

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Thursday 23 September 1982

ESTIMATES COMMITTEE A

Chairman:
Mr G. M. Gunn

Members:
Mr L. M. F. Arnold
Dr B. Billard
The Hon. Peter Duncan
Mr S. G. Evans
The Hon. R. G. Payne
Mr R. J. Randall
Mr I. Schmidt
Mr J. P. Trainer

The Committee met at 11 a.m.

The CHAIRMAN: I welcome the Minister and his officers. I have examined the minutes and if there are no objections I will sign them as being a correct record of proceedings. In giving answers to questions the Minister might say that he will obtain information at a later date for the Committee. I ask that the information that the Minister does obtain is in a suitable form for insertion in *Hansard*.

The Hon. H. Allison: In the absence of my former portfolio of Aboriginal Affairs, we will have a little more time this evening to spend on the Miscellaneous lines, which include the Kindergarten Union, the former Childhood Services line and child parent centres of the Education Department as well as non-government schools and some 20 or 30 other organisations responsible to the Minister but not to the Director-General. Probably during the course of the morning session and a substantial part of the afternoon session we will discuss the Education Department, followed by the Department of Further Education, and then during the evening we can discuss the Miscellaneous lines.

The CHAIRMAN: The Minister has commented on certain aspects of the Committee's deliberations. Does the Committee wish to apportion the time to be set aside for the debating of one particular matter?

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: I suggest that we consider starting the Department of Technical and Further Education section at about 3.30 p.m. and that we consider the Miscellaneous vote after the dinner adjournment. I know that we have a few other matters that relate to capital works and the Teacher Housing Authority, but they are the benchmarks that I think would be useful for us and for Government members.

Mr RANDALL: Is that a commitment or a generalisation? Previously we have worked on a general agreement between the two Parties or we have established a time table so that Government officers could know a time at which they would be appearing before the Committee.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: Last year we organised it as a generalisation and it worked well. We held ourselves to that and we think we could do the same again.

The Hon. H. Allison: A similar issue arose last year. The Capital Works line is contained within the Public Works lines. The Minister of Public Works is also being examined today so it might be convenient for members to move in and out of the two Committees.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: I was referring to the items of buses and houses but I take the Minister's point on that. I think the other Committee will not be coming to that until this evening.

Education, \$465 373 000

Witness:
The Hon. H. Allison, Minister of Education.

Departmental Advisers:
Mr J. R. Steinle, Director-General of Education, Education Department.
Dr P. Tillett, Assistant Director-General of Education, Education Department.
Mr W. C. Marsh, Acting Director of Personnel, Education Department.
Mr G. Atkinson, Acting Chief Finance Officer, Education Department.

The CHAIRMAN: I declare the proposed expenditure open for examination. I understand the Committee will consider the first vote until about 3.30 p.m. Does the Minister wish to make any comments before questions are asked?

The Hon. H. Allison: No, Mr Chairman. There are so many comments that one would wish to make on a line that extends over almost one-third of the State's Budget. I think that my responding to specific questions might be more appropriate in those circumstances.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: My first question is partly supplementary to the Minister's statement about the share of the Budget that is allocated to education. The Minister would be aware of my second reading speech on the Budget and the mathematical computations that I referred to when discussing the share of the Budget that is going to education. The Minister would also be aware that in the same speech I provided an analysis of what ought to have happened if education spending was to have kept pace with inflation and incremental creep since 1978-79. I provided a series of indices which I commented on.

The Minister would also be aware that the South Australian Institute of Teachers has done its mathematical analysis and has arrived at figures of the same order, but which are somewhat different. Will the Minister or his staff comment on both those analyses and give an indication of exactly what has happened to education spending, first, with regard to its share of the State Budget and, secondly, with regard to its own internal growth, taking account of incremental creep and inflation? For the purposes of comparison I ask whether that could be done in regard to the period that I have referred to, namely, 1978-79.

