

THE TRAVELLING SCHOOLS OF NEW SOUTH WALES* 1908 - 1949

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The travelling schools of New South Wales were a response to two factors which have influenced the development of public education in New South Wales from its inception in 1848. Firstly, many parts of New South Wales have only ever been sparsely settled, resulting in many children being geographically isolated. Secondly, a basic tenet of the New South Wales government school system has always been that it should provide educational facilities wherever they are required.

Travelling schools were far from being the only method tried by the public education system to provide elementary educational facilities for all children, no matter how geographically isolated. When the first travelling school commenced in New South Wales in 1908 it was only the latest in a long line of innovations introduced by the Department in an attempt to resolve this problem. Indeed, the Government school system was established in 1848 largely to provide educational facilities in neglected rural areas. However many children remained beyond its reach because of the need to have a minimum of thirty school age children in a locality before a national school could be established.

This situation was addressed in the Public Schools Act of 1866 which lowered the minimum enrolment for a public (previously national) school from 30 to 25 and created two new types of government schools designed specifically for sparsely populated areas - provisional schools and half time schools. Provisional schools could be established in localities where there were as few as 15 children of school age, while half time schools required an enrolment of only 10 children. Half time schools existed in pairs with one teacher serving both schools, normally by conducting one school in the morning then travelling to and conducting the other school in the afternoon. William Wilkins, the Secretary of the Council of Education, strongly voiced the aim of these developments in a circular to teachers in 1867.

In the first place, (the purpose of the Act is) to extend the means of instruction throughout the Colony so that by the various agencies which the Council will establish or support, every locality, however remote, and every family, however humble, may have the ameliorating influence of education brought within their reach¹.

These measures resulted in a major expansion of the New South Wales government school system into rural areas, leading the Premier, Henry Parkes, to exult that schools had been established:

.... where the light of instruction had not hitherto fallen ... like angelic agencies from Heaven in the midst of the wilderness, to give instruction to small groups of children widely separated from the influence of civilisation².

In 1872 the 194 provisional schools and 101 half time schools existent made up over one third of the schools in the government system. The majority of the 396 public schools were also one teacher bush schools. Despite these advances, in the late 1870s many children still remained beyond the

* An earlier version of this article was presented at The Australian and New Zealand History of Education Society's 21st Annual Conference in Adelaide, 1992.

reach of government schools. They were the children of isolated and frequently impoverished selectors, pastoral employees and other bush workers such as timber getters, fencers, rabbiters and miners. Usually living in very basic and primitive conditions their isolation was often reinforced by difficult terrain and poor, if any, public facilities such as roads.

The Public Instruction Act of 1880 reconfirmed the determination of the public education system to provide for children beyond the reach of existing schools. This determination was clearly voiced by the Premier, Henry Parkes, when giving a speech at the official opening of Blayney Public School in 1880. He declared:

In each school that is opened we are, in a manner, planting a new moral fortress by which to beat down the ignorance which, in times past, has so frequently enslaved the tender minds of our children; and the Legislative has given convincing evidence that its earnest desire is now that every child in the land shall be reached³.

The minimum attendance required for a public school was reduced from 25 to 20 children, and that for a provisional school from 15 to 12 children. Additionally, the use of itinerant teachers was extended from half time schools to a new type of government school again specifically designed to serve sparsely settled areas unable to be reached by existing types of schools - house to house schools. House to house schools were meant to be comprised of at enrolment, instead the teacher was paid at piece rates of £5 per child per annum. These schools initially proved popular, reaching a peak of 95 in 1890, but thereafter their numbers steadily declined in the face of many difficulties. From 1898 the minimum enrolment required for a provisional school was lowered from 12 to 10 and for a pair of half time schools from 20 to 16. Despite the considerable expansion of the government school system under the Public Instruction Act, at the beginning of the Twentieth Century there still remained in New South Wales isolated children beyond the reach of education.

