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The Reorganisation of Teacher Education in the U.K. and Ontario: Implications for Australia

by

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I visited the U.K. and Ontario in late September and October 1976 to study the reorganization of teacher education which was taking place as a response to a sharp decline in the demand for teachers consequent on a falling birth-rate and a deteriorating economic situation.

The main advantage of the study was that it provided a perspective in which the current situation in Australia (and specifically in W.A.) in regard to an 'over-supply' of teacher education trainees could be more objectively evaluated in a context of common problems. The fact that the problems, particularly in England, are more urgent, complex, critical and of longer standing hopefully means that their attempts to resolve such problems may indicate possible and perhaps profitable directions of change in the Australian situation.

Background to the Reorganization

By the early 70's in Britain a crisis situation had been created in teacher education because of the imbalance which then existed between the reduced number of teaching places available in the schools and the increased number of student teachers in the colleges and departments of education. This situation was the result of the rapid expansion of teacher education numbers in the sixties, concurrent with unforeseen (perhaps unheeded) anti-expansionist demographic trends and a deteriorating economic climate. The onset of the 'numbers' crisis was thus sudden and largely unanticipated. For these reasons and because of the decentralised nature of the British system in regard to education funding and educational initiatives a good deal of the necessary subsequent change and adaptation to a new austerity in teacher education has been *ad hoc* and piecemeal rather than carefully planned and unified.

The situation that exists in England and Wales, in relation to teacher supply, is determined by the Secretary of State for Education and Science in consultation with the Advisory Committee on the Supply and Training of Teachers. Over the last three or four years the number of initial teacher education places available in colleges of education has sharply declined. As at October 1976 the order of some of the cuts in initial training quotas was as high as 60% and over. In this situation many colleges have been closed. And in general terms only those institutions which foresaw the

decline in the teacher education provision have been able to survive by rationalisation and diversification of resource through amalgamations of various kinds. Even the continuing survival of some of these is still highly speculative and the position is not expected to be resolved in this regard before 1978. Although the situation was confused and unresolved at this time in England, certain trends and emphases arising out of the rationalisation exercise which have relevance and significance for the situation in Australia were evident. Certainly the emphases that have developed in teacher education in England and Wales since 1970 have been due in the main to the coincidence of two factors: the recommendations of the James Report in 1972 and the nature of the rationalisations consequent on the decline in the availability of teacher education places in the colleges of education.

The Reorganization

The colleges of education (formerly grouped into Area Training Organizations based on University Institutes of Education which coordinated, examined and validated their courses) have been moulded, in the rationalisation process, into four distinct sectors:

- (a) colleges which have merged with universities (5) *
- (b) colleges which have merged with polytechnics (33),
- (c) colleges which have become institutes of higher education (63 into 44) **
- (d) colleges which have remained largely unchanged.

There have been, of course, a number of closures. In the late fifties and during the sixties, seventeen or eighteen new colleges were created. As of 1976 twenty or thirty plus colleges had either closed or were under threat of closure. The latest estimate puts this figure as high as fifty college closures by the end of 1977.

In discussing the rationalisation and reorganization of teacher education currently proceeding in England and Wales it is important to understand, if parallels are to be drawn with the Australian experience, the way in which the colleges of education were motivated to respond to a crisis situation. In 1972 and 1973 signals were coming down the line which presaged major changes in higher education. The Department of Education and Science White Paper "A Framework for Expansion", which was subsequent to the James Report, accepted the major educational recommendations of that report but concerned itself more with matters of scale, organization and cost. It saw already the need to reduce the number of teacher education places while increasing the number of places in higher education. A subsequent D.E.S. publication, Circular 7/73, suggested a major reconsideration of the future role of colleges of education both in

* The numbers indicate the cases of different mergers or amalgamations.

** Groups of two or more colleges which have amalgamated in various ways.

and outside teacher education and their relations with universities, polytechnics and other institutions of further education offering advanced courses. The Circular said, in particular, that by 1980 the number of full-time students following teacher education courses both initial and in-service would fall by some 40 — 50,000 and corresponding higher education provision would have to be made for this number of students by diversifying the role of colleges of education.

