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The Closure and Re-organisation of Institutions of Teacher Education in England and Wales, 1972-1981

The closure and reorganisation of the Colleges of Education in England and Wales during the 1970s will perhaps go down in the history of English education as the beginning of the end! That is the beginning of the end[1] of the era of affluence in higher education in Britain which characterised the sixties and early seventies and which led one commentator to characterise the dominant values of teacher education at the time as those of 'social and literary romanticism.' The erosion of such values began then and it has continued unceasingly from that day forward. This has been accompanied by a major increase in forms of bureaucratic control under the demands both of a shrinking numbers base and of increasing organisational differentiation. In many cases this process has resulted in the attempted marriage of such romantic values with those of the craft and technical tradition in English education where, in the case of the last two, the liturgy of rationality as a highly valued goal in modern industrial societies is daily intoned.

But my charge today is not so much to dwell upon the product as upon the process, not to evaluate the steel and concrete towers that may have replaced the ivory ones nor to bemoan the passing of former tranquilities and values — a number of which were bogus anyway — but rather to attempt to answer the question 'How can these things be?' since it is a sorry tale in the main to relate.

Before I begin I think I ought to explain that the colleges of education in England and Wales provided, until the late seventies, by far the larger proportion of teachers trained for employment in English and Welsh schools. The university faculties provided in the main only an end-on one year's training course after the initial degree qualification and did not, and do not still, offer the BEd degree as an initial qualification except for a limited number who have, in the processes described here, absorbed colleges of education.[2]

Historical Overview

If we are all prisoners of the past, and certainly institutions are, then a brief historical overview will be helpful in establishing the scene and perhaps assist in drawing appropriate parallels with the situation here in Canada — past, present and to come. Around the end of the 18th century teacher training began in Southwark, a slum district of London with a Quaker foundation by Joseph Lancaster of a free school to teach the poor in his father's house. Later it moved to a building on another site in West London to become the Borough Road College — the first teacher training establishment in the country. The original school was called The Lancastrian Institution for Promoting the Education of Labouring and Manufacturing Classes of Every Religious Persuasion. It propounded radical views, provided only the most economic provision and lacked any clear academic objectives — three hallmarks of teacher education ever since! Training was clearly seen as an apprenticeship. Many students, just poor children with no academic background, led a benighted life in the part seminary, part workhouse existence. From five in the morning till seven

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in private study, until nine then in Bible study. Between nine and twelve and from two to five they taught in the school attached to the house under supervision. From five to seven they received formal instruction themselves and spent from seven until ten revising and preparing the next day's lessons. Their movements within and without the institution were fiercely restricted and life corresponded to the Hobbesian conception of being 'nasty, brutish and short.'

That Southwark rather than Oxbridge was where it began may explain many of today's problems: teacher education's lack of credibility as a discipline; the lower academic standard of its students vis-a-vis other graduates; the ambiguities of courses embracing both personal education and professional training. All these have denied and still continue to deny finance, resources and, until recent times, talent. Unlike theology, law or medicine it has no historic claim to a university tradition of academic excellence or respectability. It seems closer in its origins to medieval craft guilds, whose apprenticeship system was the forerunner of modern technical education. Following the Southwark beginnings came the intervention of the Anglican church in the establishment in 1838 of the College of Saint Mark in Chelsea where buildings, and even principals, were 'copies' of an Oxbridge college. Other institutional establishments followed in the wake of a variety of Education Acts. Not all would-be teachers studied in the schools attached to teacher training colleges; a number trained as apprentices 'on the job.' Minimum entry requirements to teacher training consisted of fluency in the 3R's together with a small number of other requirements, e.g. 'Girls should be able to sew neatly and to knit.' The establishment of university education departments in the new civic universities in the 1890s challenged traditional curriculum patterns in the colleges, and provided a university connection with teacher education for the first time — though they themselves only offered a one year course, as now, end-on to a three year degree one. From 1907 onwards the Local Education Authorities of England and Wales built a goodly number of colleges that did not differ from the Anglican model — other than in their freedom from a religious denomination. After the First World War the colleges gradually came closer to the universities in the matter of the validation of their courses, and by 1929/30 the certification of all courses passed from the Board of Education to what were known as Joint Boards containing representation of the three parties — colleges, universities and the Board of Education.

