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1901: THE FIRST YEAR OF QUEENSLAND'S ITINERANT TEACHING SERVICE

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In 1901, Queensland had a large population living outside urban areas, including many remote dwellers engaged in frontier activities. While urban areas were provided with schools, there was little or no educational opportunity for children living in bush outposts. In the late 1890s, a member of the Queensland Parliament, George Story, called on the colonial government to address this educational inequality. After some debate, an Itinerant Teaching Service was introduced as a trial on 1 January 1901, in Story's own electorate of Balonne. The first itinerant teacher was Thomas Daly Johnson. Johnson spent more than five months of that year travelling by horse and buggy through the drought-stricken Balonne electorate, seeking out isolated families with children. He provided school materials, trained surrogate teachers, set future lessons and encouraged the opening of provisional schools. While the Itinerant Teaching Service may not have achieved a great deal in its first year, it was a blueprint for an expanded service in subsequent years, and precursor to Queensland's Primary Correspondence School. □ *Itinerant teachers, distance education, Thomas Daly Johnson, George Story, Balonne.*

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On 1 January 1901, an Itinerant Teaching Service was established on a trial basis in the Balonne electorate, south-west Queensland. The Service, organised by the Department of Public Instruction, was an attempt to bring basic education to the many children living in isolated districts of the state, beyond the reach of schools.¹ It evolved largely in response to the urging of a Queensland politician, and was the cheapest, simplest and most politically expedient answer to the long-standing problem of the provision of rural education. The first teacher appointed to the Service was a thirty-eight year old Irishman, Thomas Daly Johnson (Fig. 1), who had taught at two provisional schools in Queensland before his recruitment to the trial.² Johnson remained as the state's only itinerant teacher for the next four years, resigning in 1904 on his impending marriage. The Service continued for the next twenty-six years, during which time it expanded to employ more teachers and cater for other districts. In 1909 it was converted from a trial to an operational program. By 1921 it had reached its peak with eighteen teachers employed in as many districts. However, the establishment of the Primary Correspondence School in Brisbane in the following year led to abolishment of the Service by 1930.³

This paper looks at the establishment of the Itinerant Teaching Service, the first year of operation and the work of its pioneer teacher,

providing an insight into rural education in Queensland at the time of Federation.

EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF A PIONEERING SOCIETY

In 1901, primary level educational facilities were available in most urban centres in Queensland. There were 960 state primary schools, comprising 441 state schools, 515 provisional schools and 4 schools at benevolent and reformatory establishments. In addition, there were 22 half-time provisional schools operating in pairs, each school being open in alternate weeks.⁴ State education was administered by a government department, the Department of Public Instruction, operating under the provisions of the *State Education Act* of 1875. For this discussion, the relevant section of the Act is the compulsory education clause (Part III, Section 28), not enforced until an amendment in 1900. The clause stated that:

The parent of every child of not less than six nor more than twelve years of age shall unless there be some valid excuse cause such a child to attend a State school for sixty days at the least in each half-year.⁵

A sub-section of this clause excused children from attendance if there was no state or provisional school within two miles of their place of residence.

Away from urban centres, the availability of schools and teachers declined sharply.



FIG. 1. Thomas Daly Johnson, Queensland's first itinerant teacher. (Courtesy of Anne Carmody)

Queensland at this time, had a decentralised population which 'flowed out in attenuated streams to the utmost limit of the land'.⁶ Among the scattered population, there were many people living in remote outposts, such as changing stations; boundary riders', fencers' and shooters', camps; pastoral outstations and small selections.⁷ These outposts were often occupied by one or more families with children. Provision of educational services was difficult as the children could not be clustered into a group of twelve or more, as required by the Department to open a provisional school.⁸ It was claimed that one reason for not enforcing the compulsory clause in the 1875 Act was that it could not be upheld in remote districts,⁹ but nor was another section of the Act enforced: the provision for an itinerant teacher for such districts (Part II, Section 20).¹⁰

The neglect of Queensland's isolated children had been a cause for public concern even before the 1875 Act was passed.¹¹ As early as the 1860s, the following letters to the editor appeared in the popular weekly, the *Queenslander*:

As a minister of a widely-scattered bush district ... the want of schools ... has often been pressed upon my notice. On almost every station you will find large and increasing families, belonging to shepherds and boundary riders, living isolated ... these station men often marry in these

situations, and before they have time to think ... a family springs up around them ... A teacher might itinerate from hut to hut ...

... in the bush ... none but the well-to-do can afford to send their children to town to be educated. Shepherds, stockmen, store-keepers and overseers, if they have neither time or ability themselves to teach their children at home, must, as affairs stand, be content to see their off-spring growing up around them nearly as ignorant as the original possessors of the soil ... I hope the subject will be ventilated by the public until ... some in our legislative Chambers ... can be moved to take the matter up ...¹²

On 5 July 1873, the newspaper published the following editorial:

... vast numbers of children in the outlying districts have no educational privileges whatever, ... seeing how important it is that people should be encouraged to establish themselves and open up the country, we believe that it will imperil the general prosperity of the whole to persevere in a course manifestly opposed to settlement by an intelligent, educated people.¹³

Many parents in rural areas added their own pleas to the Department of Public Instruction regarding the lack of educational opportunity for their children:

I am writing to ask your department for some assistance to educate my family...I have four boys respectively 7, 6, 3 and 1 years of age. I live 8 miles from the nearest provisional school at Mt Brisbane and there is no probability of a school ever being nearer ...

