *backward* classes?"²⁵

The enrolment at the South Brisbane Boys' School increased to about one hundred pupils at the end of 1935 and the Dutton Park Girls' and Infants' School was amalgamated with the boys' School leaving a vacant school building. The South Brisbane Opportunity Classes moved into the building and became the Dutton Park Opportunity School with Kathleen Sheehy as Head Teacher.

Bevington as Chief Inspector had other concerns and was removed from direct involvement with the classes. His work with the classes became the responsibility of the District Inspector in whose area the classes happened to be located.

A short time after her appointment to Dutton Park Sheehy successfully applied for the provision of Domestic Science and Manual Arts facilities, her argument being that if the older pupils were in regular schools they would have access to these facilities.²⁶

As the first and only school for "backward children" in the State it attracted quite a lot of attention. In the **TELEGRAPH** of 20 September 1936, Fred Maher wrote an article headed **BACKWARD CHILDREN NOT ALL DUNCES, WORK AND PLAY AT NOVEL SCHOOL** and Clem Lack again in the **TELEGRAPH** on 6 December headed his article **THE OPPORTUNITY SCHOOL, GIVING THE BACKWARD A CHANCE**. Joyce Stirling wrote **BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS TO THE LAND OF OPPORTUNITY** in the **TELEGRAPH** of 30 July 1938 and in the same year on 2 April the **AUSTRALIAN WOMEN'S WEEKLY** featured an article **MAKING LESSONS EASIER, BRISBANE OPPORTUNITY SCHOOL IS A PLACE OF SMILES**. All the articles were illustrated with pictures of well furnished classrooms, children absorbed in interesting activity and always a picture of the photogenic Head Teacher. Well presented school grounds, abundance of teaching aids, pleasing classrooms with stimulating environment were common themes. This was long before the days of janitor-groundsmen and teacher-aids.²⁷

Kathleen Sheehy was an active member of the Association of Opportunity School Teachers and served as Secretary for a time. The meetings held by this Association provided occasions for some inservice training and on occasions Sheehy gave talks on the nature and causes of backwardness and on another occasion spoke about the history of the classes.

The carefully devised recruiting and testing program for admission to the school seems to have been abandoned in the late thirties and the school became a repository for children presenting a wide range of difficulties.

Kathleen Sheehy's appraisalment by various Inspectors of Schools rated her very highly. On many occasions her industry was marked as excellent.

The latter part of her career was troubled and this will be discussed in a later chapter. Kathleen Sheehy retired in 1958. She had taught for forty-six years, thirty-four of these in the area of special education.

INTELLIGENCE TESTING AND THE INIQUITOUS IQ

Kathleen Sheehy at a meeting of teachers in Ipswich in 1929 spoke about the development of opportunity classes in Queensland and outlined the testing procedure for admission to the classes.²⁸ Terman's Revision of the Binet was used until 1928 when the Australian version of the Binet developed by G.E. Phillips of the Sydney Teachers' College replaced it.²⁹ W.F. Bevington assisted by K. Sheehy may be credited with the first extensive use of intelligence tests in Queensland Schools. Did they have a pragmatic regard for intelligence testing as a means of identifying pupils in need of special services? This was Binet's intention in devising the original test. The allocation of a carefully calculated I.Q., a concept not devised by Binet but by Stern (1916) appeared on the lists of children tested for admission to the classes. Other tests of Reading, Mathematics and Spelling were devised by Bevington. If a child were achieving he was not considered suitable for the classes: I.Q. was not the sole criterion for admission.

Intelligence testing declined in the late thirties and forties but was revived in the fifties with the

development of the Research and Guidance Branch and the arrival of Schonell.

The use of Intelligence Tests other than for admission to the opportunity classes does not appear to have been extensive. There were occasions, however, when requests were made for an intelligence test. One letter in the files dated 18 October 1937 written by Miss Sheehy gave details of a test she administered to a boy named Gordon, a patient in the Mater Hospital. She used the Phillip's Australian Revision of the Binet. The boy scored within the normal range and among numerous comments Miss Sheehy concluded:

...Gordon's manner of approach was good. His interest in the box of mental tests was enthusiastic and animated, whilst his response to a little kindness was excellent. He seemed anxious to conquer the work and to please. Though of a shy reserved nature, I think he possesses ability if given correct opportunity. A slight stammer was detected in his speech.³⁰

In submitting lists of children regarded as mentally deficient Dr Eleanor Bourne and her colleagues probably looked at physical features to confirm comments from class teachers.

The Chief Inspector L.D. Edwards wrote in his Annual Report in 1925:

We are learning now, through intelligence tests and other aids, to distinguish between pupils who are backward because of mental defect and those who have suffered on account of lack of opportunity, bad home conditions, late commencement of school, or other intrinsic causes.

The use of group tests and standardized tests of attainments had to wait for the work of the Australian Council for Educational Research which commenced its

activities in 1930 along with the development of Psychology Departments within Universities.³¹

Tight control marked this early provision for the "backward". Bevington's annual review of the children in the classes: sending back to their regular schools those children who had made some progress; replacing them with recently recruited retarded pupils, maintained the size of the classes. An issue yet to be confronted was the number of pupils who made negligible progress and who remained in the classes.

¹ A photograph of the delegates appears in Spaul, A., 1987 **A HISTORY OF THE AUSTRALIAN EDUCATION COUNCIL 1936-1987** Allen & Unwin, Sydney.

² Resolutions Passed at the Conference of Directors of Education, July 1916. Held in History Unit, Department of Education.

³ See Chapter 10.

⁴ Education Office Gazette 1914, pp. 483-484 and Barcan, A., 1980 **A HISTORY OF AUSTRALIAN EDUCATION** O.U.P., Melbourne.

⁵ Rodgers, G.M., 1980, **A Question of Policy: Is Provision of Special Schools for Defectives to be Undertaken by this Department?** **JOURNAL AUSTRALIAN NEW ZEALAND HISTORY OF EDUCATION SOCIETY** Vol.9 No.2. pp. 42-53.

⁶ Swan, G.J., 1988 **William Faulkner Bevington THE EDUCATIONAL HISTORIAN** Vol 1 No. 2. P.3.

⁷ W.F.Bevington, 16 October 1922, Report to the Under Secretary. History Unit, Department of Education.

⁸Information about Lorna Hodgkinson from Mrs T. Pribbernow, Foundation member and first Secretary of the Queensland Subnormal Children's Welfare Association, about 1955. Library Card, Harvard.

⁹Q.P.P. 1923 p.728.

¹⁰Letter 23/1220 Health Various to W.F.Bevington.

¹¹The South Brisbane building is now part of the Brisbane State High School.

¹²Letter 01220 Bundle Backward Classes Q.S.A.

¹³Letter in Bundle 01220 Q.S.A.

¹⁴Bevington 1922 op. cit.

¹⁵Letter 01220 op. cit.

¹⁶Letter 10655 filed under Health Various 1923 Q.S.A.

¹⁷Personal communication December 1944, with Mrs Evelyn Doherty nee George, teacher at the South Brisbane Classes and at Dutton Park Opportunity School.

¹⁸Q.P.P. 1928 p.728.

¹⁹ A.J.Nimmo in a talk to Special Education students about 1983.

²⁰ Q.P.P. 1926, p.797.

²¹ Q.P.P. 1924, p.725.

²²**QUEENSLAND TIMES** 23 November 1929.

²³Q.S.A. Items 15777 and 15773 Pupil Teachers.

²⁴Mrs Doherty op.cit.

²⁵ Discussion with Miss K. Sheehy 1975.

²⁶ibid.

²⁷Newspaper cuttings from Mrs Doherty op.cit.

²⁸**QUEENSLAND TIMES** 23 November 1923.

²⁹ Phillips, G.E., 1924 **Intelligence Tests and the School** **THE AUSTRALIAN TEACHER** April 1924 pp.39-43.

³⁰ Letter No. 51773 Q.S.A. Backward Classes.

³¹ O'Neil, W.M., 1983 **One Hundred Years of Psychology in Australia 1891-1980** **BULLETIN OF THE AUSTRALIAN PSYCHOLOGICAL SOCIETY** December 1983 pp.8-19.

CHAPTER 13

THE DECLINE AND REFORM OF THE OPPORTUNITY

CLASSES

Bevington moved into head office in 1933 as acting Chief Inspector and some months later, his appointment confirmed, spent the last four years of his career as Chief Inspector. Apart from inspecting Dutton Park Opportunity School for the years 1934 - 1937 he was fully occupied with administrative duties and does not appear to have had any other field duties.¹ The inspection and supervision of the other classes was left to the District Inspectors of Schools. Bevington indicated the need to be careful in the selection of teachers for the classes and in his last report outlined again the aim of the classes and in order to achieve these aims he wrote:²

- (1) only teachers of marked efficiency are employed,
- (2) the number of pupils per teacher is reduced to about twenty,
- (3) essential subjects only are taken,
- (4) special methods are employed,
- (5) the needs of the individual children are considered,
- (6) inferiority complex is banished and
- (7) the school atmosphere is made as bright and as full of interest as possible.

Fourteen teachers who had been carefully selected by Bevington worked in the classes at South Brisbane (later to move to Dutton Park), Fortitude Valley, Petrie Terrace, Buranda, Ipswich, Rockhampton and Toowoomba. Four of the teachers who had served at various times in the Ipswich classes were admissions to the State Service but had completed their pupil teacher training at St. Mary's Mercy

Convent in Ipswich.³ For many years only women were employed in opportunity schools apart from two men who taught the classes for backward boys at Buranda and Leichhardt Street until they closed in the thirties. Bevington wrote in 1924⁴

Only a small percentage of our teachers is fitted temperamentally for such work and as only a few out of this section are willing to take up the work, the selection of suitable teachers is by no means easy.

Queensland was not represented at the meeting of the Directors of Education in Perth in 1924, when there was a review of "Special Schools and Classes for the Mentally Atypical" and an agreement that "from one to two of each hundred children in any modern community have mental capacity below that usually regarded as normal". The employment of women teachers appears to have been a national trend and the Directors agreed that

..... past experience with children in special schools had clearly demonstrated that the employment of men could not be justified on educational grounds, as even in the most favourable circumstances the educational results of work with subnormal children have been small. Brilliant educational ability can be more profitably employed by the State in teaching the normal or supernormal. Sympathetic motherly women with experience in Montessori Methods were considered ideally suitable for work with mental defectives.⁵

In Queensland very few men were to be found teaching in the opportunity classes until the fifties. Bevington's careful selection and nurturing of teachers, his tight control of admissions and discharges completely disappeared upon his retirement. The classes became the depository, or perhaps the dumping ground, for children rejected from the regular school and staffing in some

schools appears to have been as idiosyncratic as the selection of children.

A teacher (later a Principal of a special school) wrote in evocative terms his early encounter with the Opportunity Class in Rockhampton.⁶ His reflection also says something about Queensland education in the forties:

....the most striking thing about Central Boys in 1940 was.....the Opportunity School. A squat, ugly, low set wooden building surrounded by a high wire fence, set directly behind the flag pole, it dominated the parade ground.

It was presided over by a large lady called Miss Evans. The inhabitants - all male - were rather like the building - and the most appalling thing was that they were all able to knit.

Every morning we faced each other - we on our side of the flag pole in rigid lines, hands outstretched for finger nail inspection. They sat behind their high wire fence, leering and knitting away like a bevy of Madame De Farges at the foot of some tremendous guillotine.

There was never any trouble between the schools - we were terrified of them.

One day Miss Wood gave me a note to take to Miss Evans.

So appalled at the prospect of entering her domain, I ran away - note and all - and was located hiding in the cotton patch in the far corner of the playground. (These were wartime days - and the cotton was supposedly cultivated to help the Red Cross, but in fact we rolled it up in pieces of lavatory paper and smoked it.)

When my father was informed of this unseemly conduct - the running away I mean - I got short shrift. He advised me, in no uncertain terms, that if I didn't soon get my act together, I'd not only be taking notes "down there" but would be staying there as well - where at least I might learn to knit!

The next exam, I came top of the class, and never left it.

My rehabilitation was complete.

I wonder if some attitudes to Special Schools have changed all that much!

THE DEVELOPMENT OF GUIDANCE SERVICES AND THE APPOINTMENT OF A PSYCHOLOGIST

With the pioneering use of intelligence tests by Bevington the Director of Education was prompted to state in his report for 1924:

The tests have value, however, in establishing on a scientific basis those opinions which have been more or less vaguely formulated; and the tests may be used by teachers as a means of self criticism, and, occasionally, of self defence. Teachers must remember, however, that mere fact of intelligence does not release them from their obligations. Such intelligence may limit their work, but a teacher's duty is to make the most of the intelligence with which the child is endowed.

The Directors of Education when they met in Brisbane in May 1926 recognised that "intelligence tests have a distinct place and value in educational practice, but it also recognises that they are subject to certain limitations". The Directors also regarded "Dr Phillip's book **MENTAL TESTS FOR AUSTRALIAN CHILDREN** as being a valuable contribution".⁷

L. D. Edwards in his 1950 Report repeated his 1924 statement about the need for vocational guidance and the use of tests. He spoke of "many cases in which the students had not chosen their occupations wisely" which had occurred in the late twenties and could have been avoided if appropriate tests had been used. The Director outlined an intensive experiment (undertaken by E.G.D. Ringrose and G. Roscoe of the Teachers' Training College)⁸ in 1932 when parents and pupils of four large metropolitan schools completed questionnaires and tests of intelligence, and mechanical and clerical aptitude tests were administered. The experiment was not repeated.

The 1941 Annual Report announced the appointment of a psychologist:

The Department has long felt the need of a trained psychologist whose services would be available to advise parents in regard to the education of their children. Mr J. J. Pratt, B.A., B.Ed., a teacher in the service of this Department, was attached for two years to the Australian Council for Educational Research, Melbourne. While there he undertook a course that included research into questions of educational guidance and tests of vocational fitness. After a brilliant course of study and research, Mr. Pratt was appointed "Educational Guidance Officer."

The duties of his position will be: to advise teachers on the application of mental tests; to correlate the results of mental tests, school records, and external examinations; to survey the occupations open to boys and girls and advise them on the school course most suited to their abilities and aptitudes; and to conduct such other inquiries and investigations as may be required and for which his special abilities will be useful.⁹

Joseph James Pratt (born 1914)¹⁰, son of a Methodist minister, attended the Queensland Teachers' Training College as a Junior Teacher Scholar in the years 1931-32. During his second year at the College he completed requirements for matriculation to the University of Queensland and while teaching at Buranda Boys', Leichhardt Street (later Central Practising School, now Brisbane Central) and the Innisfail Rural School he successfully completed as a part-time and finally as an external student the requirements for a B.A. degree. In 1939 he was seconded to the Australian Council for Educational Research. During his secondment the Council was "very favourably impressed by his capacity and his attitude towards his work", and "(could not) speak too highly of the willingness and interest shown in his work". He also graduated B.Ed. from the University of Melbourne.

Upon return to Queensland in 1941 Pratt took up his position of Educational Guidance Officer, twenty-eight years after Cyril Burt, "the first educational psychologist in the world" arrived at the Education Office of the London County Council.

In anticipation of the psychologist's appointment **THE EDUCATION OFFICE GAZETTE** of September 1940 contained a notice:

BACKWARD CHILDREN

Particulars Required

Head Teachers are requested to attach to the monthly return for September lists of children who, in the opinion of the Head Teacher, are incapable of adapting themselves to the normal environment of their fellows in such a way as to maintain existence independently of care, treatment, or control.

Particulars given in the lists should include the name, the age, and the grade of each child.

The lists were filed and now rest in the Archives little action having been taken. Some children were admitted to the opportunity classes and Pratt visited the Dutton Park, Fortitude Valley and Petrie Terrace classes to review their placement.¹¹ One wonders how the other children named in the lists survived with the limited intervention of the newly appointed psychologist.....

Pratt's major task for 1941 was planning a comprehensive guidance scheme for secondary school students:

Teachers in more than fifty large schools were appointed guidance officers to provide educational and occupational information to children leaving school and to supervise the compilation of record cards. Record cards were printed for use in sixth and seventh grades and test supplies were obtained.¹²

Pratt was so absorbed in this task that he had little time for the backward. He paid an incidental visit to the

Dutton Park Opportunity School on 28 November 1941 but the Head Teacher, Miss Sheehy, was "absent on sick leave". He did not write a report. By this time World War II was well under way and Pratt was probably considering his future. In 1942 he enlisted and served in the Australian Army until 1946, when upon discharge he left Queensland to take up a Senior Lectureship at the University of Melbourne. He joined the Commonwealth Office of Education in 1949 and in 1966 became the Foundation Head and Professor of the Faculty of Education at the University of New South Wales. From 1971 until his retirement in 1976 Pratt served as Chairman of the New South Wales Board of Advanced Education.

World War II seriously disrupted all education activities during the forties. The depression decade leading up to the World War II (1939-1945) and the actual war years saw the maintenance and extension of school buildings at a standstill. Classes were large and classrooms were crowded. During the war and for some years following teachers were kept on beyond the compulsory retiring age of sixty-five. The number of women teachers far exceeded the number of men teachers except of course in positions of responsibility and authority where the men still dominated.

One of the post war initiatives by the Department of Education was to establish in 1948 a Research and Guidance Branch and to appoint William Wood the Principal Officer. Wood was born in Paisley, Scotland in 1910 and migrated to Queensland with his parents during World War I. After completing the Senior Public Examination at the Brisbane

Grammar School he attended the Teachers' Training College during 1929, taught for two years at Buranda Boys' School (where he would have observed the Opportunity B Class) and as an evening student graduated B.A. in 1932 (later M.A.). He was seconded to the Australian Council for Educational Research in Melbourne for the years 1932-33 where he completed a B.Ed. at the University of Melbourne; he returned to Queensland to teach at the Central Practising School from 1934 to 1940 (where he would have observed the other Opportunity B Class); promotion to Head Teacher took him to Amamoor State School in the Mary Valley and from Aloomba State School in North Queensland his last transfer he enlisted in the R.A.A.F. serving from 1942 to 1946. Upon discharge he was made responsible for the planning, organizing and directing of refresher courses for ex-servicemen before becoming the Principal of the Education Department's Research and Guidance Branch. From 1958 to 1970 Wood was the State's first Director of Special Education Services and in 1970 was appointed Chairman of the Board of Advanced Education, a position he held until his retirement in 1975.¹³

THE NEED FOR A MORE ADEQUATE PROVISION

The Director General of Education, L. D. Edwards, retired at the end of 1951 and was succeeded by Herbert George Watkin (1898-1967) who concentrated on the expansion and development of secondary education, paying scant attention to primary education, and unfortunately even less to special education. In these areas his administration was a "triumph for mediocrity" as predicted by his

predecessor. Many teachers of the time would agree with Goodman who in 1968 wrote of L.D.Edwards:

...he had a long association as a teacher in the Department, dating back to 1899. He was unique among Directors in that he had taken his B.A. with first class honours in philosophy, later an M.A., and for a time he held an academic appointment at the University of Queensland. (*Acting Professor of Philosophy*) Cultured, charming, intellectual, 'Lew' Edwards was probably the most gifted of the state's top educational administrators since Lilley and Griffith. But no matter how brilliant and far-seeing he might be in education, he could only direct to the extent that Parliament, through the Minister of Public Instruction, would permit. Unfortunately for Edwards and for Queensland, he suffered his fourteen years as Director (1937-1951) under seven Labor Ministers, most of the time under the incompetent H.A.Bruce. His best advice was seldom taken and his plans never left the ground.¹⁴

Watkin who lacked imagination and vision fared much better than Edwards when it came to Ministers. The forces for change swept him along with a growing public interest in education. Watkin was made an honorary Doctor of Laws by the University of Queensland and also received a knighthood. Wood, despite the lack of encouragement from Watkin, set about the reorganization of the opportunity classes in a methodical way. He had been a brilliant student but his brusque manner and his abstemious administrative style frequently disturbed people who worked with him.

He saw his immediate task as reviewing the pupils in the remaining classes at Dutton Park, Fortitude Valley, Petrie Terrace, Sandgate, Ipswich, Rockhampton and Toowoomba. The total enrolment in 1951 was 250 children and they were taught by twelve teachers: eleven female and one male who taught manual arts at Dutton Park. The number of pupils enrolled and the number of teachers employed were far

fewer than for most years during Bevington's era 1923-1934. Wood did not formally review the teachers but he commented on the accommodation. Three of the classes, namely Sandgate, Petrie Terrace and Toowoomba (closed on 20 August 1951), functioned in rooms under the main school building and were physically and emotionally isolated as Bell graphically described in the case of the Rockhampton Class. From Wood's point of view "it (the Rockhampton class) is largely composed of children suffering from severe forms of mental, physical and psychological disabilities. It is well-nigh impossible for a class of this nature to be an integral part of a normal school" He classified the nineteen children in the class as educable feeble-minded (6), partially deaf (2), crippled (3), maladjusted (1) and ineducable (7).

A perusal of the staff cards reveals that nine of the teachers had trained as pupil teachers and had been selected for the work by Bevington. Six of the teachers were over sixty.

The buildings housing the classes were sub-standard, even by Queensland standards of the fifties. The Fortitude Valley classes occupied the abandoned Infants' School, across the railway line from the main school; the Ipswich classes were held in the main section of the Central Boys' School with a most unsympathetic Head Teacher (a new building was later provided in 1955 along with a change in Head Teacher).

THE PUPILS 1950

Educable		
Dull and Backward (70-85 IQ)	42	18%
Educable feeble-minded (50-70 IQ)	68	28%
Partially deaf	18	7%
Crippled	10	4%
Maladjusted	33	14%
Total Educable	171	71%
Ineducable		
Mongols	30	12%
Others	40	17%
Total Ineducable	70	29%

Wood defined the terms "educable" and "ineducable". He regarded the "educable" as comprising children who, whatever the nature of their handicap, "have sufficient intellectual ability to benefit from formal education, though to a lower standard than in the case of normal children".¹⁵ Ineducable children were those "whose innate intellectual ability is so poor that they will never benefit from formal schooling" In mental testing terms the ineducable would not attain a "Binet mental age greater than six" and in I.Q. terms "55 or 50 would be regarded as the upper limit." Some years later Schonell *et. al.* (1959), in reviewing the work of the Queensland Subnormal Children's Welfare Association, used similar definitions:¹⁶

Subnormal children are those whose intellectual development is so seriously retarded as to render them incapable of profiting from instruction given in an ordinary school or in a special or opportunity class.

The children were further divided into two groups: "those whose intelligence quotients lie between 35 and 60 and whose social development renders them capable of training

in an Occupation Centre" and "those with intelligence quotients below 35who are better placed in an institution for care and protection."¹⁷

In his report Wood separated the country children from the metropolitan: there were seventy-one children in the country classes and 170 children in the metropolitan classes.