Before the end of the Second World War the McNair Committee (1944) in reflecting the government's concern over a system by now badly out of tune with the times had reported. The colleges were held to be isolated from the mainstream of the system while university education departments were 'caught' between the universities and the colleges. One group on the McNair Committee favoured total integration with the universities of all the colleges, another group, including the Chairman, Sir Arnold McNair, disagreed. They wanted, and in the end got, a system whereby each university education department entered into a relationship, along with the colleges in its area, with what came to be known as Area Training Organisations. Though the Committee had recommended 'partnership between equals' this was not in fact what happened. Most university departments regarded themselves as the senior partners and sometimes patronised their colleagues in the colleges. Such attitudes were later to contribute in part to the attrition of the whole system.

1944-1970: The Optimistic Years

Simultaneously with the publication of the McNair Report came the Education Act of 1944 which was to chart the course of English education for the next two decades in total, and, in part, for many more years after that. One immediate result was the raising of the school-leaving age to fifteen in 1947 and the establishment of many new colleges to train teachers to cope with the extra

pupils thus created. These were termed 'emergency training colleges' and offered courses of twelve months without any breaks — though the total time spent was still somewhat less than the two year normal course. Some such colleges survived to become 'permanent' though that word had a different meaning in 1947/50 compared with what its meaning was to become twenty-five years later. The normal two year course was extended to three years in 1960.

By the end of the fifties the post-war bulge in the birth rate which was now affecting secondary (or high) schools and the remorseless climb in the birth rate from 1957 onwards were posing serious problems both of immediate and longer-term teacher supply and of the future provision of places in higher education. The Robbins Report (1963), which dealt with this problem, again proposed the integration of colleges with universities and again the government rejected the proposal. The recommendation that 'suitable college students' would be able to proceed to the BEd degree was however implemented and the first graduands emerged in 1967/68.[3] But expansion in numbers continued as proposals to raise the school leaving age to sixteen in 1970 were announced by government. From 17,000 students in colleges in 1962 it was proposed to raise the number to 80,000 in 1970 and 120,000 in 1974.

This meant of course that as numbers increased local education authorities assumed a more dominant role in the field since they had outstripped the voluntary college provision (Anglican, Catholic and non-conformist) in sheer numbers of institutions — the former standing at 113 to the latter's 53. Three serious problems now arose as expansion went boldly ahead.

1. The universities were under attack because as the senior partners in the Area Training Organisations they failed to satisfy either the college aspirations for university status or their own real involvement in college problems.

2. The quality of courses was a cause of concern. The original technical instruction in the 3R's crudely outlined in the 1846 Pupil Teacher Regulations was now replaced by academic education studies — a potpourri of philosophy, sociology, history and psychology of education plus experience in schools. The course had merely evolved through each stage of academic expansion — one year added to two years (1960) for a certificate, plus another year added to those three (1967/68) making four in all for a degree. The public's concern with standards in schools was widespread and the blame for what was seen as lower standards in numeracy and literacy and in pupils' social behaviour was blamed on the colleges and their courses.

3. Within the colleges debate raged between subject lecturers on one side who in the main were former secondary school teachers who taught academic subject studies and who saw their role as teaching their subject rather like university lecturers in a particular discipline and whose enthusiasm for teaching practice was, to say the least, variable. On the other side were a smaller group who regarded academic subjects as secondary to the role of acquiring teaching skills. A third group, who did not belong to either camp, claimed substance for their 'educational' disciplines and, for two disciplines in particular — psychology and sociology — direct relevance to the classroom.

The James Report: A New Hope or a False Dawn?

In the circumstances previously outlined various calls were made for a national enquiry into teacher training. The abortive follow-up of the enquiry of the current Secretary of State, Mr. Edward Short, cut short by the 1970 general election and the subsequent defeat of his party, together with the Parliamentary Select Enquiry into teacher training similarly terminated, were indications of what was to come. During the 1970 election campaign the Conservative Party gave

a pledge to establish such a committee. After their victory, Margaret Thatcher the new Secretary of State kept the promise and convened a small committee of seven members under the chairmanship of Lord James of Rusholme, vice-chancellor of York University.

