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The Teachers Colleges and the Partridge Report in Western Australia: An End to Autonomy?

by

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In January, 1975, the State Government announced the appointment of a committee to inquire into post-secondary education in Western Australia. The committee of three was to be chaired by Professor P.H. Partridge, Professor of Social Philosophy and Director of the Research School of Social Science at the Australian National University. The other members were Professor N.S. Bayliss, the former chairman of Murdoch University Planning Board, and Mr. H.W. Dettman, Chairman of the W.A. Teacher Education Authority and former Director General of Education. The task of this committee was "to advise the Government of Western Australia on the promotion, development and co-ordination of post-secondary education in the State having regard to its future needs" (Committee on Post-Secondary Education, 1976, p.15). The term post-secondary education was given a broad definition to include the universities, colleges of advanced education (including the teachers colleges), technical and further education and 'continuing' education, as well as forms of education conducted by government and non-government bodies.

The purpose of this paper is to examine a specific recommendation of the Report relating to the teachers colleges which states:

'We recommend that the Teacher Education Act, 1972, should be repealed and replaced by legislation to provide for the establishment of a multi-campus institution to be known as the Western Australian College of Advanced Education (Committee on Post-Secondary Education, 1976, p. 3).'

The implementation of his recommendation by centralising the government of the colleges in the proposed new institution, would deprive the State's five teachers colleges of the autonomy they were granted by the 1972 Act and place them in a similar situation to that existing before they were granted autonomy. When it is considered that the separation of the colleges from the Education Department was not effected until November 1973, twelve months after the Act was passed, while the Report on Post-Secondary Education (the Partridge Report) was published at the beginning of 1976, barely two years had elapsed during which the colleges could fully practise their autonomy. For the colleges to be brought under unitary control after such a brief spell of self-government suggests that autonomy of the individual colleges has failed. This suggestion will be examined within the context of the general development of the teachers colleges as autonomous institutions.

BACKGROUND TO AUTONOMY

The first proposal for teachers college autonomy in Western Australia was in the Report of the Committee of Inquiry into Tertiary Education in Western Australia. This Committee, under chairman Sir Lawrence Jackson, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court in W.A. recommended:

30. That planning start now for the removal of teacher education from administration and control by the Education Department.

31. That existing teachers colleges continue for the time being under the control of the Education Department, but that steps be taken to introduce other types of tertiary courses into them, with a view of their becoming autonomous colleges of advanced education as soon as possible (Committee on Tertiary Education in Western Australia, 1967, p.3).

In 1967, there were only two established teachers colleges. Claremont, the State's oldest tertiary institution, was commenced in 1902 and Graylands, a post-war college was opened in 1955. Both were small institutions in terms of campus size and student population. Claremont had 1141 students (many of whom were part-time) and Graylands 450. Campus sizes were 5 hectares and 3 hectares respectively. At the time, however, another college was being established for the preparation of secondary teachers in conjunction with the University of Western Australia on a small site near the University. Before this, Claremont Teachers College had accommodated both primary and secondary student teachers. Another two primary teachers colleges were to follow in quick succession. In 1970 Mt. Lawley Teachers College admitted its first students and in 1972 Churchlands Teachers College commenced. By 1972 these five institutions catered for 2,788 students, and their total enrolment by 1975 was 5,650. Table 1 illustrates the size of each college.

TABLE 1: TEACHERS COLLEGE ENROLMENTS, 1967 – 1975.

TEACHERS COLLEGE	1967	1972	1975
Claremont	1,141	659	969
Graylands	450	435	481
Mt. Lawley	-	641	958
Churchlands	-	192	1,084
Secondary *	180	1,798	2,158
TOTAL	1,771	3,650	5,650

* Includes students enrolled concurrently at University and W.A.I.T.

1967: *W.A. Education Department*, p.72.

1972: *Report on the Future of the Teachers Colleges*, 1972, p.19.

1975: *Committee on Post-Secondary Education*, 1976, p.67.