The Hon. H. Allison: The questions that have arisen are fairly simply answered. This seems to be an almost perennial proposition from members on the Opposition benches. What I must point out is that repeatedly both the Opposition and the South Australian Institute of Teachers takes the allocation of funds and the annual actual expenditure and compares one with the other, rather than one with the one. Once again, in this case the figures that have been produced to criticise the increase in education expenditure have ignored the fact that as usual the actual expenditure of last year has been compared with the estimated expenditure for this year.

I took the opportunity to have members of the staff analyse the statements variously made by not only the institute and the shadow spokesman for education but also by others. The Treasury has reminded us, as it always does, that the actual expenditure by the end of 1983 will include quite a considerable additional sum of money which will be taken for the Education Department from a total of \$80 000 000 which was allocated from the round sum allowances for salaries. I believe that there is also \$25 000 000

included for other contingencies such as increases in various costs through the year, that is, price rises which occurred during the year. That \$80 000 000, if it is apportioned as it has been in the past, will provide about \$22 000 000 for the Education Department. That would mean that instead of the allocation of 6 per cent plus which was referred to in debate, the actual expenditure will be somewhere around 12 per cent.

Of course, it is impossible to give a precise figure in regard to a time some seven months or eight months down the track, but the potential allocation to the Education Department of \$22 000 000 will increase the actual expenditure by the end of the 1982-83 financial year to a position some 12 per cent over and above the actual expenditure of last year: the figure of 12 per cent does in fact more than keep pace with inflation.

I think I am on record in *Hansard* in the preceding two years as having drawn the attention of the Leader of the Opposition to the fact that he, too, was comparing actual expenditure with estimated expenditure when he was relating Education Department statistics and saying that they were down.

I would use exactly the same statement that I made last year. I may not use it in precisely the same words, but I do recall last year in this Committee saying that, in 1978 and 1979, irrespective of whether one compared the estimates and the actual, or whether one compared estimates with estimates and actual with actual, in 1978 and 1979 those two budgets actually went backwards in education. We were diminishing spending in education. In the last three years we have gone forward, and we have increased expenditure in education, and no-one has come forward with the statistics taken from the Auditor-General's Report to refute those statements that I have made. There has been a lot of speculation. There have been lots of statements made. There have been advertisements, but no-one has actually taken the Auditor-General's report and refuted those statements that I have made, so we will be increasing expenditure overall in education by the end of the financial year as usual.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: We are following the practice—

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

The Hon. H. Allison: I will answer the second part of the statement. The honourable member did request specific information on the Education Department itself. There was a suggested reduction on actual demand that is required by the Education Department of some \$4 000 000 which was suggested when the Budget papers were first put out by Treasury and subsequent upon the initial release of Budget papers, we did have an additional sum of \$2 000 000 announced by me some three or four weeks ago which will be spread over the next calendar year, and that would increase the amount to be spent in the present financial year by an additional \$1 000 000. So that in effect the Education Department's reduction, in real terms over the last year, would be about \$3 000 000.

I remind the Committee that a significant feature has to be taken into consideration, that is, the Education Department is anticipating losing, as has been the practice for the last seven years since the middle to late 1970s, some 5 500 youngsters to the system. Essentially, there will be 5 600 going to the primary school system, but there will be slight gain of approximately 200 youngsters to the secondary school system, and I believe the net reduction is somewhere between 5 300 to 5 400. The reduction in staff is not in the same proportion. In other words, as has been the case for the preceding two years, we will be improving the teacher/student ratio, even if slightly, in primary education and holding the line I believe in secondary education. I do not know whether the Director-General or the Assistant Director-

General would like to give more specific information, because I am quoting from memory.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: I am disappointed that the Minister has not chosen to read my second reading speech. He intimated by some wording that he has, but he obviously has not. He has not because in fact the tables I incorporated in my second reading speech were in various forms and I seek leave to have incorporated in the Estimates Committee report these tables one more time. I will ask the messenger shortly to take a photocopy of them so the Minister can have them presented to him.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The honourable member cannot present documents to the Minister. That is not in accordance with sessional—

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: Can I have leave to—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The Chair will just advise the Minister what course of action the Chair will take. The Chair does not need advice from the honourable member. The Chair will permit the honourable member to have incorporated into the record statistical tables as long as the member gives an undertaking that they are purely statistical tables.