... I have six children and we are 60 miles from a state school (Mitchell) and considering the heavy rent, rates, taxes I have to pay and the great losses occasioned by the drought I think I am entitled to some consideration from the Education Department ...¹⁴

Eventually, pressure to solve this problem came from within the Queensland Legislative Assembly. On 26 August 1897, the member for Balonne, George Story (Fig. 2), moved a motion to amend the *State Education Act* of 1875 to enable isolated children to receive some education.¹⁵ The Balonne electorate, like all rural Queensland, had few schools. Story had spoken on this issue in Parliament 'once or twice before'. He coined the phrase 'compulsory ignorance' to describe the government's neglect of country children in 1897. He added:

From Thargomindah to Eulo, which is the nearest school, is about 100 miles; then it is fifty miles from Eulo to Cunnamulla; 120 miles from Cunnamulla to Bollon, and eighty mile from Bollon to St George. There is neither a provisional school nor any other means of education in all those long distances, and yet the country is all populated.¹⁶

Story did not believe an itinerant teacher was the solution to isolated education as 'distances are too great'.¹⁷ He proposed a complex scheme that entailed subsidising a private tutor for each isolated household. Once a year, the children would gather at the nearest school to be examined by the district inspector on his rounds. Each child

who passed the examination was to be issued with a certificate that could be exchanged at the government Treasury for £3/10/- (the yearly cost of educating a child in a state school). This money would then be given to the tutor as part payment. If more than one family could make use of the same tutor, enough money might be collected to pay all the tutor's wages for the year. Otherwise, parents would be obliged to make up the difference.¹⁸

All politicians involved in the debate of 26 August 1897 agreed that rural education was a pressing problem and that the Act should be amended. Some also supported Story's scheme, including Alfred Stephenson (member for Ipswich), William Castling (Townsville) and George Sim (Carpentaria). Sim declared: '... this is not a question of party politics but one affecting the whole of the people of Queensland'.¹⁹ George Kerr (Barcoo) supported Story's scheme but raised another problem: the cost of school materials. These, he suggested, should be supplied to isolated parents. Other politicians, while sympathetic to the motion, were sceptical of Story's scheme and put forward alternative solutions. James Stewart (Rockhampton North) proposed to reduce the minimum attendance required for provisional schools from twelve to six pupils, while William Groom (Drayton and Toowoomba) suggested an itinerant teacher scheme along the lines of the New South Wales house-to-house system. The Ministers for Public Lands (Justin Foxtton) and Public Instruction (David Dalrymple) were both vocal in their criticism of Story's scheme. They declared that the existing week-about half-time school system was quite adequate, although Foxtton suggested it could be extended to month-about in the case of greater distances. Dalrymple recalled that an itinerant teaching scheme had been proposed for the Cunnamulla area in 1895, but had received only one response, from a group of twelve children from the Mack's Creek district, who were able to be served by a provisional half-time school.²⁰

Story's motion was passed 'on voices',²¹ but resulted in no action. Two years later, on 17 November 1899, the persistent but politically wiser Story moved the same motion and proposed the same scheme. During the ensuing debate, George Sim again offered his support, along with Charles McDonald and John Leahy from the remote electorates of Flinders and Bulloo. Dalrymple and Foxtton continued to oppose the scheme: Dalrymple reiterated that the half-time school system sufficed and Foxtton claimed Story's proposal, if



FIG. 2. George Story, MLA, who agitated for better educational opportunities in regional Queensland. (John Oxley Library, Brisbane, neg. no. 186875)

implemented, might discourage the opening of provisional schools. Throughout both debates, the common criticisms of Story's scheme related to cost and logistics. However, some politicians were also concerned that the scheme, which entailed repaying parents for educational costs, could open the door to denominational schools demanding government subsidy.²²

Story's motion was passed for the second time. The *State Education Acts Amendment Act* of 1900 was assented on 27 November 1900, and the compulsory provisions enforced throughout Queensland.²³ Ironically, the scheme eventually chosen for isolated children was not Story's proposition and did not require an amendment to the Act.²⁴ Parliament opted to trial an Itinerant Teaching Service, already provided for in the Act, as had been suggested by William Groom. Thomas Daly Johnson, an unclassified head teacher at Cordalba Provisional School, near Bundaberg, was appointed as the first teacher to the Service and commenced duty on 1 January 1901.²⁵

THOMAS DALY JOHNSON

Thomas Daly Johnson was born at Mitchelstown, County Cork, Ireland on 4 November 1863.²⁶ He came from a well-to-do Protestant family who had suffered as a result of the Irish potato famine. His father, John Johnson, was a land agent and bailiff whose work entailed collecting rents. This was a distasteful task for John Johnson, not least because his wife was the daughter of a Catholic market gardener, and the troubled politics of Ireland were often discussed in the Johnson household.

Young Johnson trained as a teacher in Ireland in 1881-84 and then worked as an Assistant Teacher in Ballyboreen, County Tipperary until 1889. In the early 1890s (the exact year unknown) he emigrated to the United States of America where he worked as a longshoreman, before coming to Australia via New Zealand. He spent one year in New South Wales (locality unknown) before moving in 1895 to Queensland, where, on 10 August 1896, at the age of thirty-three, he was admitted into the Queensland Teaching Service.

In the same year, Johnson was given his first Queensland posting, as Head Teacher (unclassified) at Currumbin Creek Provisional School.²⁷ (The minimal educational requirement for appointment as a provisional teacher in Queensland at that time was completion of primary schooling.)²⁸ In December 1896, at his first Queensland teaching inspection, District Inspector Shirley described Johnson as 'incisive and intelligent'.²⁹ Two years later, Currumbin Creek (with an enrollment of sixteen children), was one of three provisional schools to achieve average results of higher than seventy per cent in the annual examination. This was considered a commendable achievement for a provisional school. In 1899, Johnson was transferred to the overcrowded provisional school at Cordalba, south of Bundaberg. The school, with an average attendance of eighty-six pupils,³⁰ must have tested Johnson's teaching skills to the utmost, though in 1900 District Inspector Harrap found his methods to be '... suitable ... applied with skill and energy ...'.³¹

At the end of the school year in 1900, Johnson was posted to the Itinerant Teaching trial, to commence duties in 1901.³² In the same year he was awarded a Junior Cadet Training Certificate.³³ Beyond his teaching reports (for 1901), little is known of Johnson during his four year appointment. In his second year, he received his first Queensland classification as a Level 3, Class 3 teacher.³⁴ Johnson resigned from the

Itinerant Service at the end of the school year in 1904 to marry 26-year-old, Irish-born Amelia 'Amy' O'Brien and moved back to the regular state school system. He spent the next twenty-four years of his teaching career in north Queensland: at Townsville West, Cardwell, and from 1907, at the tin-mining township of Stannary Hills, near Atherton.³⁵ In that year, Johnson's life was turned upside-down with the deaths of his eight month old daughter and, six months later, his wife, following the birth of their first and only son, William. Five years later, Johnson married Norah O'Brien, Amy's elder sister, who had moved into the household to look after William.