Individually, the colleges are small in relation to the minimum desirable size for a self-governing tertiary institution. Secondary Teachers College is the only institution which exceeds 1,500 students but many of these are part-time: full-time enrolments amounted to 861 students in 1975, and there were 1,297 part-time students.

Although the recommendations of the Jackson Committee were not acted upon immediately, the future of the teachers colleges was given serious consideration when the Tertiary Education Commission, another product of the Jackson Report, was established in 1969 to co-ordinate tertiary education in the State. The subject of teachers college autonomy was broached at the first meeting of the new Commission (*W.A. Tertiary Education Commission, 1971*, p.14) and in succeeding years steps directed towards autonomy were taken. In 1969 the Commission established a teacher education committee consisting of the chairman, Professor C. Sanders, and Mr. Dettman, to "report on five recommendations contained in the Jackson report relating to the future of teacher education" (*W.A. Tertiary Education Commission, 1971*, p. 7). The work of this Committee, which was progressively increased in size, continued for a number of years and its report was published in 1972.

An important factor in the development of autonomy in the teachers colleges was the policy of the federal government on financing teacher education. The origin of the federal support for tertiary education outside the universities was in the Committee on the Future of Tertiary Education in Australia (the Martin Report) of 1965. The report made a number of recommendations for teacher education, which can be seen as the genesis of teachers college autonomy in Australia: but the federal government refused the recommendation that approved teachers colleges receive Commonwealth grants on the same basis as the universities; viz. \$1.00 Commonwealth to \$1.85 State for recurrent expenditure, and \$1 Commonwealth to \$1 State capital expenditure (*Committee on the Future of Tertiary Education in Australia, 1965*, p.1). Despite this, in 1967 the federal government commenced unmatched capital grants to the teachers colleges, and two years after that the Commonwealth Advisory Committee on Advanced Education, the predecessor of the Australian Commission on Advanced Education, supported federal assistance for teacher education provided it was conducted in multi-purpose colleges of advanced education (*Commonwealth Advisory Committee on Advanced Education, 1969*, p.5). Although this did not benefit the State's single purpose teachers colleges, it had encouraged the development of teacher education in multi-purpose institutions, rather than in single purpose institutions, and it led to the incorporation of some Eastern States teachers colleges in colleges of advanced education so that they could accept federal funds. For example, Bathurst Teachers College in New South Wales became the Mitchell College of Advanced Education (*Australian Commission on Advanced Education, 1973*, p.16). This course of action was contemplated in Western Australia: firstly a very brief consideration was given to the possibility of the primary teachers colleges with the Western Australia Institute of Technology; secondly, the merging of Secondary

Teachers College with the University of Western Australia was studied. (*Report on the future of the Teachers Colleges, 1972*, p.11). Both courses of action were rejected, although the latter was entertained up until autonomy was granted to the colleges, and was further considered by the Partridge committee.

In 1972 events moved much more quickly, to culminate, at the end of the year in the Teachers Education Act, which separated the teachers colleges from Education Department control. Early in the year the Report on the Commonwealth's Role in Teacher Education by the Senate Standing Committee on Education, Science and the Arts was published. After stating that it could see no valid reason why multi-purpose colleges of advanced education should attract Commonwealth funds for recurrent expense while single purpose teachers colleges do not, the committee recommended "that teachers colleges be granted financial assistance for recurrent and capital expenditure under terms and conditions similar to colleges of advanced education" (*The Commonwealth's Role in Teacher Education, 1972*, p.29). It further recommended that single purpose teachers colleges be removed from the direct control of the State education departments and placed under the general guidance of statutory boards of teacher education (p.68) on the ground that "the employing authority should not also be the training authority as the priorities of Education Departments are often different from those of the teacher training institution" (p.66).

In its budget for 1972-3, the Commonwealth government accepted the recommendations of the Senate committee. The Minister for Education and Science, Mr. Fraser, informed parliament that

... it (the government) has decided to extend present matching arrangements applying to universities and colleges of advanced education to include State teachers colleges which are being developed as self-governing tertiary institutions under the supervision of appropriate co-ordinating bodies in the States. (*Australia, Parliamentary Debates, House Representatives, 17 August, 1976*, p.378).