The Hon. H. Allison: I would suggest that this Committee is dealing with Government records which are answerable to the public, to the Auditor-General, and that to have indiscriminately inserted into a debate of this kind documents which I find are unsubstantiated would be improper. If the honourable member chooses to pass those documents to me during the session or the lunch period, I could look at them and I could probably answer, as the Committee sees fit. I do not believe it would be appropriate for comparative documents to be inserted into *Hansard*.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: Is the Minister refusing leave?

The CHAIRMAN: Order! It is not a matter for the Minister to refuse leave. Whether the documents are inserted in the record is a matter for the Committee to determine. The Minister has put forward a point of view; the decision on whether the documents be inserted in *Hansard* or on the record is entirely a matter for the Committee.

Mr EVANS: As this debate goes on for a substantial part of the day, and if the Minister has the opportunity to look at the detail of the documents and to say later in this debate whether or not the tables are accurate, the Committee at that stage could make a decision whether the tables should be inserted. I do not believe that the Minister's request that that occur is unreasonable. I suggest that that is the proper action to be taken without forcing the issue at this stage.

The Hon. R. G. PAYNE: I was somewhat perturbed about what I believed was a ruling that you, Mr Chairman, were in the process of evolving. It seems to me that the practice we ought to follow in these Committees should not differ substantially from the practice followed in the House as a whole.

The CHAIRMAN: That is exactly the course of action that the Chair is adopting.

The Hon. R. G. PAYNE: If I may be permitted to continue, Mr Chairman. You, Sir, always have the edge, being the Chairman. I was going to say that, to the best of my recollection, when the House is sitting as a whole, if a member seeks leave to incorporate information, an assurance is sought by the Chair (the Speaker or the Chairman of Committees). As far as I can recall in the 12 years I have been a member, the question has been asked, 'Can the member assure me that it is of a statistical nature?' Of recent times there has been a suggestion that the length of the material will also be considered, and there was debate in this House on that matter, which I am sure that you, Mr Chairman, would recall.

As I understand it, the member is asked to give an assurance that the documents are of a statistical nature. I

believe that I heard the member for Salisbury give that assurance, without being asked for it, when he pointed out that he wished to incorporate a table or tables. Personally, I cannot see any reason why we ought to differ.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: By way of assistance—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The Chair will deal with one matter at a time. As I understand it, the situation is this: the honourable member for Salisbury sought leave to have statistical tables incorporated in the record; I asked the Committee whether the honourable member had leave; the honourable member for Fisher commented, as did the honourable member for Mitchell; the matter is still in the hands of the Committee. The Chair has asked whether the honourable member for Salisbury has leave to incorporate in the record a series of statistical tables. I point out to the honourable member that it is my understanding that those tables are already incorporated in the official *Hansard* record.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: The tables appear on pages 845, 846 and 847 of *Hansard*. This is an Estimates Committee, and I would have thought that those people who wish to peruse the debate of the Estimates Committees in isolation from *Hansard* would benefit from seeing these figures repeated, given the fact that I commented earlier on the Minister's apparent perusal (or absence of it) of the speech I made in the second reading stage.

The CHAIRMAN: The Committee is wasting time. Either the Committee gives leave, or it does not. Does the honourable member for Salisbury have leave to incorporate the tables, if he gives an assurance that they are of a statistical nature?

Leave granted.

INCREASE TO KEEP PACE WITH INFLATION

Year	To keep pace with inflation
78-79	100
79-80	110.2
80-81	120.6
81-82	133.1
82-83	147.3

INCREASE TO KEEP PACE WITH INFLATION AND INCREMENTAL CREEP

Year	To keep pace with inflation and incremental creep
78-79	100
79-80	111.8
80-81	124.0
81-82	138.5
82-83	154.9

