

Committee inquiring into Boys' Education

Dear Sirs,

### **Summary**

- Now that we no longer have rules that provide men with a privileged place in society, some boys are unable to compete.
- Separate boys and girls into separate classrooms to reduce competition.

### **Detail**

I am a youngish man with little experience dealing with children as an adult, but I enjoy thinking and I like to imagine that this counts for something.

Why are boys doing badly at school? There are two reasons:

- It's boring.
- There's no point.

### **It's boring**

School is boring, and has always been boring. It is probably more boring now that there are so many women teachers. Women are not usually as imaginative or as brave as men and so the lessons they prepare are more likely to be boring.

School contrasts strongly with the world of business where you have the adventure of cutting a new trail. Business people feel that they are visionaries and men who get things done. Some days they might even feel respected as such.

Maybe sometimes school teachers forget to tell their students how important business people are and how fulfilling a business career can be. I wonder how many school-kids think that everything in life is as boring as school.

### **There's no point**

Boys do badly at school because there's no point doing well. In fact they see little point growing up to be a man.

A man with no money is a loser and a deadbeat. A man who has money is a sitting duck.

My barber is an older chap and I enjoy going down there for a haircut and to talk about the good old days. He once told me about how his grandfather provided sacks for itinerant workers to sleep in as they passed by his farm during the great depression. He painted the sacks with whitewash so that the wind would not blow through. Several points may be drawn from this story:

- The farmer was a hero to those workers without having to be rich or talented.

- People expected to have to help one another in those days.
- The farmer had a story to tell his grandchildren.
- The farmer had to use his initiative before he got to be a hero.

Today's life is very different. Taxes are automatically taken from people who make money and it's the government's job to provide food and shelter for everyone else. There is no initiative to be taken, and no story to tell.

When a man works hard and gives some of his money to others that makes him a hero. When the government takes money from him and gives it to others, it's the politicians who become heroes.

I wonder if you feel like heroes?

But maybe it's not the government's fault that men are feeling bad. How could men be feeling good in an age where sheilas are doing it all for themselves?

I saw an advertising sign recently promoting a particular university course. A pretty young woman was pictured standing there and saying, "I used to want to marry a millionaire. Now, I just want to be one."

Women have always been uniquely wonderful. We have always desired them more ardently than they have ever wanted us. Can you imagine Germaine Greer being pulled up by police after offering money to a male prostitute and explaining, "Excuse me officer, I really needed a root." ?

Women have the final word on "if, when and to whom" a child will be born. These are very major decisions that men aren't always asked to take part in.

It used to be believed that men had uniquely wonderful attributes that compensated them for not having feminine strengths. If that's not true, why do we need men?

Women sometimes put it to me another way: "Why is it our fault that that men are useless?"

### **The real, underlying problem**

The fact that boys are doing badly at school is just a symptom of an underlying problem - that boys feel what they do doesn't really matter.

But that in itself is just a symptom of an even more fundamental problem: *There are hardly any fences*

What do I mean by fences? A fence is a constraint imposed on people stopping them from acting purely on their immediate self-interest.

A few decades ago women working in the public service were asked to leave once they got married. There was a fence that married women couldn't cross.

There was a fence that made it difficult for single women to have children on their own and a fence that stopped men wearing dresses walking down the street.

There was a fence that divided boys into scouting and girls into guides. That fence was removed for girls but it's still there for boys.

The people who ran our media had fences around them to limit the sort of thing they could entertain

us with.

Man and wife were fenced in together even through tedious times.

Nature imposes barriers to what we can do: There's an unwritten rule that beautiful young women are more interesting to spend time with than elderly women. Fences are a traditional way of overriding cruel natural barriers with the civilising influence of man-made ones.

Islamic nations have a lot of fences which we laugh at and call old-fashioned. I can only imagine that they look at western culture and think we're about as civilised as a flock of seagulls bickering over scraps.

There are many people today who say they're glad to see the fences gone. The fashion of today says, "We don't need fences because fences stop us doing what we'd really like to be doing and living a full life."

But they are terribly wrong, fences are good for us:

- Fences restrict people's choices so they can stop thinking about all the things they might achieve and start doing something about what they can achieve.
- Fences allow people to live their lives without being subject to others constantly trying to lead them astray.
- Fences divide people into smaller groups. People in small groups behave better than the same people in large groups.
- Fences stop you from taking the bread from someone else's plate, just because you can.
- Fences allow us confidence in our relationships with others knowing that they're also fenced in. A relationship we can trust is one we are more likely to put something into.
- Fences provide security, and slow the rate of change.

The fence that stopped married women from pursuing careers in the public service was not there to hold women back, it was to give jobs to men (and single women) who might not be able find work anywhere else. You might ask, who cares about people who can't get jobs because they're not as good as married women applying for the same jobs?

I care - a man without a job can easily feel worthless. A married woman without a job can take on volunteer work if life at home gets too monotonous.

A reason often given to dismiss fences is that if too many people want to get to the other side of a particular fence, then it will just get trampled in the rush to get to the other side. The answer to that concern is to build fences that guide actions rather than block them.

People laugh at Pauline Hanson when she says let's put up fences. But you can see her point when you think of local manufacturers being asked to reduce pollution and yet compete with overseas manufacturers who don't care about pollution.

### **Recommendations**

While I would like to recommend fences to give males a greater sense of purpose in life, I fear you will inevitably reply that it is not your job to fix the whole of society, you want a band-aid for boys' education. So I will limit my recommendations as follows:

We need to put in place a fence which would:

- Protect boys' interests in school

- Not take too much work to set up
- Not offend powerful pressure groups.
- Not draw resistance from the people who have to implement it.

The best idea I have seen to address these points is not my own but one submitted by Mrs Rosemary Andersen.

As she says, "The solution is simple: Separate boys and girls in school."

I can't resist a couple of extra recommendations to help you reform yourself:

- Suggest to the PM that future committees of parliament which haven't reported within six months of inception should be shut down and committee members made to wear badges for a month inscribed with the words, "I'm a dickhead."
- Refuse submissions unaccompanied by a summary of 50 words or less. Publish these summaries on the internet with links to the submissions. A sample can be found at [www.sbutton.com/homepages/philbachmann/1-44-21.htm](http://www.sbutton.com/homepages/philbachmann/1-44-21.htm)
- Don't publish a report that most voters can't easily understand.
- If you find that working within the constraints of a federal system of parliamentary democracy, budget feasibility, three year election cycles, pressure from vested interest groups, conflicting evidence and oppressive media influence makes it impossible to do anything useful, let the voters know. Put your hand up and ask for help from the only people who can.

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