In between the Senate report and Mr. Fraser's decision, in July the W.A. Tertiary Education Commission's Teacher Education Committee completed its report on the future of the teacher's colleges. From the original two members the committee had grown to eleven members, making it representative of the teachers colleges, the teaching profession and the other tertiary institutions. The committee recommended:

... that the five teachers colleges at present under the control of the Education Department of Western Australia should be granted autonomy under a Western Australian Council for Teachers Colleges (*Report on the Future of the Teachers Colleges, 1972*, p.ii).

This report, however, was drawn up in two parts; the second part, consisting of proposed legislation to give effect to the recommendations, was the unchanged remnant of a preliminary report, to which had been added material which was the result of discussions with, and submissions

from, interested parties, in particular, the principals and staff of the teachers colleges. Although the first part reflected the nature of the discussions and was generally in accord with the principle of individual college autonomy, the second part (which was originally intended as a discussion paper) retained a strong suggestion of centralised control by the proposed Council. If the government was to legislate for the removal of the colleges from Education Department control, it would probably (and it did) base it on the suggested outline of legislation contained in the report. This would inevitably result in centralism.

The reaction of the teachers' colleges to the report was mixed. While they approved of the first part they saw the inherent danger to individual college autonomy in the second part. Submissions and representations to the State government and to the Labor Party, which was in power, assisted in providing individual autonomy. Assistance given to the parliamentary draftsmen by members of the Tertiary Education Commission's Committee also helped to ensure that the spirit of the first part of the report prevailed. In legislation enacted in State parliament in November, 1972, clauses guaranteeing individual college autonomy were included. Although the bulk of the legislation reflected the original Tertiary Education Commission Report, the section which set down the objects of the Authority was significantly different. It included the following safeguards to individual college autonomy:

8. The objects of the Authority shall include the following;...
 - (c) to actively encourage the diversity of teacher education courses;
 - (e) to promote the development of academic autonomy of each college;
 - (f) to organise, as soon as practicable, the control by each college of its own finances within allocations, and general policies approved by the authority (*Western Australia, Teacher Education Act, 1972*).

The administrative structure, illustrated in figure 1, appears to have been a compromise between complete individual freedom and centralised control. To fulfil the Commonwealth requirement for federal funds, the colleges could have been established as autonomous colleges responsible directly to the Tertiary Education Commission, making them equivalent to the Institute of Technology and the University of Western Australia. In other Australian States such as Queensland, New South Wales and South Australia, boards of advanced education have been established and the teachers colleges have had direct links with the board, along with other colleges of advanced education. The reason for the additional co-ordinating body in Western Australia was explained by the Minister for Education at the time the Act was introduced.

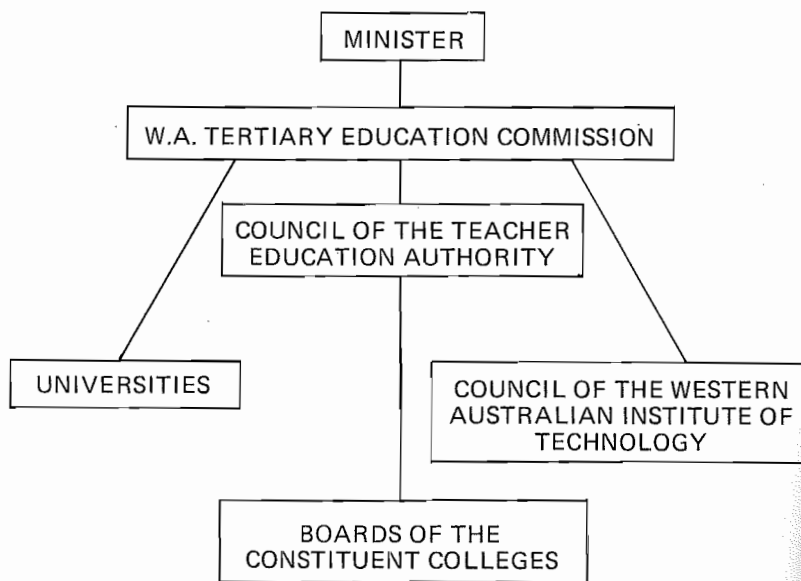
In Western Australia the teachers colleges taken separately are not large institutions and the Tertiary Education Commission considered it desirable to provide for the co-ordination of the activities within a structure which would strengthen their collective voice and yet allow