The results of this survey indicate clearly the diversity of handicaps represented among pupils in the Opportunity Schools. In intelligence the range extends from average to low grade ineducable. On the physical side, there are children of normal development, the partially deaf, the spastics, the crippled, the delicate and a few cases of rather gross deformities. Add to these the maladjusted children and the fact that there are both boys and girls ranging in age from five to fifteen years, and the degree of heterogeneity is very evident.¹⁸

Wood saw that the lack of a clearly defined admissions policy created difficulties for the classes. "The admission of mongols and other ineducable children and of children with gross physical defects has produced serious misconceptions as to the real nature and purpose of opportunity schools."¹⁹ The misconceptions held by teachers and parents were thought to be the reason why there was resistance to enrol children "who are genuinely in need of and are able to benefit from the special individual instruction available."²⁰

THE INEDUCABLE CHILDREN

In another report **AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE CARE AND TREATMENT OF INEDUCABLE CHILDREN IN QUEENSLAND** Wood points out that the term "ineducable" may have contributed to the belief:

unfortunately not uncommon amongst professional men...

that nothing worthwhile can be done for these children. Certainly they cannot be taught or trained to become independent, self-supporting citizens, but they can be trained effectively in habits of self-care, cleanliness, protection from danger; they can be taught rudimentary vocational skills. In short, with adequate training these children become more socially effective and less dependent.²¹

The report clearly states that the classification of children as ineducable should not be made upon rigid classification of Intelligence Quotient; that qualitative rather than quantitative interpretations of mental examination results should be used and that "cultural background, social development, speech deficiencies, physical abnormalities and emotional conflict must be considered in the total clinical evaluation."²²

Wood gives the figures of registered ineducable children up until the end of 1952. These data were collected by the Research and Guidance Branch and the Health Department's Psychiatric Clinic. "There were 217 ineducable children living at home in Brisbane, thirty-seven in Brisbane Mental Hospital and ninety-six in the country making a total of 350."²³

In the absence of any exhaustive state wide survey the report estimated, extrapolating incidence figures from the United Kingdom and the United States, that there would be about 720 children in Queensland for whom "there are no occupation centres, special schools or classes or any training institutions specifically for the trainable ineducable group."²⁴

Under the **BACKWARD PERSONS ACT 1938** a backward person is defined as

Any person other than a mentally sick person as defined in 'The Mental Hygiene Act of 1938', the development of whose mind has been arrested or is

incomplete, whether such arrested or incomplete state was innate or induced after birth by disease, injury or any other cause, and who on account of such arrested or incomplete development is incapable of adapting himself to the normal environment of his fellows in such a way as to maintain existence independent of care, treatment or control.

The report points out quite unequivocally that under the Backward Persons Act 1938 the Director-General of Health and Medical Services had the responsibility for the direction and supervision of every backward person and that:

Departmental responsibility for the establishment of centres for ineducable children, for their direction, supervision, staffing and training of staff rests with the Department of Health and Home Affairs.

This section in the Report, underlined for emphasis, made the Education Department's position quite clear and in view of the inertia of the Health Department it was left to parents to make some provision, for on 1 April 1954 (the choice of date suggests a bureaucratic, satanic sense of humour), all those ineducable children currently enrolled in Opportunity Schools or Classes were excluded.²⁵ In 1975 Directors of Special Education in Australia discontinued the use of the word "ineducable" but Wood as late as 1979 still regarded his actions and opinions about the "ineducable" as appropriate and continued with the idea that the Education Department had no responsibility for children regarded as "ineducable".²⁶

In preparing the Reports Wood was assisted by Edna Rodwell, an English educational psychologist on working holiday in Australia. He said of her many years later "I did not acknowledge her as I should have" ... "she made a major contribution in the fifties of raising our

opportunity schools to the status they enjoyed in the sixties - the best in Australia."²⁷

VIEWS FROM THE OUTSIDE

During 1951 Ralph Winterbourn (b.1909) Senior Lecturer in Education at the Canterbury University College (later Professor of Education at the University of Auckland 1954-1975 and founder of the psychological services for the New Zealand Education Department during a secondment 1943-1949) visited Australia from between May and September 1951 to review Guidance and Related Services in Australian Education.²⁸ He prepared a report for the Australian Council for Educational Research and about Queensland he wrote:

New Zealand educators have always heard, rightly or wrongly, that the Queensland education system is the least advanced in Australia. I was, therefore, agreeably surprised to find a vigorous and original guidance service. The Principal Research and Guidance Officer (*Wood*) is to be congratulated on having achieved so much during the three years since the establishment of the Branch.²⁹

Winterbourn visited Dutton Park Opportunity School and the Classes at Fortitude Valley and came to the conclusion that the facilities for the intellectually handicapped "were the worst in Australia!" He considered the wide range of defect within the schools and classes and the academic bias of the curriculum "worse than in the other states"

Among other things observed were classrooms of formally arranged desks, emphasis on the three R's, the use of outmoded reading books, arithmetic taken to long division, and money sums involving pounds shilling and pence and half-pence, with children of low I.Q. The Research and Guidance Branch should surely have the supervision of these schools and classes as well as being responsible for selecting the pupils.³⁰

Winterbourn thought the emphasis on formal attainments was due partly to the supervision of the ordinary inspectorate, "noted for the weight it attaches to the tool subjects". Regarding the inadequate provision for the children in the "under 50 I.Q. group" and the fact that the Health Department was not interested in them, Winterbourn asks "should the Education Department enter the occupation centre field, that is, reinstate the Opportunity Classes in a revised and modern form?"³¹

Winterbourn's comments would have been very reassuring for Wood as were the comments from a later visitor, this time from the United Kingdom, James Lumsden, H.M.I. for Special Education. Lumsden visited Queensland from 14 to 20 May 1954 as part of a national tour to advise State Governments on the education of the handicapped. The Director-General's Report to Parliament gave Lumsden's visit some space as well as an opportunity for the writer of the Report (possibly Wood and not Watkin the Director General) to indicate the difficulties of the reform process:³²

The complexity of the problems presented by the different forms in which the children are so handicapped cannot be lightly and quickly solved. Seeking guidance in this field the various State Governments and the Commonwealth in collaboration sought the advice of an expert. Mr Lumsden was recommended to them. His work in Great Britain was applied directly to the problem of the handicapped child. His authority was such that no activity in that connection could be undertaken unless it was approved by him and carried out under his supervision.

James Lumsden (1903-1983) graduated M.A. from the University of Edinburgh with honours in English Language and Literature in 1926 and two years later graduated M.Ed.

with honours. He taught for several years before becoming a lecturer at Moray House, Edinburgh. He was appointed to the Inspectorate in 1931 and retired in 1968 to become a Senior Lecturer in Education (Physically Handicapped Children) at the Institute of Education, University of London.³³

Lumsden did not write a formal report about his observations but made comments on material presented to him for perusal. Of Wood's two Reports he said, "In no Australian State have I seen a Report as comprehensive and able as these." He went on to point out that "where there is a lack of continuity of supervision of special classes and poorly defined admission policy most of the classes will fail to survive."

This is not only a warning to the administration of the consequences of half-hearted proposals, but is a serious handicap in making a new start, for remembrances of the failings of former attempts are apt to survive appreciation of what was then done or what might be done.³⁴

Lumsden also visited the Opportunity School at Dutton Park and the Classes in Ipswich. He did not report about these but in his personal diary he made some pertinent comments. Lumsden's widow sent this diary of his Australian visit to his former colleague and friend Professor Emeritus Simon Haskell, at Deakin University. The diary's unguarded, unequivocal comments about the places he visited, the people he met and the hospitality he "endured" are not all relevant to this discussion but some are:

Monday 17 May Dutton Park. Miss Sheehy makes out that nearly all the time is spent on reading and arithmetic since she wants you to believe the purpose of her school is remedial and that it is to make over normal. But it is far better than she makes out. Awful massed singing at a dictatorial assembly. Benevolent

despotism but clearly despotic. She hauls them out and pushes them back and interrupts them (and me!).
..boy in top class doing reduction of shilling and pence but can't add coins to one shilling and five pence halfpenny. Self delusion of teachers.....it's sad to see so nice a place, and so keen teachers, with such nicely mannered children working on useless skills without any understanding due to the immense prestige of the written work.

Of the Ipswich Classes he was more favourably impressed; he mentions the unsympathetic Head but describes the teachers of the classes "as two good women". The classes he said had an "excellent atmosphere" although there were "lots of children with bare feet - not from poverty but for coolness".

Ipswich has a population of about forty thousand (a coal mining place but no smoke at all) say seven thousand children. So this is not enough provision. There is some self delusion about written work but less than elsewhere.....very few of the 10 - 14 group can't read fairly well and some migrants are quite formally intelligent and will go to ordinary schools.

Lumsden mentioned his visit to meet the Premier (V.C.Gair 1902-1975), who spent forty-five minutes with him and mentioned his desire to have a boarding school for the mildly intellectually handicapped. This topic was mentioned in Hansard and a site reserved for the purpose at Yeronga,³⁵ now the location of the Yeronga T.A.F.E. College. The intention to provide such a residential facility, however, never progressed. Lumsden spent Saturday 15 May with H.G.Watkin and Mrs Watkin travelling through Ipswich to Toowoomba and his diary entry for that day concludes:

He (Watkin) is sensible enough but doesn't know much. Very oppressed by political and financial cares. Nothing gets done about the backward.

Two months prior to Lumsden's visit to Dutton Park the District Inspector of Schools, A. V. Hendy visited the school. According to his report, written under headings designed for Primary Schools and based on observation strictly limited to Queensland Primary School experience, Hendy saw the morning assembly and the role of the Head Teacher somewhat differently from Lumsden:

Pupils are prompt on parade and the Flag is honoured daily. There is a suitable morning ceremony in which the singing of appropriate songs form part. The children are well behaved, obedient and anxious to please; they are receiving splendid training in courtesy and in social co-operation. Government is kindly and encouraging; the pupils are being trained by precept and example to be honourable and self-reliant citizens. The children are proud of their school and much is being done in the way of character building.

Hendy reported and applauded the formal nature of instruction for some pupils' "(such) that they may qualify as an apprentice or may be granted a certificate as a Grade VII pupil". He noticed the wide range of pupil ability and disability and wrote under the heading

General Condition:

Many of the pupils suffer from some physical disability - weakness of eyesight, poor hearing, some chronic infirmity such as asthma or bronchitis, tardiness or inability in speech. There are also children who are dull or even veer towards "mentally deficient" Here too are "problem" children whose behaviour has been anti-social and some of these come from "broken" or "unhappy homes.".....the process of rehabilitating them and restoring by stimulative and keen teaching these children to their former classes is almost an impossible one.

THE REFORM

In his Reports Wood set the climate for reform and from the beginning of 1954 he was able to implement many

reforms, especially those relating to the type of student to be admitted and the admission procedures. Opportunity classes in the future would cater only for the mildly intellectually handicapped and all admissions to the classes would have to be approved by Wood, the Principal Research and Guidance Officer. Children regarded as suitable for admission were to be given an intelligence test, usually the Stanford Binet or the Weschler Intelligence Scale for Children (both tests adapted for Australian use by the Australian Council for Educational Research) as well as attainment tests in Reading, Spelling and Mathematics. The test results were to be used in conjunction with the school report. Only those children who were eight years of age or older were to be admitted because, as Wood often remarked, the child should have an opportunity to succeed or fail in a regular school. The Director-General of Health and Medical Services would be expected to accept responsibility for the so-called "ineducable" children under the provisions of the **BACKWARD PERSONS ACT 1938**. The appointment of teachers, curricula and inspection were also considered. Teachers wherever possible were to be trained and for this purpose a limited number of teachers, usually three or four, were to be seconded on full pay to undertake the ten week certificate course in Diagnostic Testing and Remedial Teaching established in 1953 by Professor Fred Schonell at the University of Queensland. Some attempt was to be made to devise a special curriculum for the pupils in opportunity schools or classes; home science for the girls and manual arts for the boys would be provided and

Inspection of the classes would be undertaken by "one conversant with the needs of handicapped children and in a position to advise teachers on the problems that (arose) in their work". It was recommended that this task be undertaken by the Principal Research and Guidance Officer, who, however, never attempted this. It was not until 1972 that an Inspector of Schools (Special Education) was appointed.

In the 1952 report Ipswich and Toowoomba surveys were mentioned. In Ipswich 212 children were tested and in Toowoomba eighty-one.

....teachers presented for psychological examination pupils who in school performance were markedly below the normal for their age, and provided individual reports on them. Following psychological examination a selection of children, whose condition suggested the need for interviews with parents, was made and the parents interviewed.

The work was not limited to fact finding. The opportunity was taken to provide guidance to parents and teachers. Where necessary, children were referred for further examination to the School Medical Services, the Commonwealth Acoustic Laboratory and the Psychiatric Clinic.³⁶

To ensure that teachers presented only suitable cases for consideration guidelines were provided:

- a) over age for grade by two or more years;
- b) markedly backward in one or more of the fundamental subjects;
- c) slow learners;
- d) suffering from a marked speech defect;
- e) exhibiting extreme states of nervousness and anxiety;
- f) presenting marked behaviour problems;

Teachers were required to prepare individual reports on each child making assessments of attainments in reading, writing, spelling, written composition, arithmetic and

other relevant information about behaviour and general health.³⁷

The practice of conducting district surveys continued for most of the fifties and sixties. Groups of Guidance Officers would visit a town after names had been submitted by Head Teachers and School Health personnel. Children selected for opportunity schooling were then placed on waiting lists until new facilities were available or a vacancy occurred in an existing school - where enrolment numbers were strictly controlled.

William Wood emerges in the fifties as a decisive figure in the administration of special education; he was to remain in this position of pilot for the next twenty years. Within and outside the Department of Education Wood was seen as one who could make hard and harsh decisions. His reorganization of the opportunity classes prompted other activities particularly the development of voluntary organizations.

The education revolution of the fifties had already begun with further impetus given by another figure, Professor Fred Schonell, whose impact on special education and indeed on education generally was considerable.

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- ¹ Staff Card, Kathleen Sheehy, History Unit, Department of Education.
- ² Q.P.P. 1935 p.860-861.
- ³ Misses Agnes, Elsie and Madge McKenna and Miss A. Mulcare. The McKenna sisters later moved to Infants' Schools where they were most successful. Miss Mulcare resigned to marry was readmitted to teaching and continued to teach in special education until her retirement. Information from Mrs A. Walker c. 1984.
- ⁴ Q.P.P. Bevington's Report.
- ⁵ Report of the Conference of Directors of Education, Perth, November 1924. p 12-13.
- ⁶ Geoffrey Bell (born 1931) Retired as Principal Gold Coast Special School 1991. Personal Communication 1988.
- ⁷ Report of Conference of Directors of Education, Brisbane, May 1926. p.20.
- ⁸ J.J.Pratt, personal communication September, 1996.
- ⁹ Q.P.P. 1941 p.557.
- ¹⁰ Staff Card J.J.Pratt, History Unit, Department of Education, Queensland. **WHO'S WHO IN AUSTRALIA 1951**
- ¹¹ Pratt personal communication.
- ¹² Annual Report to the Minister for Education 1948 p.29.
- ¹³ **WHO'S WHO IN AUSTRALIA 1971** and History Unit, Queensland Education Department.
- ¹⁴ Goodman, R., 1968 **SECONDARY EDUCATION IN QUEENSLAND 1860-1960** Australian National University Press, Canberra. p.340.
- ¹⁵ **THE EDUCATION OF MENTALLY HANDICAPPED CHILDREN IN QUEENSLAND 1952** Research & Guidance Branch, Department of Public Instruction, Queensland.
- ¹⁶ Schonell, F.J., Meddleton, I.G., Watts, B.H., Rorke, M.J., 1959 **THE EFFECTS OF A SUBNORMAL CHILD ON THE FAMILY UNIT** University of Queensland Papers Volume 1 No. 2. University of Queensland Press.
- ¹⁷ *ibid.* p.4.
- ¹⁸ **THE EDUCATION OF MENTALLY HANDICAPPED CHILDREN IN QUEENSLAND 1952** Research & Guidance Branch, Department of Public Instruction, Queensland p.11.
- ¹⁹ *ibid.* p.15.
- ²⁰ *ibid.* p.12.

²¹ **AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE CARE AND TREATMENT OF INEDUCABLE CHILDREN IN QUEENSLAND** 1953 Department of Public Instruction, Queensland. p.4.

²² *ibid.* p.1.

²³ *ibid.* p.3.

²⁴ *ibid.* p.3.

²⁵ Information from Jules Moxom, parent about 1956.

²⁶ Personal Communication with Wood at Currimbin 17 July 1979.

²⁷ Wood personal communication 24 March 1987.

²⁸ **WHO'S WHO IN NEW ZEALAND**

²⁹ Winterbourn, R., 1951 **GUIDANCE AND RELATED SERVICES IN AUSTRALIAN EDUCATION** A.C.E.R. Melbourne (This report is essentially a private document with strictly limited distribution) p.19.

³⁰ *ibid.* p.22.

³¹ *ibid.* p.22.

³² Q.P.P. Director General's Report 1954.

³³ Personal Communication, Mrs Mary Lumsden 21 January 1986.

³⁴ Typescript attached to 1951 Report, History Unit, Department of Education.

³⁵ Q.P.D. Hansard

³⁶ **THE EDUCATION OF MENTALLY HANDICAPPED CHILDREN IN QUEENSLAND** *op. cit.* p.2.

³⁷ *ibid.* p.17.

CHAPTER 14

THE EDUCATIONAL REVOLUTION OF THE FIFTIES AND THE INFLUENCE OF FRED SCHONELL (1900-1969) AND ELEANOR SCHONELL (1902-1960)

Teachers in the country began the fifties with another person in the bureaucratic chain - the Regional Director. Regional Offices of Education had been opened in Rockhampton, Townsville, Roma and Hughenden to service the new regions, unimaginatively, but geographically correctly named Central, Northern, South-Western and North-Western.¹ The innovation was not so much a concern about administrative decentralization as an attempt rather to stave off the propaganda of the "new-staters", matching the regionalization of other services such as electricity supply, public works and housing, generally shoring up Labor support in rural areas. By far the largest area, South East Queensland continued for many years to be administered from Brisbane. It was during the 1948 election campaign that the regional proposals were publicly announced in Mt Isa but the decision to decentralize the Public Service had been made on 12 June 1947 by the Executive Council.² The Queensland Teachers' Union in a Teachers' Journal editorial commented:

The important point for us as teachers is that decentralization is being forced on education for reasons that are extra-educational. Teachers are apt to consider that changes in education are made for educational reasons. As a matter of fact, changes in education.....are seldom caused by purely educational reasons.³

Most teachers, after years of control from the Education Office in Brisbane, were slow to respond to the change and the Regional Offices continued to refer all but trivial matters to the Head Office for decision. Staffing and promotion were controlled from Brisbane and the Inspectors, the Director General's representatives in the field, continued to work from the capital. Devolution of these functions did not happen for another twenty years. The Director General wrote about the Regions in his report to the Minister in 1949:

It is undoubtedly true that the appointment and activities have relieved the Head Office of some correspondence....

However, increasing evidence is reaching the Department of the advantages that have arisen and can be expected to continue from the decentralization of educational administration. Urgent staff adjustments are effected without reference to a distant Head Office; the Department has an Administrative Officer available for ready reference in case of matters affecting a particular region; and those minor problems which crop up from time to time can be solved expeditiously and, very often on the spot. Parents and teachers feel that they are in much closer touch with educational administration in the State.⁴

Guidance and Special Education Services were controlled by Wood, not from the main Education Office situated in the old Treasury Building (now Jupiters Casino), but from Block A in the Central Technical College Buildings (now part of the Queensland University of Technology) at the lower end of George Street, near Parliament House. This separation and isolation from the main centre of decision making was seen by many teachers as independence and those teachers in special education more often than not saw themselves independently of the mainstream; likewise many mainstream teachers saw Guidance and Special Education as

some kind of extra curricula activity that had nothing to do with them.

Between the census of 1947 and that of 1954 Queensland's total population had grown by nineteen per cent; the school population however increased by thirty-nine per cent (from 163,396 to 227,575), while the number of schools grew a mere 5 per cent (from 1,746 to 1,835). The increase in school population brought about by soaring birth rate (a typical war aftermath) and post war immigration⁵ was first felt in the primary schools where enrolments increased by forty-two per cent between the years 1945 and 1952. Predictions about school enrolments were now prepared by the Research and Guidance Branch making Wood as Principal Officer a key member of any planning committee.

Education was not high on the list of priorities of the Labor Government which had been in power since 1932 and had been returned to power in 1953 with fifty of the seventy-five seats. Political commentators of the period claim that the provision of education was never a major political concern between 1915 and 1957.⁶ The Opposition continued to be weak and ineffective and expressed no concern that Education ranked eleventh in cabinet. Queensland school leaving age remained at fourteen as it had done since 1912, while in other States it had been increased to either fifteen or sixteen. Expenditure on education was the lowest of any Australian State and a scholarship examination at the end of primary school restricted entry to secondary education. During the 1952

Supply Debate, Jim Donald, the Member for Bremer elected to speak about the special education provision:⁷

Of a total of 1,556 schools in Queensland the Department provides nine special schools for the tuition of children in certain circumstances. Some of the children attending them suffer from physical disabilities, in other words are physically handicapped.

The special schools referred to are the Ashgrove Free (Pre?) School Centre, Ipswich Kindergarten, Hamilton Domestic Science School, Children's Hospital, Wilson Ophthalmic School Hostel, Montrose Home for Crippled Children, Opportunity School (Dutton Park) school for the Deaf and the Blind, Willowburn Home for Epileptics, Westbrook Farm Home, Thursday Island School for Coloured Children and No 1 School for New Australians, Wacol.....

Who provided the honourable member with the information he did not say and the inaccuracies went without comment or challenge - as did his tedious discourse on the classification of schools. (Jim Donald may have become better informed when he accepted the position of Patron of the Ipswich Branch of the Queensland Subnormal Children's Welfare Association two years later!) In the same debate, however, the Member for Isis, J.C.A. Pizzey, spoke with considerable passion about the inequities caused by the State Scholarship Examination, the lack of adequate secondary school provision and the low school leaving age. Within the decade the same member was to become the Minister for Education and true to his word did something about redressing these problems. Jack Charles Alexander Pizzey (1911-1968) had been a teacher, adult education organizer and secretary to a Sugar Mill before he became the Country Party member for Isis in 1950. He had completed, as an external student, a B.A., Dip.Ed. from the University of Queensland. Unique amongst members of

Parliament he was able to implement his reform agenda when opportunity offered and change the nature of schooling in Queensland. J.C.A. Pizzey taught with J.J.Pratt and W. Wood in adjoining classrooms at Leichhardt Street.⁸

Changes in the primary school were long overdue: the syllabus prepared during 1928-29 by the then Chief Inspector, L.D.Edwards, was still in use. The Syllabus requirements were misinterpreted by both teachers and Inspectors who seemed to regard syllabus as "prescription". "It was a syllabus born of hope, but built on unreality"⁹ and left to poorly trained teachers who had few opportunities for inservice training, many in small schools, to implement. The syllabus requirements were the basis for the state scholarship examination which led to cramming practices in many schools. In 1938 the syllabus was considerably amended and again in 1947. 1952 actually saw the production of an entirely new syllabus.

The teaching of reading in the fifties also caused teachers some concern. The official purely phonic method was used in the locally produced preparatory readers. The class readers printed in the late twenties and early thirties were now considered inappropriate and outdated but any criticism of them was regarded with hostility and even as disloyal by Departmental authorities. Much of the material in the readers consisted of non-copyright nineteenth century material borrowed from British sources with a limited amount of Australian material. A newspaper article rightly claimed the "Villains were always villainous, heroes heroic and a Good Message came with every volume."

Not only did they (*the readers*) enshrine almost exclusively a set of values seen by many educationalists as irrelevant or inappropriate, but they set a fixed standard, holding the good readers back and setting an impossible task for the poor readers.¹⁰

The class readers were also used for teaching grammar and spelling. The amazing result was that many children did learn to read! Little was done about those who failed.