Its brief was to enquire into the future of teaching training and education on the widest front — content of courses, organisation of student groupings, the roles of the various agencies involved and to make recommendations. This it did and it proposed that teacher education could be conceived in three cycles:

Cycle 1	**Cycle 2**	**Cycle 3**
Diploma in Higher Education (2 years)	Professional training (1 year)	In-Service Training (One term sabbatical in every 7 years)
OR		
Degree (3 years)	School or College Induction (1 year) On-the-job training	

The whole was to be administered by a new National Council for Teacher Education and Training which would be given authority to award new kinds of degrees, e.g. the BA(Ed), though existing bodies, e.g. universities, would not be debarred from awarding diplomas and degrees.

The proposals predictably created a terrific furore — only Cycle 3 on In-Service Training and Cycle 2 on Induction receiving any welcome. They were in fact fairly radical and challenged existing thinking on a wide scale. However behind the rhetoric of future development and an increase in provision in Higher Education the reality was that the Committee also hinted that 'the supply of teachers is now increasing so rapidly that it must soon catch up with any likely assessment of future demand . . . choices will have to be made very soon between various ways of using or diverting some of the resources at present invested in the education and training of teachers.' It seems likely that the likely future cut-backs in the numbers of teachers required were considered by James since briefings given to the committee reported that a substantial contraction was likely once a certain pupil teacher ratio had been attained. On a 20:1 pupil teacher ratio in schools it was likely that the total numbers entering colleges would fall from 117,000 in 1972 to 59,000 in 1981. On an 18.1 ratio they would still need to fall to 75,000. On an even more generous pupil teacher ratio it would still mean 42,000 empty teacher training places by 1981.

It is hard to look back at that golden age and realise that a time bomb was ticking under the exterior debate about the James Report since no one had considered that numbers were an issue. It is hard to see why not since future school populations were known in terms of previous years' birth rates.

However the civil servants were not idle and Hugh Harding, an undersecretary of the Department of Education and Science, with direct responsibility for teacher training and who was to play a leading role in the reorganisation process, had already warned that colleges risked third rate status unless they could offer something distinctive which was not available, or was less likely to be available, at universities or polytechnics. (Polytechnics were the creation of the Department of Education and Science (DES) in 1965 and represented a set of higher level institutions funded by the public purse. They were responsible to Local Education Authorities in the main and who did

not have research as a contractual obligation of their members.) He subdivided the colleges into three groups (under 500, 500-1,000 and over 1,000), worked out their locations vis-a-vis universities and polytechnics and whether they had potential as institutions of higher education or not. In the event it was recognised quite early on that in the likely need for economies of scale with resources for higher education concentrated in the universities and polytechnics, 15,000 places needed to go forthwith. The James Committee knew these figures and even had a draft chapter prepared, but either did not think the implications were important or were so worried that they avoided the responsibility of publishing them, or thought that Margaret Thatcher, as Secretary of State, should do so. Whatever the reasons the Department's subsequent comment about 'time being needed to plan a new system' gave it the breathing space to present its own White Paper.

Education: A Framework for Expansion?

Government White Papers are major policy statements of government intentions over the coming three to five years. Education: A Framework for Expansion[4] outlined such a programme in respect of nursery education, school building, staffing standards in schools, teacher training and higher education. We shall be dealing with the last two elements.

Consultation with all interested parties about the future was promised but not really honoured as far as the colleges were concerned as we shall see. By combining a public response to James about a timetable for implications (which was expected) with proposals to cutback teacher training places though expanding higher education (which was not expected) the Department succeeded in blurring/fudging two issues so much so as to introduce a fundamental policy change with the least public opprobrium. It was a technique that was going to be extensively employed in the discussion/consultations/directives concerning the colleges in the years ahead.

The idea of a third sector was dropped and proposals made that a majority of colleges merge with polytechnics and other Further Education colleges thereby using their facilities for expanding public higher education outside the universities. Instead of a single validating body, the universities and a new public sector validating body, the Council for National Academic Awards divided the job between them. The Area Training Organisations were to run on in an attenuated form whilst all teacher education institutions in what was now called the Public Sector were to be responsible for course approvals to their local Regional Advisory Council for Further Education. The establishment of a National Advisory Committee on the Supply and Training of Teachers was conceded.

The White Paper embodied the fruits of Hugh Harding's earlier calculations about size and location hinting that colleges within cities would need to amalgamate, colleges without would have difficulty in developing, and some would go!