each college a considerable measure of individual freedom. (*W.A. Parliamentary Debates, 1972, p.4568*).

The functions of the Council of the W.A. Teacher Education Authority was to promote, develop and co-ordinate the operation of the constituent colleges, and to make recommendations to the Minister and to the Tertiary Education Commission on their future development, but this function was limited by the Act:

.... in so doing, the Council shall at all times have regard to the desirability of delegation of authority to the constituent colleges to the fullest extent practicable. (*Western Australia, Teacher Education Act, 1972*).

FIGURE 1: STRUCTURE OF TERTIARY EDUCATION IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA.



(*AUSTRALIAN COMMISSION ON ADVANCED EDUCATION, 1973, p.34*)

In its task of co-ordinating the operations of the colleges, the Council was responsible for such things as approval of courses of study, making awards to successful students, arranging practical professional experience for students, establishing terms and conditions of service for staff, providing central administrative services and co-ordinating college finances.

In practice, considerable delegation of these responsibilities occurred as a result of the requirements of the Act and the joint effects of encouragement by the Teacher Education Authority and pressure from the colleges.

THE PROGRESS OF AUTONOMY

There was considerable optimism for the future of the colleges under autonomous conditions. Typical of the expressions of optimism is that by the Minister for Education, T.D. Evans, in his second-reading speech to the Act:

Under self-government there should be greater incentive to improve the quality of teacher education in general and provide for greater diversity of course offerings in particular in comparison with the State's existing self-governing institutions the teachers colleges have so far been accorded less esteem. The proposed self-governing teacher education authority, providing support for self-governing teachers colleges, should correct this situation and make possible a co-ordinated system of tertiary or higher education in the State of Western Australia (*Western Australia, Parliamentary Debates, 1972, p.4570*).

The Tertiary Education Commission expected that under autonomy the teachers colleges would endeavour to improve and broaden their course offerings and that innovation and experimentation would characterise teacher education (*Report on the Future of the Teachers Colleges, 1972, p.42*). Fulfillment of these expectations was not immediate, but the colleges commenced the process of converting to a state of autonomy immediately after the Act became law in January, 1973.

By November, 1973, when the formal transfer of authority from the Education Department took place, the colleges had been conducting their own affairs for some months. This change was not without difficulties, for they had a considerable task:

1973 was a very busy year for the colleges in preparing for their transition to autonomous status as constituent colleges of the Authority. Each college established its College Board and Committee structure for the internal governance of the college In addition to developing their academic policies, formulating college rules, appointing staff and progressively assuming many administrative responsibilities formerly discharged by the Education Department, colleges were required to commence the preparation of their submissions to the Australian Commission on Advanced Education for funds for their 1976-8 triennium and associated plans for academic and capital development. (*W.A. Teacher Education Authority, 1975, p.16*).

The operation of their own affairs by the colleges revealed some shortcomings of the Teacher Education Act, as would be expected with a new organisation. Some time was allowed to elapse before amendments were implemented, and in 1974 two amending acts were passed. Both dealt primarily with membership of the college boards. The second, and more important of the two, sought, in part, to strengthen non-staff representation by giving the Minister the power to appoint four members to each

board, and by setting the number of other community representatives at four (previously two to four). Furthermore, the ex-officio membership was increased from only the principal to include also the vice-principal and the deputy vice-principal. This latter change would ensure continuity of representation of the college administration on the board, overcoming the weakness that the vice principal, when acting on behalf of the principal, was unfamiliar with the situation as he was not a regular member. With regard to the first change, the Minister was concerned at the unrepresentative nature of some college boards on which staff representation dominated and to which community members had not been appointed (*W.A. Parliamentary Debates, 1974, p.3281*). The changes which were made ensured a more even distribution of power on the boards. When the legislation was debated there was no suggestion of deep dissatisfaction with the operation of the colleges and it can be assumed that the measures were designed to correct individual defects in the Act.