The books themselves were used and reused and many were in a poor state: reprinting had not been undertaken because of the cost involved.

Most teachers were recruited from the ranks of successful Junior Candidates (Year 10) and most spent a little more than a year at the Teachers' Training College learning "how to and not too much of why".¹¹

Apart from one day seminars, usually organized by the local branches of the Queensland Teachers' Union, there was no inservice training.

In 1952 the Premier, V.C.Gair opened the annual conference of the Queensland Teachers' Union and gave the teachers of Queensland little hope for the future. Also on the platform was Professor Fred Schonell who spoke to the teachers making direct and indirect references to the Queensland Education scene. Large classes, greater than necessary emphasis on the three R's and the rigidity of the curriculum as interpreted by the Inspectors of Schools were concerns already voiced by teachers but now taken up by Schonell, an independent, international authority. Schonell also spoke about the absence of any official policy on education, the failure of the Department to provide refresher courses, the return to one year-teacher

training and the resultant poor morale amongst teachers. "His address was cogently relevant throughout and at times, visionary." ¹²

Schonell spoke again at the Teachers' Union Conference in 1954 and again echoed the concerns of teachers. He, unlike the teachers, was unconstrained by the Public Service Act which could penalize teachers for publicly criticising the employing authority. In his address Schonell paid tribute to the "Herculean labours of the Director General and his officers", the need for inservice training for Inspectors and reminded the conference that Queensland expenditure per head was the lowest in Australia. Grulke, a member of the Conference and later General Secretary of the Union, in his vote of thanks said that Schonell clearly showed the picture as it is and gave a vision of what it might be.¹³

Schonell spoke again at the 1955 Conference and the title "Seven Priorities in Queensland Education" gave teachers a vision for the future: he publicly supported the unanimous decisions of Conference that the Scholarship examination be abolished and that five years of secondary education be implemented.¹⁴

Teachers now regarded Schonell as an important ally.

FRED AND ELEANOR SCHONELL¹⁵

.....there is no question that when Professor Schonell returned to his native Australia in 1950 to occupy the foundation Chair of Education at the University of Queensland, the time for a complete and thorough reappraisal of education in the state was long overdue. As I myself found on coming to Queensland in 1952, the backwardness and parochialism of the state educational system was dismaying. Typifying the situation were exceptionally large primary classes,

mass teaching methods, antiquated Dickensian concepts of discipline, substantial neglect of state secondary provisions, facilities for teacher preparation which were almost incredibly bad, a lack of regard for individual differences in general and in particular an apparent lack of concern for the problems of the mentally, socially and educationally handicapped. In short, the characteristics of the state educational services were cheapness, uniformity and an outmoded view of child nature and development.¹⁶

It was into the political and educational turmoil of the fifties that the Schonells arrived and worked during their first decade in Queensland: Fred Joyce Schonell as Foundation Professor of Education at the University of Queensland and Florence Eleanor Schonell as housewife and mother. Because married women with working husbands were rarely employed in Queensland, Eleanor Schonell's professional expertise was limited to occasional part-time lecturing at the University of Queensland and to acting as honorary psychologist with the Queensland Spastic Welfare League. She also served as a member of the Medical and Educational Panel - the group of professionals who controlled admissions, reviewed progress of the children and planned facilities.

Fred Schonell, son of a teacher, was born in Perth in 1900 and his wife Eleanor, nee Waterman, was born in Durban, South Africa in 1902. They both attended state schools in Western Australia and in due course the Claremont Teacher's College - established in the year Eleanor was born. Graduating as teachers in 1920, they taught in various state schools and studied part-time, both graduating B.A. from the University of Western Australia in 1925. They married the following year.

In 1929 Fred Schonell was awarded the prestigious Hackett Fellowship for study overseas. It seems appropriate that Schonell received a Fellowship endowed by John Winthrop Hackett, intellectual, vigorous education reformer, editor of the **WEST AUSTRALIAN** and first Chancellor of the University of Western Australia.

THE SCHONELLS IN BRITAIN

The Schonells arrived in England in 1929 and for the next twenty years they were to extend their knowledge and experience that would ultimately have great benefits for the children of Queensland. **AN INVESTIGATION INTO DISABILITY IN SPELLING** was the title of Fred Schonell's Ph.D. thesis prepared under the supervision of Cyril Burt, Professor of Education at the University of London. The degree was awarded in 1931. While Fred Schonell was working on his thesis Eleanor Schonell taught in London schools and eventually became a research worker at University College. Upon the successful completion of her husband's thesis Eleanor Schonell commenced work on her M.A. degree also under the supervision of Cyril Burt. Dr. Fred Schonell obtained a lecturing position at Goldsmith's College and continued his study and research into backwardness in the basic subjects. Schonell's work has been seen as a development of Burt's earlier work and the important outcomes of both were convincing demonstration that there were many and varied forms of learning failure and that there was a need for the careful qualitative definition of the differing forms as well as an equally careful quantitative and objective definition of them.¹⁷

The publication of **BACKWARDNESS IN THE BASIC SUBJECTS** in 1942¹⁸ gave teachers a greater awareness of the diversity of learning failure and a practical guide to remedial techniques.

..dullness, backwardness (general or specific; remedial or irremediable) were forms of learning failure distinguished and defined, in sharp contrast to the imprecise use of these and of similar terms that had confused so long the efforts of those seeking provision for children not making normal progress in learning.¹⁹

The Schonells published **DIAGNOSTIC AND ATTAINMENT TESTING** in 1950 thus providing teachers with opportunities for objective testing and evaluation of their work and methods of teaching. Much of the material in the 1950 publication had been published previously and formed the basis of their many lectures to teachers. The Schonells were prodigious writers and lecturers and were in great demand.

In 1941 Fred Schonell was appointed to the Chair of Education at the University College of Swansea and it was while he was there that he was awarded a Doctorate of Letters from the University of London for his published work.

It was at the University of Birmingham, where Schonell had moved as Professor of Education in 1946 that he conceived and implemented the idea of a Remedial Education Centre - the prototype for many in the United Kingdom and especially for the one he established at the University of Queensland some years later. While at Birmingham Schonell founded and edited the **EDUCATIONAL REVIEW**, a journal that acquired in a very short time an international reputation and circulation.

In 1949 Schonell was offered a Chair at the University of London as Head of the Department for Higher Degrees and Educational Psychology. He declined and "for reasons of health, however, and for a yearning to return to his native country," Schonell accepted the newly created Chair at the University of Queensland.

ELEANOR SCHONELL AND CEREBRAL PALSY

Eleanor Schonell's greatest contribution to special education was through her study of spastic children. She used "spastic" as the English did and as Australians imitated instead of the all embracing term "cerebral palsied". Poliomyelitis, an infectious virus disease causing a weakening of the muscles of the trunk, shoulders and hips, was the greatestcrippler of children but with the discovery of a vaccine by Johannes Salk in 1954 it was practically eliminated in all but third world countries. Cerebral palsy replaced poliomyelitis as the greatestcrippler and the increase in the number of children surviving this "nonprogressive disorder of movement or posture due to a malfunction or damage to the brain" was brought about by the improvement in care and management of the suspected damaged newly born.²⁰

When increased numbers of children with cerebral palsy reached school age in the forties education problems as a result of the condition became obvious. Eleanor Schonell wrote in the introduction of the 1956 first edition of her **EDUCATING SPASTIC CHILDREN** ²¹

...until recently only a small proportion of cerebral palsy cases were considered worth spending time on educationally. The general attitude towards cerebral palsied children with severe disabilities, especially those afflicted with athetosis, was that the bulk of

them were mentally defective and would not justify time and energy spent on trying to educate them.

Although Spastic Centres and associated schools had been established in all capital cities in Australia by the early fifties there was very little "first-hand information of an educational and psychological kind for all concerned with the education, upbringing and general welfare of the cerebral palsied."²²

Eleanor Schonell's involvement in the problems associated with the education of the cerebral palsied began when the family moved to Birmingham in 1946 where she was awarded a post graduate research fellowship under Professor J.M.Smellie of the Department of Paediatrics and Child Health within the University of Birmingham. With paediatrician Dr Patria Asher, Eleanor Schonell conducted the first survey of spastic children ever undertaken in the United Kingdom. The survey covered the west midland cities of Birmingham, Stoke, Coventry and Walsall and yielded incidence figures far below those of the United States indicating that further studies were necessary. Eleanor Schonell did all the psychological testing in the survey and in this activity developed skills that she later used extensively in Queensland, as honorary psychologist at the New Farm Spastic Centre and as a visiting lecturer at the University of Queensland.

Dr David Jackson,²³ Honorary Paediatrician and Chairman of the Medical and Educational Panel of the Queensland Spastic Welfare League since its foundation in 1950 until his retirement in 1990, spoke enthusiastically of Eleanor Schonell's "impressive experience and wise counsel" in the

development of Spastic Centres in Australia and particularly to her contribution to the progress of the Queensland Centre.

It is hard to remember when Dr Eleanor Schonell first appeared at the Spastic Centre because in retrospect she seems always to have been there. But certainly she was with us in the very early days around 1950-51somehow I find myself remembering her best in that little crowded room in the original building, when the work was just beginning and her personality and influence entered into the place and all who have worked in it then and since.²⁴

Eleanor Schonell was able to use her experience at the Earl Carlson School for Spastics in Birmingham in assisting the Queensland Spastic Children's Welfare League establish its school and treatment centre at New Farm. The school was named after Dr. Earl Carlson, author of **BORN THAT WAY** in which he wrote about his difficulties and those of his mother in obtaining not only an education but an acceptance of himself as an intelligent human being. He wrote "it was plain to her (*his mother*) that my mind alone could provide an escape from my physical handicaps."²⁵ Eleanor Schonell first met Carlson at Birmingham and many times in the United States and later on the occasion of his visit to Australia in the fifties. The Carlson School was assisted considerably by Paul Cadbury, Quaker and philanthropist and provided a model for other centres in Britain and in Australia.

THE SCHONELLS AND SPECIAL EDUCATION IN QUEENSLAND

The creation of a Chair of Education at the University of Queensland had the strong support of the Honorary Vice Chancellor, John Douglas Story, who had been Under Secretary of the Department of Public Instruction 1904-

1919 and later Chairman of the Public Service Board. L.D.Edwards, the Director General of Education and *ex officio* member of the University Senate was also a strong supporter of the creation of the Chair. It must have been a cause for great satisfaction for Story and Edwards, two great men of Queensland education, when the first incumbent was Fred Schonell. **THE QUEENSLAND TEACHERS JOURNAL** heralded Schonell's appointment in a bibliographic statement that included a photograph, a rare inclusion for the then cash strapped Teachers' Union.²⁶

Fred Schonell arrived in Brisbane during March 1950 and within fifteen months of his arrival he approached the Vice Chancellor, J.D.Story, with a plan to set up a Child Development and Remedial Education Centre. Formal approval for the Centre was given in October 1951 and the first staff of three commenced work on 1 April 1952.²⁷

One of the major activities of the Centre, now established in Old Government House, was the teaching of a Course in Remedial Teaching and Diagnostic Testing during second term. The Course was conducted each year from 1952 until 1973 when sub degree courses were phased out. Teachers from every state in Australia and from overseas attended the Course. In Queensland teachers from the revived opportunity classes and from the State School for Spastic Children attended the Course which covered:

- Techniques of Remedial Teaching
- Psychology of the Basic Subject
- Intelligence and Attainment Testing
- Organization of Projects and Activities for Backward Children.

Part of Wood's reform of the opportunity schools and classes involved seconding three or four teachers each

year on what became known as Schonell's short course. New appointees to the special schools, after some experience in the work were selected for the course and discovered a new and exciting dimension to education. It was a rebirth of their professional life! For some of these teachers, particularly those who were to serve in remote parts of the state, the testing section was of considerable importance. These teachers became responsible for the testing of all applicants for admission to the special schools. The test results, school and interview reports were all sent to the Principal Guidance Officer (Wood) for perusal and approval for admission if within the well defined guidelines.

One teacher, a student on the short course in 1957, spoke of her experience:²⁸

Fred Schonell, the teacher, was an inspiration; his concern and compassion and his expression that "the greatest tragedy of mankind is misadventure of the mind" will remain with me forever. His lectures were always so concise and clear, well illustrated by those children, Billy Bones and Betty Binks, who portrayed whenever required all aspects of atypical development - Professor seemed to love alliteration. Just think of Dick and Dora.

Eleanor Schonell led us very gently into the world of cerebral palsy. Listening to her speak about educating the child with c.p. and then watching her establish rapport and communication with a child with severe athetosis and practically no speech was an inspiring experience.

My experience as an adult student in the short course prompted me to enrol in a degree course. Others have also had this experience. For many teachers the short course was the beginning of a much more satisfying professional life and the beginning of a stimulating academic career.

Teachers in special schools became innovative and endeavoured to break with the rigidity of their previous experience in regular schools. In the area of reading

teachers in special school found new direction in Schonell's **PSYCHOLOGY AND THE TEACHING OF READING**,²⁹ **THE HAPPY VENTURE READERS** and **THE WIDE RANGE READERS** with all the accompanying material: workbooks, playbooks, games, flash cards, film strips and even a song book were used in special schools in the fifties long before they were formally adopted in the sixties as the official reading scheme in regular schools. Schonell devotees agreed with his proud claim that it was "complete with box and dice!"

The Faculty of Education under Schonell offered a Diploma Course in Educational Psychology and a Diploma Course in the Teaching of Physically Handicapped Children was planned but alas, never implemented.

A one year course in the teaching and training of subnormal children, the only one in Australia, commenced in 1956 in conjunction with Bowen House, the school established by the Subnormal Children's Welfare Association.

The success of the journal **THE SLOW LEARNING CHILD** **THE AUSTRALIAN JOURNAL FOR TEACHERS OF BACKWARD AND SUBNORMAL CHILDREN** (with expanded subject matter and increased circulation more appropriately renamed **THE EXCEPTIONAL CHILD** in 1976 and the **INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF DISABILITY, DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION** in 1989) first published in July 1954 exceeded the expectations of the editors Schonell and Richardson. It was thought that the 450 copies printed would more than meet the demand but such was not the case - demonstrating the need by teachers for information about teaching methods and research.

The publication of **THE SUBNORMAL CHILD IN THE HOME**³⁰ a collaborative effort by Schonell, his deputy at the Remedial Education Centre, Richardson and McConnell, Principal of Bowen House, gave considerable help to parents, especially those in the country who had not responded to the almost traditional advice of "putting the subnormal child away."

The Schonells' involvement brought a high level of professionalism to work in the area of special education. Here were two people with international reputations heightened by extensive writing and research who applied their skills to areas previously regarded as not very important. Their membership and leadership in the two major voluntary organizations established in Queensland enhanced the self esteem of the children, parents and teachers within them.

THE SLOW LEARNER : SEGREGATION OR INTEGRATION published in 1963 and edited by Schonell, McLeod and Cochrane marks the beginning in Queensland of the rational debate about the most appropriate school placement of mildly intellectually disabled students.

Schonell was appointed Vice Chancellor of the University of Queensland in 1960 but his interest and involvement in publishing and his work with the Queensland Subnormal Children's Welfare Association continued.

It was at a Senate Meeting of the University of Queensland in 1961 that it was decided to offer a Diploma in Speech Therapy. The two organizations in which the Schonells were involved had considerable difficulty in finding speech therapists. Fred and Eleanor Schonell supported

the advocacy of Mrs Elizabeth Usher (1911-1996), the leader of the very small group of speech therapists in Queensland and eventually the foundation head of the Sub Department at the University of Queensland, convincing the Senate of the need for a local training course. Fred Schonell wanted Speech Therapy to be a Sub Department of Education but in this he lost his case (a rare event!) and Speech Therapy commenced in the Department of Child Health within the faculty of Medicine. The first Diplomates began work in 1965 and in 1965 Speech Therapy became a full Department.³¹

The Remedial Education Centre was most appropriately renamed in 1967 the Fred and Eleanor Schonell Educational Research Centre.

A definitive work on the Schonells is yet to be written and in this dissertation the topic must be restricted to the Schonell activities in the area of special education.

THE AFTERMATH OF REVOLUTION

The fifties mark a change in direction for all aspects of education in Queensland. Fred Schonell, a Messianic figure for some teachers, provided teachers with new confidence in their profession with opportunities for involvement in further studies in innovative courses at the University of Queensland. In their respective roles with voluntary organizations Fred and Eleanor Schonell brought experience and wisdom and helped provide a model for other organizations. Without the Schonells there would have been change but it would not have had the same quality, energy, enthusiasm, vigour and impact.

There was a change of government in 1957 and J.C.A. Pizzey became Minister for Education (with second Cabinet ranking), serving as such until 1968, which made him the longest serving Minister for Education ever in Queensland. Pizzey became Premier for a short time in January 1968 and died in office six months later making way for Bjelke Petersen.

Inservice activities organized by the Education Department to introduce teachers to another way of teaching children to read, became a regular feature. Dick and Dora, Fluff and Nip were now household words as the children of Queensland commenced reading from the Happy Venture Readers.

The school leaving age was raised to fifteen and provision for secondary education was dramatically increased. In 1962 the barrier to secondary education, the State Scholarship examination, was abolished, allowing all children to proceed to secondary school.

The Research and Guidance Branch under the able leadership of Wood collected and processed data and brought authoritative evidence to solve educational problems.

In the area of special education the Research and Guidance Branch shifted the emphasis in administration away from individuals and schools and provided a new direction.

Parents became more vocal and involved in educational matters and in the area of special education parent groups began to demand education for their children.

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- ¹ Logan, G., 1988 **EDUCATION REGIONS IN QUEENSLAND Towards a Philosophy and Practice 1937-1988** Department of Education Queensland.
- ² Wyeth, E.R., No date c1951, **EDUCATION IN QUEENSLAND A.C.E.R.**, Melbourne, p. 203.
- ³ Editorial, **QUEENSLAND TEACHERS JOURNAL** 21 June 1948 p.3.
- ⁴ Director General's Report to the Minister 1949 and quoted by Wyeth op. cit. p.203.
- ⁵ Figures calculated from **QUEENSLAND YEAR BOOK 1984** Published by the Queensland Office of the Australian Bureau of Statistics.
- ⁶ Lawry, J., 1980 Education in Murphy, D.J., Joyce, R.B., & Hughes, C.A. **LABOUR IN POWER AND GOVERNMENTS IN QUEENSLAND 1915-1957** University of Queensland Press, Brisbane. p.355.
- ⁷ Supply Debate, Q.P.D. Volume 202 1951-1952, p. 1270.
- ⁸ J.J.Pratt, Personal communication 5 September 1996.
- ⁹ Quoted by Mary Dan in paper about L.D.Edwards, A.N.Z.H.E.S. Conference, Brisbane, 1984.
- ¹⁰ **THE COURIER MAIL** 20 December 1980. p.17.
- ¹¹ Comment from Anderson, A.M., 1981 **KELVIN GROVE 40 YEARS 1942-1981** Kelvin Grove College of Advanced Education.
- ¹² **QUEENSLAND TEACHERS JOURNAL** Vol. LXIV No. 3 May 1954, p.15.
- ¹³ .ibid.
- ¹⁴ Spaul, A., & Sullivan, M., 1989 **A HISTORY OF THE QUEENSLAND TEACHERS UNION** Allen & Unwin, Sydney. p.225.
- ¹⁵ Much of the information about Fred and Eleanor Schonell is taken from **THE SLOW LEARNING CHILD** Vol. 9. No. 3., March 1963, pp. 129-198, **THE EXCEPTIONAL CHILD** Vol. 29. No. 3., and Vol. 30 No.1 and from being a student in 1956 at the Remedial Education Centre.
- ¹⁶ Richardson, J.A. 1963 in **THE SLOW LEARNING CHILD** Vol. 9 No. 3. March 1963, p.174.
- ¹⁷ **EDUCATIONAL PROVISION IN NEW ZEALAND FOR CHILDREN WITH LEARNING DIFFICULTIES** N.Z.C.E.R., Wellington, N.Z. p.35.
- ¹⁸ Schonell, F.J. 1942 **BACKWARDNESS IN THE BASIC SUBJECTS** Oliver & Boyd, Edinburgh.
- ¹⁹ ibid. p. 35.
- ²⁰ Bleck, E.E., & Nagel, D.A. 1975 **PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED CHILDREN A Medical Atlas for Teachers** Grune & Stratton, New York. p.37.

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- ²¹ Schonell, F.E., 1956 **EDUCATING SPASTIC CHILDREN** Oliver & Boyd, Edinburgh, p.4.
- ²² *ibid.* Preface p.v.
- ²³ Dr. David Jackson, A.M., D.S.C., born 1912, personal communication c,1978.
- ²⁴ Jackson, D.C., **Dr Eleanor and the Spastic Centre THE SLOW LEARNING CHILD** Vol.9 No.3. 1963. p.183.
- ²⁵ Carlson, E., 1941 **BORN THAT WAY** John Day Co., New York. p.20.
- ²⁶ **QUEENSLAND TEACHERS JOURNAL** Vol. LV, No. 3, April 1950, p.16.
- ²⁷ Andrews, R.J., **THE EXCEPTIONAL CHILD** Vol.30, No. 1, p.4.
- ²⁸ J.M.Minnikin, Rockhampton, on the occasion of Sir Fred's Knighthood 1962.
- ²⁹ Schonell, F.J., 1945 **PSYCHOLOGY AND THE TEACHING OF READING** Oliver & Boyd, Edinburgh.
- ³⁰ Schonell, F.J., Richardson, J.A., and McConnell, T.S., 1958 **THE SUBNORMAL CHILD IN THE HOME** MacMillan, Sydney.
- ³¹ Pearn, J., 1986 **FOCUS AND INNOVATION: A HISTORY OF PAEDIATRIC EDUCATION IN QUEENSLAND** Department of Child Health, University of Queensland. p. 623.

CHAPTER 15

THE FIFTIES AND THE SIXTIES REVISITED

THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION BECOMES THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

The change in name in 1957 from "the Department of Public Instruction", a title dating back to the Ancient Greeks, to the "Department of Education", in keeping with trends in other states and in other parts of the world, did not bring with it any change in the Department's attitude to those children branded "ineducable". These children whose intelligence test results failed to rise above the fuzzy line of educability were discarded and left to the voluntary organizations. Any attempt to stir the Department of Health (and the reports prepared by Wood tried to do this) into accepting responsibility under the **1938 BACKWARD PERSONS ACT** had failed. Initially subsidies to the voluntary organizations were paid by the Health Department and it was made clear that subsidies would only be paid to one body, clearly indicating that country centres would have to become Branches of the metropolitan organization. This bureaucratically convenient decision also assisted the development of highly centralized organizations. During the education debate in the State Parliament in 1957 the Member for Merthyr, S.R.Ramsden (later of Multiple Handicapped Association) spoke of his visit to what he considered, and

many would agree with him, "the well functioning Bowen House":¹

....the standard of efficiency this school has attained since it opened in January 1955,.....fully justifies my demand that it be transferred from the patronage of the Department of Health and Home Affairs to that of the Department of Education.

I do ask the Minister for Education and the Minister for Health and Home Affairs, busy as they might be, to join me at a very near date in making a visit to Bowen House to see for themselves the urgency of what I suggest. All I ask, and with justice supporting my argument for the mentally handicapped children of Bowen House, and the subsidiary centres either established or to be established at Ipswich, Toowoomba and Rockhampton, is that they receive the same treatment in regard to their education that the physically handicapped children of the State receive.