So the scene was set. The White Paper contained perhaps the first seeds of two new techniques of conveying unpalatable information that was to become standard form in later government policy proposals. The first was a laboured explanation of points about the future (as if talking to a naughty or less than good child) ending with a punch line that gave the real message. Section 17, for example, talks about the diffuse nature of the colleges and the difficulties some would have had in being 'comparatively small,' 'inconveniently located.' It goes on:

> (Some) may find a place in the expansion of teachers and professional centres. Some must face the possibility that in due course they will have to be converted to new purposes; some may need to close.

The second technique was the preparation of a case that attempts to take the reader with it in

developing an argument that is so reasonable that you must agree with the sentiments expressed, for example:

> an institution capable of providing higher education courses adequate in standard and range must teach a critical size to obtain full economies of scale . . . The factor makes it extremely difficult to see how a small or isolated college . . .

The crucial technique is 'extremely difficult to see' with which no reasonable person could possibly disagree, could they?

Circular 7/73: The Beginning of the End

The scene was set and the government circular of 7/73 laid down how implementation was to proceed. Local Authorities were given until November 1973 to produce interim schemes for implementation with final proposals as soon as possible after April. Full consultation with the Department was advised as was consultation with the voluntary colleges in each area. The circular following the White Paper envisaged a planned fall from 114,000 to 60-70,000 plus 1,500 full-time equivalent students on induction/in-service courses over a period to 1981. The exercise was complicated by the fact that local government itself was being reorganised and so 'old' local authorities had to plan in conjunction with the 'new' local authorities being established. The circular said speed was of the essence because the expansion of higher education required 'a steady flow of building projects.' In fact no building took place because of cuts in public expenditure in the next few years. Local authorities were asked to plan in a vacuum because the kinds of regional target figures supplied by the Department for each of them existed solely as projections at Department Headquarters. Each local authority had no means of knowing how they related to the regional figure, nor the position in adjoining local authorities and so were in no way able to challenge the overall position. Planning was left largely in the hands of Hugh Harding, the under-secretary in charge of teacher education, and his reorganisation Committee. This was to prove a real power behind the ministerial throne in due time.

Reorganisation by Chaos 1973-75

As one who lived through this period, though an interested outsider, I can attest that total confusion reigned. As a first response to Circular 7/73 every local authority, like Oliver Twist, demanded more. Though the tenor of the circular had spoken of the need for some expansion in higher education it had implied, at least, cuts of some magnitude in teacher education. Local authorities, however, on the sound bargaining principle that you ask for more than you are likely to get, and end up with the figure you really want, had proposed figures that would considerably expand higher education nationally, while only marginally reducing teacher training places. Rougher tactics were needed and so the Department issued 'advice' to local authorities in the form of thinly, and sometimes not so thinly, disguised directives. Hugh Harding wrote a goodly number of these warning that, for example, 'the valuable capital assets of what are at present colleges of education should be utilised' in response to a local authority who failed to recruit sufficient students in its colleges in one year but wanted to keep the places 'warm' for future years. To another, proposing to federate with a group of colleges he said 'the decline in the need for teacher training places may make it necessary for one or more college to close . . . one must recognise . . . that they occupy sites with valuable development potential in an area of acute housing shortage.' On another, 'we think that the arguments for closure and use of resources elsewhere are strong.' In regard to the Church (or voluntary) colleges he was equally tough — the Church must contribute proportionately to the national reduction, he said, 'if it insisted on the stronger colleges retaining their autonomy and independence, this was likely to be at the expense of closing perhaps five or six of

the weaker colleges.' This particular strategy was to occupy a good deal of the subsequent negotiation position in teacher education right down to the present day namely hinting to College X it might remain open if College Y or another institution closes while hinting to College Y it might do likewise if College X closes. The tactics employed in this sequence of events were effective and more and more local authorities and the voluntary bodies took the hint by submitting plans more to the Department's taste. So the attrition began and colleges began proposing mergers — mergers between themselves, mergers with polytechnics, mergers with further education colleges. The public image of course was that consultation was taking place with the Department and no firm decisions were yet to hand. In this regard the obsessive secrecy of the Department led to comments in an OECD Report[5] about the lack of public discussion on preventing alternative strategies from being aired before policy was formulated. But secrecy is another of the British diseases seen at its most extreme form in government departments but common enough in other parts of public life too. The tortuous logic with which the Department justified its guarding of college futures, as though they were military targets under attack, is an indictment of the way government departments can do business in Britain.