The 'difficult question of providing means of educating children in the sparsely populated district'⁴ was a major area of concern at the 1902 Conference of Inspectors and Departmental Officers. The Minister for Public Instruction, John Perry, put forward a proposal that isolated families should be subsidised to enable them to employ private teachers. A majority of inspectors, however, chose to reject this idea in favour of a liberalisation of the regulations governing the establishment of half time and house to house schools, that is, an extension of the use of itinerant teachers. Despite the resolutions passed at the Conference, in 1903 a subsidy scheme was introduced and the half time and house to house school regulations were not liberalised.

Under the subsidy scheme isolated families, providing that there were at least two families involved, could obtain financial assistance to employ a private teacher. The subsidy was £5 per child per annum. Subsidised schools, as they became known, proliferated rapidly. In 1907 there were already 281 in existence in addition to 12 house to house schools, 352 half time schools, 409 provisional schools and 1963 public schools. Despite these efforts there still remained very isolated children beyond the reach of education, mostly in single neighbourless families and families too poor to afford and accommodate even a subsidised teacher.

During 1907 Inspector Finney, in charge of the Narrabri District in north western New South Wales, identified several such families in a very sparsely settled area between the Gwydir and Macintyre Rivers. In a formal submission to Head Office in Sydney, he made clear the plight of these families.

These families belong to employees of the large stations named, or are the children of men who make a small living at fencing or rabbiting. They are entirely without provision of education or the means to engage a tutor by aid of government subsidy.

Their wages hardly ever exceed a pound a week and I speak with experience when I state that their home living is of the barest and coarsest - the rations, what is known as 'thirdclass', consisting of tea, sugar and the perennial corned mutton. The quality of the first two must be known to be understood.

The subsidy regulation fails to meet the requirements of these - even with the Head Station people willing to adopt it in their behalf, they are too far away to participate. The managers or owners of the stations are either single men or if they have families employ governesses and keep their children exclusive - in many cases they cannot be blamed for doing so⁵.

Finney proposed that a 'travelling teacher'⁶ be used to periodically visit these children and give them some basic instruction.

It is quite practicable for a travelling teacher to visit these station centres in turn and make such arrangements that the children of each family get two months teaching per year. This in itself would be valuable; there are whole states in America in which the children get only three months in the year⁷.

Finney had definite ideas on how this travelling teacher should operate:

He should be provided with a van, two horses, school material, a small library and a magic lantern apparatus. He would visit the adjacent small schools (subsidised, half time or provisional) and the visit would be a valuable educational tonic. I would suggest a teacher of 3A classification, single, of very high moral plane, with a salary a little above that for 3A to cover all expenses⁸.

Inspector Finney's idea was not a new one. It had been put forward by Inspector Hunt at the 1902 Conference of Inspectors and Departmental Officers, and a similar scheme had operated in Queensland since 1901 taking 'education to the door of isolated families'⁹. In line with the Department's general turning away from the use of itinerant teachers, the idea does not appear to have received any attention until it was resurrected by Inspector Finney. The Department had hoped that subsidised schools would solve the problem of educating isolated children.

The proposal put forward by Inspector Finney did, however, receive favourable consideration, and the personal interest and support of Peter Board, the Director of Education. Finney's proposal was evidently closely discussed at the 1908 Conference of Inspectors and Departmental Officers, and this time, it would appear, support for itinerant teachers prevailed over the subsidy scheme. Unfortunately the records of this conference have been lost, but a subsequent memorandum from Peter Board to the Minister revealed:

The decision having been arrived at that subsidy should not be paid for the education of single isolated families, it is proposed, in order to reach such cases, that such families should be arranged in groups that will admit to their being visited by an itinerant teacher who should divide his time amongst the various families in the circuit so arranged. In order to carry out this proposal the provision of a vehicle and suitable equipment is necessary. It has been ascertained that a suitable van, horse, harness and camp requisites can be provided at a cost of £83. This price includes at tent 12ft by 14ft which the teacher would carry with him and use when other

accommodation was not available as a schoolroom. He would be expected also to camp in his vehicle¹⁰.