No one seems to recall whether Mr Ramsden's invitation was ever accepted but the subsidies to voluntary organizations was, in late sixties, transferred to the Department of Education.

Schools in terms neither of building nor function were defined under the Education Act and those set up by the voluntary organizations in the fifties often were large houses modified for the new purpose - with the installation of additional toilets, ramps to replace stairs and fire escapes to satisfy the local council regulations.

With the change of name in 1957 some restructuring was made to the Education Department. A new Special Education Services Division was established and William Wood, the Principal Research and Guidance Officer, became its Director. Wood now joined the administrative hierarchy along with the Directors of Primary, Secondary and Technical Education. The responsibilities of the Director

of Special Education Services included as one would expect, special schools and classes, but it also included important activities such as data collection, planning and research. In 1965 two separate branches were established: one Guidance and Special Education, and the other Research and Curriculum. The Minister in justifying the changes told Parliament in his Annual Report:

with the rapid development of new teaching methods and materials the Research and Curriculum Branch has an important role to play in the evaluation of teaching media and the communication of the results of research to teachers. There is abroad an air of change and experiment and the proper development of any State system of education depends upon innovation and research tempered by experience, and introduced in such a way as to serve the best needs of a growing State.²

THE DEAF AND THE BLIND

The nominal residential fees for country children compelled to live at the Queensland School for the Deaf and the Blind were discontinued in 1950. The announcement was made by the Hon. V.C.Gair (Chairman of the School Committee and member for South Brisbane in which the school was located) at the Fourth Conference of the Australian Association of Teachers of the Deaf.

With the demise, after a prolonged illness, of Stanley Edward Holle on 3 December 1953, Principal of the Queensland School for the Deaf and Blind, the senior teacher H.B.Gowlett was appointed Acting Principal. Expecting to be made Principal and disappointed at advancing no further, Gowlett resigned in 1956 and the Department of Public Instruction advertised nationally for a successor. The most experienced applicant, Arthur James Lobb (1910-1994), Deputy Superintendent of the New South

Wales Institution for the Deaf and Blind, was appointed Principal. He came to the Queensland school on 13 May 1954 after twenty-eight years at the N.S.W. school where he had trained, like his predecessor, as a pupil teacher. He had satisfied the requirements for the Associate Diploma of the Australian Association of Teachers of the Deaf and held a Diploma in Public Administration from the University of Sydney.³ Lobb would on occasions recount the story of how he, as a pupil teacher, took charge of Holle's class when the latter had gone to Queensland for his interview in 1924!

When Lobb arrived to take up duty there were 168 hearing impaired pupils and nineteen blind children at the school with a teaching staff of twenty-one, hardly a generous pupil-teacher ratio. He willingly accepted the direction from Wood, still in the wake of the Ewing's visit, to place greater emphasis on oral instruction and to give consideration to replanning the school. The main building in use since 1893 had been neglected, particularly during the depression of the twenties and again during World War II, was in great need of refurbishment.⁴

The school and residential buildings were hopelessly inadequate for the large enrolment, a consequence of successive rubella epidemics. The task of converting the school to oralism presented enormous problems.⁵ A Head Teacher of a primary school and the parent of two deaf children had considerable misgivings about the implementation of the changes:

all signing and finger spelling was banned but the children who needed to communicate with one another found ways and means of doing so without being caught. Some of the teachers were not convinced that such a

course was possible and the edict to "sit on your hands" was repressive and restrictive. Staffing levels at the school made supervision and instruction very difficult. The deaf manual arts teacher, Edwin Castree who had been a pupil at the school was a fine role model and a superb communicator in the deaf community but he too was "silenced".

Another teacher of the deaf in the sixties whose mother had been a pupil at the School for the Deaf in the thirties, a leader in the deaf community, told of how school leavers would visit her mother to learn "deaf speech".

The "oral" facade continued with only murmurings of discontent until 1957 when some consideration was given to those children who were not "oral", but it was not until the seventies that any great change took place.

Some of the class room crowding was relieved with the establishment of a Junior Day School at 242 Gladstone Road, Dutton Park. Twenty-two children and four teachers were the first to occupy the new school which had been a very gracious private home. The Report to Parliament, which included photographs of the new school, stated,⁶

In keeping with modern trends in the education of deaf children, the Department established an additional department for day pupils in an entirely separate location in February 1956. The building stands in the midst of spacious gardens and every effort is being made to maintain a homely atmosphere. It is surprising how quickly children suffering from emotional disturbances settle down in such a quiet restful environment.

.....in the newly established department, the Oral method is used exclusively.

The Junior Day School continued as such until 1981 when it was replaced by units more appropriately attached to primary schools in different parts of the city. The building was then used as a centre for training teachers

and guidance officers in behaviour management until it was razed by fire in 1985. The replacement building is now the State Centre for the Queensland Arts Council.

The Report to Parliament for 1957 gave more space to the education of deaf children and referred to the children who at the time were considered "oral failures":⁷

The new school for the oral instruction of deaf children opened at the beginning of 1956. A fine brick building standing in its own attractive ground has been purchased. It is close to the Dutton Park tram terminus and near enough to the main establishment for the Blind and Deaf, to make possible effective administration of both sections of the school.

While the move towards oral teaching of the deaf has been implemented as far as possible in the school in Cornwall Street, there are still groups of children being taught by the manual method as they have shown themselves unsuited to oral teaching.

At the new school, however, all teaching is oral. The rooms have been specially treated with sound absorbent material and the furniture tipped to reduce noise.. As all the children wear hearing aids, even the almost totally deaf ones, the reduction of noise is a most important consideration. Classes are small, no more than eight to a teacher, and, in pleasantly painted and furnished rooms, with a bright homely atmosphere this, perhaps the most patience-demanding of all teaching, goes on.

With the success of oral instruction for some children, including the effective use of hearing aids fitted and serviced without charge by the Commonwealth Acoustic Laboratory, these children were moved into regular schools and a part time service was commenced with the Teacher-in-Charge of the Junior Day School regularly visiting the children in regular schools. Twenty-five years later, that is in 1979, the visiting teacher service had increased to four teachers assisting 150 children with varying degrees of deafness in regular schools.⁸

The rebuilding of the school and facilities at Cornwall Street commenced after much discussion and planning with officers of the State Works Department in 1963 and was completed ten years later. During the ten years the concept of large residential facilities with large dormitories and massed dining areas was defeated by that of normalization rendering the new buildings as out of date from the day they were officially opened on 8 December 1973.

NARBETHONG - A CHEERFUL PLACE

A.J.Lobb, the Principal of the Queensland School for the Deaf and Blind returned from the Summer Vacation in 1963 to discover that the fifty-nine visually handicapped students and their fourteen teachers at his school were to be removed to another site - the building that had been previously occupied by the Buranda Infants School. The first Head Teacher of the new school for the visually handicapped (known initially as Buranda Blind School but changed to "Narbethong" (aboriginal for "happy place") was to be Eric Baker Searle, who had been teacher-in-charge of the section at Cornwall Street.

Lobb was naturally displeased at not being consulted about the change: the decision had been made by Wood during the summer vacation.⁹ Visually handicapped children from the country were to continue living at the School for the Deaf and would travel to their "new" school daily.

The decision to separate the two groups with such different instructional needs was long overdue. The situation had existed since 1893 when the deaf students

were in the minority. Later the number of deaf students increased considerably and remained that way. For the first four years of the school's existence both groups were taught in the same room but this changed with the appointment of a second teacher.

There were few isolated instances of blind students continuing to secondary education, Mercy Dickinson (nee Griffin) being one of these, but between 1937 and 1955 there were no blind children in high schools in Queensland. At last, in 1956, one boy enrolled at Cavendish Road High School to be followed a year later by five more students. These students attended the classes unaided during the school day but received some tutorial assistance from their secondary school teachers, Narbethong staff and volunteers after school. During 1965 the Head Teacher of Narbethong would visit Cavendish Road High and Kelvin Grove High (where another blind student had enrolled) to assist students, and in the following year a visiting teacher was appointed. Cavendish Road High eventually became the more popular school and in 1974 a Special Education Centre was established there to support the students. Over the years the academic success of the students has more than justified its establishment. Decentralization of services for the visually impaired began in Townsville with a unit in a disused demountable classroom at the Hermit Park State School early in 1975, to be moved five years later to a specially built unit at the new Kirwan State School. The pressure from parents in the cities of Toowoomba in 1978 brought about the appointment of a visiting teacher and in the following

year a unit, at Toowoomba North. Units also opened in Cairns and Rockhampton in 1978.¹⁰ All primary school aged children who could physically manage in a regular school setting moved out in the eighties and Narbethong became a school for multiple handicapped children.

DECENTRALIZATION OF SERVICES FOR THE HEARING IMPAIRED

The 1964 rubella epidemic showed an increase in the referrals to the National Acoustics Laboratory reflecting a leap from two per thousand live births in the previous year to 5.49.¹¹ There was a marked increase in the number of children with a hearing/speech impairment requiring services at the Yeronga Pre School Centre but many did not receive any help until their fifth year when the law required that all children attend school.

An unprecedented ninety-three children were admitted to the Queensland School for the Deaf during 1969 making the total enrolment 303; in the following years this increased to the highest ever of 334 by 1972. A decline followed.¹²

There were also increased enrolments of children with hearing problems at the State School for Spastic Children where in 1969 seven children diagnosed as athetoid, with moderate to severe hearing loss were enrolled.¹³

The Principal of the Queensland School for the Deaf reorganized the Cornwall Street Campus into discrete Primary and Secondary sections. Teachers in the secondary section were able to make use of and adapt the curriculum materials prepared by the Education Department, enabling the offer of a much more age-appropriate program for the older students. The teachers also worked cooperatively

with teachers of the Technical Branch in assisting students (all male) to undertake apprenticeships in the skilled trades. Matthew¹⁴ (born 1954) a carpenter, employing two deaf tradesmen, spoke of his high school days at the Queensland School for the Deaf:

I am very grateful to Mr Adams, my High School teacher who helped me with my Tech. College classes. He helped other fellows too and now we all have jobs as skilled tradesmen. We played lots of sport at the school and that was enjoyable too. Some of us still play with the Deaf Tennis Club.

The first demand for local provision for education for the deaf rather than residential accommodation at the Brisbane School came from Townsville parents of four deaf children in 1969. These parents, with the assistance of the Association for Pre School Education of the Deaf, demanded the appointment of a teacher and the establishment of a pre-school in Townsville. The resolution of the parents' group was published in the **TOWNSVILLE BULLETIN**¹⁵ after a meeting with L.A.Vidler, Deputy Principal, Queensland School for the Deaf, in April 1968:

Mr Vidler is requested to take back to Brisbane our demand for a trained teacher of the deaf for Townsville. This teacher should be capable of handling a pre-school for deaf children and supervising parent guidance as well as providing a visiting teacher service.

On the basis of this latter service it may be possible to return integrated students presently boarding in Brisbane to Townsville.

This committee has in view, in the near future, the establishment of a full service for deaf children and their parents in North Queensland.

Since an answer to our request was not forthcoming in time for the beginning of first term this year we urgently request an answer by the commencement of second term:

This was followed by a request from Ipswich in 1971, then by another from Cairns in 1972 where a volunteer teacher had already commenced a class in a local hall.

A.J.Lobb retired in June 1974 and the Department of Education, after advertising the position nationally, appointed Leon Albert Vidler (born 1928) Deputy Principal of the School, Principal. In the last year of Lobb's incumbency teachers began to question the administration and philosophy of the school. There was hope that a change in Principal would bring changes to the school. With Lobb's departure, decentralization of the school, which he opposed, gained momentum; and oralism, which he supported, was questioned.

The Director of Special Education Services commissioned a report on all aspects of deaf education in Queensland. The report was completed and delivered to the Director on 4 December 1974. A major outcome of the report was that the school adopted, from the beginning of 1975, a total communication philosophy.¹⁶

Primary education units attached to regular schools quickly followed the pre-school provision and within the decade the Queensland provision for deaf children was decentralized. By 1986 there were twenty-two centres providing a range of services. Their establishment was not planned from the central office but developed as the result of local advocacy and pressure.

By 1986 only a small number of secondary students in years 9 and 10 remained at the Queensland School for the Deaf and at the end of 1988 the school closed. All children

were by now in special units attached to regular schools and most of them lived at home with their parents.¹⁷

OTHER INITIATIVES

Children with a visual handicap were served well by the Paediatric Low Vision Clinic set up at Narbethong. The Clinic had a part-time consultant ophthalmologist and a part-time optometrist as well as the guidance officers who formed part of the clinic team. Advice on the use of low vision aids and the results of visual and psychoeducational assessments were readily available to country parents.

The School for the Deaf also had an Audiological Clinic with a full time teacher-audiologist and part-time consultant otorhinolaryngologist (ENT specialist). These facilities were enhanced during the seventies with Commonwealth funding and continue still as part of the State Low Incidence Support Centre.

Some special education schools became part of the local community embracing the concept of normalization but not so the Willowburn School for Epileptics which closed in 1964. This action brought no storm of protest and one hopes marked the end of an era. Opened in 1937 the school for epileptics only ever had one teacher, Miss Dorothy King, who taught there for twenty-seven years. Willowburn was established last century as a mental hospital on the outskirts of Toowoomba, later renamed the Baillie Henderson Hospital. In 1919, John Huxham, the Minister for Home Affairs created within the facility, a "Colony for Epileptics" where children who had had major epileptic

seizures were sent - often for life. It was eighteen years before a school facility was provided and it was only when the teacher was about to retire that the Department of Education took any further action. With the development of effective, anti-convulsant drugs and greater community awareness of epilepsy the need to "put away" children with epilepsy had fortunately ceased.

The Willowburn School for Epileptics situated in a mental hospital, isolated and segregated, providing perhaps the only relief from the tedium of institutional life for a number of abandoned children. Despite being a refuge the Willowburn School for Epileptics (its enrolment peaked at forty-nine in 1959) is an example of the worst aspects of segregated special education provision of this century.¹⁸

Voluntary organizations have prompted most special education provision in Queensland the Institution for the Blind, Deaf and Dumb being the first. The State eventually assumed responsibility for the school in the twenties. The pattern was repeated in the thirties and then to a greater extent in the fifties and onward. Acknowledgement of the role of the voluntary movement must be made.

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- ¹ Q.P.D. Vol 218, 1957-58, p.417.
- ² Q.P.P. 1966-67 p.673.
- ³ Letter from University of Sydney Archivist 21.03.95.
- ⁴ A.J.Lobb personal communication.
- ⁵ A.J.Lobb personal file State Government Archives.
- ⁶ Queensland Parliamentary Papers 1956-57. p.693/4.
- ⁷ Queensland Parliamentary Papers 1957-58. p.671.
- ⁸ Seminar Proceedings, Visiting Teacher Service 9 August 1979.
- ⁹ Wood in an interview on 17 July 1979 said the decision had to be made quickly to obtain possession of the vacant building. Lobb in a discussion c.1974 said he could have been phoned, he still felt aggrieved.
- ¹⁰ **THE DECENTRALIZATION OF SERVICES TO VISUALLY HANDICAPPED CHILDREN IN QUEENSLAND A Report of the Review Committee set up by the Director of the Division of Special Education, 1983** Chairman, Geoffrey Swan, July 1983. The Report was never released.
- ¹¹ Figures from the Australian Hearing Service once the National Acoustics Laboratory.
- ¹² Annual Returns Queensland School for the Deaf.
- ¹³ State School for Spastic Children Admission Register and Record Cards.
- ¹⁴ Matthew interviewed while on the job 23 June 1996.
- ¹⁵ **TOWNSVILLE BULLETIN** 11 April 1967 headed **Plea For Deaf Children.**
- ¹⁶ **REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE EDUCATION OF DEAF CHILDREN IN QUEENSLAND** Report Commissioned by the Director of Special Education Services 1974. Department of Education, Queensland.
- ¹⁷ Most of the material from Inspectors Reports, Queensland School for the Deaf and from a Report Commissioned by the Director of Special Education and chaired by John Burge, Inspector of Schools, June 1982. **SERVICES FOR THE HEARING IMPAIRED IN QUEENSLAND The Report of the Committee to Review the Decentralization of Services for the Hearing Impaired in Queensland.** Department of Education Queensland.
- ¹⁸ Staff Card, Dorothy King, born 1898, History Unit and Annual Returns, Willowburn School for Epileptics.

CHAPTER 16

VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATIONS I

THE SERVICE PROVIDERS OF THE FIFTIES

When socio-economic levels were right, namely, towards the end of the second millennium, "the voluntary organization" began to take shape. At an earlier era worker groups acted voluntarily or under coercion at harvest, factory, army or elsewhere, exhibiting individual human traits as disparate as brotherliness, greed, obedience, aggression, doggedness, ambition etcetera.

With time, outside domination of the work unit weakened and self-regulation encouraged the forming of associations even in areas not work-related. The motivation that drew people together progressed from self interest to altruism. The voluntary organization incorporated both aspects; the tyranny of long tested work practices suggested the disciplined structured unit as the most effective tool to cut through opposition.

Any attempt to define a *voluntary organization* would need to use terms such as "community", "formal constitution", "optional membership", "pressure group", emphasizing the importance such organizations play in fostering participation in society.¹ Voluntary organizations have made an inestimable social and economic contribution to the provision of services to children with a disability, as well as to their families and ultimately to society. The structure, complexity and uniqueness of each organization is worthy of a separate study but the concern

of this and the next chapter is about the contribution of some organizations to the provision of special education. Kramer describes the four roles of a voluntary organization. These roles are not mutually exclusive and the importance of roles may change with the growth and development of the organization:²

(1) As *vanguard*, the purpose of the voluntary agency is to innovate, pioneer, experiment, and demonstrate programs, some of which may eventually be taken over by the government.

(2) As *improver* or *advocate*, the agency is expected to serve as a critic, watchdog, or gadfly as it pressures a governmental body to extend, improve, or establish needed services.

(3) As *value guardian* of voluntaristic, particularistic, and sectarian values, a voluntary agency is expected to promote citizen participation, to develop leadership, and to protect the special interests of social, religious, cultural, or other minority groups.

(4) As *service provider*, the voluntary agency delivers certain services it has selected, some of which may be a public responsibility that government is unable, is unwilling, or prefers not to assume directly or fully.

The earliest voluntary organizations in Queensland were concerned with the relief of the needy with particular emphasis on the "deserving poor". Very often this group included the disabled and the help offered was basic food, clothing and sometimes shelter. The church had always been seen as having a responsibility to the poor and needy but with the increasing secularisation of society and the emerging middle class, voluntary organizations without religious affiliation began to emerge. Of course members of the voluntary organizations often had religious affiliation and frequently the voluntary organizations elected church leaders as patrons. Idealism, frustration, humanitarianism and anger have also prompted people to

either form or join a voluntary organization hoping that group action would bring about a desired result.

In Queensland, as in other parts of Australia, voluntary organizations have played a major role in facilitating the provision of education for children with a disability and it is difficult to imagine how long it would have taken the State to make special educational provision without the advocacy and pioneering work of voluntary groups. The work of one man, John William Tighe led to the forming of a voluntary organization. (*q.v. Chapters 6 and 7*) The mildly intellectually disabled received State provision, the only disabled group to do so, as the result of the efforts of W.F.Bevington and John Huxham. (*q.v. Chapter 11*). Some moderately intellectually disabled boys, however, were accommodated at Buranda and Leichhardt Street Schools from 1923 until the mid thirties when they were abandoned, their cause later taken up in the fifties by the Subnormal Children's Welfare Association. It was a token attempt without real endeavour to make it work and the acceptance of the classes within the host schools was hardly more than amused tolerance. Children with severe intellectual disabilities were ignored by the State as were those children with physical disabilities which prevented them from attending regular schools. To the physically disabled most Queensland schools presented architectural barriers built as they were to a standard design on high blocks with stairs and toilet facilities removed from the main buildings.

The Federal Opposition Parliamentary Spokesman on Health and Welfare, later Minister for Social Security and more

recently Governor General, Bill Hayden quoted Professor Brown from the "Australian Quarterly" during the second reading of the **HANDICAPPED CHILDREN (ASSISTANCE BILL) 1970**

So long as social action is equated with charity and so long as social expenditure is seen primarily as serving political ends, the tendency will be to do as little as possible in a piecemeal fashion in response to political pressure.³

The piecemeal education provision has followed the medical concern and intervention for the specific conditions. The success and quality of education provision has been governed by the kind of voluntary organization that has been established to provide for the group and the ability of the organization to raise funds and muster public support and sympathy. The amount of government assistance depends greatly on, as Hayden told Parliament, (and again quoting Brown) politics rather than policy.

In the worst sense of its usage this is true in Australia. Social programmes depend more on estimates of their vote catching strength than on serious study of people's need.⁴

A review of the voluntary organizations in Queensland (and consideration is only being given to those organizations attempting to ensure that children with a disability have access to schooling), indicates that each organization focussed very narrowly on one particular disability and used all avenues to ensure that Government funding became available. Political friendships and affiliations, direct approaches to Ministers and a pandering to politicians were all used in attempting to receive government support. The founders of the organizations were initially concerned citizens but later, parents, relatives and friends anxious

to see that a child with a disability received an education became the prime movers. Professional and business people with similar aims, but sometimes with conflicting values regarding state or private enterprise, became part of the voluntary movement, as did public minded people demonstrating a sense of duty.

THE QUEENSLAND SOCIETY FOR CRIPPLED CHILDREN

Poliomyelitis, a virus infection of the motor cells in the spinal cord, can cause muscular contraction and resultant lack of movement resulting in permanent paralysis. For some the infection is only mild and full recovery is possible. In all cases, however, intelligence is unimpaired but if the upper limbs have been affected some adaptations will need to be made in the classroom. Those children whose lower limbs have been involved will have problems of mobility.⁵ As a result of vaccination programs there are very few instances of children having poliomyelitis and the clientele of the Queensland Society for Crippled Children has thus changed considerably.

The poliomyelitis epidemic at the beginning of 1932 was particularly severe and children under ten were barred from school attendance. Parents kept older children at home as well and Brisbane newspapers began publishing a schedule of work in English and arithmetic.⁶

The Queensland Society for Crippled Children was the first of several voluntary organizations founded in Queensland this century to meet the needs of children with a specific disability. Parents of children with a physical disability often faced a dichotomy: the physical treatment

to improve function and to prevent or lessen deformity on the one hand, and the education to enhance social and intellectual skills on the other. Earle Carlson, the cerebral palsied advocate for his group, expressed the concern so succinctly when he said "it was made plain to her (his mother) that my mind alone could provide an escape from my physical handicaps".⁷

In 1928 Eugene Newson, of the United State of America and the President of Rotary International, challenged Rotarians around the world to look into the needs of children crippled as a consequence of the recurring epidemics of poliomyelitis. The response from the Brisbane Rotary Club came as result of Dr.S.F.McDonald's persuading the Club to raise sufficient funds to assist in the treatment and education of one boy.⁸ The needs of other children similarly placed prompted further action and on 3 February 1932 a deputation from the Rotary Club of Brisbane, with some medical practitioners led by Dr S.F.McDonald, paediatrician and Dr G.A.C.Douglas, orthopaedic surgeon, met with the Home Secretary and the Under Secretaries of Works and Education. The request to establish a special school was taken to Cabinet but due to the parlous state of finances (it was the height of the depression) was refused. On 14 September 1932 the Lord Mayor of Brisbane convened a meeting attended by 480 people and the Queensland Society for Crippled Children was founded.⁹ George Marchant, wealthy string and paper bag merchant, temperance advocate and philanthropist, donated his large home on Swann Road, Taringa to the new society. With such support the State government reversed

its decision to provide a school and under the Education Act decided that a provisional school could be established if the Society provided an appropriate building for it.