The return to power of the Labour Party in 1974 did nothing to quell the onward rush to oblivion despite their having given a pledge to end the cut-back in the colleges. For lecturers in colleges it was a despairing time. Some who only a few years ago were in an expansion situation suddenly faced cut-backs and hurriedly began to design new courses to stay in business. But wait. They perhaps designed a course for their College A to merge with College B but suddenly they were told they were merging with Polytechnic Y while College B was closing. The feelings of lecturers in College B can only be imagined. If there was a Departmental view for example in this case it would be that College A staff should be glad they at least had some sort of future, though basically the Department did not care overmuch either way.

At the 1975 stage then out of around 150 colleges the score was that 13 colleges faced closure, 40 were merged with polytechnics, 6 would go to universities (to offer BEd's in a university context), 60 were to merge with each other or further education colleges to become 'hybrid' institutions and 30 remained as they were. Figures showed that basically about 64,000 teacher education places remained — though distributed over a variety of institutions, 35,000 had gone to higher education programmes and 14,000 places had been lost. In terms of lost places it meant that on a 1:11 college staff/student ratio over 1,200 staff jobs were already set to go fairly immediately. But troubles never come singly. As the Department master-minded its cutting policies three events overtook it on the national scene. The economic crisis following the hike in oil prices of 1973 led to an increase in inflation, a run at times on sterling, the introduction of pay restraint and a decrease in the White Paper higher education target to 625,000 in 1976 from an original figure of 750,000.

The birth rate continued to fall suggesting a rapidly declining school population from 1976 onwards — 870,000 in 1964, 640,000 in 1974, 602,000 in 1975.

The massive rise in teachers' salaries awarded by the Houghton Arbitration Committee in 1974 — up 31% — upped the cost of employing teachers and at the same time made the career more attractive. Fewer teachers therefore wanted to leave the profession and hence fewer replacements were needed.

So the tough policy on teacher education predicted on not unrealistic assumptions was faced with even more harrowing assumptions and could result in only one end — a further series of cuts.

Cut and Cut Again

The Department had occasionally reported, as a matter of routine, on teacher supply at intervals and in March 1975 in the light of events known principally to itself, since the public, both general and educational, had only the 'vaguest idea of what was going on,' produced DES Report No. 82. This proposed reducing the White Paper of 1972's target of teachers required by 1981 from 510,000 to between 480-490,000 — down around 20/30,000. Places in colleges were to shrink from 75,000 to 58,000. Another 16/17 colleges faced closure and proposed intakes to colleges were to be reduced by around 30 per cent.

Hugh Harding wanted to finish the job — 'If it were done . . . then 'twere well it were done quickly.' Already he had identified 16 in two further groups for closure — some on grounds not at all clear, others because they clearly failed to attract students or failed to find a validating authority for their degrees. For the latter two categories he had coined the phrase that will go down in the annals of educational history — 'some will wither on the vine' — a pungent analogy indeed!

However a new minister at the Department, Lord Crowther-Hunt, opposed such a programme wanting further consultation with the local authorities and colleges affected. In the end he won the day and only another 8 were scheduled for closure. New problems however came from the fact that colleges were terminating courses and could not attract students many of which were in key curriculum areas and so aggravating the shortage of teachers in fields such as mathematics, physical science, French. Still more problems concerning this, and ever declining birth rates as the decade wore on, meant that even tighter targets on recruitment were proposed consistent of course with propping-up shortage subject areas. As these were discussed it became clear that even the viability of some colleges selected to remain open was in question. The total number of places proposed in 1975 for 1981 was 58,500 but this figure shrank to 56,000.

The Final Solution: The End of the Beginning?

The appointment of more new ministers at the Department meant that fresh minds looked at the problem but unlike some other problems in the political and private sphere it just would not go away. The fruits of earlier policies of over-recruitment also were now evident in the inability of some newly qualified teachers to find a teaching post. Towards the closing days of Autumn 1976 the new target was announced as 45,000. Despite fierce opposition from the teachers' unions in the National Advisory Committee this was accepted. However, the committee now demanded, and got, a list of the criteria which were used in determining closures. The paper was the only official attempt by the government in four years of reorganisation to justify the closure of some colleges rather than others. These outlined five axioms:

> Teacher Education should be firmly integrated with other higher education;
> initial and in-service training should be closely related;
> the teaching force should move to all-graduate status;
> the system should be stabilised at a minimum level capable of further expansion if required;
> the output of teachers should be enough to satisfy the schools, including specialised requirements.