These two important policy statements pointed the way to rationalisation through diversification of the offering in colleges of education. But the manner in which the resources necessary to achieve these objectives were to be obtained did not come from any centralised directive. The initiatives for action were left to the local education authorities and their education committees. They had to demonstrate economic educational viability in the face of drastically reduced teacher education quotas by amalgamations and mergers of the types enumerated. The survival of the colleges will depend, in the short term, on the degree to which such rationalisation and consequent diversification of educational offering can make good the short-fall caused by the drastic decline in teacher education numbers and, in the long term on the demand by society for the graduate students in the diversified fields. What has followed from the amalgamations and mergers which have characterised the rationalising of courses *vis-a-vis* the dramatic decline in pre-service teacher education numbers is of great significance, not only because the restructured colleges of education have moved into course areas cognate with, but outside the area of teacher education, but because the character of teacher education itself is changing in extent, character and emphasis in the process. This is due to a national move towards the James Committee's concept of the three cycles in teacher education — personal, professional and vocational — as a consecutive rather than a concurrent undertaking and also to the gain in material resource and staff academic versatility following the amalgamations and mergers which have hastened the move towards pre-service degrees both at pass and honours level. In addition the restricted quotas for pre-service teacher education have tended to improve the quality of the students selected. But most importantly teacher educators in the new situation have been offered a unique opportunity to commit themselves more fully to the in-service provision: particularly in assisting in problems of the induction year and for shorter need and refresher-type courses for teachers who have been in the field for varying periods of time.

In-Service Education

"Towards a National Policy for the Induction and In-Service Training of Teachers in Schools" and "The Contribution of Colleges and Departments of Education to INSET." are two important papers, setting out the views of the Induction and In-Service Sub-Committee of the Advisory Committee on the Supply and Training of Teachers which underline the importance of the induction and in-service provision and the unique opp-

ortunity provided by the present situation to organize induction and in-service training on a national scale. The A.C.S.T.T. paper "The Contribution of Colleges and Departments of Education to INSET" in its introduction which it labels "The Present Opportunity" says this: "The present contraction of teacher education releases for INSET purposes, human and material resources of high quality available previously only for the purpose of initial education and training which might otherwise be wasted". It goes on to say that an expanding INSET role for colleges and departments of education "makes it possible to make a continuum of provision of teacher education from initial through induction to the various forms of INSET provision appropriate to a developing professional career. The opportunity of linking initial and in-service education to the benefit of both and of all in the profession *may never arise as easily and as economically again*". *

The whole topic as discussed in these two papers has important relevance to the Australian situation and indeed in Australia belated recognition is only now being given to the issue of induction as an essential aspect of professional training, although in-service training of the informal kind for practitioners in the field, still receives insufficient attention.

The Amalgamations

I turn now to the necessarily small but fairly representative sample of amalgamations where it was possible to visit either one or more of the institutions concerned and enter into discussions with their principals and staff. Bearing in mind the limitations imposed by the size of the sample and the inevitably short term nature of the appraisal of the success or otherwise of an amalgamation, it seemed that there were certain pre-conditions in regard to organization and institutional values in the institutions involved which pre-judged the success of the exercise. It might be profitable to identify what these pre-conditions were by looking in some detail at those amalgamations and mergers that were studied at first-hand.

I take now two cases of institutions coming together where the rationalisation of numbers and courses appears to have been successfully accomplished and at the same time significant collegiate values characteristic of the former individual institutions have been retained.

Historically linked since their foundation 135 years ago, the Colleges of Ripon and York St. John are situated on campuses twenty-five miles apart (Ripon moved from York in 1862). Formerly the two colleges each had student populations of between 750 and 800 students in courses devoted almost exclusively to pre-service teacher education. With the severe cuts in quotas for initial teacher education entry it was anticipated that the student population would be halved and the viability of both institutions would be threatened. The local education authority and the

* Italics mine.

colleges resolved early, on an amalgamation which by virtue of the gain in total resource, in line with the policy statements regarding diversification into courses outside pre-service teacher education, would enable the two colleges to survive.

They based the diversification exercise both in the area of teacher education and courses outside it on the particular and traditional strengths of the colleges: a primary and arts emphasis at Ripon and a secondary and science emphasis at York St. John. Staff moved where necessary between the colleges (for example Mr. John Lee who was my principal informant coordinated the in-service area for both colleges but was based at the Ripon campus). Students took up residence according to the college where their teaching interests were directed. At the end of a year there could be movement of students from one campus to the other, in line with changing teaching interests. Administration and staffing were rationalised, not so much through redundancy but by natural wastage (some early retirements) and the changing of administrative and staff roles in line with new course directions. A wide-ranging in-service programme, based on the proposals of the sub-committee on induction and in-service quoted earlier was in the process of development and a discussion paper for an academic staff conference on the subject was produced.