Johnson was to remain Head Teacher at Stannary Hills for the next seventeen years, a well-respected citizen, remembered as a kindly but 'pedantic' man. He became a Justice of the Peace, conducted burial services and was sympathetic to the lot of the local miners. In 1909 he risked his job to allow Edward Granville Theodore, a future Labor Premier of Queensland, to give a public speech at the school, after he had been refused permission to speak at the local School of Arts. In 1924 Johnson received his final transfer, to Eumundi State School. In 1932 he retired from teaching and moved to Annerley, Brisbane, where he resided until his death on 6 August 1937. He was buried in Toowong Cemetery.

AN EXPERIMENT IN ITINERANT
TEACHING

A brochure written in 1915 by the education-
alist J.D. Story outlined what was required of an
itinerant teacher:

Each teacher is supplied with a specially designed buggy, four to six horses, and complete camping out equipment. He has also the services of a boy from fourteen to eighteen years of age to attend to the horses, help to pitch the tent, light the fire, lower sliprails, open gates, and do numerous little things which a handy youth can do. The teacher is expected to make his own arrangements for camping and food, and thus relieve parents of this responsibility; he receives a special allowance from the department for this purpose ... The travelling teacher is the handy-man of the Service; he must be a good bushman; and he must be tactful so as to gain the goodwill of the parents and of owners whose lands he must cross. He should also be of kindly disposition so as to win the confidence of shy bush children; should be of trustworthy character, for his work can seldom be inspected, as his duties take him to homes which are far away from the beaten tracks and which can often be reached only through lonely country patrolled by police in search of cattle duffers, or of new chums who are lost; and further, he must be a man of infinite resource, for he must be able to splice a broken pole, mend a wheel, doctor a sick horse, and, if threatened by fire or flood, be able to extricate himself and his boy and save His Majesty's property.³⁶

This suggests that the Service was well established by 1915 and that the Department of Public Instruction had definite expectations of its teachers – unquestionably male. In 1901 however, the Service was experimental and Johnson should be viewed as its pioneer. In that year, the Department described the itinerant teacher's role broadly as meeting 'the needs of the children who still lived beyond the reach of any school'.³⁷ Johnson was expected to supply school materials (books and stationery), train family members as tutors in his absence, set work programs until the next visit, encourage the establishment of provisional schools,³⁸ and, to report to the Minister on the number, locality and educational standard of the children encountered.³⁹ In its first year, the Service's educational aspirations were modest. Tuition was not mentioned as one of the teacher's duties until 1903, and even then it was to be 'confined to the barest elements'.⁴⁰

Described in the Teachers' Register as the 'South Western District',⁴² the electorate comprised a large tract of land on the Queensland-New South Wales border and included the townships of Eulo, Bollon, Hebel, St George, Mungindi and Cunnamulla.⁴³ Accompanied by a young male assistant, Johnson managed to cover approximately 1,400 miles of the electorate in 1901 (Fig. 3), making eighty-five separate visits (see Appendix 1). Travelling on 'a buckboard buggy [with] a pair of horses'⁴⁴ they camped out for about half the time as they moved between households.⁴⁵ George Story himself may have advised on their travel itinerary and families to visit, as one of the children encountered was a George L. Story Winks, the youngest member of a caretaker's family from Whycomb (visit 63).

The Itinerant Service first commenced in the Balonne electorate, with Cunnamulla, George Story's home town, as the base for operations.⁴¹

In 1901 Johnson received £110 per annum, plus a travelling allowance of 12/6 when in townships and 5/- when in the bush. This was the same yearly salary he had received in his previous appointment (minus the travelling allowance).⁴⁶ Little is known about his young assistant except

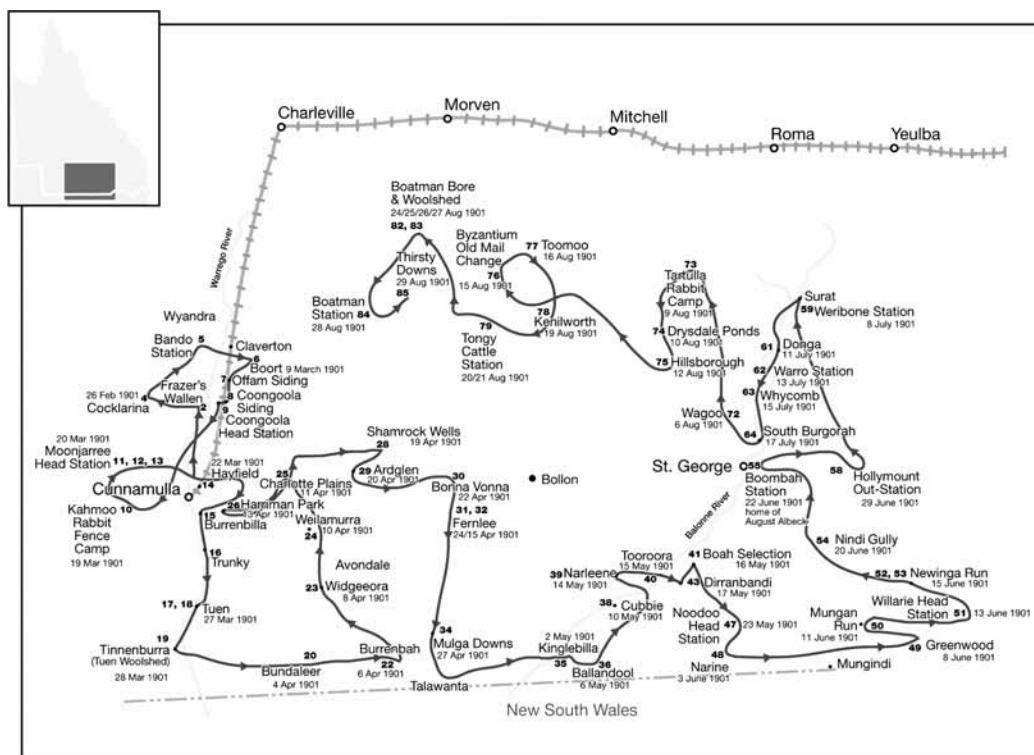


FIG. 3. Johnson's route from Cunnamulla to Thirsty Downs Grazing Farm showing selected visits. Numbers relate to Appendix 1. (Drawn by Baden Phillips, Queensland Museum)



FIG. 4. Johnson and his assistant travelling through the Balonne electorate. (*The Queenslander*, 24 June 1905)

that Johnson was given an extra 15/- per week for his wages.