It was further proposed that the travelling school system should be given 'a fair trial' in the Narrabri District: 'in which several families are cut off from existing means of instruction and the Inspector of that district has given consideration and attention to this method of meeting their wants'¹¹.

Approval was subsequently given for the establishment of a 'House to House (Travelling) School'¹² serving 29 pupils at four teaching stations on a circuit of some 250 miles, north west of Burren Junction, to be known as the Eton Harrow Travelling School. The school was to be 'experimental as the test of the use of a vehicle in the management of a school'¹³. This unusual and somewhat humorous name of the school, which was partly based on the name of a nearby railway siding - Eaton - and possibly the name of a nearby property, did not meet with the approval of all. Inspector Kennedy of Taree protested that:

... it is a pity that the names of the two finest schools of the Empire should be applied to perhaps the most insignificant and irregular school. Such nomenclature appears to me to be much on a par with some wretched parody on a sacred song e.g. Holey Kitty for Holy City¹⁴.

Close attention was paid to the design and equipping of the wagon which was constructed at Muswellbrook. Considerable and unusual care was also taken in selecting a suitable teacher. The Department required that he should be capable and experienced classified teacher; 'a single man of good address, considerable tact and thoroughly reliable. He should be well acquainted with the bush and with the management of a horse'¹⁵. Such a teacher was found in Mr. Albert Biddle. Biddle had trained as a pupil teacher at Glen Innes in 1902-1903 and had subsequently taught at several bush schools before taking up his appointment to Eton Harrow Travelling School. The school commenced on 1 August 1908 with Biddle spending a week in turn at each station. During the 3 weeks he was absent from each station Biddle developed a system whereby the children continued their lessons by following a timetable and completing a preset series of lessons. At the end of each week the children would mail their work to Biddle who would check it and return it through the post.

The Eton Harrow Travelling School was hailed as an immediate success and received considerable attention and coverage in both Departmental publications and newspapers. Mr. Acting Inspector Riley, who had replaced Inspector Finney at Narrabri, reported:

The new movement has been much more successful than I should have thought possible ... Practically the whole course of study as set out in the syllabus (with the exception of music) covered, seemed to me equal to that generally covered in a full-time school¹⁶.

The extension of the travelling school scheme was confidently predicted as 'it promises to solve what has always been regarded as a difficult problem'¹⁷.

However, despite its high profile and evident success in taking education to these children, Eton Harrow remained the only travelling school in operation for many years. Evidently, despite the positive reports, the Department soon decided that travelling schools could not fully fulfil the prime task for which they were intended, the education of children in families so isolated they could not gather with the children of another family to obtain the services of a subsidised teacher. As early as

1909, Board reported that travelling schools were "... not applicable in many cases where distances prevent the grouping of teaching centres"¹⁸. Instead, in 1910, the subsidy scheme was extended to provide for these isolated single families.

The Department however did not abandon its travelling school experiment, although it had the perfect opportunity to do so at the end of 1909 when Eton Harrow school had only 2 worthwhile teaching stations left. Instead, the school was relocated in April 1910 to an area between the Barwon and Namoi Rivers where there were many isolated small landholders. Here, however, the travelling school was not completely true to its original role as some of these land holders dismissed their subsidised teachers so that their children could have the advantage of the higher standard of education offered through the travelling school¹⁹.

Except for Eton Harrow Travelling School which capably continued to fulfil its task, the travelling school scheme was allowed to lapse, and largely forgotten until, in July 1912, the Minister of Public Instruction, A. C. Carmichael, received a letter of complaint from T. White, the Acting General Secretary of the Australian Workers Union. This contained another letter and a newspaper article reporting that on sheep stations in the west of the state there were still children growing up absolutely illiterate, due to lack of facilities for education²⁰.

The Department responded to this critical report by requiring all Inspectors, in districts west of the tablelands, to discover precisely how many school age children in their district were not being educated and to report the exact locations and circumstances of these families. When making their reports the inspectors were also requested to consider:

... whether some means of education could be provided for these families by means of an itinerating teacher, somewhat on the plan adopted in one district in the North West²¹.