Objectively and in the short run, the success of the total operation can be judged by the fact that the short-fall in numbers caused by the cut in quotas of students for teacher education had been made up in diversified courses. But more importantly success in this case can be measured by the retention of the commitment to collegiate and community values. As the College prospectus says in its final paragraph: "Each campus will have its own life-style, run its own domestic affairs and be small enough to be a real community." Success in these terms is also illustrated by the Roehampton Institute of Higher Education which lies in the Inner London Area close to Wimbledon Common, Putney Heath and Richmond Park. It comprises the voluntary colleges of Digby Stuart (Roman Catholic), Southlands (Methodist), Froebel Institute (non-denominational) and Whitelands (Anglican). It has 1,500 teacher education places (the largest in the country) and with its diversification programme anticipates a near doubling of this number with approximately 700 students in each of the colleges. It states its aims thus: "While the training of teachers will continue to be a major concern of R.I.H.E. a comprehensive range of non-vocational degree courses is also available, including both traditional subject disciplines and new courses of an interdisciplinary nature. The combined resources of the four colleges — including a tutorial staff of three hundred — make this varied offering possible. At the same time the continuing collegiate structure guards against the danger that a student will feel lost in a vast impersonal institution. Each student will be a member of a college of about seven hundred students with its own residential and community life . . . In many cases the students' study programme will take place largely within the chosen college, but, since all courses are planned on an institute basis, a range of options far beyond the resources

of any one college is available to all". Here again is an amalgamation which appears to have solved the problem of retaining the values of the collegiate structure while still having access to the material resource and academic flexibility of the larger institution.

In the amalgamations already described certain important parallels emerge. In both cases the colleges involved in the amalgamations have similar historical backgrounds and the funding procedures are the same (maintained i.e.a. colleges in the case of Ripon and York St. John, voluntary colleges in the case of R.I.H.E.). As former colleges of education they are committed, in each case, to an ethos which gives priority to the values of community. For similar reasons, in each case, the amalgamating colleges have followed the same traditional development of course structure and hence these would be easily interchangeable. Staff consensus in matters which concern the balance of elements in professional and personal development of students would more easily obtain in joining institutions which have similar traditions. Finally, the two groups of amalgamating colleges submit their courses for validation to universities with which they have been traditionally and harmoniously associated (the University of Leeds in the case of Ripon and York St. John and the University of London in the case of R.I.H.E.).

The Reorganization in Ontario

In the province of Ontario Canada, there were, prior to 1969, thirteen teachers colleges each providing one year of professional training after the sixth year of high school. In 1966 a report on the training of elementary school teachers by a ministerial committee under the chairmanship of C. R. McLeod, Director of Education for the City of Windsor, recommended the transfer of all teachers colleges to university control. In consequence between 1969 and 1974 nine of the colleges were progressively absorbed into university departments of education and two colleges were closed. In June, 1974, the Minister of Education announced the formation of the Ontario Teacher Education College embracing Toronto and Hamilton Teachers Colleges as a continuing operation under the Ministry of Education. Candidates for admission to these colleges are now required (as at September 1975) to hold an arts or science degree from an Ontario university, or its equivalent. It is interesting to note that, in order to maintain comparability with students training for elementary school teaching in the universities, the Minister himself grants the degree of Bachelor of Education to those students who successfully complete the course. The case of a Minister of Education granting degrees is, as far as I know, unique. Clearly the O.T.E.C. has been retained to act as a kind of yardstick for the standards of students now graduating from university departments of education.

I visited both the Toronto and Hamilton branches of the O.T.E.C. and while there were interesting course innovations in this end-on year of professional training, it is not an amalgamation in the English sense; the

campuses are widely separated (over 100 miles apart) and each college under its own principal runs its own courses with its own resources and each is occupied exclusively with professional teacher education.