THE PRIMARY SYLLABUS IN 1901

In 1901, the Queensland State Primary School system comprised six classes, each class extending over one and a half years, with the exception of first class which ran for two years. The school year was divided into three terms called 'half-years', with two holidays, five weeks in summer and one week in winter.⁴⁷ School attendance was compulsory from the ages of six to twelve years (though children usually began school at the age of five), for sixty days in each half-year.⁴⁸ The daily school routine was conducted over 6¾ hours with a 10 minute recess for morning tea and a 1¼ hour break at lunchtime. Lesson contact time was 4 hours and 50 minutes. The rest of the time was spent in neatness inspections, marching and preparation for lessons.⁴⁹ The core subjects were reading, writing, arithmetic, grammar, geography, history, elementary mechanics, 'object lessons', vocal music, drill and gymnastics and, for girls, sewing and needlework.⁵⁰

As itinerant teacher, Johnson would have had no time, or reason, to observe this daily routine or the school calendar. Nevertheless, he would have attempted to adhere to the core subjects when setting work programs for his pupils.⁵¹ He modified these programs to meet the needs of individual pupils, for example at Thirsty Downs grazing farm, he reported: 'Work supplied: Two half-years in second class, particular attention

being paid to arithmetic so as to enable them to come up to the standard in that subject' (visit 85).⁵² The pupils' ages were not a factor for Johnson when setting programs. Throughout 1901, he did not set a program higher than third class (the level of an eight or nine year old in the state school system), yet he encountered children much older than this. At Boatman sheep station, for example, four children with an age range of five to fifteen years, were set first class and the first two-thirds of second class (visit 84), while at Rutherford freehold block, all four children (ages five to ten years) were given the last third of first class (visit 66).

JOHNSON'S REPORT FOR 1901

Johnson's report on his work in 1901 was included in the Department's annual report for 1900.⁵³ The report, covering his travels from 22 February to 29 August 1901, was published in response to another motion put forward by George Story on 17 September 1901, that the weekly diary of the itinerant teacher be tabled in parliament. The first four months of the report contain the barest information on each household visited with particular focus on the school-age children. After this, the style of the report abruptly changes to include such details as full names and ages of all children (including babies) in a household, and an inventory of school materials supplied. This change of style may have been prompted by Story's motion or by an admonishing Johnson received on 21 August 1901 regarding the brevity of his reports

(recorded in the Teachers' Register).⁵⁴ Another feature of Johnson's report is that its statistics differ from those given in the Department's annual report. Johnson recorded 85 separate visits to 96 families with a total of 422 children, whereas the Departmental report for that year recorded 103 visits,⁵⁵ the additional 18 visits presumably made after August 1901.

Johnson spent the first seven weeks of 1901 on the overland journey to the Balonne district, after the necessary preparations. Over the next five months, he visited families throughout the electorate, who had, on average, 4.5 children. The first visit was late in February 1901, to the children of a selector at Spring Grove near Cunnamulla. Johnson stayed in the Cunnamulla area until the end of March, finding a further sixteen isolated families with school-age children. In April, he moved south towards the New South Wales border and then east to the Balonne River, making several northerly digressions into the interior of the electorate and visiting another twenty-six families. From May until the beginning of August 1901, he called on forty-three families as he followed the river north with an easterly deviation towards Mungindi. The final leg of the circuit was in a westerly direction towards the Warrego River, visiting fourteen families. The last visit recorded in his report for 1901 was on 29 August, to Thirsty Downs on the Morven Road, thus the final eighteen unrecorded visits for the year were most likely in this area.

Johnson encountered children with a range of education levels: some had never had tuition, some had been to school for a year or two, and others, had been taught previously by a governess. For example, at Cocklerina he found six children who had never been to school (visit 4), while at the marsupial camp at Drysdale Ponds, the children had spent two years at Tipton Provisional School (visit 74). At Abbadoah, he visited a family of nine school-age children who had 'heretofore been instructed by a governess but one is not employed at present' (visit 27). Johnson reported some parents made efforts to send one child in the family to school. At Boatman woolshed, he wrote that 'the parents are keeping the boy Martin at Charleville State School in the hope he may be able to help his brothers, after a year or two, with their studies' (visit 83); and at Charlotte Bore No.1, he reported that one child was at home and a 'second child is at Cunnamulla attending the state school there' (visit 25). He encountered a similar situation in a shearer's family at Watsonville

where one child rode to St George School and another stayed at home (visit 69). At several households, he found attempts at teaching already in progress, most frequently by the mother. Sometimes others were performing the task, as at Byzantium old mail change where 'Mr Clanchy, at much personal sacrifice employs an elderly gentleman' (visit 76).

At some households, Johnson left large quantities of school materials and at other places he left nothing, probably reflecting pre-existing supplies. Families who had previously had some contact with a school were possibly better resourced than others. Johnson left 12 textbooks, 6 copybooks and 97 items of stationery with the several unschooled children of a dingo-shooter at Pine Grove grazing farm (visit 71), while a family at Nixon's Sawmill on the Balonne River, did not require any materials at all. In this family, the eldest boy had attended St George State School (visit 68). Considering Johnson's apparent generosity with school materials, it is obvious that his supplies were replenished during his travels. His small buggy, already loaded with camping equipment and two people, could not have carried vast stocks. The materials would have been sent from Brisbane by Cobb & Co. coach, or by train, to be collected at pre-determined locations.

Johnson's visits in 1901 were usually one day long, although towards the end of that year's itinerant program, he extended his contact time to two days per family (visits 79 onwards). The households where he spent two days received tuition as well as the regular routine of assessment, surrogate tutor training and setting of schoolwork. At Tongy cattle station, he reported: 'I taught the children the most part of two days in tables and arithmetic'⁵⁶ (visit 79). At several outposts he encountered two families, and twice he found three families together (visits 28,43). In these situations, he clustered the children and trained one tutor for the group. On many occasions he visited two families on one day, despite considerable distances between them. For example, on 21 March he visited the Cobb & Co. changing station at Monjaree, and later in the day saw more children at Monjaree run, ten miles down the track (visits 12,13). In that first year, Johnson set a year's program of schoolwork for each child, suggesting he did not expect to return until the following year. When the Itinerant Service became fully established, children received up to four visits a year.