In the academic area, there was considerable activity, and some competition, among the colleges in proposing new courses of study to supplement the basic teaching diploma courses which were offered before the transfer of college government. Courses were proposed for bachelors' degrees in education, graduate diplomas in remedial education, speech education, religious studies, music education and art education, among others. Some were successful: in 1974, for example, Mt. Lawley was able to offer a course for the training of teachers specifically for aboriginal education, and Churchlands commenced a course for the preparation of pre-school teachers. In 1975 all the primary colleges introduced courses to enable two-year trained teachers to raise their qualifications to diploma level in anticipation of the registration of teachers, for which State legislation was passed in May 1976. Also in 1975, Claremont and Churchlands became multi-purpose colleges when they introduced courses other than teacher education.

In part, this diversification can be seen as a fulfillment of the prospects of autonomy: by their efforts to diversify, the colleges were catering for the demands of the teaching community. The Partridge committee, however, saw it in a less favourable, but more accurate, light:

Some colleges seek to diversify their programmes not only on educational grounds but also in the hope of improving their status, and particularly with the aim of securing larger enrolments. Small enrolments attract less funds than large enrolments; there are narrower opportunities for building up libraries and other teaching resources and for gathering a large and heterogeneous staff; and, below a certain size, small institutions are more vulnerable and perhaps less attractive to potential students than larger institutions (*Committee on Post-Secondary Education, 1976, o.15*).

During 1975 these plans for expansion, along with the optimistic outlooks for the colleges' future received a severe dampening. First, the publication of the Report on *Population and Australia (1975)*, which indicated that the rate of population increase was declining, led the

Education Department and then the Tertiary Education Commission to re-examine their projections for growth in school populations and demand for teachers. As a result, in May 1975 estimated primary student-teacher intake were reduced, as the following TABLE 2 indicates:

PRIMARY TEACHER TRAINEE INTAKES, 1976-1978, ENDORSED BY THE W.A. TERTIARY EDUCATION COMMISSION FOR PLANNING PURPOSES

Institution	1976		1977		1978	
	Dec., '73	May, '75	Dec., '73	May, '75	Dec., '73	May, '75
Churchlands T.C.	400	220	400	220	400	220
Claremont T.C.	325	160	325	160	325	160
Churchlands T.C.	230	160	260	160	290	160
Lawley T.C.	400	220	400	220	400	220
Perth T.C.	100	100	120	100	150	100
Edith Cowan University	60	50	60	50	60	50
Totals	1515	910	1565	910	1625	910

(*Committee on Post-Secondary Education, 1967, p.65*).

The immediate effect of this reduction on the colleges was to make diversification an important priority so that they could swell their numbers in new courses. Such hopes were dashed, however, when the federal budget was introduced in August. The government was concerned at the spiralling rate of inflation and the effect which the public spending was having on it. The budget ushered in a period of restraint in government spending, and education was one of the victims of restraint. Reporting the government's allocation for education, the Treasurer, Mr. Hayden, stated:

Ordinarily, the 1976 calendar year would have seen the start of a new triennium for the financing of universities, colleges of advanced education and schools; and the technical and further education area would have been phased into triennial financing in July, 1976. However, we have decided to treat the calendar year 1976 as a year outside the triennial progression

In the meanwhile, the education commissions will be asked to review their recent triennial reports and to bring in revised recommendations by March next for new triennial programmes to commence in January 1977. (*Australia, Parliamentary Debates, House of Representatives, No. 13, 1975, p.55*).