Peter Board was evidently still in favour of the travelling school scheme²² and consequently, when the inspectors' reports revealed that there were 1014 children of school age west of the tablelands who were receiving no education²³, he was quick to announce that four new "itinerant schools" would be established "to give the plan a more extended trial"²⁴. Carmichael, the Minister of Public Instruction, enthusiastically announced the extension of the travelling schools scheme in 1913, declaring: "If these young Mahomets will not, or can not, come to the mountain of education, then our educational mountain must go to them"²⁵. The travelling school was once more publicly proclaimed as "the link that will complete the chain"²⁶, providing the final means by which the remaining children not receiving an education could be reached.

The views being put forward by Board and Carmichael, however, were not in accord with the conclusions reached by the western inspectors in their reports on this subject. Almost to a man the inspectors had rejected the travelling school proposal, favouring instead the continued extension of the subsidy scheme. Indeed, many of the 1014 children who had been discovered were not really beyond the reach of available facilities at all, and were soon provided for - mostly through the subsidy scheme²⁷.

Consequently, when Chief Inspector Dawson wrote to the inspectors at Hay, Forbes, Inverell and Broken Hill in December 1912 to inform them that the Minister had decided to station an itinerating teacher within each of their inspectorates, and that they were each required to submit suggestions as

to the most suitable portion of their district in which the teacher might carry out his work²⁸; the Department was not responding to a perceived need but attempting to impose from above.

In the event, only two travelling schools were eventually opened. One in the Inverell District, known as the Inverell Travelling School, which commenced operations on 4 March 1913, and the other, the Ivanhoe Travelling School, in the Hay District, starting on 13 March 1914. Both these schools were equipped and conducted in the same manner as Eton Harrow, both teachers were again specially selected, and both schools had extensive circuits. The Inverell Travelling School travelled an immense circuit of some 227 miles from Inverell northward along the Macintyre River virtually to the Queensland border. The Ivanhoe Travelling School travelled a circuit of approximately 150 miles around the far western town of Ivanhoe. Because of the length of their circuits, these teachers only saw the children for one week out of every eight weeks and so had to rely extensively on correspondence systems similar to the one developed by Biddle at Eton Harrow.

Like Eton Harrow both these schools served the families of isolated, and frequently poor, settlers. Very few of the children had any previous education. Mr. Bisley, the first teacher in the Inverell Travelling School found that some of his pupils "even 13, 14 and 15 years of age"²⁹ did not know the alphabet. While Henry Callender, the first Ivanhoe Travelling School teacher discovered that only 9 of his 29 pupils had any previous education at a school, the majority could neither read nor write, and few had ever seen a town, river or mountain³⁰.

As with Eton Harrow, the Inverell and Ivanhoe Travelling Schools proved to be immediately popular and successful. Their success was not only in the academic field. Inspector Hayes noted in his 1914 report that "a fine feature of the school" was "its centralising and civilising effect"³¹ on the families involved. Because of the Ivanhoe Travelling School "the wife and family now receive much kinder and more humane treatment from the 'head' of the house than previously"³². Girls in particular benefited by being relieved of much of the hard physical work they had done previously, and being treated and spoken to "in a more becoming manner"³³.

The success of the travelling schools was principally due to two factors: the quality and dedication of the teachers; and the system of correspondence teaching which developed within these schools.

The Department wanting to give its new scheme every chance of success went to considerable trouble to specially select suitable, well qualified men for the position of travelling teacher. The insistence on men of this calibre paid off. The men chosen proved not only to be capable, but enthusiastic and highly dedicated to their work: "a sturdy type of Australian school missionary, full of enthusiasm of the pioneer"³⁴. A major factor in the early travelling teachers' dedication was that they saw themselves "at the beginning of a time"³⁵. The future of the travelling school system, they believed, lay in their hands. In consequence, they were highly motivated to succeed.