Instructing the surrogate tutor was a major part of Johnson's duties, and possibly the most time-consuming. In most cases, the children's mother was delegated, but occasionally another member of a household was chosen. In households where some form of tutoring was already in operation, Johnson's task would have been easier (visits 6, 44, 46, 49, 51, 66, 67, 68, 84, 85), but in other households there was little hope of success. For example, at Tartulla rabbit fence camp, a family of six children were encountered, the youngest being newborn twins. The father was in charge of eighty miles of rabbit-proof fencing and the mother had recently died. Johnson rather optimistically recorded that 'the father will direct their studies at night, when at home' (visit 73).⁵⁷

Another component to Johnson's duties was to inform people of the possibility of provisional schools. At Watsonville, on the Balonne River, he wrote: 'I visited this place because Mr Watson is interested in the establishment of a provisional school at or near the Belmore Hotel, on the left bank of the river' (visit 69).⁵⁸ The Department of Public Instruction's Annual Report for 1902 records that sixty-nine of the children Johnson visited in the previous year were now attending seven new provisional schools, 'mainly... as a result of the itinerant teacher's labours'.⁵⁹

The hardships faced by Johnson and his assistant should not be underestimated. They began their travels when the Great Federation Drought, the worst drought ever recorded in Queensland, was at its climax, limiting their supplies of water and horsefeed and bringing the ever-present threat of bushfires and dust storms. The drought would have also impacted on isolated families, who, at the best of times struggled to survive in a hostile environment, and it is unlikely many would have had the means to extend hospitality to visiting travellers. Despite the hardships he faced throughout his travels, Johnson found his work a rewarding challenge. In 1904, when he spoke to a local newspaper, the *St George Standard*, about his time as itinerant teacher, he expressed 'great satisfaction at the manner in which he [had] everywhere been received and treated', and reported that 'very fair progress ha[d] been made by the children in their home tuition'.⁶⁰

CONCLUSION

Queensland's Itinerant Teaching Service, trialled in 1901, was the first governmental scheme to address the lack of educational

facilities in country areas. The service, the result of three years of sporadic debate in the colonial Parliament, came at a time when other Australian colonies were also addressing this issue; for example, New South Wales had introduced the house-to-house system.⁶¹ George Story, in galvanising debate, alerted Queensland's politicians to the educational inequality existing in the urban-rural divide. As a consequence, the under-utilised half-time school system was developed, more provisional schools were opened and the Itinerant Teaching Service was established. The Service was an enlightened move on the part of the Government. Relatively inexpensive, simple to operate and non-sectarian, it was an investment in the citizens – and voters of the future – in rural Queensland. Moreover, it enabled the Government to claim to be assisting the isolated bush battlers who were so largely contributing to the state's economy (pastoral products were the major export at that time). The Department of Public Instruction was fortunate to recruit for the Service Thomas Daly Johnson, who, with minimal support and at a time of great environmental adversity, more than fulfilled his duties. From the perspective of children involved in the scheme's first year, it is unlikely that they were much better off after visits of one day. However, the Itinerant Teaching Service laid the foundation for distance education in Queensland. In the short-term, it was the blueprint for the larger, well-organised Service that followed the experimental years. In the long-term, it was precursor to the Primary Correspondence Scheme which continues today.

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32. *The Education Office Gazette*, December 1900, p. 286.
33. Register of Teachers (Males), AccessEd Library Services.
34. *Ibid*.
35. Register of Teachers, QSA.
36. Wyeth, *Education in Queensland*, p. 154. John Douglas Story (J.D. Story) was no known relation of George Story, MLA.
37. Annual Report 1900, *QVP*, 1 (1901), p. 6.
38. Annual Report 1902, *QPP*, 1 (1903), p. 6.
39. *The Queenslander*, 2 February 1901.
40. Annual Report 1903, *QPP*, 1 (1904), p. 6.
41. Annual Report 1900, *QVP*, 1 (1901), p. 3.
42. Register of Teachers, QSA.
43. Annual Report 1902, *QPP*, 1 (1903), p. 5.
44. *The Queenslander*, 2 February 1901.
45. *St George Standard*, 17 June 1904.
46. Register of Teachers (Males), AccessEd Library Services.
47. *The State Education Acts 1875-1912*, p. 44.
48. *State Education Act of 1875 together with the Regulations of the Department, General Instructions for the Guidance of Teachers and Others, and Appendices*. (Brisbane: Edmund Gregory, Government Printer, 1897), p. 9.
49. *Ibid*.
50. *Ibid*, p. 7.
51. Peter Meadmore, personal communication, 11 December 2000.
52. Annual Report 1900, *QVP*, 1 (1901), p. 10.
53. *Ibid*, p. 3.
54. Register of Teachers (Males), AccessEd Library Services.
55. Annual Report 1901, *QPP*, 1 (1902), p. 6.
56. Annual Report 1900, *QVP*, 1 (1901), p. 8.
57. *Ibid*, p. 6.
58. *Ibid*, p. 14.
59. Annual Report 1903, *QPP*, 1 (1904), p. 6.
60. *St George Standard*, 17 June 1904.
61. *QPD*, 67 (1897), p.1003.

APPENDIX 1

Visits by Thomas Daly Johnson in the Balonne Electorate in 1901. (Compiled from the Annual Report of the Queensland Department of Public Instruction, 1900, recording Johnson's weekly diaries)
Wording and spelling have not been changed. Abbreviations: SS = State School; PS = Provisional School; NR = not recorded.