For the teachers colleges in Western Australia, this meant an end to immediate plans for the future. Graylands Teachers College, for example, expected massive capital grants to commence building a new college on

a larger site, but this was shelved as a result of the Tertiary Education Commission's review of the Western Australian programme. But consequences of the budget extend beyond the immediate future as the following quotation states:

The present economic climate has ended the honeymoon period for the colleges, and I see no possibility of a return to that state in the future. It we are to continue to develop, we will have to extract full value from every dollar which is made available. We will have to look to our efficiency in the industry of providing tertiary education for the community. The tightening of finance may well require a review of some revered educational philosophies and policies. (*McMullen, 1975* p.6).

THE FUTURE OF THE COLLEGES

Fundamentally, this is what the Partridge Committee has attempted. Although the Committee commenced in a period of optimism for the teachers colleges, intervening events appear to have affected its findings. Criticism of the degree of autonomy of the colleges is not a reflection of their past performance, but an argument in support of economically efficient operation in circumstances of a potential over-supply of teachers and economic restraint by the government. The conclusion of the Committee that

... it would be advantageous to the colleges themselves, and to the sound development of post-secondary education in Western Australia, if central administration and co-ordination in relation to the five teachers colleges were strengthened (*Committee on Post-Secondary Education, 1967, p.79*).

is supported by the Committee mainly on economic grounds: the colleges are relatively small institutions; population projections indicate they are unlikely to become large institutions in the foreseeable future; restricted sites place limits on the growth of all colleges; competition to diversify courses "would almost certainly lead to wasteful duplication and there is already duplication of staff administrative structures" (p.80).

There is ample support for the Partridge Committee's contention that the colleges are too small to be viable institutions. The Martin report, in 1965, expressed the view that a population of 1,500 full-time students was a desirable minimum size for a tertiary level college and this has been voiced often since. None of the State's teachers colleges is above that figure. The Tertiary Education Commission considered, in 1971, that the teachers colleges were too small to implement Jackson's recommendations for multi-purpose development (*Tertiary Education Commission, 1971, p.15*), and there has been no significant change in colleges size since then. The strongest support comes from the Commission on Advanced Education, whose special committee on teacher education expressed the hope that teachers colleges with close geographical or other relations with colleges of advanced education or universities would eventually amalgamate. The Special Committee said:

We can see no long term advantage in developing separate, small, autonomous tertiary institutions on near-adjacent sites. However, to be successful, these co-operative links must be forged steadily on a basis of mutual respect, trust and desire. (*Australian Commission on Advanced Education, 1973, p.22*).

Even before the current cutback in finance and student numbers, there were amalgamations of colleges in the eastern states. Thirteen institutions, including five which were concerned with teacher education, were either absorbed or amalgamated to form only six institutions during the 1973 - 75, and the Commission continued to support such rationalisation in its most recent report (*Commission on Advanced Education, 1975, p. 8*). However, there is a significant difference between what is proposed by the Partridge Committee and what is occurring in the other States. The Partridge Committee foresees a multi-campus college with a central administration. The report states:

We have accordingly considered the possibility of organizing the five teachers colleges within a federal-type structure within which each college or campus would retain a considerable measure of control over its own academic operations, but which would strengthen the policy-making, administrative and co-ordinating functions of the central administration. (*Committee on Post-Secondary Education, 1976, p.81*).

In the Eastern States every one of the six new institutions being formed by amalgamation will be established on a new consolidated campus. In Victoria, where most of the amalgamations are occurring, the State College (former teachers college) at Ballarat will amalgamate with the Ballarat Institute of Advanced Education on a 97 hectare site; the State College at Bendigo and the Bendigo Institute of Technology will merge on a new 34 hectare site; the Lincoln Institute (a medical college), the College of Nursing and the Institute of Early Childhood Development will amalgamate on a new 15 hectare site, while Deakin University will develop out of the State College at Geelong and the Gordon Institute of Technology. In New South Wales, the Wagga Agricultural College and the Riverina College of Advanced Education are merging, the latter being developed on a new site adjacent to the agricultural college. In South Australia, the Institute of Technology and the Adelaide College of Advanced Education (former teachers college) will combine on a large new eastern city campus (*Commission on Advanced Education, 1975*). Furthermore, the Commission on Advanced Education regards as a major objective the relocation of Torrens College of Advanced Education on a new site as it is spread over eleven campuses (*Commission on Advanced Education, 1975, p.124*). Although this is a more severe case of multi-campus spread, it is indicative of the attitude of the Commission.