This commitment was necessary as the life of a travelling teacher was frequently a gruelling one which required great personal sacrifice in carrying out his vocation. Besides the isolation, the constant travelling, the teaching in makeshift and frequently adverse conditions, the teacher had to assume a number of other roles including driver, horse handler, providing forage and water for his horse, and assessing and maintaining the physical condition of his "school" and "residence".

There were frequent problems with which the teacher had to cope, such as the scarcity and high cost of fodder, wooden wheel spokes that became swollen in the wet and dangerously loose in the dry, a bolting horse³⁶ and the destruction of the school tent in a violent storm³⁷. In 1919 the far west of

the state was in the grip of a severe drought. Alex Fraser, the teacher in charge of the Ivanhoe Travelling School, reported that fodder was extremely scarce, water holes were frequently dry, temperatures had averaged 116 degrees Fahrenheit for 3 weeks and, consequently, travelling was not "a bed of roses"³⁸. The black soil plains of the north west also posed problems for the travelling schools there. In his first report on the Inverell Travelling School in 1913 the teacher, S. Bisley, told of being so hopelessly bogged in mud he had to be hauled out by a passing bullock team. At places on his circuit he had to traverse long stretches of sand which slowed his progress to a mile an hour³⁹.

The second factor in the success of the travelling schools was the use of correspondence lessons. An initial difficulty of the travelling schools was how to constructively use the time that the teacher was absent from each station. This problem was overcome by leaving the children a timetable and a series of set lessons. As they completed their work, it was posted on to the teacher who corrected and returned it. Sometimes a fresh lot of work was sent by post. This system proved so effective that from its inception it was seen as one of the key elements in the success of the travelling school scheme. The best description of the scheme was provided by Albert Biddle, its evident originator:

Another difficulty to overcome was the forming of some plan to keep the children constantly engaged and interested during the three weeks absence from each station.

To overcome this difficulty a programme of lessons for the following three weeks, divided into weekly sections, and containing lessons to keep the pupils engaged from 3 to 3 1/2 hours daily is drawn up, as is also a time-table to work from. The children are supplied with envelopes and stamps with which to forward their work to me at the end of each week. On receipt of the letters the work is corrected, the errors, false impressions and ideas are noted, and the work is returned and filed.

The programme of lessons referred to above consists of lessons in reading, writing, composition, language work, word building, poetry, arithmetic, geometry, nature study and observation notes, history, Scripture, brushwork, cardboard work and drawing.

The children attend to their work regularly, and in most cases in a highly satisfactory manner.

Any success achieved by this new movement has been due to the above correspondence scheme⁴⁰.

Why then, if these 3 travelling schools were so successful, were not more opened? For Eton Harrow, Inverell and Ivanhoe were the only travelling schools to have existed in New South Wales. Part of the answer lies in the evident preference for subsidised schools amongst the Department's inspectors, and the very limited number of districts where the travelling school was a viable proposition. The factor that proved to be the death knell of the travelling school scheme, however, was the introduction of correspondence tuition as an entirely separate method of providing education in remote and sparsely settled areas.

In 1916, a Staff Inspector, Mr. S. H. Smith, undertook to teach by post a small boy in the north west after the subsidised school he had previously attended had closed. The parents of other isolated children sought out his help in such numbers that in October 1916 a teacher was appointed to continue the task⁴¹. At the beginning of 1917, there were 27 children from 11 families enrolled in

what had become a correspondence school⁴². Correspondence teaching provided immensely popular. By 1925, there were 2555 pupils, taught by 60 teachers, enrolled at the Correspondence School at Blackfriars⁴³.

The correspondence school had several advantages over the travelling schools in providing educational facilities for isolated children. No matter how isolated a child was, he had immediate access to the correspondence school through the postal service. There were no problems in securing as many suitable teachers as were needed as they did not have to leave Sydney. Plus, the correspondence school had quickly demonstrated that it could provide a high standard of education at a much lower cost to the Department⁴⁵. One example of the enthusiasm with which the Department adopted the correspondence system is given in what now seems a rather extraordinary lead article in The Educational Gazette of March 1929, from which the following extract is taken:

The continued success of the Correspondence School deserves the attention of all primary school teachers. Why do children taught by those who never see them learn as rapidly and as thoroughly as others under good class teachers? That they do is abundantly clear to those who have knowledge of both types of teaching. The fact is interesting and significant. Curiosity is aroused, and one seeks reasons apart from effective organisation for the splendid results that have been obtained by this unique scheme ...