Visit	Date	Family	Occupation of Father/s	Location	Children	Program & Materials Supplied	Special Observations
1	22 February	McManus family	Selector	Spring Grove, 16 miles Cunnamulla	3 children – never been to school	Necessary for the requirements of the children	Children's aunt to supervise
2	23 February	Goss family	NR	Frazer's Camp, Rabbit fence, Wallon Station	2 boys aged 18 & 14 – elder 1 year instruction at Rose Vale, younger knows alphabet	Necessary for the requirements of the children	NR
3	24 February	Albion family	Overseer	Emerald, 7 miles Frazer's Camp	8 children – 3 school-age	Necessary for the requirements of the children	Children's aunt to supervise
4	26 February	McNamara family	Owner	Cocklerina, 25 miles Frazer's Camp	8 children – 6 school-age, never been to school	Necessary for the requirements of the children	Parents to supervise
5	2 March	Smith family	Manager	Bandoo Station, 34 miles Frazer's Camp	3 children – 2 school-age	Necessary for the requirements of 1 girl	Parents to supervise
6	9 March	McWaters family	Owner	Boort, 19 miles Claverton	4 children – 3 school-age	Necessary for the requirements of the children	Mother already supervising
7	11 March	Palmer family	Ganger	Offham Railway Siding, 15 miles Boort	2 children, 3 others attending school – 2 school-age	Program of work	NR
8	12 March	3 families – names NR	NR	Coongoola Railway Siding, 14 miles Offham	11 children – 6 school-age	Necessary for the requirements of the children	Sister & 2 mothers to supervise
9	13 March	NR	NR	Coongoola Head Station, 5 miles Coongoola Siding	2 boys – ages NR	Program of work	Mother to supervise
10	19 March	NR	NR	Kahmoo Rabbit Fence Camp, 13 miles Cunnamulla	4 children – 3 school-age	Program of work	NR
11	20 March	Elliott family	NR	Monjaree Head Station, 13 miles Kahmoo Camp	5 children – 3 school-age; 2 to college when drought breaks	Program of work for 3rd child	NR
12	21 March	NR	NR	Monjaree-Cobb & Co's Mail Change	1 child – age NR	Program of work	NR
13	21 March	Batten family	Carpenter & general handyman	Monjarre Run, 10 miles Monjaree Mail Change	4 children – 3 school-age	Program of work	NR
14	22 March	NR	NR	Newhaven Town Reserve & Hayfield, 8 miles Cunnamulla	12 children – 9 school-age	Necessary for the requirements of the children	NR
15	25 March	NR	NR	Burrenbilla, 20 miles Cunnamulla	6 children – 4 school-age	Program of work	NR
16	26 March	NR	NR	Trunkey Mail Change	2 children – 1 school-age	Necessary for the requirements of 1 child	NR
17	27 March	NR	NR	Tuen Hotel & Mail Change, 22 miles Trunkey Mail Change	3 children – 1 school-age	Necessary for the requirements of 1 child	NR
18	28 March	NR	NR	Tinnenburra (Tuen Woolshed), 20 miles Tuen Hotel	6 children – 4 school-age	Necessary for the requirements of 4 children	NR
19	30 March	Eig family	Boundary rider	Tinnenburra-Cuttiburra Rabbit Proof Fence, 49 miles Tinnenburra	8 children – 6 school-age	Necessary for the requirements of the children	3 able to read & write
20	4 April	NR	NR	Bundaleer Head Station, 80 miles Wooroorooka	2 children – 1 school-age	Necessary for the requirements of 1 child	Station bookkeeper to supervise

Visit	Date	Family	Occupation of Father/s	Location	Children	Program & Materials Supplied	Special Observations
21	5 April	McDonnell family	Selector	Caro, 11 miles Bundaleer	3 children – 2 school-age	Necessary for the requirements of 2 children	21 year old sister to supervise
22	6 April	Taylor family	Selector	Burrenbah, 5 miles Caro	6 children – 4 school-age	Necessary for the requirements of 4 children	NR
23	8 April	2 families – names NR	Bookkeeper & overseer	Widgeoara Station, 20 miles Bundaleer	6 children – 3 school-age	Necessary for the requirements of 3 children	NR
24	10 April	2 families	NR	Weilamurra Bore, 26 miles Widgeoara Head Station	10 children – 8 school-age	Necessary for the requirements of 8 children	NR
25	11 April	NR	NR	Charlotte Bore No. 1, 24 miles Weilmurra Head Station	2 children – 1 school-age, other child attending Cunnamulla SS	Necessary for the requirements of child	Father to supervise
26	13 April	NR	NR	Harriman Park, 15½ miles Charlotte Plains Bore No. 1	1 child – school-age	Necessary for the requirements of child	Father to supervise
27	17 April	Mrs Manns & family	NR	Abbadoah, 10 miles Cunnamulla	9 children – school-age	Necessary for the requirements of pupils	Have been instructed by governess but not at present
28	19 April	3 families – names NR	NR	Shamrock Wells, 40 miles Abbadoah	3 children – school-age	Necessary for the requirements of 3 pupils	NR
29	20 April	2 families – names NR	NR	Arglen, 8 miles Shamrock Wells	7 children – 6 school-age	Necessary for the requirements of 6 pupils	NR
30	22 April	Heness family	Proprietor	Bonna Vonna, 24 miles Shamrock Wells	3 children – 2 school-age	NR	Elder sister will instruct
31	24 April	NR	NR	Fernlee, 28 miles Bonna Vonna	5 children – 3 school-age	Requisites for 1st Class	Elder sister will instruct
32	25 April	1 family – names NR	Boundary rider	Fernlee, 28 miles Bonna Vonna	2 children – 1 school-age	Requisites & program	NR
33	27 April	NR	NR	Mulga Downs	3 children – 1 school-age	Requisites & program	NR
34	29 April	2 families – names NR	Boundary rider & kangaroo shooter	Mulga Downs, Talawanta, Nebine Bore	7 children – 5 school-age, only 2 knew alphabet	Requisites & program	Parents to instruct
35	2 May	NR	Station manager	Kinglebilla	3 children – ages NR	Program for 2nd Class & requisites	Elder sister will instruct
36	6 May	Webster family	Overseer	Balandool	4 children – ages NR	Requisites of work for 1st Class	NR
37	7 May	Pratt family	Boundary rider	Narran Gate, 52 miles Kinglebilla	5 children – 2 school-age	Requisites & program of work – 1 year	Father will instruct children
38	10 May	O'Keefe family	Manager	Cubbie Station, 64 miles Kinglebilla	11 children – 4 school-age	1 year program of work – 1st & 3rd Class	Elder sister will instruct
39	14 May	McCarthy family	Bailiff	Narleene, 39 miles Cubbie	4 children – 1 school-age	Requisites & program of work – 1 year 1st Class	Parents will instruct
40	15 May	Burns family	Caretaker	Tooroora, 30 miles Cubbie	5 children – 2 school-age	Requisites & program of work – 3rd half-year 1st Class	NR
41	16 May	Cahill family	Selector	Boah Selection, 3½ miles Dirranbandi	4 children – 1 school-age	Requisites & program of work – 1st Class	NR
42	16 May	Desailly family	Caretaker	Woonmundi Selection, 7½ miles Dirranbandi	3 children – 1 school-age	Requisites & program of work – 1 year 1st Class	NR
43	17 May	3 families – names NR	NR	Dirranbandi	5 children – 2 school-age	Requisites & program of work – 1st Class	NR