The **EDUCATION OFFICE GAZETTE** of November 1932 contained the following notice:¹⁰

The newly formed Queensland Society for Crippled Children has received from a public spirited citizen Mr George Marchant the spontaneous and notably generous offer of his beautiful home and grounds at Taringa. The gift of the home which will be used as an institution for the care, cure and training of crippled children is subject to the proviso that the society places itself in a financial position to maintain the institution. Accordingly the Society has launched an appeal for funds and an encouraging response is being made by the public.

It is felt by the Minister and the Department that the appeal will especially commend itself to the teachers and pupils of Queensland Schools. An effort on behalf of crippled children by pupils upon whom the greatest blessing of health and strength has been bestowed should not only materially assist the fund but also provide a practical lesson in social service. The Minister approves of Head Teachers inviting penny subscriptions to the fund. School donations sent to the Director of Education will be acknowledged by official receipts and the total amount subscribed by the end of February, 1933, will then be handed to the Society on behalf of the school children of Queensland.

44,281 children of Queensland responded with a donation of over 184 pounds and in his letter of acknowledgment, the Secretary of the new Queensland Society for Crippled Children, thanked the children of Queensland for their handsome contribution "made on behalf of their less fortunate comrades."¹¹

George Marchant's gift of "Montrose" was a little premature as no survey had been conducted and nobody had any clear idea of the extent of the need. One of the conditions of the gift was that immediate action be taken. The committee moved with alacrity. Within the year of its

opening on 3 December 1933 the home was full and the teacher, Miss Jean Martin opened the provisional school on 7 March 1934 and nineteen pupils were enrolled. Miss Martin lived at the home and accepted board and lodging in return for supervisory duties. The Annual Report by the Minister to Parliament for that year reported:

The school at Montrose Home for Crippled Children was opened on 7 March 1934. The average attendance for the year was 31. The school is in charge of a female teacher who has succeeded in establishing a bright happy tone among her pupils.

The present furniture is only temporary, and special desk-chairs are being constructed to suit the disabilities of the pupils. In the words of the District Inspector, "the pupils are well-fed, clean, happy, and contented."¹²

The foundation pupils had a range of medical conditions but poliomyelitis and osteomyelitis were dominant. The school was an adjunct to the home which was essentially a nursing establishment. Brisbane had no physiotherapists at the time and treatment prescribed by the medical officers was carried out by nurses and masseuses.

To accommodate the expanding number of children requiring treatment and special education the Montrose Home for Crippled Children, and the school, moved to larger premises at Consort Street, Corinda. These too were the gift of George Marchant and with changes and expansion form the centre of today's premises and school.

From 6 to 8 April 1936 a Conference sponsored by the Health Department of the Commonwealth Government was held in Canberra to discuss the crippled child. The Conference was prompted by a visit the previous year of William Richard Morris, Viscount Nuffield (1877-1963) of Morris car fame, who gave fifty thousand pounds "to help crippled

children in Australia". Nuffield's endowment of the Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre in Oxford and gifts to various children's hospitals and Universities in England also assisted crippled children in Australia through the research studies.

In opening the Conference the chairman said:

In this work Australia is hopelessly behind the rest of the world. It is eight years since the first Society was founded, although sporadic efforts had previously been made by other organizations which included the crippled child in their activities. The gift of Lord Nuffield coordinated Australian interest; now societies had been formed everywhere and the needs of the crippled child are being attended.¹³

The conference delegates were mostly medical practitioners or members of Rotary Clubs. Queensland was represented by Dr Harold Crawford, of the Queensland Branch of the British Medical Association and Federal Representative of the Australasian Massage Association (Crawford was later to be much involved with the Queensland Spastic Welfare League), Dr C.A. Thelander, Chairman of the Royal Commission on the Investigation of Paralysis and, surprisingly, Sister Elizabeth Kenny (1886-1952) whose methods of treatment were not accepted by all members of the medical profession. Sister Kenny was accompanied by the medical superintendent of her Clinic, Dr. Jean Rountree. The Kenny method of treatment attempted to stimulate the affected limbs to enable them to regain function, contrasting with the traditional medical treatment of immobilising the affected limbs with casts or braces. A more recent evaluation of the Kenny method was made by the Professor of Child Health at the University of Queensland:

With the wisdom of hindsight, Sister Kenny's concepts were probably more correct. The results were better, although pragmatic success was achieved by incorrect theoretical reasons.¹⁴

During the Conference Sister Kenny had to defend her approach and, at a Royal Commission in Brisbane that included the formidable Dr (later Dame) Jean Macnamara (1899-1968),¹⁵ Victorian and international authority on poliomyelitis, defend it again. The adverse and predictable findings of the Royal Commission prompted Sister Kenny to accept an invitation to work in the United States where she directed the Kenny Institute in Minneapolis-St Paul. Sister Kenny's advice to the mother of one child in 1935 indicates a view of common sense and normality.

Ruth (born 1928) with a mild spastic hemiplegia, some clumsiness in walking and slightly impaired speech spoke of her experience many years later:¹⁶

Mum rejected the advice of the local doctor, to put me away. There seemed so little available so in desperation my parents took me to the Sister Kenny Clinic in George Street. I was seen by Sister Kenny who seemed such a kind lady. She told my mother and father that she knew little about spasticity but suggested I attend the local school and be encouraged to play with other children and under no circumstances be mollycoddled. It set me on the road to a normal life. I was enrolled at the local State School which was a disaster. The demands made on me because I couldn't march in time or write neatly were very distressing so I was sent to Clayfield College and that was just like going to heaven.

Ruth later passed the Junior Public Examination, became a clerk-typist and worked until her retirement as a paid employee of the Queensland Spastic Welfare League. It would be impossible to estimate the number of children who in the first half of the century were denied a "normal"

childhood because of a restricted perception of disability. Robert (also born 1928) was four when he came down with poliomyelitis. He was immediately isolated in hospital and some months later sent to Montrose Home where he spent his entire primary school life with only rare trips home. Sometimes he did not go home for Christmas. After he passed the Scholarship Examination (and he was most grateful to the school for the help he received) he attended Brisbane Grammar School, lived at home in Redcliffe and no longer wore a calliper or surgical boots.¹⁷

Those children who attended the Sister Kenny Clinic in Brisbane or in Townsville attended the nearest primary school if they were mobile and if not were enrolled at the Primary Correspondence School. Sister Kenny told the Canberra Conference:

I think we have more spastic cases under our supervision than any other institution in Australia, and we are getting satisfactory results according to report, but to what degree it is not for me to say - that is for the medical profession to say - whether they are satisfied with the work or not.¹⁸

The Queensland Society for Crippled Children made no provision for children to attend on a daily basis. As late as 1949 Matron Jessie Peters and Bert Watson, the Secretary Manager of Montrose, visited Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide to investigate the possibility of day attendance. With former opinions reinforced they came back and had no difficulty in convincing the Board of the Queensland Society for Crippled Children that the established practice of residential care should continue. No change was made until the seventies!¹⁹

The Canberra Conference also heard a paper presented by Miss L.F.Carne, Teacher-in-Charge of the School for Physically Handicapped Children at the Royal Alexander Hospital. Miss Carne saw the presence of spastics as one of the major problems in the school:

Spastics are our biggest problem - because owing to the nature of the defect they are so difficult to teach at all and even when some progress has been made, the mental level appears at about the Third or Fourth School standard. The proportion of Spastic cases seeking enrolment at school is high, and there is often considerable speech defect as well, it is to be hoped that in the future development of hospital schools it will be possible for special groups or classes for these children, so many of whom will never be self supporting.

The saddest problem of all is that of the mentally-defective crippled child unfitted for any school. The only solution to this problem as far as I can see is the establishment of Occupation Centres as is done in England.²⁰

After a clear statement of what would now be regarded as exclusion the concluding statement reads somewhat hypocritically:

Here in Australia we are only just laying the foundation stone of a great humanitarian work - the care and education of the physically-handicapped child. Let us build wisely and with vision so that not one child in this great land may be deprived of its rightful heritage.

It seems the feeling at the national conference was that children with cerebral palsy presented complex educational problems. Dr Jean Macnamara believed that such children could not be educated with other children; she also convinced the Victorian Society for Crippled Children whose official policy then stated that it was "unwise to have spastics with other children".²¹ In 1940 Dr Macnamara organized a special class for spastic children at the Melbourne Children's Hospital and three years later a similar arrangement was made in Adelaide.²²

The Queensland Society for Crippled Children provided accommodation and physical treatment for children admitted on medical advice. Initially the treatment was provided by nurses and masseuses and when they became available physiotherapists, occupational therapists and speech therapists carried out the treatment. Attendance at the school was automatic for the first forty years but with the development and expansion of guidance services children in the school were reviewed by guidance officers. This was to lead to some discord between the Board and the Education Department.

With fewer children requiring residential care the numbers at Montrose Home were declining - resulting in a drop in income from the Commonwealth Government which paid a subsidy based on bed occupancy. Guidance Officers protested about the admission of children with minor disabilities when appropriate treatment and schooling was available nearer their homes. The President of the Society wrote to the Director General of Education in January 1983:

To better pursue the objects of the Society, it is desired that this voluntary organization assume responsibility for the administration and control of this school as a non-State Special school.

The Director General after an interview with the President some weeks later noted:

...the President pointed out how the situation at Montrose Home had now become divided although at all times there had been some division between the home and the school. He also claimed there was a growing feeling that the home was becoming an appendage of the Department of Education.

A statement was also made on the rigidity in the approach to education as determined by the Education Department staff and it appeared that it was impossible for this requirement to be looked at so as

to meet the needs of Montrose Home. There was also a statement that the Education Department did not recognize fully the different types of handicaps that could be catered for at Montrose Home without the education requirements interfering with the treatment.²³

About the same time some dissident parents attempted to become members of the Board to try to bring about some changes to the Home. The dormitory accommodation had not changed in fifty years while the rigid nursing regime in the home and the reluctance to involve parents in any decisions were causes for complaint. The Board's response was to raise the fee for membership to the Society to fifty dollars and to change the Constitution to maintain the patriarchal structure. Quite a few members of the Board were sons of former members and there were no women on the Board.

Despite the Board's request to assume responsibility for the school and to maintain full capacity of the Home the number of children in residence declined. Day pupils were admitted to the school and received treatment from the therapists employed by the Society (but since 1973 paid by the Department of Education). The School continued to be part of the Education Department.

Secondary education for Montrose students who continued to require physical treatment commenced in a fortuitous way. A teacher at Corinda High School whose asthmatic son was at Montrose arranged for the boy to attend the nearby Corinda High on a daily basis. Two other Montrose students, in wheel chairs, also required secondary education. All three were transported the short distance - on the back of a truck. The school had no special

facilities for disabled pupils but staff from Montrose would go down to the High School if needed. The Montrose students were accepted and assisted by the other high school students. In 1974 when more students were requiring secondary education and an aide was appointed to assist them and a ramp into one of the buildings was constructed. Eventually a teacher was appointed to assist the children in the High School. Over the years additional ramps and special facilities have been built. Students from other parts of the city, transported in taxis provided by the Education Department now attend the Corinda High School. In 1984 a special facility was built to accommodate the thirty-six children enrolled.²⁴

THE NORTH QUEENSLAND SOCIETY FOR CRIPPLED CHILDREN

When the North Queensland Society for Crippled Children attempted to register the organization based in Townsville there were howls of protest about the name from the Queensland Society for Crippled Children in Brisbane. The people in the south thought the suggested alternative - the North Australian Society for Crippled Children even more threatening so dropped their objections.

Concerns about distance and long journeys, usually by rail, and long separation from families, prompted Miss Helen Franklin, a social worker, to convene a meeting of interested citizens. "Miss Franklin had been offered money and other forms of assistance for children in the Townsville Hospital who had been disabled by polio and other causes."²⁵ The meeting was told that there were forty children permanently disabled by poliomyelitis, some

of them marooned in the Townsville Hospital, while an additional thirty children were similarly situated in centres outside Townsville. The North Queensland Society under the chairmanship of local business man J.C. Butler was extremely successful in fundraising and a residential facility, Cootharinga, was built on a special grant of Crown land at North Ward. Three classrooms formed part of the facility and the founding Head Teacher, Mrs Rita Jell, went to Cootharinga after successfully teaching in State Primary Schools and in the Townsville Hospital Children's Ward.

The school in the early years was proud of its academic success; many children passed the State Scholarship examination but the integration process and acceptance of more severely disabled prompted the Chairman of the Society to comment in 1984:

In its early days the Home housed children who were quite badly disabled physically, but in those days we did not experience the severity of disability with which we are faced today. The Cootharinga Home is the only facility to the North of Rockhampton which accepts catastrophically disabled children on a long term basis. The Home also provides respite care to assist those parents who are able to cope with their disabled child at home.²⁶

The school at Cootharinga was replaced in 1985 by the Mundingburra Special School and the children transported to the facility each day. The North Queensland Society for Crippled Children has demonstrated great flexibility in adjusting to the changing attitudes to disability. Itinerant therapists have been employed to assist children placed in regular schools and hostel type accommodation has been replaced by smaller group homes.

QUEENSLAND SPASTIC WELFARE LEAGUE

In 1995 Australia Post issued two stamps picturing people with disabilities participating in ordinary communities. One stamp, commemorating the hundredth anniversary of the Association of the Blind, shows a blind person playing a violin and the other, commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the Spastic Centre of New South Wales, a child with cerebral palsy flying a kite.²⁷

Any discussion about the education of the cerebral palsied in Australia should include some reference to the founders of the New South Wales Spastic Centre which provided a model for the other states. Neil and Audrie McLeod were determined that their daughter, Fiona, would lead a full and independent life. Many regarded their hopes and expectations as unreal but the drive and dedication of the McLeods resulted in the establishment in 1945 of the Mosman Spastic Centre, the first of its kind in the world, free to all those who needed it and a model for the rest of Australia.²⁸ Eleanor Schonell described the Mosman Spastic Centre "as the most comprehensive and original in any part of the world."²⁹

Cerebral Palsy, a non-progressive disorder of movement resulting from damage to the brain before, during or soon after birth is often complicated by neurological problems. The complexity of the condition and the variations, depending on the extent and area of the brain damage, requires a multi-disciplinary approach to treatment - education being now perhaps the key discipline.³⁰

In 1862 Little described a drooling, speechless, crosslegged child with very low mentality as afflicted with Little's Disease. He referred to the condition as spastic paralysis and thenceforth the two terms

became synonymous. During an epidemic of poliomyelitis in 1920 many children brought as possible victims were diagnosed as cerebral palsy cases; nothing was done for them because doctors accepted the attitude of Little that cerebral palsy cases were probably of low-grade mentality and little or nothing could be done to improve their condition.³¹

The Queensland Society for Crippled Children accepted a number of children with cerebral palsy at Montrose but with reservations. When Walter Bryan Ward (1906-1992) was looking for a suitable school for one of his twin daughters (born 1944) who was cerebral palsied he and his wife went with her to the Mosman Spastic Centre for assistance.³²

Ward was amongst the parents who attended a meeting on 16 December 1947 organized by the Queensland Council of Social Agencies prompted by the Australian Association of Social Workers. A provisional committee was formed and it spent the next three months drafting a constitution and preparing for a public meeting which was held on 16 March 1948 and chaired by the Vice Mayor Alderman (later Sir) Reginald Groom. The draft constitution was accepted by the meeting and remained intact for the next twenty-three years. The aims of the Queensland Spastic Children's Welfare League thus formed were

to foster public interest in and to take action throughout the State of Queensland for the discovery, investigation, treatment, care, education and training, recreation and placement of and generally to promote the welfare of spastics.

to establish or co-operate in the establishment of day centres for spastics, resident centres for spastics, homes for spastics, seaside holiday homes for spastics, and other homes and facilities through which the objects of the League can be advanced.³³

There was a clear need for some facility for the education and treatment of children with cerebral palsy. Parents were well aware of the success of parent groups in the United Kingdom: the foundation of the National Spastics Society and the British Council for the Welfare of Spastics; the establishment of schools solely for the cerebral palsied, notably St Margaret's School, Croydon near London and the Carlson House School in Birmingham.

The extent of the need was not clear, although the Queensland Society for Crippled Children conducted a survey throughout all schools in Queensland to find how many crippled children "including spastic pupils" were not receiving attention. Members of the British Medical Association, Branches of the Country Women's Association and Rotary Clubs and local authorities were also canvassed.

As a result of this survey seventy children with cerebral palsy were found in the metropolitan area and forty-five in the country. In view of the activity of the parents of children with cerebral palsy the Queensland Society for Crippled Children did not proceed with the plan to build a separate establishment for spastic children.

The founding parents of the Queensland Spastic Welfare League were well aware of the difficulties associated with the education of spastic children: a generous pupil-teacher ratio and the involvement of other professionals, especially physiotherapists, occupational therapists and speech therapists essential. In the forties there was also the question of educability; some children because of low intelligence were rejected from the initial intake of

students. This was a cause of great disappointment and grief to some parents.

The committee of the Queensland Spastic Children's Welfare League approached the Premier of the day, V.C.Gair, who was always sympathetic to needs of children with a disability, and received a guarantee of a pound for pound subsidy on all funds raised. The government would also provide and staff a school - but only for educable children.

Surveys were conducted by the League and at the end of 1949 three hundred cerebral palsied people were found who had little or no education at all. This year also marked the year during which sufficient funds were raised to purchase a large home in Elystan Road, New Farm for what was to become the Queensland Spastic Centre.

Monday 12 February 1951 was the opening day of the State School for Spastic Children at New Farm with Miss Hilda Virginia Paul (1899-1991), formerly of the State School at Montrose Home, as the first Head Teacher. The appointment of Miss Paul was encouraged by Dr Harold Crawford, whose voluntary work for the Queensland Society for Crippled Children and the Queensland Spastic Children's Welfare League earned him great admiration and respect from parents and the community.

Miss Paul who had taught at Montrose firstly as staff teacher from 1939 until 1946, then as Head Teacher until her appointment to the Spastic Centre, claimed to have taught more cerebral palsied children, despite the claims of the Board, than any other kind at Montrose.³⁴ The newly appointed Head Teacher arrived to find the two rooms

allocated for school purposes without pupils. She protested to the secretary of the Spastic Welfare League and threatened to return to Montrose if some pupils were not found! Within two hours the school began - with nine pupils hurriedly collected in staff members' cars. Four of the pupils enrolled in the early years received all their education at the State School for Spastic Children and after passing the State Scholarship Examination remained at New Farm for their secondary schooling by correspondence with assistance from staff members, voluntary teachers and amanuenses. They gained entry to the University and thence to graduation.³⁵ For these very physically handicapped students of above average intelligence the only option hitherto had been sheltered workshop. They clearly demonstrated that education was a possible and necessary fulfilment.

Admission to the State School for Spastic Children followed acceptance by the Medical and Educational Panel of the Spastic Welfare League (Eleanor Schonell was an important and active member of the panel). Those cerebral palsied children of low intelligence were accommodated in what became a separate school eventually, a building named Longland House.³⁶ With the aid of Commonwealth Government funding the schools were amalgamated in 1976.

The founding Head Teacher insisted that the teachers follow the regular school curriculum. For some children this presented no problem but for the less able some modification would have made school life less demanding and less frustrating.

The interaction of therapists and teachers and the demands on the children's time occasionally caused conflict, as did the requirement that one of the parents, usually the mother, attend the School once a fortnight to work as an aide or alternatively pay for a replacement. These "volunteer" aides were eventually replaced by paid aides. This also marked a decline in parent involvement in the school. Teachers in the school had to adjust to the presence of therapists, social workers and one trained nurse who dispensed and monitored medication, mostly to children with epilepsy, and liaised with medical officers. Integration of children into regular schools began slowly from the late fifties and gained momentum in the sixties with the appointment of an advisory visiting teacher.

**QUEENSLAND SUBNORMAL CHILDREN'S WELFARE ASSOCIATION
FROM 1982 THE ENDEAVOUR FOUNDATION**

Three parents of children with Down syndrome, Thora Pribbernow, Jules Moxon and Bill Hooper were waiting to pick up their children at the Fortitude Valley Opportunity School towards the end of 1950. They had heard and were very concerned that officers of the recently established Research and Guidance Branch of the Education Department would be reviewing all children in special schools and would control all admissions to the schools. They felt that children with Down Syndrome would almost be excluded as ineducable. It was from this chance meeting and discussion outside the Valley Opportunity School that the Queensland Subnormal Children's Welfare Association was founded.³⁷

Jules Moxon reminded a group of parents some years later that the prospect of having nowhere to send their children had been very distressing. The Queensland Government had done nothing to set up training centres as required under **BACKWARD PERSONS ACT 1938** and the only facility available for children with a moderate to severe intellectual disability was admission to what were popularly known as lunatic asylums. These Dickensian establishments were euphemistically called special hospitals and no training was undertaken for the inmates who varied from the criminally insane to the mentally ill and the intellectually impaired. There were isolated instances where a staff member would attempt some program to relieve the tedium of institutional life.

Thora Pribbernow visited Sydney in 1950 to meet parents of the already well established New South Wales Subnormal Children's Welfare Association. Mr J. Swanson, the secretary of the New South Wales Association, visited Queensland in March 1951 and addressed a group of fifty affected parents. The meeting resolved to form a Queensland Division of the N.S.W. Association which, however, was later rescinded. Instead the Queensland Sub-Normal Children's Welfare Association was registered as a non-profit company.

The first public meeting was held on 14 June 1951 in the Brisbane City Hall, chaired by the Lord Mayor and addressed by Professor F.J.Schonell who became President of the Association and remained in that position for the next sixteen years.

Schonell gave a polished and an authoritative address - chided the Education Department for not accepting

responsibility, spoke of the need for special training of teachers, the need for early ascertainment and the need for social workers.³⁸

The use of the term "subnormal" in the title was defended by Schonell as being less offensive than the other terms such as "moron" or "mental defective". Moving with the times the organization changed its name to Endeavour Foundation in 1982.

As a matter of urgency the Association opened its first facility on the verandah of Mr and Mrs Hooper's home at Coorparoo with ten children including Meg Hooper, the daughter of the house. All of pupils enrolled faced exclusion from the State Opportunity Schools. The first teacher was Janet Petersen who became lecturer in special education at the Darling Downs Institute of Advanced Education and later at James Cook University in Townsville. The parents of the children attending the occupation centre were expected to pay ten shillings a week for fifty-two weeks of the year. This was later increased to fifteen shillings a week but in 1959 protests about the payment of fees by parents brought about their abolition.

In May 1955 Bowen House, a large home at 38 Jordan Terrace, Bowen Hills was opened as the Association's first school and by the end of the year eighty-eight pupils were enrolled. Children were accepted on conditions that: they could attend to their own toilet needs; on a Stanford Binet Test they could register an I.Q. of above forty-five; the parents would be responsible for travel to and from school. John McLeod of the Remedial Education

Centre, and a member of the Medical and Educational Panel thought all children should be admitted regardless of I.Q. This was eventually accepted.