In the complete absence of any kind of friction, affectionate relationships are firmly established. Sympathy begets understanding, and distance by a sort of paradox brings teacher and pupil closer together. Each appeals to and brings out what is best in other. Clash of will and conflict between one nervous temperament and another do not occur. Thus the ideal atmosphere is more fully obtained in the correspondence school than in many a classroom. Teachers engaged in the correspondence schools have captured the imagination of parent and pupil. All are friends there is no friction. Interest, concentration, effort, pleasure in the work, are educational flowers that blossom freely in the correspondence school. Where teacher and pupil are hidden from each other they get to know the best of each other and little or nothing of the worst, and so they tend to think only the best.

Two hundred years hence, perhaps sooner, some teacher will write a wonderful 1A thesis on education, in which he will show how a great reform, which consisted in hiding teaches from their pupils, had its origin in the correspondence school⁴⁶.

The Department evidently decided to suspend the travelling schools scheme in favour of correspondence teaching. Evidence of this decision was provided in State parliament in 1920 when a member, Mr. Doe, urged the extension of the travelling school system. In his reply Mr. Mutch, the Minister for Education, stated:

... the Department has gone one better in the matter of reaching isolated families. Correspondence Schools were started about three years ago and are now busily engaged in attending to the wants of children who are even outside the orbit of Travelling Schools⁴⁷.

Only two definite applications were made for travelling schools after 1914; at Thirty Five Mile Tank, situated between Ivanhoe and Wilcannia, in 1926 and, at Wanaaring in 1928. In both of these

instances, the Department firmly rejected the applications, strongly recommending that the applicants avail themselves of the services of the Correspondence School.

Despite this change in policy the three existing travelling schools continued to operate successfully for several years after the introduction of correspondence teaching. Eton Harrow's circuit steadily diminished until in 1922 there were only 3 stations, 2 of them being only 1 mile apart. In 1923 there were only 2 stations remaining - Namoi View and Evandale. On the recommendation of the local Inspector, Mr. Barley, these 2 stations became half time schools in May 1922 and the name Eton Harrow Travelling School was discontinued⁴⁸. The van had not been moved for at least 3 years prior to the closure of the school and since 1915, the teachers at this school had regularly used either a motor cycle or ridden the school horse to travel between that stations.

Inverell Travelling School, on the other hand, appears to have retained its original form throughout its existence.

As late as September 1921, the teacher, Thomas Fenton, was able to report that he was teaching 25 children over a circuit of 202 miles and: "at the places visited now I am well received and splendidly treated"⁴⁹. However, the travelling was frequently difficult, and sometimes dangerous, due to the poor state of the roads. The Department decided to transfer the pupils to the Correspondence School and the school consequently closed in December 1921.

As a result of the successful replacement of the Inverell Travelling School by correspondence tuition, the Department decided that it would be desirable to do the same to the last travelling school at Ivanhoe. Before doing so, however, the Department decided to write to the parents and state their intentions:

The success which has followed instruction by given Correspondence Schools conducted by this Department has been so pronounced that it is considered that the educational requirements of this locality will be suitably met by the enrolment of the pupils in a school of this type.

It is accordingly proposed to discontinue the Travelling School referred to herein, and substitute therefore teaching by correspondence from the Head Office of this Department⁵⁰.

The parents, however, failed to agree with the Department, most families opposing the closure of their school. Many considered that correspondence tuition presented too many difficulties including the supervision of lessons and inadequate postal services. As a result of these protests, the Department reluctantly allowed the Ivanhoe Travelling School to continue.