It added that teacher education units should not fall below 600.

But the gods had still not finished their sport with the college because a target of 45,000 was likely to affect more than the nominal 30 already identified for closure as Mrs. Shirley Williams' announcement in the House of Commons in January 1977 proved. Again some college principals and local authorities were in total despair because they were only told by phone an hour or two

before the announcement. Many of those proposed for closure had received Departmental approval for their courses and had assured futures as far as all could tell.

In June 1977 the final figures were set at 46,000 — a slightly improved figure — and five threatened institutions reprieved. The agony was over it was thought or was it? Time since then has regrettably proved otherwise as my sub-heading to this section implies but mercifully, as in all our histories, public and private, the future was unknown to the actors in this drama at the time.

Policy Making in Teacher Education: The Modern Machiavelli at Work?

The reorganisation of teacher education had major implications not only for the whole system of teacher education itself but for the rest of the educational system, particularly higher education. Despite its largely bungling and incompetent techniques it was the test bed for future forays by the government into reorganising the universities and the schools. Time like an ever rolling stream bears all our memories away and it is easy to forget how in the very early seventies the mere idea of suggesting even one closure of an educational institution was seen as impossible. The college closures too took place before our current levels of unemployment which have habituated our minds to the closure of all sorts of institutions — educational, commercial and industrial.

The parties in the matter were the Department of Education and Science as represented by the Secretary of State and the Minister of State for Education together with their senior civil servants on one side and the local education authorities and voluntary bodies (Anglican and Catholic Churches etc.), the owners of the colleges, on the other. Their interaction could be described as the policy making process at work each side working from pre-ordained guidelines though, as we have seen, the national government side were really calling the shots — when they knew what they were, that is!

During the period in question — five years — eight people held these two top political posts. These were four Secretaries of State and four Ministers of State. One of them, Lord Crowther-Hunt, in his other role as a former lecturer in government at Oxford had reckoned it takes eighteen months for a minister to learn the job. Though some of these politicians had experience in educational fields either as active politicians or in their former careers the rapid turn over did not encourage decision making. Lack of knowledge and the call of other duties also contributed to the lack of control of events from the political point of view.

The Prime Minister tends to appoint all ministers on their political acumen rather than their specialist knowledge. But for an issue like reorganising an educational system lack of knowledge must cause delay in a minister's ability to act. Then the varied demands of a minister's life eat into time and leave little place for considered action. Secretaries of State are involved in all types of policy making — internally in their departments and in Cabinet. They have to respond to Parliament and the media at a moment's notice, need the stamina to make at least three major speeches a day and receive delegations from hundreds of pressure groups in any one year of office.

Lord Crowther-Hunt, in the light of both his ministerial experience and his former role as a lecturer in government at Oxford estimates that ministers, if they did the job properly, made 260 decisions a week of which at least 10 per cent — 26 that is — required detailed consideration. Such decisions could take three hours each if properly handled. He found the college closures of this kind, often visiting the institution concerned and listening to delegations, replying to MP's and other parties by letter, and then agonising over the decision.

The life style of the top civil servants who prepare the ground for ministerial decision making —

there were two Permanent Secretaries in office during this period — is very different from that of the politicians. They have reached the top after a career spent entirely in the service. The majority are public school/Oxbridge graduates generally in Arts subjects though Sir James Hamilton (who incidentally visited us at Birmingham on his orientation tour on taking up the job) was a scientist. Loyalty to the service is paramount — to individual ideas, ministers or departments is secondary. The advantages of such a system are that civil servants feel they have a public duty to keep government moving and do not normally take upon themselves the policy decisions of their masters. The disadvantages are that the whole ethos of their training encourages rituals of confidentiality, files, close guarded secrets and even a language all of its own. In the case of college reorganisation there seemed to be a lack of understanding and co-operation between ministers and their civil servants. The ministers themselves adopted a variety of practices. One believed that only the long-term policy of teacher numbers could be decided at the national level, with regions and individual authorities working out the details. Another, appeared not to understand or even to be cynical — describing the reorganisation of the colleges as equivalent to Henry VIII's dissolution of the monasteries.