The original constitution of the organization made no provision for Branches but in 1954 three of the largest provincial cities, Toowoomba, Ipswich and Rockhampton formed Branches and opened schools. These cities bought large houses, "Hameworth", "Claremont" and "Hillside" (slightly decayed) set in spacious grounds and near public transport. They converted them for school use. The houses were well known and their new role attracted welcome public attention. Conflict about fund raising and government subsidies and changes to the constitution were diplomatically managed by Schonell who was often required to placate branch members. Schonell was "more interested in the enthusiasms and grass roots expansion of the organization than the fine points of accounting procedures and legal requirements."³⁹ Other provincial cities and towns opened centres and eventually the organization had twenty-five schools with over 1200 pupils, employing 125 teachers and a number of therapists, psychologists and aides. The Association, to meet the needs of the ageing clientele, had moved into the provision of other facilities and in 1983 had twelve sheltered workshops, six farms, thirty-four adult residentials, twenty-four group homes and thirteen clinics. There were over two thousand members in sixteen branches and forty-three sub-branches.⁴⁰ Some parents of children attending the Association schools occasionally expressed their concern about being outside the State School system; others supported by the now well

established bureaucracy of the organization fiercely guarded the independence. With the assistance of government subsidies the schools by 1976 were totally funded, so it was with some surprise ten years later that the Endeavour Foundation agreed to the Department of Education's accepting total responsibility for schools and related education services from 27 January 1986.

Many parents felt the move was an acknowledgment of the rights of the child. Some parents who had refused a place in an Endeavour Foundation school and had insisted on enrolment in a State School felt their position had been vindicated. One official of the Endeavour Foundation said that the numbers in the schools had declined because of the more flexible entry into state special schools and that now the Foundation had more work with adults the assumption of control of the schools by the state seemed appropriate.⁴¹

One cannot think of the early days of the Subnormal Children's Welfare Association without paying tribute to Thelma Sara McConnel (1904-1994) whose appointment as foundation Principal of Bowen House provided hope for parents and an example and inspiration to all special educators. With her intellectual energy and verve she set a high standard of professionalism. Thelma Rand, born in Austria and migrating with her family to the United States in 1929, trained as a nurse and later studied teaching at Hunter College in New York specializing in Montessori methods. Thelma Rand also undertook courses in psychology and education at Berkeley in California. In 1939 she married Frederic McConnell, a Queenslander from a

pioneering grazing family, and migrated to Queensland where with her father-in-law she established and conducted a Montessori Kindergarten in Toowoomba. McConnell with her family moved to Brisbane some years later and became involved with the Queensland Council of School Organizations, for a time its Honorary Secretary. She was also responsible for the setting up of Child Care Centres in the suburbs and in this area too she must be regarded as a pioneer. After completing a B.A. degree with a major in psychology she worked at the Remedial Education Centre as research assistant to Professor Fred Schonell.

Thelma McConnell was Principal of Bowen House from 1955 until she was appointed Education Adviser to the expanded Association in 1967. Upon her retirement in 1969 she volunteered to lecture and train teachers in India for part of each year and work as Honorary Educational Psychologist at the Brisbane Royal Children's Hospital for the remainder of the year. McConnell was proud of the Montessori tradition and always wore a replica of the Montessori emblem.

She received an honorary doctorate from the University of Queensland some days before her death.⁴²

THE ASSOCIATION FOR THE PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION OF DEAF CHILDREN

In August 1954 Clare Minchin, a kindergarten teacher at the Lady Gowrie Kindergarten in Fortitude Valley, accepted the invitation of a group of parents of pre-school deaf children to conduct classes on Saturday afternoons at the Lady Gowrie Centre. The parents were concerned about the

lack of facilities available for teaching deaf children by the oral method. Some of the parents had been in regular correspondence with the John Tracy Clinic in the United States and had been stimulated by the earlier visit of the great proponents of oralism, Professor Alexander Ewing and Dr Irene Ewing. Accordingly they wanted a school that would concentrate on teaching their hearing impaired children to speak. As sufficient funds became available and the number of children increased, the classes moved to a venue where they could be held more regularly. So it was, the Oral Pre-School moved to the Holy Trinity Church Hall in the Valley. Clare Minchin in a talk to special education students at Mt Gravatt College of Advanced Education in 1978 described the venue as "vast and unsuitable with lots of traffic noise and a fear that some of the children would get lost in the hall, or worse still would wander off into the Valley!"⁴³

In 1955 Clare Minchin went to Manchester to study with the Ewings and upon her return in 1958 the Oral Association moved to permanent premises at O'Loan Street Yeronga where residential facilities were available for short term stays for mothers and their children.

The Yeronga Oral Pre-School for the Deaf organized programs for small groups of children to encourage speech, speech reading and language development. For children under the age of two parents were encouraged to attend with their child for a day once a week.

For some years when funds were available the Association provided a mobile service to places as far north as Rockhampton. During these visits children with a hearing

impairment were located and parents given assistance in teaching and management. The teacher also liaised with local schools and the Commonwealth Acoustic Laboratory.

In 1963 the Department of Education assumed responsibility for the teaching section of the Pre-School. The Association continued until 1976 to provide additional therapy services and accommodation for short visits for country children and their parents.

THE MULTIPLE HANDICAPPED ASSOCIATION OF QUEENSLAND

On 9 September 1963 Ian Thomas McDonald (1937-1993) became the foundation Principal of the school for multiple handicapped children in the now defunct Caledonian Hall and Burns Club at Kangaroo Point. McDonald, trained as a teacher of the deaf in Victoria, had a wide experience of disability having taught at the State School for Spastic Children and at the Queensland School for the Deaf which included in his classes children with additional disabilities. An energetic and imaginative teacher of gentle humour, totally committed to the task, he was awarded a Churchill Fellowship in 1969 for his "unique work for a unique Association."⁴⁴

Although the school did not open until 1963 a nascent organization was there in the mid fifties:

In 1955, parents of five multiple handicapped children approached existing organizations in an attempt to have their children accepted for training and possible education. Such organizations, although very sympathetic were unable to accept them because of their multiple handicaps, which included blindness, deafness, spasticity as well as mental retardation.⁴⁵

Three of the children whose multiple disability included hearing impairment were enrolled at the Queensland School

for the Deaf. The Principal of the School, A.J.Lobb, considered them inappropriately placed and encouraged the parents to apply to the Queensland Subnormal Children's Welfare Association for admission to the Bowen House Centre. Professor Schonell rejected the application on behalf of the Association because the staff was not trained to teach multiple handicapped children nor did the centre have the necessary equipment. He recommended however "the problem be taken up directly with the Minister for Education".⁴⁶

Parents promptly sought a meeting with the Minister, L.F.Diplock, and this took place on 23 October 1956. Several months later, on 21 February 1957 Padre Ford, Chairman of the Committee received a letter which he later described as "totally rejecting and dejecting".⁴⁷

I wish to inform you, that the matter has been carefully considered by Officers of the Research and Guidance Branch and the Senior Officers of my Department. On the basis of investigations made into the cases mentioned, it has been found that, owing to severe multiple retardation, these children cannot be classed as educable. They are not, therefore, eligible for admission to the School for the Blind and Deaf. I am recommending to my colleague, the Minister for Health and Home Affairs, that the aid of the Sub-Normal Children's Welfare Association be sought with a view to the Association making provision for blind and deaf children, who are so severely retarded that they are ineligible for admission to schools under the Administration of the Department of Public Instruction.

During 1957 there was a change of Government and the new Minister for Education, J.C.A.Pizzy, spoke to his colleague, the Minister for Health and Home Affairs, Dr.H.W.Noble, but no action was taken. Parents then approached the Hon. K.Hooper, the Minister for Transport and President of the Parents and Citizens Association of

the Queensland School for the Deaf and Blind. As Hooper was unwell at the time he referred the problem to his colleague the Hon. S.R. Ramsden, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly and Member for Merthyr. This was the beginning of Ramsden's involvement in the work with multiple handicapped children. Ramsden, a former Anglican priest, was and remained most sympathetic becoming after retirement from politics in 1971 Administrator of the Association. On 9 July 1958 he introduced a group of parents to the Minister for Health and Home Affairs:

While being very sympathetic, the Minister was unable to help, but promised to conduct a survey throughout Queensland, in an attempt to ascertain how many multiple handicapped children resided in the State.⁴⁸

No survey took place until 1961 when the Remedial Education Centre of the University of Queensland at the request of the Queensland Council of Social Services attempted to locate multiple handicapped children. Although various agencies were canvassed and the press used to publicise the survey the response was so poor as to suggest that an organization was unnecessary. The parents persisted, however, and a formal organization commenced activities in March 1962.

The Association elected the Minister for Health and Home Affairs as Patron, the Hon. Mr Justice Wanstall as President and a list of prominent citizens as Vice Presidents. The Council, a group of hard-working parents, was left responsible for fund-raising and the ultimate success of the Association. A group of professional people reviewed the children and young adults for admission.

The hall at Kangaroo Point was abandoned by the association in 1964 and the school moved to premises at Mountford Street New Farm. The new school had been an old people's home, partially destroyed by fire but with some restoration it served the Association until expansion forced a move to larger premises at Eight Mile Plains in 1973. In 1981 the school section of the Association became the Eight Mile Plains Special School administered by the Department of Education.

THE IMPACT OF VOLUNTARISM

The fifties saw an enormous growth in the voluntary movement driven by "women with a compulsive sense of social justice".⁴⁹ No one in the early days of any of the organizations could have envisaged their growth and development. With the exception of the Queensland Society of Crippled Children and the North Queensland Society for Crippled Children, parents dominated the organizations until such time as professionals assumed control. The move from amateurism to professionalism came with the growth and expansion of each organization.

The experience of the founders of the early voluntary organizations was put to good use by the parents of the sixties who saw their role as advocates rather than as providers. They felt it was the responsibility and the duty of the government to provide education for all children.

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- ⁵ Bleck, E.E., & Nagel, D.A., 1975 **PHYSICAL HANDICAPPED CHILDREN - A MEDICAL ATLAS FOR TEACHERS** Grune & Stratton, New York. p.229.
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- ¹⁰ Letter 46600 Crippled Children and **EDUCATION OFFICE GAZETTE** November 1932.
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- ¹⁷ Robert, born 1928 Personal Communication about 1945.
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- ¹⁹ Ward. W.B., *op cit.*, p.71..
- ²⁰ **REPORT OF THE AUSTRALIAN CONFERENCE ON CRIPPLED CHILDREN** *op.cit.* p.36.
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- ²² *ibid.* p.5.
- ²³ Department of Education File, Montrose Home, Reference Number 3122/M/88 dated 2 March 1988.
- ²⁴ **MONTROSE HOME SPECIAL SCHOOL GOLDEN JUBILEE 1934-1984** and **THE SUNDAY MAIL** Desks and Wheelchairs Mix 19 February 1978 p.21.
- ²⁵ The Minutes of the Thirty-first Annual General Meeting of The North Queensland Society for Crippled Children 17 December 1984.
- ²⁶ *ibid.* p.5.
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- ³² Discussion with W.B.Ward 1983.
- ³³ Taken from notes prepared from the records of the Queensland Spastic Welfare League for staff seminar May 1971.
- ³⁴ Details of Hilda Virginia Paul Staff Card, History Unit, Department of Education. Comment about children from Ward, W.B. *op.cit.* p.75.
- ³⁵ Patricia Connelly, B.A., Dip.Ed., Margaret Schroder, B.A., Francis Hefferan, B.A., and Michael Duggan, B.Soc.Work.
- ³⁶ Named after Sir David Longland (1909-1985) President of the Queensland Spastic League from 1963 until his death, former Chairman Public Service Board and the State's first Ombudsman.
- ³⁷ This account from Jules Moxon about 1954.
- ³⁸ Reynolds, A.R. 1982 **FROM SELF HELP TO COMPLEX ORGANIZATION : EVOLUTION OF A WELFARE ORGANIZATION WITH REGARD TO ITS GOALS** Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of Queensland.
- ³⁹ *ibid.* p.79.
- ⁴⁰ **ENDEAVOUR FOUNDATION NEWS Special 30th Anniversary Issue** Spring 1983.
- ⁴¹ Conversation with N.Collins, Executive Director of the Endeavour Foundation about 1989.

⁴² Personal Communication during the years 1954-1994.

⁴³ Clare Minchin, talk to B.Ed. Students Mt Gravatt C.A.E. 1978. Tape in Special Education Archives.

⁴⁴ **MULTICAP - THE FIRST TWENTY-ONE YEARS** The Multiple Handicapped Association 1982.

⁴⁵ *ibid.* p.11.

⁴⁶ *ibid.* p.12.

⁴⁷ Padre S. Ford, First Chairman of the Committee and parent. Personal communication about 1965.

⁴⁸ **MULTICAP - THE FIRST TWENTY-ONE YEARS** *op. cit.* 13.

⁴⁹ Dr Gregory Murphy quoted in Ward, W.B. *op.cit.* p.65. Murphy Honorary psychiatrist at the Queensland Spastic Welfare League was speaking about the mothers of cerebral palsied children.

CHAPTER 17

THE VOLUNTARY GROUPS II

POWER TO THE PARENTS IN THE SIXTIES

The fifties was the era of the service-providing voluntary agencies and this period marked a movement away from a negative view of disability with the clear demonstration that education for children with a handicap was both necessary and possible. Although initially some of the organizations were dominated by medical and physical concerns there was also a shift to a wider concern for all aspects of development with an appropriate emphasis on education. The narrow focus on a particular disability also provided opportunity for in-depth study and some research into aspects of the condition. The move from amateurism to professionalism also had benefits for the client group but created the impression of a monopoly on a particular disability. The Queensland Spastic Welfare League for example was considered the only organization with the skills and knowledge to attend to cerebral palsied people from whatever part of the State.

The government's assumption of responsibility was in the eyes of some parents too slow and took little cognisance of the rights of the child and those of the parents. The insistence by the Education Department that only those voluntary organizations who employed trained teachers would receive subsidies (and of these after 1972, only registered teachers), simplified the assumption of responsibility some years later. It also ensured

continuity of personnel in the schools and lessened conflict between the teachers and the school management.

AUTISTIC CHILDREN'S ASSOCIATION OF QUEENSLAND

Blueler (1906) used the word "autistic" as an adjective when describing isolated specific non-verbal and non-relating behaviour but it was Leo Kanner (1943) who identified an autistic syndrome in a major study and coined the noun "autism".¹ Kanner believed that the condition was likely to occur in the children of highly intelligent, introspective and emotionally cold parents and he cites cases to support this but when John Rendle-Short, Professor of Child Health at the University of Queensland, spoke about autism, perhaps one of the first to do so in Queensland, he said much to the relief of parents and their supporters:²

.....there are autistic children whose parents are affectionate, easy-going, loving and not particularly intelligent. The statement that the condition only occurs if the parents are of a particular emotional make-up is therefore undoubtedly wrong, and the original observation can probably be accounted for by unconscious case selection.

Rendle-Short encouraged parents and professionals to form an organization and commence education programs for a small group of children, firstly in temporary premises at St Lucia then later in a purpose built school at Sunnybank. The organization continued independently, rejecting the offer by the Education Department to accept responsibility for the school now located on three sites. The Autistic Children's Association had to resort to legal intervention to resolve conflict between the fund raising part of the organization and the professional staff. The

situation was eventually considered by the Chief Justice in Chambers who regarded legal action a misuse of Association finances. The problem was resolved subsequently without costly litigation.³

SPECIFIC LEARNING DISABILITIES ASSOCIATION OF QUEENSLAND SPELD

One of the external influences on the growth of special education in Queensland, mostly through his publications, and two visits here was Samuel Kirk (1904-1996) who in 1964 became the Director of the Division of Handicapped Children and Youth of the U.S.A. established by President Kennedy. Kirk had been involved in special education for most of his professional life. It was he who introduced the term "learning disabilities" in 1963:

....I have used the term "learning disabilities" to describe a group of children who have disorders in development in language, speech, reading and associated communication skills needed for social interaction. In this group, I do not include children who have sensory handicaps, such as blindness and deafness, because we have methods of managing and training the deaf and the blind. I also exclude from this group children who have generalized mental retardation.

The term was eagerly adopted by a group of Queensland parents who were anxious to find support for their children whose inexplicable failure at school caused them great anxiety. Some of these children were placed, or perhaps misplaced, in Opportunity Schools and the parent of one such child, Mrs Patricia Savage, approached the Principal of the Baroona Opportunity School, Miss Ruth Felsman (1913-1993), to try to find a solution to this problem. Ruth Felsman suggested forming an organization

to lobby the government to make special provision and so SPELD Queensland was conceived not as a service provider but as an advocacy group.

SPELD was most successful in its advocacy using networks already established by the Queensland Country Women's Association. Although SPELD was not formally constituted until 5 October 1969 some of the parents supported the establishment of an experimental class for children with severe learning disabilities at Kelvin Grove State School from the beginning of the first school term in 1968. Three of the six children selected for the first class were described as dyslexic and the others as aphasic; three children were already in attendance at Opportunity Schools. The submission to the Director General for such a class listed the children as having been administered no fewer than ten tests as part of the "full psychological and educational examination".⁴ The list probably impressed the Director General rather than the children!

Similar classes were opened at Kedron Park and Greenslopes Schools but were not extended to the country.

Remedial teachers were appointed to work on an itinerant basis, the first Edna Furey, who used public transport yet provided support for nearly forty children in three schools. A year later in 1965 another teacher was appointed and the following year a further teacher. The expansion of the work was slow, probably due to the antipathy of the Director General of Education, H.G.Watkin.

SPELD when it was established supported the work of remedial teachers and later, resource teachers. SPELD

members also petitioned local members of Parliament to have remedial teachers appointed and to have designated space provided in schools.

SPELD attracted a wide range of supporters from various disciplines. The inaugural president of SPELD was Dr Simon Latham, Senior Lecturer in Child Health within the University of Queensland. The Advisory Committee included Professor Rendle-Short, also of the Department of Child Health, with the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, Professor Eric Saint, as Patron. There were also representatives from education and child guidance.

SPELD with its newsletters, local committees and seminars created a greater awareness of the needs of the learning disabled. One of the activities in 1974, provision of funds to assist in the upgrading of a Readership in Special Education to that of a Chair at the University of Queensland, gave further impetus to the cause.

In 1975 the first resource teacher was appointed to a school. This expanded the role already established by the remedial teacher and was an attempt to provide support for the children and the class teacher without withdrawal from the classroom.

SPINA BIFIDA ASSOCIATION OF QUEENSLAND

Rembrandt's painting, The Anatomy Lesson (1632), immortalises Nicholaus Tulp the doctor who in 1652 first used the term "spina bifida", giving a clinical description of a condition which has existed throughout history and for which causes are yet to be found. Lorber (1976) quotes Ferembach (1963) who claimed that spina

bifida malformations could be found in old skeletons and that Hippocrates in the fifth century B.C. knew about the condition.

Twentieth century advances in medicine, especially in surgery and the control of infections have increased the life expectancy of children born with spina bifida. During the seventies an increasing number of children with spina bifida were appearing in Queensland schools. Some of these were in regular schools where parents, mostly mothers, visited the school regularly during the day to attend to the toilet needs of the children.

The Spina Bifida Association of Queensland Incorporated was founded in December 1969 by a group of concerned parents, relatives and friends with the assistance of Dr. J.G.Toakley, a neurosurgeon who became the first President of the management committee. In other States Crippled Children's Associations formed Spina Bifida Sub-Groups. It is not clear why this did not happen in Queensland. Dr Toakley while giving evidence to the Senate Standing Committee on Health and Welfare was asked by Senator Buttfield:

...you want to remain the Spina Bifida Association for certain reasons. Have you endeavoured to join in with any other association?

Dr Toakley replied: We do not have a Crippled Children's Association in Queensland.

It is surprising that such a statement went unchallenged as there were the Queensland Society for Crippled Children since 1932 the North Queensland Society for Crippled

Children since 1952 and the Queensland Spastic Welfare League since 1949.⁵

In the first bulletin issued by the Association Professor John Rendle-Short wrote:

In spina bifida, more general practitioners, surgeons, physiotherapists, speech therapists, occupational therapists, social workers, teachers and others, all have a vital role to play, and because of this, the parents, the most important members of the team, often become confused.

During the seventies the Department of Education agreed to provide subsidies to the Association to employ teachers, social workers and therapists to assist in the integration of children into regular schools. Because of the complex nature of the condition and the need for highly specialized personnel the Association is based in Brisbane with a visiting service into the country.

In a 1991 review of 272 children with spina bifida only twenty-two were in special schools and fewer children were required to live away from home.⁶ The proportion of children attending regular schools had increased considerably since another review in the seventies.⁷

XAVIER SOCIETY OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF BRISBANE

It is difficult to see why the Catholic Church in Queensland has not been nearly as active as in other states in the provision of special education. Apart from the provision of many primary and secondary schools and the establishment of some large orphanages the admission of Catholic children with a disability to non-Catholic institutions "with consequent great danger to their faith" does not seem to have promoted much activity until the

sixties. A few concerned Catholic parents were thought to have sent their children to special schools in the south where they would receive regular religious instruction.

The Xavier Society of the Archdiocese of Queensland purchased a large property on 388 Cavendish Road Coorparoo when it was no longer required as a repatriation centre for men returning from World War II. The Society, a Catholic Men's Society devoted to charitable works, then invited the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary to establish a hospital for the large number of Catholic children disabled as a result of the poliomyelitis epidemic. It was known initially as the Xavier Home for Crippled Children and later as the Xavier Hospital for Children. The Sisters with great difficulty, because of lack of funding and inadequate accommodation conducted a school but in 1970 the Matron of the Institution approached the State Education Department to accept the responsibility of providing teachers for a school.

The Xavier Special School commenced on 24 August 1970 and with successful applications for Commonwealth funding has been able to provide an appropriate facility with a heated pool and therapy rooms.

The school eventually accepted day pupils and when the Education Department extended its charter to include all children, Xavier school admitted children with a wider range of disabilities.

DOWN SYNDROME ASSOCIATION

The name Langdon Down is instantly recognized by every medical student, junior psychologist or new recruit to teaching in special education. The eponymous syndrome is the single most common cause of mental retardation, found in about a third of all those with severe

learning disabilities. The physical characteristics are familiar to many of the general public.⁸

Parents of Down Syndrome children were often confronted and offended by the term "mongol" first used by John Langdon Down in 1866 when, in a less racially sensitive era, it seemed acceptable enough but now a century later in disfavour it brings with it hordes of misconceptions and prejudice. The high mortality from cardiac and respiratory conditions and the obesity which appeared to be a feature of the condition have been reduced considerably by better management techniques and medical knowledge. With advances in knowledge and attitudes children with Down Syndrome have much better prospects and almost all live with their families. The earlier studies, mostly conducted on people in institutions gave depressingly poor results.

In 1959 French geneticists led by Professor Jerome Lejeune were the first to link Down syndrome with the additional chromosome but the projection that the condition would be chemically treated has not yet happened.

