In all the Commonwealth Government's discussions and considerations concerning the wool industry, there is one objective clearly before us. That is the improvement - streamlining, if you like - of our whole system of marketing. Despite the encouraging upward movement in recent months in the price of wool at auction, we are by no means likely to find ourselves in such a strong market position again that we can afford to ignore the obvious need for improving the way we get the clip to our customers and, with prices at their present level, the cost for which we transport it.

Transport costs have always been a substantial feature of the economy of the wool industry in Australia, remote as we are from our main markets. With this in mind, it was pleasing to hear the recent announcement regarding wool freight rates by the Chairman of the Australian Wool Board, Sir William Gunn.

There is no doubt that the benefits to be gained by the substantial freight reductions for wool exporters negotiated by the Wool Board will have an impact on the economy of the entire industry. Sir William announced that there would be an eight per cent reduction in conference line freights on wool ships in 1972/73, a saving of $2.2 million on current rates. In the following year, 1973/74, the reduction will be four per cent, a saving of $1.1 million, and for 1974/75, the rates will return to their present levels.

This means that, over the three years, there will be an average saving of four per cent, a significant factor indeed over a period in which costs generally are hardly likely to be reduced.

As well as these rate reductions, the conference lines will offer growers for the first time a choice in the method of transport. This three-tier structure is a new and interesting departure from previous practice. The cheapest method,
to cost 25 per cent below present freight rates, will be a 'bare bones' operation, moving the wool only from the wharf to storage shed in the country of destination.

An intermediate standard service will provide a 15 per cent reduction in the first year, 11 per cent in the second and six per cent in the third. From a Western Victorian point of view, it was interesting to note Sir William's remarks concerning the completion of a Wool Board study to see which Australian ports it was cheapest for wool to be taken to for shipment overseas.

The study indicated that the most economic ports from the viewpoint of the land transport leg of the operation were Portland, Newcastle, Geraldton and Albany.

As Minister for Education and Science, I am naturally aware of the growing interest in education among Australians. It is therefore timely that the Liberal Party has just released a booklet entitled 'Education in Australia', setting out the party's objectives and achievements.

One could summarise the party's two major objectives in education as equality and quality. The availability of education must be increased, taking account of what people want for their children and of the growth in population.

At the same time, the quality of education must be improved to enable people to cope with rapid changes in technology, to provide them with adequate occupational skills so that they can share in the prosperity of our times, and to enable them to understand how our community functions and to contribute to its welfare.

To achieve these two objectives, we believe we must pursue at least four major courses of action. We must encourage a variety of educational institutions - government and independent, from the pre-school to the tertiary - to provide diversity in teaching methods and subjects and the broadest possible range of opportunities at colleges and universities, particularly beyond the capital cities. There must be freedom of choice of schools for individuals and groups within the community.
3.

We must reduce inequalities of opportunity in education throughout Australia by developing programmes to help those with special problems to enable all children to take their rightful place in the community.

Several such programmes - assisting aboriginals and teaching migrant children English - are already well established.

Third, we must instil in all families a concern for the need for education so that they can encourage their children to make the most of the opportunities available. This is not a financial task, for no matter how much governments spend, their efforts will be badly impaired if even a few parents do not create the right atmosphere at home for their children to study and progress.

Finally, we must encourage local educational research programmes, and the Commonwealth is now heavily committed in this area. This is the best way of learning the facts about our country's major educational needs and problems. Overseas studies can help. But they are no substitute for inquiries into the special circumstances in our own country so that the solutions we seek to implement are based on sound analytical research.

These are basic ground rules from which the Liberal Party seeks to deal with education, working in co-operation with the States, avoiding Canberra-based control yet providing maximum assistance, encouragement, and where we can, expertise and innovation.