Visit	Date	Family	Occupation of Father/s	Location	Children	Program & Materials Supplied	Special Observations
44	18 May	Field family	Overseer	Currawildi, Outstation Noondoo	4 children – 3 school-age	Requisites & program of work – 1 year 2nd Class	Mother to continue to instruct children
45	20 May	Crothers family	Owner	Bonebrotket Selection, 12 miles Dirranbandi	5 children – 3 school-age	Requisites & program of work – 1 year 1st & 2nd Class	Mother & lady's help will teach children
46	22 May	Field family	Carpenter	Diamond Wells, 18 miles Bonebrotket	2 children – 1 school-age	Necessary for requisites	Mother will continue to instruct child
47	23 May	Green family	Boundary rider	Noondoo Head Station Old Shed, 20 miles Bonebrotket	4 children – ages NR	Requisites & program	2 gentlemen employed on run to instruct children
48	3 June	Smale family	Boundary rider	Narine Station, Poolloomoodool, 21 miles Noondoo Old Shed	2 children – ages NR	Requisites & program – 1 year 2nd Class & 1 year 1st Class	NR
49	8 June	Smith family	Carrier	Greenwood Selection, 8 miles Mungindi	11 children – 7 school-age	Requisites & program – 1st, 2nd, 3rd Class	Mother to continue to instruct children
50	11 June	Condron family	Prickly pear contractor	Mugan Run, 13 miles Greenwood	7 children – 5 school-age	Requisites & program – 1st & 2nd Class	Parents to instruct children as best they can
51	13 June	Ormerod & Fielding families	Manager & general station-hand	Willarie Head Station, 18 miles Mugan	8 children – 5 school-age	Requisites & program – 1st & 2nd Class	Mrs Ormerod will continue to teach children
52	15 June	Dorrstein & Bennett families	NR	Newinga Run, 12 miles Willarie	11 children – 8 school-age	Requisites & program – 1st Class	NR
53	17 June	Gannon family	Fencing contractor	Newinga (on the run), 8 miles Newinga	4 children – 2 school-age	Requisites & program – 1 year 1st Class	NR
54	20 June	Lessan family	Boundary rider	Nindy Gully (Outstation Bullamon)	4 children – 2 school-age, uneducated	Requisites & program – 1 year 1st Class	Mother to give what instruction she can
55	22 June	Albeck family	Baliff & station contractor	Home of August Albeck, Close to St George	5 children – 3 school-age	Requisites & program – 1 year 1st & 2nd Classes	Mother promised to get a girl to help with studies
56	25 June	Burke family	Station-hand	Thurrangie, 12 miles St George	2 children – 1 school-age	Requisites & program – 1 year 3rd Class	NR
57	27 June	Betts family	Selector	Balagna, 18 miles St George	5 children – 3 school-age	Requisites & program – 1st Class	NR
58	29 June	Noble family	Dog-trapper & marsupial shooter	Hollymount Outstation, 32 miles Balagna	3 children – 2 school-age	Requisites & program – 1st Class	NR
59	8 July	Buchanan family	Manager	Weribone Station, 119 miles Hollymount	2 children – 1 school-age	Requisites & program – 1st Class	NR
60	9 July	Wright family	Groom	Rosehill Mail Change, 9 miles Weribone	3 children – 3 school-age	Program of work – 1st, 2nd & 3rd Classes	Mother & eldest daughter to undertake instruction
61	11 July	Loder family	Groom	Donga Mail Change, 14 miles Weribone	3 children – 2 school-age	Requisites & program – 1st Class	Mother to give instruction
62	13 July	Underwood family	Part proprietor	Waroo Station, 13½ miles Donga Mail Change	9 children – 4 school-age, 1 at Surat SS	Program of work – 1st 2nd & 3rd Classes	Elder sister instructing
63	15 July	Winks family (Samuel)	Caretaker, marsupial shooter, dingo trapper	Whycomb, 43 miles St George	9 children – 17;13;11;9;8;6;4;3 & 0yrs	Text books & stationery (Appendix 2)	Children to be instructed by daughter of neighbouring selector
64	17 July	Winks family (C. J.)	Station overseer	South Burgorah (outstation Boombah Station), 3½ miles Boombah Station	10 children – 12 (2yrs under tutor); 10;9;7;6; 3 & 2yrs	Program of work – 1st, 2nd half-years 3rd Class, 1st & 2nd half-years 1st Class – supplied text-books & stationery (Appendix 2)	Elder sister, aged 18, to instruct