In 1976 the Down Syndrome Association was formed in Brisbane and aimed at establishing "programs to achieve the maximum individual potential and the integration of the Down Syndrome individual into society".⁹ The response to the submission by the Acting Director of Special Education stated that all but a few Down Syndrome children of school age were in schools conducted by the Queensland Subnormal Children's Welfare Association and that the four hundred in attendance constituted about one-third of the

total enrolment of these schools. Two of the parents were members of Parliament and were active members of the Association. One of these visited Macquarie University in Sydney and the Preston Institute of Technology in Melbourne in May 1978 in order to review experimental programs being conducted at these institutions.¹⁰

Parents objected to the "ineducable" label automatically tagged to children already stigmatized with Down syndrome and they wanted a State School to accept their children and provide an appropriate education. As a result of the visit to Sydney and Melbourne a recommendation was made to the Association and the Education Department that similar programs, involving parents, be instituted in Queensland. With the eventual assumption of control of Endeavour Foundation Schools by the Education Department, one of the aims of the Down Syndrome Association was achieved - that is, a State School Education for all children.

CATHOLIC EDUCATION CENTRE FOR DEAF CHILDREN

The first Plenary Council of Bishops of the Roman Catholic Church held in 1885 deplored the fact that there were some Catholics who would hand over their deaf and dumb children to non-Catholic institutions. It urged parents to remember their obligation to bring up their children, even though they were deaf and dumb, in the faith of their church. The Queensland School for the Deaf made provision, under State School Regulations, for religious instruction but some Catholic parents sent their deaf children to the School established by the Dominican Sisters at Newcastle established in 1888. The Dominican

Sisters also established an oral school at Portsea in Victoria in 1944 and it was from this school that a teacher and a member of the Order, appropriately named Sister Gabriel, was sent to Queensland to provide oral instruction to pre-school-aged deaf children and to establish an oral school. In an Education Department interview Sister Gabriel indicated that neither the Order nor its members had any intention of moving from the strictly oral approach. Initially children were taught with their mothers and eventually enrolled in Catholic schools and visited regularly.

The Centre received subsidy as a voluntary organization and eventually employed lay teachers whose salaries were reimbursed by the Education Department.

QUEENSLAND PARENTS OF PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY INCORPORATED

This advocacy group of parents and some people with a disability describes itself in its lobbying paper as:

..a state wide organization involved in vigorous advocacy via parent networks to ensure sons, daughters and others with disabilities, experience quality lives as respected, valued members of our communities. Our current efforts in advocacy are focussed on the development of inclusive lives for people with disabilities.¹¹

One of the founding parents, Mrs Rhonda Poulton, insisted on a regular school placement for her daughter with cerebral palsy and actively encouraged other parents to do the same. Sometimes the placement made great demands on the school, the child involved and the family but the offer of an alternative placement in a special school was

rejected. This has led to several Court challenges in recent years.¹²

The Q.P.P.D. claim that the State Government's policies and practices for the disabled have led to segregated schools and institutional living arrangements, followed by tedious days spent in sheltered workshops and eventually, isolation in family homes with ageing parents. The redressing of these policies is the aim of the Association.

THE ASSOCIATION FOR CHILDHOOD LANGUAGE AND RELATED DISORDERS - CHILD

The voluntary organization known as CHILD began as a mutual support group by Mancel Ellis Robinson in 1972. Mrs Robinson, an academic of considerable competence and understanding, organized groups of children and their parents, in firstly a private home, then a church hall at St Lucia and eventually a disused school at Fig Tree Pocket which the Association named "Glenleighdon". CHILD was formally established in September 1976 and was recognized as a non-government special school in 1982.

The Association provides assistance and support for children with severe speech and language and related disorders. The profound and often confusing nature of the disability requires a multi-disciplinary approach and parents despite frequent visits to various specialists continue to find this low incidence condition baffling.

With the aid of the Commonwealth Capital Grants Program in 1984 CHILD was able to provide a small residential facility for country children and their parents.

CHILD has a very strong parent support group as well as a professional management committee and has always rejected any proposal for the school to become part of the State system.

ASSOCIATION FOR THE WELFARE AND EDUCATION OF DEAF CHILDREN IN NORTH QUEENSLAND

When in 1972, a Townsville parent, Mrs Jill Owens was seeking help for her speech delayed but recently diagnosed hearing impaired three year old, she approached the Tracy Clinic in the United States rather than any Queensland agency since she was determined her child would learn to speak. Mrs Owens enlisted local assistance in fund raising and after forming an Association found classroom accommodation in a local Catholic school.

This North Queensland Association rejected any child with an obvious additional handicap and in an interview with the Director of Special Education Services in 1974, during which she was requesting Departmental support, Mrs Owens referred to the John Tracy Clinic and strongly advocated a "pure oral approach".¹³

The school was named "Nurrungar", an aboriginal word for listening, and in an article in the **TOWNSVILLE BULLETIN** for 13 July 1984 it was stated that the school catered for about a third of Townsville's deaf population. The President of the organization continued

The children at the school have some hearing capabilities. It is almost impossible to teach a totally deaf child to speak, and they usually go to state run institutions and learn finger language techniques." ¹⁴

The Association had a stormy relationship with some of its teachers, few lasting longer than a year. The conflict centred around strict adherence to "oralism" and the refusal to acknowledge any additional disability.

THE CHANGING ROLE OF VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATIONS

When the Advisory Council for Special Education called for submissions from voluntary organizations providing special education services, and from the parents using such services, there were 110 responses and one in particular, from the mother of a fifteen year old boy with a severe physical handicap, summed up the feelings of some parents:¹⁵

We would prefer that the government takes over the handling of education and training for handicapped children. Some voluntary facilities are well catered for, others are not, and if one agency (i.e. government) takes over, guidelines can be set down and people will know where they are. In any case, for some members of the community to be educated by the government and others not, because they are different seems like discrimination and even a lack of basic human rights. Most parents who can adequately provide for the family and its needs find it very distressing for their handicapped child to have its education provided because of the generosity of the local Lions Club.

Occasional discrepancies in the quality of schools were mentioned as were the suggestions that there was a hierarchy of disability with some conditions receiving more favoured treatment than others. Some parents of children with moderate intellectual handicap felt they were discriminated against as did parents of multiple handicapped children.

The Advisory Council for Special Education in its 1979 Report recommended to the Minister that his Department accept total responsibility for the education of all

children and that the Education Act be amended to permit this.

ARGUMENTS FOR AND AGAINST VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATIONS

In reviewing the development of voluntary organizations in Queensland it is useful to look at Wolfensberger (1973)¹⁶ who collated arguments for and against the provision of services for the disabled by such organizations rather than by government.

Too impatient for assistance that could only come when the child reached the legal, compulsory starting age for school, the parents of children with a disability, often recognizable since birth, pioneered most early education programs. The service-providing voluntary organizations consisting of directly involved, emotionally charged, concerned parents set about fund raising and establishing classes for their children in much less time than could the bureaucracies within government. Governments could not make use of unpaid labour and makeshift buildings to the same extent as the voluntary agencies.

Voluntary agencies could change their charter as demanded by the client group. The major service providers found within a few years of their establishment that their concerns expanded to include adults; services then began to include sheltered workshops and age appropriate social activities.

Against provision by voluntary organizations Wolfensberger saw a lack of flexibility. Some organizations in refusing to extend their charter gave rise to the establishment of other organizations. The growth of bureaucracy within an organization can also lead to fewer services for the

disabled, with fund raising and impressive buildings almost an end in themselves. Such bureaucracies managed by highly paid professionals exclude the parents (very often the founders) and the client group.

The government funding to voluntary organizations providing educational services to children in 1985 reached \$7.2 million. The Annual Report to Parliament said,

the Division of Special Education will continue this assistance, giving priority to programs in early education and for the severely handicapped, and in support of handicapped children in the mainstream. While developing programs, it is essential to recognise that the development of adequate and professional support for parents and staff must be a shared responsibility.

The accounting procedures of the Department of Education ensured that the claims for funding by the voluntary organizations were within the established guidelines. There was never any program accountability, an issue taken up by the Advisory Council but never resolved. Funding decreased to some voluntary organizations when the Education Department assumed responsibility for their schools, but still continues to the two organizations who go on maintaining schools. To those who provide support to enable students to attend school, funding is available.

Voluntary organizations have played a major role in the development of educational services for the disabled. Their advocacy role as the community conscience will have to continue to ensure educational provision for students with a disability is a reality.

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- ⁶ Swan, Geoffrey, 1991, **REVIEW OF SERVICES TO CHILDREN AND YOUNG ADULTS : CENTRALIZATION OR REGIONALIZATION** Spina Bifida Association of Queensland Incorporated.
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- ⁸ Down, J. Langdon, 1887 **MENTAL AFFECTIONS OF CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH** Reprinted Classics in Developmental Medicine 1990 Mackeith Press Blackwell Scientific Publications Ltd., Oxford. p.i.
- ⁹ **WHAT ABOUT DOWN'S SYNDROME** A Submission to the Queensland Government from the Down's Syndrome Association, September 1977.
- ¹⁰ The two parents Guelfi Scassola M.L.A. Mt Gravatt & Beryce Nelson, M.L.A., Aspley. Mrs Nelson visited Sydney and Melbourne on behalf of the parents and made the report. Copy on Association File, Education Department.
- ¹¹ Queensland Parents of People with a Disability Inc. **INCLUSIVE LIVES LOBBYING PAPER** March 1995, p.1.
- ¹² **THE COURIER-MAIL** 10 August 1995 School's walkout threat in disabled girl row. p.1.
- ¹³ Interview with Director of Special Education Services and Mrs Owens of the North Queensland Society for the Welfare of Deaf Children about November 1974. Tape in Special Education Division.
- ¹⁴ **TOWNSVILLE BULLETIN** 3 July 1984 The article was headed **Charity of the Month**.
- ¹⁵ Advisory Council for Special Education 1979 **THE ROLES OF GOVERNMENT AND THE VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATIONS IN THE EDUCATION OF HANDICAPPED CHILDREN IN QUEENSLAND** A Report to the Minister.p.36.
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CHAPTER 18

THE SEVENTIES AND BEYOND

NEW DIRECTIONS AND NEW DIMENSIONS

With the subsequent chapters the discussion about contemporary developments will centre around reports, issues and trends and apart from naming individuals associated with these no attempt will be made to assess their contribution to the development and growth of special education or to provide any biographical detail. Greater objectivity in interpretation and evaluation of people and indeed events of recent times can be undertaken only by those more removed in time and place.

THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

In 1959 the **DECLARATION OF THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD** stated that

the child who is physically, mentally or socially handicapped shall be given the special treatment, education and care required by his particular condition.

and later in 1971 in the **DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF MENTALLY RETARDED PERSONS** the focus was much sharper:

The mentally retarded person has a right to proper medical care and physical therapy and to such education, training, rehabilitation, guidance and training as will enable him to develop his ability and maximum potential.

Queensland special educators also read with more than usual interest the 1968 article by L.M.Dunn of the United States who posed the question "Special education for the mildly retarded: is much of it justifiable?"¹ Dunn raised such issues as the viability of special classes and the

over representation in some classes of children of ethnic minorities. **THE LAST TO COME IN**², a Report issued by the United Kingdom Department of Education and Science in 1971, focussed on the implications of the **EDUCATION (HANDICAPPED CHILDREN) ACT 1970** which made universal compulsory education a reality for all children exactly one hundred years after the **EDUCATION ACT 1870**. These articles formed the basis of discussion at the conference for Principals of Special Schools and Senior Guidance Officers held at the Gold Coast in 1973 and in the words of one guidance officer "these articles had a profound effect on our thinking and practice about the placement of some children in special classes". The Principals of schools for the mildly intellectually retarded expressed some concern about the lowering of intelligence in some admissions to their schools but the change in provision had a momentum of its own, with policy statements to justify the inevitable following later. The United States Public Law 94-142 (the 142nd Bill passed by the 94th Congress passed in 1975 and since 1990 known as IDEA the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) provided further impetus and terms such as "individual education program" (IEP) and "least restrictive environment" became part of the Queensland special education terminology. "Special educational needs" came a few years later with the publication of the Warnock Report in the United Kingdom.³ The Special Education Division of the Department of Education considered the implications of this Report so important that an occasional paper was prepared and sent to all schools.⁴ The Queensland Special Education

Association and the Australian Group for the Scientific Study of Mental Deficiency sponsored a public meeting addressed by G.V.Cooke, the Vice Chairman of the Warnock Inquiry and County Education Officer, Lincolnshire. His address was printed in an occasional paper and distributed to all schools.⁵

PROGRESS AND CHANGE

That section of the Minister's 1970 Annual Report to Parliament dealing with special education listed the achievements for the year, indicating that 2579 children were receiving special education in twenty-seven centres, whilst new classes had been attached to the Primary Schools as far apart as Atherton and Beaudesert; extra classes had been added to the existing ones at Windsor and Greenslopes, and surveys conducted on the Gold Coast and in the towns of Ingham and Kingaroy.

The Minister also reported that the Queensland School for the Deaf would soon be completely rebuilt and free transport provided for children attending the school. There was also a reference to the Private Accommodation Scheme under which children would be able to board with host families, this providing an alternative to living at the school. It was somewhat reminiscent of the "boarding-out" scheme introduced as the all important low cost alternative to orphanages, a century earlier. The twentieth century approach stressed the social benefits.

Remedial education according to the Report was available to 360 children in thirteen centres and for the learning disabled an additional class was established in Brisbane.

The statistical data in the Education Office Gazette for the same period stated that 276 teachers were employed in special education - 105 male and 276 female.

The new classes at Atherton and Beaudesert began in abandoned Home Economics/Manual Arts facilities as had the other nine attached classes at other places. Both teachers and children adjusted well to the spacious areas and made good use of the resources but it seemed to workers in the field that the availability of space without much cost was the motivating factor rather than the special education need.

The surveys mentioned in the 1970 report were undertaken by a group of guidance officers, their program being to visit a town, peruse lists (provided by Head Teachers) of children failing in school, administer intelligence tests and some attainment tests (in reading, spelling and basic arithmetic) and interview parents of the children regarded as mildly intellectually disabled who were anxiously seeking the promised service in the opportunity classes. One teacher described the procedure, usually completed within a three week period, as being undertaken "with indecent haste" suggesting the Department of Education simply made use of the "cuckoo principle" in its seizure of available space to provide accommodation for the classes. Teachers in the regular schools although happy to see their lower achieving pupils removed had little to say about the nature of the process but always cooperated by providing a report on the child's progress, or more likely lack of progress, in the school. The procedure of

"recruitment" had not changed greatly since the time of Bevington and Sheehy in the twenties. With the regionalization and expansion of guidance services such procedures were changed and the need for recruitment sorties disappeared.

The thirteen classes attached to primary schools during 1976 had a combined enrolment of 458. Some of the classes attached, namely Warwick, Innisfail, Biloela and Charleville, had enrolments of over three per cent of the school population suggesting a greater incidence of mildly intellectually disabled children than the accepted two per cent. There were also children in all but one of the classes who were of secondary school age, that is, aged between thirteen years and seventeen years. The age inappropriateness of this was of concern to some teachers as was the low intelligence levels of some pupils, particularly in areas where the Subnormal Children's Welfare Association had not established schools. This was particularly noticeable in Gladstone and Warwick.⁶ In some places, notably Cairns and Charleville, there was an over representation of aboriginal children and in Rockhampton nearly half the children came from the "orphanages".⁷ The teacher-in-charge of the Warwick Classes in co-operation with the Principal of the Warwick State High School moved the class of secondary aged children to the adjacent Warwick State High School. This was a local initiative, approved after its implementation by the Regional Director and the Director of Special Education. This practice was repeated in other places

providing an age-appropriate setting for older students, enhancing self esteem and behaviour in the students.⁸

The seventies also saw a change in the administration of special education. William Wood who had been Director of Special Education services from 1958 until 1970 and prior to that Principal Research and Guidance Officer since 1949 was appointed Chairman of the Board of Advanced Education. The Directorship passed to George Fitzhardinge Berkeley (1926-1993) who held the position until 1975 when he was promoted to the position of Assistant Director General.⁹

Berkeley during his first year in office made two very significant decisions; one in concert with the senior officers responsible for special education in other states resolved to discontinue the use of the term "ineducable" in relation to children of low intelligence;¹⁰ the other was to have the budget restructured giving special education a distinct budgetary provision. It is difficult to ascertain why this had not happened sooner. Up until this time special education formed part of the primary school budget.

Berkeley presented a paper **GOVERNMENT SERVICES FOR THE EDUCATION OF THE MILDLY MENTALLY RETARDED IN QUEENSLAND** at the Seminar of the Australian Association for the Mentally Retarded held in Melbourne in June 1972 in which he outlined the development of special schools and classes and stated with some pride, one suspects, "the gap between the provision and need is likely to be reduced well within the present decade". Plans were in hand to provide sufficient places for the estimated two per cent

of the school population considered mildly mentally retarded. Reference was also made to teacher training, curriculum development and the provision of special school buildings with class rooms that could facilitate an open-area approach to teaching. This open-area approach was often translated simply into an absence of walls (cost cutting?), a situation which many teachers and indeed pupils in special schools found difficult and confusing because of the additional visual and auditory stimuli and the interaction with a larger number of people.

THE COMMONWEALTH INVOLVEMENT

The Senate Standing Committee on Health and Welfare issued a report in 1971, **MENTALLY AND PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED PERSONS IN AUSTRALIA** in which it was said

no child is ineducable and many witnesses felt that at the present it was inappropriate for State Health or Mental Health Departments to provide and administer educational facilities such as Day Training Centres. The provision of these facilities is the prerogative of the Education Departments, and those states not already doing so should transfer responsibility for the education of handicapped children to their Education Departments.¹¹

After the election on 2 December 1972 Australians had a new Commonwealth Labor Government led by Edward Gough Whitlam (born 1916). With it came a considerably increased role in education by the Commonwealth Government through the Australian Schools Commission. Whitlam wrote some time later:

My Government, through its special education program, was the first national Government to provide funds to improve the education of handicapped children, which had been grossly neglected by all Governments. Some State Governments did not assume any responsibility for the education of the handicapped. Teachers, especially in non-government schools, were poorly

qualified as no special tertiary courses were available to them. In 1973 capital funds and assistance with running costs were made available for the education of handicapped children, a large training program was initiated for teachers and basic training and research were financed for the area of special education.¹²

About a year after its appointment the interim committee of the Australian Schools Commission published in May 1963 its report, **SCHOOLS IN AUSTRALIA**, recommending funding for non-government special schools. This funding enhanced the subsidies already paid by the State government and also made provision for the State to assume responsibility for those schools conducted by voluntary organizations. It was pointed out that "the diffusion of effort and resources ..is wasteful and often deleterious to the education of the children concerned."¹³

A further reminder of the State's special education responsibility came some years later with the publication of the report by the **ROYAL COMMISSION ON HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS 1977**

As recommended by the Karmel Committee, Education Departments should assume responsibility for educating children in institutions and in hospitals and greater subsidies should be given to voluntary schools. Education Departments also need to assume responsibilities for handicapped children from the time they can first benefit from educational programs.¹⁴

We are concerned about the apparent lack of educational facilities for children of normal intelligence who are receiving long-term medical care in hospitals or institutions. We are equally concerned about the lack of schooling for many children in institutions for the mentally handicapped. Education Departments should ensure that not one child is missing out on appropriate schooling.¹⁵

The impact of Commonwealth Government advice, some of it accompanied by financial support, brought about a remarkable increase in special education services.

Commonwealth funding prompted improvements in the State Special School at the Royal Children's Hospital which had functioned since 1919 after a successful deputation from what was then called the Brisbane Hospital for Sick Children. The Deputation leader's remarks make an interesting comment on the thinking and conditions of the time:¹⁶

Dr Turner explained that children were often in hospital for very long periods - a year, or two years, or even longer.....their only chance of life was long treatment in hospital.....the teaching would do the children very much good physically as well as mentally.....When these crippled children grow up they will not be able to do physical work; if they are to earn their living and not be a burden upon the State they must do so by using their brains.

The school commenced on a verandah adjacent to the Children's Ward but after 1926 occupied a small school building transported from Victoria Point. A suggestion that a school would help in the treatment of long-term sick children was made in 1913 by the Hospital's first honorary physiotherapist, Miss Evelyn Wilson. The need for an enlarged facility was made apparent in 1973 by Dr Simon Latham, Deputy Superintendent of the Hospital. After several years of planning a new school was built with Commonwealth funds and opened in June 1977. By the time the school was completed advances in the treatment of sick children had reduced the time of stay in hospital.

Another State Special School was built at the Mater Children's Hospital, conducted by the Sisters of Mercy, a Roman Catholic Order, and opened at the end of 1977.

Special Education Units were opened in institutions caring for severely handicapped children and acknowledgment of the significant contribution of the Commonwealth in providing education for children not previously catered for was given in the Annual Report:¹⁷

In 1982 the Commonwealth Schools Commission again provided funding for the SHEPARD (Severely Handicapped Education Programs and Resource Programs Development) Program. A joint management committee representing Education, Health, Welfare and non-government agencies saw to the disbursement of \$404,000 to seventeen projects. Three of these projects provided information and guidance to professionals on a Statewide basis. Remaining projects provided educational programs for children in Cairns, Townsville, Mackay, Rockhampton, Maryborough, North Coast, South Coast Brisbane and Toowoomba.

Parents of country children were responsible for the opening of an Isolated Children's Special Education Unit. The Unit commenced activity in a some unused classrooms at Taringa State School to be removed later to a section of the Primary Correspondence School. The Unit in a very short time was providing assistance to 700 children, most of them enrolled in the Primary Correspondence School and needing special assistance.¹⁸

To assist in the coordination of the various Commonwealth-funded programs the Special Education Co-operative

Workshop was established in part of the now disused residential section of the Queensland School for the Deaf. It was replaced by the Low Incidence Support Centre in 1992.

TEACHER PREPARATION

Women teachers were to receive the same rates of pay as men from the beginning of 1971. The decision to grant equal pay for women teachers came after successful application to the Industrial Court by the Queensland Teachers Union in August 1967. Previous unsuccessful claims had been made in 1919, 1920, 1924, 1926 and 1948. The case for women teachers in special education was part of the Union's submission to the Court. The Department of Education's response to the claim somewhat devalued the nature of the work: it was suggested that women were ideally suited to the child minding nature of the work, that it gave them considerable maternal satisfaction and that they were altruistically motivated for a task that was not essentially teaching.¹⁹ The decision for equal pay however was phased in over a four year period. Married women teachers after 1973 were allowed permanent status within the Department. Prior to this the rule was "resignation upon marriage", interrupting the continuity of service.

The Board of Advanced Education, which had been established in 1971, became responsible the following year for the four Teachers Colleges at Kelvin Grove (this particular site the College's fourth and final home since it was established in 1914); Kedron Park College

established in 1961 and the Colleges at Mt. Gravatt and Townsville both established in 1967.

1971 was also the year in which the Murphy Report on Teacher Education was published. G.K.D. Murphy (1906-1976) was Director General of Education at the time and chaired the committee set up by the Minister J.C.A.Pizzey to review teacher education in Queensland.²⁰

The Queensland Special Schools Association made a carefully documented submission to the Murphy Committee expressing concern about the need for training of special educators:

The Queensland Special Schools Association is highly disturbed by the lack of professional education of teachers for their extremely important and exacting duties in special education. Most, if not all, teachers enter the various branches of special education without specific qualifications for teaching exceptional children.²¹

The document was well received by the committee, the Chairman and two of its members later commenting favourably on its professionalism, documentation and recommendations, some of which appeared in the Report.²²

The interim report recommended

1. that a minimum of three years of basic preparation for primary school teachers be adopted and that this extension of training be introduced with a proportion of the 1969 intake of teachers colleges;
2. that teachers successfully completing the three-year course proceed to the equivalent of the present I.1 classification without the necessity of undertaking further study; and
3. that the opportunities for the continuing education of teachers be enlarged and that there be provision for the recognition of higher qualifications for teachers.