The advantages which the Partridge Committee put forward for central administration of a multi-campus organisation appear to have limited relevance to the existing situation of declining numbers and limited finance. The Committee suggests joint development of courses, joint use

of specialised staff, facilities and resources, movement of staff between campuses, and relief of administrative burdens on the colleges. It is likely however, that these advantages may be offset by the disadvantages of a multi-campus organisation: difficulties in co-ordinating resources; the need for student travel between campuses when specialist courses are offered at one campus; lack of staff identification with a particular campus when they are required to distribute their services among several campuses; the continued problem of small individual libraries, and isolation of academic staff from administrative decision-making.

The experience of the colleges of advanced education in the Eastern States tends to suggest that amalgamation should be accompanied by re-siting on the same campus. However, this does not appear practicable for the five Western Australian colleges because of the recency of the establishment of Churchlands, Mt. Lawley and Secondary Teachers College. The inclusion of all five colleges in the proposed W.A. College of Advanced Education appears to be an indiscriminating proposal which is not in harmony with other parts of the Partridge report. The Committee did suggest that Churchlands would achieve considerable growth on its present site and would be able to cater for the educational needs of the north-western suburbs (*Committee on Post-Secondary Education, 1976*, p.72). With a current enrolment of nearly 1100 students Churchlands is not far short of the minimum desirable size of 1500 full-time students for a self-governing tertiary institution. The recent addition of a course in business studies may enable it to expand to this size within a short period, at which point, if it has been centralised, it may seek once again to be self-governing, with the consequent problems of developing its own management once more.

Secondary Teachers College, however, appears to have a future more closely linked to the university than to the other teachers colleges as a result of the joint teaching arrangements between the college and the university. The Committee dwelt on this relationship and recommended its continuation (*Committee on Post-Secondary Education, 1976*, p.77). In view of this, the different nature of the courses offered by Secondary Teachers College, and its larger enrolment, the inclusion of the college in a combined college seems an unnecessary change in administration.

Claremont, Graylands and Mount Lawley are small colleges, but their prospects for the future differ. On the one hand, Claremont and Graylands are, as the Committee points out, restricted by the size of their campuses. Graylands is further disadvantaged by its old buildings. The establishment of central administration to govern these colleges would not solve these disadvantages and physical incorporation on a new site perhaps as part of a multi-disciplinary college, may be considered a desirable alternative if economic viability is to determine their future. Mount Lawley, on the other hand is a new college, and its site limitations can conceivably be overcome by the acquisition of adjacent government land at present used as a driver-training school. This possibility, which was suggested by the College in 1973 (Mt. Lawley, 1973, p. 13) would increase the campus to twenty hectares, which, in relation to student population and campus

sizes of eastern states colleges, is ample for a population in excess of 3,000 students (*Commission on Advanced Education, 1975*). Consideration may be given to merging all three colleges on this site.

Whichever alternative is chosen, it would be unwise for the government to demolish the structure of college government which has been only recently established and which is now functioning smoothly. Individual colleges will be forced to rationalise their activities due to the restriction of finance by the federal government, and this will resolve one issue put forward by the Partridge Committee. Centralisation of administration would have a limited influence on the major difficulties, of student numbers and more limited funds, facing the colleges, but would introduce the weaknesses of multi-campus organisation. Amalgamation of some of the colleges may be economically desirable, but the future of the teachers colleges in Western Australia should be within the framework of self-government on each campus.

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