Overall there was a lack of drive in developing new policies perhaps in part because ministers received no long term advice on which to base their daily decisions on the future of individual institutions. Speeches were made about new developments, e.g. college diversification, but little happened. Advice came from the national inspectorate (HMI) but it seemed badly briefed or ignored and college principals on the ground often felt HMI neither understood, nor were able to advocate on their behalf, the arguments put to them. The Department's inspectorate however did do a fair job in trying to initiate in-service courses and plan their operation. The National Committee on the Supply and Training of Teachers, composed of all interested parties in teacher training — local authorities, teachers' associations, universities etc. whose duty it was to advise the Secretary of State had few powers and was in a weak position to offer advice. The Department did have one strength, however, a strong statistics department under a man appropriately named Kenneth Forecast which, as we have seen, knew in 1971 that declining birth rates alone were going to play havoc with the situation whatever else happened. Yet they were never published.

But individual strengths — the briefs of Hugh Harding, good statistical advice from Kenneth Forecast and plans to improve in-service training do not add up to a policy. Ministers who had all the evidence of a rapidly changing situation laid down no coherent strategy but took the easy way out — leaving the formation of policy to the sum total of Hugh Harding's individual college briefs and Kenneth Forecast's statistics. It did, in fact, capitulate to the numbers game. The educational world was shattered by events. How someone in the third tier (there were Deputy Secretaries and a Permanent Secretary above him) ended up running the show is a mystery. Competent as he was, Hugh Harding was never the man to do it as we say 'off his own bat.' It was one more twist in the strange tale of who really runs Britain since effectively this very civil servant was in charge of the disposal of personnel and money on a gigantic scale. Perhaps all governments have such men — seldom do they reach the public eye, or at least the informed public's eye, so blatantly.

The main reason for the effectiveness of the decisions the Department and the ministers finally took is the centralisation of power in Britain despite the weak and contradictory nature of national policy in teacher education at the time. The other actors in the drama — the local authorities, the voluntary bodies and the lecturers' unions — were powerless to impose alternative strategies to central government decisions. The belief that we had an independent local government and strong trade unions was shown to be false. The Department had control over finance and information and

used it to their advantage — discussing with individual colleges only their particular case and leaving each one in the dark about the others. The professional association of college lecturers[6] were weak. Though small in total numbers (around 7,000) they were genuinely concerned with professional interests but were not tough trade union negotiators. Their general secretary,[7] however, realising that the tide was against him and that the association was not going to get anywhere with protest did negotiate the best redundancy terms possible on the principle "If you can't beat them, sue them." Morale was bad then and continues so to the present time. National administrators/policy makers decide changes in structures but don't have to live with them or deal with the problems created. Once a sector has been reorganised the politician merely assumes that the 'problem' has disappeared. Those outside government can only protest — politely in delegations or raucously at national conferences with no guarantee that those at the top will listen. They are left like truculent school children at the back of the class shouting at the teacher. If they behave themselves they may become monitors/prefects half identifying themselves with those at the top. At worst they can be expelled altogether, or, if in a college, in those immortal words of Hugh Harding, "left to wither on the vine."

Notes

1. As well as my own slant and inputs the paper has been based on formulations from three key works:
   (a) *Teacher Education and Training*. The James Report. (London: HMSO, 1972).
   (b) D. Hencke, *Colleges in Crisis*, (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1978).
   (c) J. Lynch, *The Reform of Teacher Education in the United Kingdom*, (Guildford: Society for Research into Higher Education, 1979).
2. The two sectors are known respectively as the 'public' sector — the colleges/institutes of higher education, polytechnic departments of education, and the 'autonomous' sectors — the university departments or schools or faculties of education.
3. This was the first-ever *undergraduate* degree in Britain in Education in the public sector though a few universities had awarded BA's in Education prior to this. The BEd however had been awarded as a *postgraduate* degree in Scotland for many years.
4. *Education: A Framework for Expansion*, (London: HMSO, 1972).
5. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Educational Development Strategy in England and Wales*, (Paris: OECD, 1975).
6. The Association of Teachers in Colleges and Departments of Education (ATCDE).
7. Mr. Stanley Hewett who, sadly, died in 1975 in the midst of these events. He was, literally, a casualty of the pressures of reorganisation and a warning that these processes exact physical costs as well as other less visible ones.