On the 8 July 1968 the Acting Minister for Education announced the Government's adoption of the recommendation.²³

This remarkable change in the preparation of teachers at Colleges no longer fiscally or philosophically attached to the Department of Education also had implications for the preparation of teachers in special education.

In May 1969 at the National Conference of the Australian Council for the Rehabilitation of the Disabled, Professor Hugh Philip of Macquarie University delivered a paper on the preparation of teachers of the handicapped, concluding "if there is one word which sums up one's evaluation of the current scene it would be - 'deplorable'."²⁴

The very limited offerings in special education at Australian tertiary institutions prior to the seventies were listed by Philip and later, when reviewing the training of special educators in Australian tertiary institutions, Atkinson and Andrews wrote²⁵

Before the 1970's, little emphasis had been placed by education authorities and tertiary institutions on the preparation of teachers to work with exceptional children. The courses that were offered included training courses instituted by national teacher organizations for children with sensory handicaps, the training of teachers of the deaf and teachers for special schools in Victoria, teachers of the deaf and supervisors in training centres for mentally retarded children in New South Wales, and remedial teachers and teachers of moderately to severely mentally retarded children in Queensland.

Some teachers of the deaf fared better than most when they were selected to study at the Training Centre for Teachers of the Deaf in Melbourne. Between 1954 and 1971 nineteen

Queensland teachers had been selected to study at the Centre established after the Ewing's visit in 1950. The teachers had already completed their basic training and had had several years in the classroom before secondment. Just four years after commencing the scheme the Minister reported to Parliament:²⁶

During the past four years, the Department has adopted the policy of sending a limited number of selected teachers to Victoria each year to undertake a full year's specialised study in the education of the deaf. This policy is bearing fruit as the school is quickly building up a staff of specially trained teachers.

A review of the careers of the teachers selected during this time is impressive. Their subsequent academic and professional success is outstanding but most had to move out of special education, due to the lack of promotional opportunities, to enhance their careers.²⁷

Some teachers in opportunity schools and in schools for the physically handicapped from 1955 until the course was discontinued in 1974 undertook the ten week course devised by Professor Fred Schonell. Although this course in diagnostic testing and remedial teaching was not designed for teachers of mildly intellectually disabled children it did provide a useful starting point for future studies and some of the material offered had some applicability. The Submission by the Queensland Special Schools Association commented "admirable though it may be, (this course) is not entirely adequate for the education of teachers of slow learning children." Some teachers in schools conducted by the Queensland Subnormal Children's Association completed the Certificate Course in the

Teaching and Training of Subnormal Children offered by the University of Queensland from 1954 until 1972. Much of the teaching for this one year full time course was centred on Bowen House. Full time secondment of state teachers for this course at this time would have been considered inappropriate.

The Murphy Report (1971) recommended a three year course for those wishing to teach in special schools; the first year of the course would be as for primary education, the second and third years would be devoted to special education. A two year part-time course was to be introduced for teachers of the deaf and a ten week full-time course for trained primary school teachers wanting to teach in opportunity schools. This was afterwards extended to a two semester course. The special education courses recommended by Murphy commenced in 1968 at Kedron Park Teachers' College where Andrew Nimmo was foundation Principal. The courses and the students moved with Nimmo to Mt Gravatt Teachers' College when it opened in 1969. With financial assistance from the Commonwealth full time secondment of teachers to undertake courses in special education became a reality. Teachers from primary and secondary schools were recruited for courses and eventually for positions in special schools. It was also possible for University graduates to take a one year course in special education and occasionally these were graduates in either speech, occupational or physiotherapy.

The College also offered pre-service courses to selected students in four areas; mildly intellectually handicapped, physically handicapped, hearing impaired and visually handicapped. These courses provided a regular supply of young, energetic and enthusiastic teachers some of whom have had outstanding careers in special education.

The Annual Reports to Parliament from 1973 until 1987 contain details of the numbers of teachers seconded to study special education at Mt Gravatt, James Cook University and Darling Downs Institute of Advanced Education. Full time secondment was discontinued in 1988 and replaced by part-time inservice courses.

ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION

The establishment of the Advisory Council for Special Education Needs was approved by the Queensland Cabinet on 11 May 1976. The terms of reference provided to the new Council were:

- (a) to report to and advise the Minister and Government on matters relating to special education.
- (b) to advise and assist in development of tertiary programs.
- (c) to rationalise efforts of State and Commonwealth Departments and voluntary organizations within the field of special education.
- (d) to provide liaison between professionals and the community.
- (e) to provide professional arbitration in the field of special education.
- (f) to undertake such other functions in the field of special education as the Minister from time to time determines.

Other states, namely, Victoria and New South Wales, had Advisory Councils for Special Education and the suggestion

that a Council be established in Queensland came during the 1976 State election campaign by the National/Liberal Party which was returned to power. The first Chair of the Council was Professor Betty Watts, of the Schonell Education Research Centre of the University of Queensland. The Council body consisted of parent representatives, representatives of organizations associated with special education and nominees of each of the Ministers for Health and Children's Services. The Council was given no budget but secretarial services and limited expenses were provided by the Division of Special Education. On several occasions during its first and second terms the Advisory Council requested the Minister to make it a statutory body giving it greater autonomy and independence as well as a separate budget. This request was successfully resisted with certain officers of the Department of Education convincing the Minister that the focus of control of special education would move away from the Director as had happened in secondary education with the establishment of the Board of Secondary School Studies in 1971.²⁸

Despite the lack of adequate funding and staff the Advisory Council in its first term provided some well documented advice to the Minister about voluntary organizations, teachers in special schools and teacher education. The Advisory Council Report was given space in the 1979 Annual Report to Parliament²⁹

The recommendations contained what the Council sees as a practical and necessary way to ensure that all handicapped children in Queensland receive appropriate education, and that a rationalisation of special education services and economies in providing special education are achieved. These recommendations refer

to a wide range of actions which Council believes should be undertaken as soon as possible.

The Second Council, appointed 1981, reported to the Minister on the early identification of handicap in childhood and the implications of the needs of the severely handicapped. Again it addressed teacher education, especially with regard to assisting teachers in regular schools develop the skills and techniques necessary for integrating children with a disability. A Services Directory, **CHILDREN AND YOUTH WITH SPECIAL NEEDS IN EDUCATION, HEALTH AND WELFARE**, was published by the Council in May 1981 in an attempt "to assist professional and agencies in the education, health and welfare areas to make more relevant referrals to a range of services." The Directory was widely distributed and used.

Other matters in Advisory Council Reports pertained to therapy services in schools, educational programs in hospitals for severely handicapped adults, integration of disabled students into regular schools and reform of schools to accommodate low achieving students

The Fifth Council appointed in January 1993 was to report to the Director General instead of as previously to the Minister. Patrick Comben, the Minister at the time, thought it more appropriate that he should receive all advice through the Director General. The change may have reduced the efficacy of the Council with its advice having

to be filtered through a Director General whose priorities might be directed elsewhere.

The recommendations made by earlier Councils, namely assumption of control of schools conducted by voluntary organizations and changes to the Education Act, were over time implemented.

Members of the Council received no allowances and served either in their own time or in time generously provided by their employers.

THE COST OF SPECIAL EDUCATION

Special educators are often reluctant to discuss financial matters. The economic benefit of special education has been used on occasion to justify expenditure. Bevington in 1922 in his first minute recommending provision for the "backward" wrote "the cost will not be great.....the students will become economically independent and will not be a burden on the State". Similar responses continued to be given to justify expenditure in other areas of disability.

ESTIMATED RECURRENT COST PER PUPIL IN DOLLARS FOR PRE-SCHOOL, PRIMARY, SPECIAL AND SECONDARY EDUCATION IN QUEENSLAND 1973-4 TO 1981-2

Year	Pre School	Primary	Special	Secondary
1973-74		435	1275	725
1974-75		617	2135	1014
1975-76	646	807	2863	1241
1976-77	677	935	3542	1462
1977-78	752	1065	4009	1619
1978-79	793	1094	4425	1706
1979-80	887	1189	5559	1892
1980-81	1039	1347	7089	2223
1981-82	1152	1516	8379	2492

The table showing the recurrent cost per pupil from 1973 until 1982 in the four divisions of education was shown in the 1982 Department of Education Report to Parliament.³⁰ A perusal of the figures shows that the cost per pupil for preschool education almost doubled while that of primary increased almost four times; that of secondary over three times, while special became seven times as costly. The publication of similar tables was discontinued, "misinterpretation and questionable usefulness" being given as reasons.³¹

The most recent estimate of expenditure on special education appeared in the report prepared for the Metropolitan East Education Region.³² The annual cost per student ranged from \$12,700 for some students in special education to \$43,600 for multiple handicapped students. These figures were based on expenditure for 1992 as were the figures quoted in the Wilshire Report \$17,296 (special) \$2,772 (primary) and \$4,345 (secondary).³³

Justification of expenditure in some areas of special education may well become an issue for the future.

EXCEPTIONAL YEARS FOR EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN

Excitement and growth marked the seventies and the eighties. Reports to Parliament list the opening of numerous schools and units. Members of Parliament regarded it as politically prestigious to have as many special education facilities as possible in their electorates. Courses in special education were offered in

most tertiary institutions and many teachers were involved.

Advances in technology were not ignored, neither were the arts or outdoor education. Innovation and experiment were encouraged and the goal of integration seemed closer.

¹ Dunn, L.M., 1968 **Special Education for the Mildly Retarded - Is Much of it Justified?** **EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN** 35.1. p.5-22.

² Department of Education and Science 1971 **THE LAST TO COME IN REPORTS ON EDUCATION** NO 69, H.M.S.O., London.

³ Warnock, H.M., Chairman, 1978 **SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS Report of the Committee of Enquiry into the Education of Handicapped Children and Young People** H.M.S.O., London.

⁴ Document No 39 Information and Publications Branch, Department of Education, Queensland.

⁵ Cooke, G.V., 1979 **THE WARNOCK REPORT : IMPLICATIONS FOR PROVISION FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES** Occasional Paper No. 11, Bardon Professional Development Centre.

⁶ Swan, G.J., 1978 **OPPORTUNITY CLASSES - ALTERNATIVES** Unpublished M.Ed.Studies Thesis, University of Queensland. p.76.

⁷ Swan, G.J., Inspector of Schools Field Book.

⁸ Rasmussen, S.R. & Kelly, R.E., 1980 **The Establishment and Evaluation of 9A7 - A Special Education Class Located in Warwick State High School THE WHAT AND HOW FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION IN THE 80'S** Special Education Conference Proceedings Toowoomba.

⁹ William Wood, Director from 17.04.1958 until 05.11.1970 and George Fitzhardinge Berkeley from 14.01.1971 until 28.04.1975 when he became Assistant Director General. Information from History Unit, Department

¹⁰ Senate Standing Committee on Health and Welfare 1971 **MENTALLY AND PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED PERSONS IN AUSTRALIA** p.25.

¹¹ *ibid.* p.21.

¹² Whitlam, E.G., 1985 **THE WHITLAM GOVERNMENT 1972-1975** Penguin Books, Ringwood, Victoria.

¹³ **SCHOOLS IN AUSTRALIA 1973** Interim Report of the Australian Schools Commission, P. Karmel Chairman.

¹⁴ **ROYAL COMMISSION ON HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS 1977** Vol. 5. p.124.

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- ¹⁵ *ibid.* p.128
- ¹⁶ **THE 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE STATE SPECIAL SCHOOL ROYAL CHILDRENS HOSPITAL 1919-1994** Published by the School Staff 1994. p.15.
- ¹⁷ **SCHOOLS IN AUSTRALIA** *op.cit.* p.111.
- ¹⁸ **DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION ANNUAL REPORT 1982** Government Printer Brisbane. p.23.
- ¹⁹ Geoffrey Swan appeared on behalf of women teachers and assisted in the preparation of the plaint.
- ²⁰ Murphy, G.K.D., 1971 **TEACHER EDUCATION IN QUEENSLAND** Department of Education, Queensland.
- ²¹ **QUEENSLAND SPECIAL SCHOOLS ASSOCIATION** Submission to the Committee to Review Teacher Education in Queensland. p.2
- ²² Murphy, G.K.D., Wood, W., and Berkeley, G.F., to Principals November 1967.
- ²³ *ibid.* p74 and p.77.
- ²⁴ Philip, H., 1969 **The Preparation of Teachers of the Handicapped** in **PROCEEDINGS CONFERENCE AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR THE REHABILITATION OF THE DISABLED** Sydney.
- ²⁵ Andrews, R.J., & Atkinson, J.K., 1976 **The Training of Teachers in Australian Tertiary Institutions** **THE EXCEPTIONAL CHILD** Vol. 13 No 3 November 1976 p.175.
- ²⁶ Q.P.P. 1957-58. p.694.
- ²⁷ The Names are listed in Duerdoth, P., Vlahogiannis, N., 1992 **MORE THAN A SCHOOL Glendonald School for Deaf Children 1951-1991** Victoria College Press, Burwood Victoria.
- ²⁸ Personal communication P.M.Briody, Director of Special Education 19.05.1975 - 06.07.1978.
- ²⁹ **ANNUAL REPORT TO PARLIAMENT 1979** Department of Education, Brisbane. p.21.
- ³⁰ **ANNUAL REPORT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION 1982** Queensland. p.51.
- ³¹ Information Officer, Department of Education, November 1995.
- ³² Andrews, R.J., Elkins, J., and Christie, R.J., 1993 **REPORT AND OPERATIONAL PLAN FOR THE PROVISION OF SPECIAL EDUCATION 1993-1996 METROPOLITAN EAST EDUCATION REGION** Robert J. Andrews and Associates, Paradise Point, Queensland.
- ³³ Wiltshire, K.J., Chairman, 1994 **SHAPING THE FUTURE Report of the Review of the Queensland School Curriculum 1994** Government Printer, Queensland.

CHAPTER 19

CONCLUSION

"I was thinking", Alice said very politely, "which is the best way out of this wood: it's getting so dark....." Alice meets Tweedledum and Tweedledee, from **THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS** Lewis Carroll 1890.

Part of our problem today is that we have a surplus of simple answers, and a shortage of simple problems. quoted by Wolfensberger from the **SYRACUSE DAILY POST** 12 November 1976.

The instruction which most children received over a century ago (if they attended school at all), could hardly be termed appropriate. Indeed it could be said that the generally, primitive state of knowledge about teaching and learning at that time made school an unhappy place for a number of children and particularly those we would now term as "learning disabled".

Many physically handicapped children were for convenience placed in institutions where even here they were often regarded as misplaced, their requirements illmet and their future no one's concern. This practice persisted until into the twentieth century.

Due to their handicap, there were children who did not survive childhood. Advances in medical science - those saving the traumatically born, those preventing handicapping conditions - were yet to come.

Providing education for the children outside the perceived norm was not an automatic government responsibility even though the **1875 EDUCATION ACT** had promised free, compulsory and secular education. The authors of the Act

Sir Charles Lilley and Sir Samuel Walker Griffith did not see their encompassing Act as including the disabled. Nevertheless Griffith spoke highly of Tighe's work and Lilley became involved much later in the State's first voluntary organization. It took various forms of individual and public concerns to wrest parsimonious subsidies from treasury. Schooling, and that only within the strict limitations of the 1875 Education Act, was a more difficult achievement.

The first to receive attention in Queensland, as elsewhere, were the children with sensory disabilities. Until the Queensland Institution for the Blind, Deaf and Dumb opened in 1893, groups of deaf and blind children were sent to the New South Wales Institution for the Deaf, Dumb and the Blind founded by a deaf man Thomas Pattison. The pioneering work of the blind John William Tighe, firstly as an itinerant teacher of the blind, marked the beginning of special education in Queensland. Tighe's energy and enthusiasm convinced and prompted the citizens of Brisbane and eventually the Government of the day to assist financially. His stay in Queensland was not long enough for him to establish a school but he started the movement that eventually did.

Ideas about special education have depended on developments in other places, particularly Britain and the United States of America and in this regard Edith Bryan's appointment to the Queensland School for the Blind and the Deaf provided a very significant link with those traditions and movements. Technical advances in communication enhanced this link.

The early twentieth century was dominated by the eugenics debate on the risks to society from "degenerates". A concern was voiced for "social efficiency" which required the elimination of "undesirable types". The "undesirables" included many people with physical and intellectual handicaps from whom society had to be protected. For society's good, and their own good, segregation was necessary.

A report from Queensland's first Medical Inspector of Schools (appointed 1912) of a significant number of "mentally deficient" children brought no action until 1923, even though the presence of handicapped children in a class was seen as an inhibitor to the general progress of the class.

Concern for the group currently called the "mildly intellectually disabled" prompted the first government initiative in special education in Queensland. This required advocates within the system. John Saunders Huxham, the Minister for Education and William Faulkner Bevington, Inspector of Schools, saw their Backward Classes as a temporary placement. The classes developed into segregated settings but an attempt at providing for two small groups of moderately/severely handicapped boys was abandoned. Girls were better left at home to their mothers' tuition. With the removal of the close supervision of Bevington the Opportunity Classes lost their original function of rehabilitation and it was not until the establishment of the Research and Guidance Branch that the perceived lines of "educability" were clearly drawn.

The rejection by the Department of Public Instruction of children considered "ineducable", making use of the **1938 BACKWARD PERSONS ACT**, prompted the resurgence of the voluntary movement with the formation of the Subnormal Childrens Welfare Association. The first President, Professor Fred Schonell, foundation incumbent of the Chair of Education (1950) at the University of Queensland provided leadership and inspiration in many directions, not the least being special education.

The fifties and sixties saw an expansion in the number of schools and classes for the mildly intellectually disabled. Most of the State's special education resources were devoted to this group, teachers were given special training, curricula were developed to enhance work and employment skills and local committees formed to assist in job placement.

By this time the Queensland Society for Crippled Children, founded in the thirties as a result of earlier poliomyelitis epidemics, was rejecting children regarded as unsuitable, hence the foundation of the Queensland Spastic Welfare League and the involvement of Dr Eleanor Schonell. Rejection of Children regarded as multiple handicapped by the already established voluntary organization, prompted another group - the Multiple Handicapped Association.

The success of the voluntary organizations in establishing specific purpose schools reflected their skill as fund raisers and their political effectiveness as advocacy groups.

The provision of segregated schools satisfied the parents up until the seventies. Indeed a school of any kind would have done this, for those long denied access.

Very likely few regular schools could produce a parent body so conversant with the rights to education, the curricula, the goals, opportunities and the new trends in education both local and beyond. The segregated school to many parents seemed but a step to the regular school where the long disadvantaged child might become part of the mainstream and not really very different from any other child in the school.

With the growth of special schools and classes central administration developed; firstly the Research and Guidance Branch in 1949, later the Division of Special Education Services in 1958 and eventually in 1975 a Division of Special Education. Clear lines of communication were established and made accessible to teachers and parents. Separate Divisions existed for the primary, secondary, preschool and special education each with its own Director.

As in other states and in other parts of the world the existing efficiency and effectiveness of the bureaucratic structure for the administration of education was being questioned. In Queensland the increasing authority of the regional officers and the demand for greater community involvement prompted the Queensland Department of Education in 1986 to produce a discussion paper **EDUCATION 2000**. Subsequent papers and reviews brought about some changes in the structure of the Education Department. A new Government in December 1989 brought about a further

restructuring of the Department of Education which resulted in the disappearance of the Division of Special Education and too the other Divisions.

Special education was subsumed in a Studies Directorate, as were the other Divisions of Pre-school, Primary and Secondary Education.

Berkeley, a former Director of Special Education Services and eventually Director General of Education in Queensland, wrote in 1991¹

If Rip van Winkle had been an Australian educational administrator in the 1950s and had awoken from his sleep in the 1990s, he would probably have had great difficulty in recognizing whatever State Education Department he had worked in. He would not have had any problem had he awoken in the seventies but throughout the eighties what some would call the 'virus restructurus' had certainly struck in a number of places.

The 1992 Report of the Department of Education to Parliament (now prepared by the Media and Information Section of the restructured Department and written by journalists) states the goal of the Special Education Sub-program "to provide an education that is developmentally and age appropriate to children with special needs". Because the current Reports do not contain the kind of detail and statistical data featured in earlier Reports future historians will have to look elsewhere for such data.

Parents of children in need of special education and their supporters always wanted their children's rights enshrined in law. Did the 1989 Act do this?

THE EDUCATION (GENERAL PROVISIONS) ACT 1989 defines a student as "a person enrolled in a school or registered

in any other educational institution, or a person who, in the opinion of the Minister, is a student, is a student for the purpose of this Act".

With student status in question are there real hopes in **THE ANTI-DISCRIMINATION ACT 1991** which states that no person may be subjected to discrimination because of an impairment; or in the **DISABILITY SERVICES ACT 1992** which affirms the principle that people with disabilities have the same rights as others?

Even with these Acts there is still no guarantee that every child with special needs will receive an appropriate education. Legislation is framed according to Hayes "in such a way that it is at the Minister's discretion to allocate funds after applying any priorities he or she thinks fit".² The regulations prepared to implement the requirements of the Act and binding under the Act are always couched in terms to protect the Minister and his servants from litigation and from demands which may be seen as excessive.

THE FUTURE

Much of the development and progress of special education has resulted from the advocacy of parents and their supporters. Their role has not been diminished by amendments to the Act or in the almost universal provision of free, compulsory and secular education to all children. The Australian Directors-General in 1975 accepted that the "maximum useful association between handicapped children and others consistent with the interest of both was preferable to the dichotomous view imposed by the use of the terms integration-segregation".³ It differs greatly

from the resolution of the first such meeting of their counterparts in 1918 which saw no place for handicapped children in the regular schools.⁴

The comments made about the nature of today's special education in the United States may well have applicability in Queensland.⁵

There is nothing pervasively wrong with special education. What is being questioned is not the interventions and knowledge that has been acquired through special education training and research. Rather what is being challenged is the location where these supports are being provided to students with disabilities.

Special education needs to be reconceptualized as a support to the regular education classroom, rather than as "another place to go" Recent research suggests that what is so wrong with special education is the stigma and isolation that result from being removed from the regular education class for so long. We now have effective strategies to bring help to the student rather than removing the student from the enriching setting of the regular class.

¹ Berkeley, G.F., 1991 **Restructuring Education in Australia** in Harman, G., Beare, H., and Berkeley G.F., 1991 **RESTRUCTURING SCHOOL MANAGEMENT** Australian College of Education, Canberra.

² Hayes, S., 1990 **Ethical and Legal Issues: Guidelines** in Butler, S., 1990 **THE EXCEPTIONAL CHILD: AN INTRODUCTION TO SPECIAL EDUCATION** Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Sydney. p.613.

³ **REPORT OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY GROUP TO THE SCHOOLS COMMISSION 1977** Schools Commission, Canberra.

⁴ See Chapter 12.

⁵ Quoted by Hallahan, D.P., & Kauffman, J.M., 1995 **THE ILLUSION OF FULL INCLUSION** Pro-Ed, Austin Texas. p.29 from Blackman, H.P., 1992 **Surmounting The Disability of Isolation** **THE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR** 49(2) p.29.

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