



Speech by

Mr R. QUINN

MEMBER FOR MERRIMAC

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LITERACY AND NUMERACY

Mr QUINN (Merrimac—LP) (Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party) (10.13 a.m.): Today, the Minister for Education tabled in this House a report on literacy and numeracy standards for the years 1995 and 1996 and mentioned that, in his opinion, the standards are unacceptable. I agree. They are unacceptable for a variety of reasons. This whole matter comes back to the amount of money that was spent on literacy and numeracy in the previous six years when Labor was in Government.

It is not hard to understand why. I invite honourable members to look at this graph which shows expenditure. In the six years of Labor an average of \$6m per year was provided for literacy and numeracy. The coalition provided an average of \$30m a year for literacy and numeracy. The Minister was correct: it did set alarm bells ringing and we did something about it. We tried to address Labor's pathetic record when it was in Government. It is hard to turn those sorts of things around.

I am sure that when we see the next edition of the report we will find that there has been a slight improvement in certain areas. But it is hard to address six years of neglect when one is in office for only two and a half years. That is the legacy that Labor has left to the people of Queensland. It is a legacy of underfunding in particular and specific areas in school education in this State. It is no coincidence that it shows unacceptable levels but the coalition did something about it. We moved to increase massively the funding for literacy and numeracy.