Visit	Date	Family	Occupation of Father/s	Location	Children	Program & Materials Supplied	Special Observations
65	17 July	McCracken family	Groom Cobb & Co	South Burgorah (Mail Change), Surat Rd, 18 miles Brindle Hotel	3 children – 6; 5 & 2yrs	Supplied written programs work – 1st & 2nd half-years in First Class, textbooks & stationery (Appendix 2)	Parents qualified to give necessary instruction
66	18 July	Stewart family (John)	Part-owner	Rutherford freehold block, Surat Rd, 8 miles St George	7 children – 10;9;7(never been to school); 5;4;2 & 0yrs (uninstructed)	Programs – 3rd half-year 1st Class, extended reading & spelling to 1st half-year 2nd Class	Mrs Stewart to continue to teach
67	18 July	Stewart family (Daniel)	Part-owner, shearer, general station-hand	Rutherford, Houses, 50 yards appart	6 children – 10;8;6;5;2 & 0yrs (never been to school)	Work – 3rd half-year 1st Class, textbooks & stationery (Appendix 2)	Mrs Stewart to continue to teach
68	24 July	Nixon family	Sawmill proprietor, blacksmith	Nixon's Sawmill & selection	6 children – 15 (2 yrs St George SS); 13;12 & 10yrs	No school material supplied – set work 1st, 2nd & 3rd half-years 1st Class	Parents to continue to instruct
69	25 July	Watson family	Shearer, owner	Watsonville (agricultural home-stead), 6 miles St George	3 children – 11 (rides to St George SS); 6 (partially knows alphabet) & 1yr	No material supplied	Mr Watson interested in establishing PS near Belmore Hotel
70	25 July	Goward family	Shearer, general hand	agricultural home-stead, Right bank Balonne River	3 children – 7 (niece, 1 week St George SS); 5 (knows alphabet);1	Work 1st & 2nd half-years 1st Class, no material supplied	Parents to instruct
71	26 –27 July	Cole family	Part-owner, marsupial shooter	Pine Grove grazing farm, Dirranbandi Rd	7 children, never been to school – 12;10;9;7;5;3 & 0yrs	School material supplied (Appendix 2)	Mrs Cole to instruct
72	6 August	Moore family	Overseer, boundary rider	Wagoo Outstation, Junction Maranoa & Balonne Rivers	8 children – 12 (3 mths St George SS); 9;8;7;5;3;1 & 0yrs	School material supplied (Appendix 2)	Mrs Moore to instruct
73	9 August	Cavanough family	In charge 80 miles rabbit fence	Tartulla Rabbit Fence Camp, Tartulla Creek	6 children – 16 & 14 (3yrs Yeulba SS);9;2; 0yrs (twins)	School material supplied (Appendix 2)	Mother died 3 mths ago; father to direct studies
74	10 August	Garland family	Dingo & marsupial shooter	Marsupial Camp, Drysdale Ponds, Tartulla Creek	11 children – 14 & 12 (2yrs Tipton PS);10 (1yr Tipton PS, 1yr Dalby SS); 8;6;4;1	School material supplied (Appendix 2)	Sarah Garland (16) to instruct
75	12 August	Marsh family	Cattleman	Hillsborough Cattle Station, 54 miles St George	5 children including 11 yr old boy whose father at the Boer War – 11 (attending Mitchell SS);10;7;4yrs	Set work 1st,2nd;3rd half-yr 1st Class – school material supplied (Appendix 2)	Mrs Marsh to instruct as far as circumstances permit
76	15 August	Clanchy family	Selector, groom Cobb & Co	Byzantium Mail Change, Wallan Creek	7 children – 10 (11 yrs Mitchell SS, 2yrs tutor);8 & 6(2yrs tutor);4	School material supplied (Appendix 2)	Elderly gentleman employed to teach children at great personal sacrifice
77	16 August	Collins family	Principal worker on run	Toomoo Cattle Station, 96 miles Bollon	7 children, never been to school – 14;12;10;8;6;3 & 1yrs	School material supplied (Appendix 2)	Mrs & Miss Dickson to teach all children on the run
78	19 August	Crawford family	Carter, general team worker	Kenilworth, Bollon – Mitchell Road	5 children – 13 & 11 (3yrs Bollon PS, 2yrs Mitchell SS; 4;2 & 0yrs	Set work 2nd & 3rd half-years 2nd Class & geography program to suit	Mother & eldest daughter to instruct
79	20-21 August	Murray family	Overseer	Tongy Cattle Station, Outstation Bendena-Nebine Creek	8 children, never been to school, 10 months tutor – 13;11;9;8;6;4; & 2yrs	Taught the children 2 days arithmetic; supplied school materials (Appendix 2)	Mr Murray promised to get an old gentleman to tutor, brother-in-law & 13yr old daughter to instruct
80	20-21 August	Miller family	Shearer's cook, labourer	Tongy Cattle Station, Outstation Bendena-Nebine Creek	5 children, never been to school – 10 (10mths tutor);5; 2;1 & 0yrs	Supplied school materials (Appendix 2)	Parents to instruct

Visit	Date	Family	Occupation of Father/s	Location	Children	Program & Materials Supplied	Special Observations
81	24-25 August	Sanderson family	Boundary rider, labourer in charge 50 miles bore drains, 14 miles rabbit proof fence	No. 3 Bore, Boatman Sheep Station	5 children, never been to school	Supplied school materials (Appendix 2)	Parents to instruct
82	26-27 August	Busiko family	General station hand, boundary rider	Woolshed, Boatman Sheep Station, 2½ miles Head Station	2 children – 14 (6 weeks Morven school); 12 (never been to school)	Set work 1st, 2nd, 3rd half-yrs 1st Class, supplied school material (Appendix 2)	Parents to instruct
83	26-27 August	Welsh family	Shearer, fencer	No. 1 Bore, Boatman, Boatman Sheep Station	3 children – 15 & 13 (never been to school); 11 (Charleville SS 2 yrs)	Set work 1st, 2nd, 3rd half-yrs 1st Class, supplied school material (Appendix 2)	Parents keeping 11 year old at school in the hope he can teach others
84	27-28 August	Walker family	Manager	Head Station Boatman, 81 miles Charleville	5 children – 15 (at school Melbourne living with grandmother); 8; 6 & 5 (never been to school) & 2yrs	Set work 1st, 2nd, 3rd half-years 1st Class; 1st, 2nd half-yrs 2nd Class	Mrs Walker to continue to instruct children
85	28-29 August	Baker family	Selector	Thirsty Downs (grazing farm), 9 miles Boatman Homestead	9 children – 14 (some time at Charleville SS); 13 & 8 (never been to school)	Set work 2yrs 2nd Class, attention paid to arithmetic, supplied school material (Appendix 2)	Elders daughter & father to instruct, parents already taught all family to read

APPENDIX 2

School materials supplied by Thomas Daly Johnson in 1901. (Compiled from the Annual Report of the Queensland Department of Public Instruction, 1900 recording Johnson's weekly diaries)
Wording has not been changed.

TEXTBOOKS	STATIONERY
Little Primer	Pencils
Little Readers Part 1; 2	Chalk
Nelson's Royal Readers No. 1; 2; 3; 4	Slate Pencils
Century Readers No. 1; 2	Pencilholders
Alphabet Sheet	Penholders
Table-book	Pens
Arithmetic (Colenso)	Blotting paper
Star Arithmetic No. 1 (with answers)	Ink powders
Star Arithmetic No. 2	Exercise books
Geography A & R No. 1	Vere Foster Copy Books No. 1; 1½; 2½; 3; 3½; 4
Grammar A & R	
Grammar, McLeod's	
Large Atlas	