Although not mentioned, another probable reason that parents favoured retaining their school was the personal popularity of the second teacher, Mr. Alex Fraser, who conducted the school from 1916 till its closure in 1949, a remarkable period of 34 years. The Department tried several times after 1922 to replace the school with correspondence education, and actually did discontinue the school for 3 months in 1934. However, each time the parents argued their preference for the travelling school system over correspondence tuition and won the day. It was only Alex Fraser's death in January 1950 which finally brought the school to a close.

While the three travelling schools were conducted by a number of capable and committed male teachers, Alex Fraser warrants special attention. During his long stint with the Ivanhoe Travelling

School, he became part of the folklore of far western New South Wales. The son of a school inspector who later became a director of education, Fraser was expected to do well in the Department. Instead, despite a number of attempts within the Department to move him on, Fraser chose to remain with the travelling school and make it his own. Described by one inspector after several years at Ivanhoe as 'a patient, kindly, unambitious man'⁵¹, Fraser was a capable and appreciated teacher and very much a local character. His escapades and idiosyncrasies sometimes annoyed, but more frequently entertained, the families of the district who were generally highly loyal to him.

During his existence, the Ivanhoe Travelling School fulfilled its stated role well, taking education into the homes of many isolated settlers in the Ivanhoe area. Fraser continued to use the van up until 1928 when the horse, 'Tom' died after 14 years faithful service and the van was in a dilapidated condition. Additionally, from 1920 on, he had sometimes used a motor cycle to reach some 'dry' stations during periods of drought. In 1928 he purchased, with Departmental assistance, a 'Ford V8 deluxe coupe'. Thereafter he travelled his circuit by motor car. With the death of Alex Fraser the last travelling school quietly came to an end.

The travelling schools of New South Wales were only ever a minute part of the government education system. In 1915, for example, when they were at the peak of their influence, there were only 85 children enrolled in the three schools. The attention these schools received was far out of proportion to their size and impact. Their appeal then, and today, largely lies in the novelty and romance of the concept as rather eloquently expressed in The Sydney Mail of 13 January 1909.

If the settler is too far off to send his children to the provisional school, or too isolated to take advantage of the subsidised scheme, some other plan must be devised to meet his case. As it is plain his children cannot travel to the school, the school must travel to them.

The white tilted vans of the West are the settlers' links to the civilised beyond. They are to be met with on the most lonely roads. There is hardly a home, however far removed, that they do not visit; and very welcome, indeed they are. Perhaps only a Chinaman fruiterer, an Indian skin-buyer, an Assyrian hawker, or, less seldom, a European grocer - all are welcome, as forming a pleasing break in the monotony. Besides bringing the required commodities for the household, they convey news of the outer world. To the usual well-known list of white tilts another is now to be added - the tilt of the travelling school. Its arrival will be eagerly awaited, and its welcome long and hearty. Its stay will not be so temporary as that of the others. It will sojourn awhile - a week or so - and pass on to be welcomed again at the next lonely outpost of civilisation⁵².

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41. K.S.Cunningham, Primary Education by Correspondence. Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 1931, p.17.

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43. S. A. Rayner comp., Correspondence Education in Australia and New Zealand, Melbourne, A.C.E.R., 1949, pp.16-17.
44. Report of the Minister of Public Instruction (for 1923), p.4
45. Correspondence concerning the proposed closure of Ivanhoe Travelling School, 2 July 1923, in subject file 20/13355.2.
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47. Letter to Mr. Doe from Mr. Mutch, Minister for Education, undated, in subject file 20/13355.2.
48. Letter to Head Office from Inspector Barlex, 27 February 1923, in subject file 30/13355.2.
49. Quarterly Report, Inverell Travelling School, 23 September 1921, in subject file 20/13355.2.
50. Letter to parents and children attending Ivanhoe Travelling School from P. Board, Director of Education, 19 December 1922, in subject file 20/13355.2.
51. Inspection Report by Mr. Inspector Lennard on Alex Fraser, 7 June 1924 in subject file 20/13355.2.
52. J.T.D. "The Travelling School", op.cit. p.184.