At Queen's University Department of Education in Kingston, Ontario I discussed with the Dean, Vernon Ready, and staff members, the recent absorption of the Peterborough Teachers College into the University. From these conversations, several important consequences of the transfer of teacher education to the universities in Ontario, emerged. Firstly the total exercise has been decidedly uneven in character. Some universities (notably Queen's) have been happy to incorporate the total staff expertise of the colleges into their departments of education. In other cases, high percentages of college staffs have been made redundant. Secondly, although the recency of the operation precludes any properly considered judgement, it is clear that whereas some of the universities are prepared to recognize the need to integrate their newly constituted departments of education based on the special and differing character and needs of teacher education, others treat the merger simply as an addition to an existing faculty or department. Queen's University because of its good fortune in having a quite outstanding former teacher, administrator and educationist to head its department of education is a good example of the former group. I spoke to the former vice-principal of Peterborough Teachers College who now heads the teaching practice area of the department of education. He felt that intrinsically there were difficulties and weaknesses in the university approach to teacher education, based on tradition and structure and he was somewhat nostalgic about the disappearance of the colleges but admitted that he was impressed by the innovatory and sensitive approach at Queen's under Dean Ready and his staff. As an example of a highly innovatory approach to the linking of pre-service and university elements in teacher education, Queen's Faculty of Education are operating the following scheme. Primary teachers bring their classes into the faculty for a month at a time, where teaching is shared between teachers, faculty staff and students in specially built demonstration classrooms. Buses are provided. Payment of associate (practice) teachers is set at a little over \$7.00 per *diem* throughout the province. Queen's has, for this scheme, reduced this to \$3.00 per *diem* with the agreement of their associate teachers and is using the balance of funds to offer workshops to these teachers during these one month periods.

Summary and Implications for Australia

In England and Wales the present crisis has had the effect of hastening the dismantling of a structure of teacher education initiated by the McNair Report of 1942, which advocated the continuing independence and community-oriented ethos of the colleges, at the same time protecting academic standards by placing them under the supervision of university institutes of education. The Robbins Report recommended a virtual integration into the universities and a framework for colleges to run degree level courses.

The tendency then, during the period of rapid expansion of teacher education in the sixties, was for closer ties with universities or mergers within higher education, notably with the newly established polytechnics. The result was that the colleges were sandwiched between the universities and the polytechnics with an ill-defined role and a status outside higher education. The James Report proposed no major institutional changes but laid the foundations for an academic solution within the colleges by separating personal academic from professional training by a two-year Diploma of Higher Education in a four-year consecutive course. It also advanced the possibility of colleges offering other courses outside teacher education, which could be validated by the Council for National Academic Awards or the universities. Whatever the merits or demerits of the consecutive play for teacher education proposed by the James Committee, its important achievement was to attempt for the first time to give an independent academic and professional role to the colleges within higher education, while still preserving full cooperation with universities and polytechnics.

It is unfortunate that the crisis in teacher education numbers coupled with an economic downturn have prevented a more general implementation of the James Committee recommendations. Certainly much of what was proposed, particularly those recommendations relative to INSET, have been adopted as policy by the Advisory Committee for the Supply and Training of Teachers, and are being implemented in the colleges. But what the James Report does most significantly is to project a model for teacher education in which the traditional values of the collegiate structure have been preserved but with a widening and deepening of the educational base. I saw at Reading such a model in the Bulmershe College of Higher Education which under its principal, James Porter, a member of the James Committee, is currently engaged in fully implementing the new pattern of education proposed by that committee. I was greatly impressed by the community ethos and the excellent resources, both human and material, of this institution. There was a unity both of planning and purpose which I found in none other of the institutions visited. I was at Bulmershe at the end of my stay in England and it struck me that it provided the yardstick against which the re-organization of teacher education in progress in England and Wales could be measured.

Bulmershe is a free-standing college, but it reinforced my earlier convictions that amalgamations which build from the traditions and values of the collegiate structure are best suited to the special needs of teacher education in the areas of pre-service, induction and in-service training. At the same time Bulmershe has demonstrated the capacity to offer a wide range of courses outside teacher education.

The general feeling in England and Ontario is that staff and institutional expertise should, wherever possible, be retained against another period of expansion in teacher education perhaps in the early 1980s. In the meantime a great opportunity exists in the colleges for the slack in pre-service education to be taken up by an in-service provision much better organized

in terms of both formal and informal educational experiences. A letter from Education Department superintendent E. Styles who organized my visit to Ontario and who is currently investigating in-service education in Ontario says this in part: "An oversupply of pre-service enrolments *vis-a-vis* the employment market is leading to quota restrictions on all faculties and colleges. It is assumed that this situation will probably not obtain for more than a decade, and faculties are concerned not to lose high-grade staff against the time in the future when they will be in demand again. Coupled with this concern is the recognition that a temporary hiatus in new recruitment to the profession can be used effectively to upgrade teacher qualifications and expertise. Thus, the deans of the universities and the principals of the colleges are proposing to the Ministries of Education and universities and colleges, that the slack in university and college staff use and income represented by the impending restrictions on pre-service enrolments, be taken up for a while by an examination of, and offerings in, informal as well as formal in-service education. This would mean some shift in the bases of university and college funding and would require a general and long-term statement of policy with regard to desirable in-service experiences." . . .

Clearly there are broad similarities between England (in particular) and Australia in relation to the way each has adapted to a critical situation in regard to teacher 'over-supply'. As in England teacher education institutions in Australia will reflect in new organizational and administrative patterns the changing role and emphasis of teacher education within higher education.

Teacher education in Australia is currently bedevilled by the insecurity which stems from an ill-defined role within higher education. It is caught, and to some degree crippled, by the ambivalence of its aspirations — on the one hand to ape the academic status of the universities and on the other to achieve thoroughly practical and vocational goals. The argument on the merits of concurrent and consecutive course patterns arises in part from this dilemma: a dilemma which has become more critical with the change in the teachers colleges status and function as colleges of advanced education.

Clearly consecutive and concurrent course patterns are not mutually exclusive. For example Bulmershe College of Higher Education implements pretty fully the James' Committee recommendations but has concurrent elements built into the consecutive pattern. In fact what seems to be emerging is the concept of a modular liberal arts type course which precedes professional training of any kind whether it be teaching or any other cognate area. This pattern has certain advantages. If diversification of course offering is to be the key to survival for the former 'monotechnics', then the modular type course, whether it be the two-year Diploma of Higher Education suggested in the James Report or only a one year deferral of choice, becomes almost obligatory. To what degree consecutive or concurrent patterns are adopted subsequently for students electing for

teacher education, depends to some extent on the type of student. For example, Ross Chesterman, Warden of Goldsmiths' College, in the foreword to 'A Study of a One Year Post Graduate Primary Course' says: "The Goldsmiths' experience shows that a final year free from the traditional academic requirements has special attractions for the potentially more gifted teacher whether primary or secondary".

Certainly there would appear to be a strong case for something like the Dip. H.E. liberal arts background for all students. The weakness of fully concurrent patterns of teacher training is that they are in many ways self-defeating. The basic assumption in concurrency is that of vocational relevance. But the fact that academic and professional courses are attempted side by side does not necessarily lead to the desired integration. Integration has to take place in the mind of the student and this presupposes a capacity in the student to reflect on and to theorize adequately about school experience. Hence in the present state of concurrent patterns, the familiar divorce occurs in the student's mind between the so-called 'theoretical' and 'practical' elements of his course and he is prone to accept unquestioningly current practices of the school to which he is appointed.

In seeking to derive profit from comparisons of the Australian reaction to the current problem of teacher 'over-supply' with overseas countries (and certainly before making decisions to phase out institutions with all the implications that such decisions have for the loss of expertise developed over a long period of time by a staff team, and the effect on staff confidence and career opportunities) the conclusions of the Schools Commission on the findings of a study group on teacher supply and demand should be carefully considered. (Schools Commission Report, 1976). The report calls for definite policy initiatives and raises the question of the reliability of the bases of decision-making in relation to teacher supply. It says in Section A.9: "As is indicated in the study report itself, there is need for considerable refinement of data and clarification of details about current and future teacher supply. This suggests that much more work should be concentrated on specifying the composition and deficiencies of the current stock of teachers, their wastage and recruitment patterns, and the implications of alternative policies relating to the employment situations for teachers. *Future years may offer opportunities for more extensive and enriched in-service development for teachers.* The possibility of such a surplus as is suggested in the report of the study group raises the further issue of *whether a more conscious attempt might not be made to develop nation-wide models for estimating relationships between teacher demand and supply. Australia would wish to avoid the experience of those countries whose policies concerning teacher education have been susceptible to wide fluctuations, resulting in the sapping of the confidence of teacher preparation institutions and, more recently, a drastic reduction in their numbers and programmes.*"*

* Italics mine.

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