Indices of actual expenditure

Year	Actual vote
78-79	100
79-80	105.4
80-81	120.8
81-82	133.6
82-83	151.1

EDUCATION BUDGET 1982-83

1. Education vote allocation as a percentage of the payments authorised by Appropriation Acts:

Year	E.D. Vote	Appropriation vote	Percentage
	\$	\$	
77-78	285 978 000	969 888 000	29.49
78-79	308 005 000	1 035 448 000	29.75
79-80	324 750 000	1 099 667 000	29.53
80-81	371 980 000	1 189 814 000	31.26
81-82	411 450 000	1 341 979 000	30.66
82-83	465 373 000	1 501 866 000	30.99

2. Actual education expenditure as a percentage of the actual amounts spent by authorisation of Appropriation Acts:

Year	E.D. Expenditure	Appropriation Expenditure	Percentage
	\$	\$	
77-78	299 184 870	1 012 750 738	29.54
78-79	318 337 852	1 062 156 773	29.97
79-80	348 392 864	1 168 168 990	29.82
80-81	401 501 910	1 306 062 791	30.74
81-82	434 095 790	1 474 203 436	29.44
82-83	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: Thank you, Mr Chairman. The tables appear in *Hansard*, and I am incorporating them in this record because apparently the Minister has not read them. The first table relates to education vote allocations as a percentage of payments authorised by Appropriation Acts.

The Hon. H. Allison: On a point of order, Mr Chairman—

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: I hope I can finish my second question.

The Hon. H. Allison: A point of order, Mr Chairman. The incorporation into *Hansard* and the honourable member's statement are obviously diametrically opposed. If he assumes that the Minister has not seen, has not read, has not examined the statistics, then chooses to incorporate them in *Hansard* without the Minister's having had access to them and then proceeds to debate them, I suggest that the Minister is being placed at an impossible disadvantage. To have this sort of situation arising is intolerable. The honourable member has now, as I have been speaking, made a copy available, and I thank him for that. Issue resolved, Mr Chairman.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: To continue, I was commenting on the fact that the Minister had intimated that he had read my speech. Let us go through what the tables show. The Minister accused me of comparing actual figures with voted figures. He also did that last year. Last year the Minister did make a pertinent comment, that I had not adequately taken into account payments authorised in Special Acts, and I acknowledge that criticism of my analysis last year. That has been taken care of in this year's analysis.

The first table refers to comparing vote with vote, so the 1982-83 is the vote figure (obviously we have not got the actual figure yet), compared with the 1981-82 vote figure again, and this goes back to 1977-78, in each case with the vote figure. The Minister commented that I might have spun some figures out of thin air: in fact they are figures quoted from Budget papers presented in this Parliament by the respective Treasurers of the day. For the benefit of other members, that table shows there was an increasing share of the Budget going to education from 1977-78 up to 1980-81, and that point is acknowledged; the percentage rose from 29.49 to 31.62.

In 1981-82 that figure declined, according to that analysis, to 30.66 per cent, which was a contention that I made last year. It was refuted at that time but, according to the figures

taken from the official documents, it is still sustained. It has this year gone up over last year's figure, according to that same analysis, but is still down on 1980-81. If one wants to compare actual with actual (in other words, the money actually spent from year to year), that is in the next table. We have not got the 1982-83 figure yet, but we find the 1981-82 figure of actual money spent compared with the previous years likewise. A similar trend is shown in those figures. That highlights the point that the Minister's response just now was not the response needed for the question I asked.

I also point out the other three tables, one of which, using inflation figures taken from the Budget papers and generally accepted in the economic analyses in South Australia and in this country, indicates that for 1982-83 the Budget figure for education would need to be 47.3 per cent greater than it was in 1978-79 if inflation only was to be taken into account.

If, however, incremental creep, as I assumed it to be, had been taken into account, it would have had to be 54.9 per cent. The Minister can indicate to me what the incremental creep figures have been for that period, and I would be most interested to hear them. The actual amount for education has increased (and this is the vote figure, I repeat). Perhaps the Minister has misconstrued the word 'actual' in that table, which refers to the vote; it is 51.1 per cent greater. If one compared the payments actually made at the end of the year, past experience shows that the same trend will be maintained. In other words, the actual amount spent on education is normally 7 per cent to 8 per cent greater than the vote. That is a consistent relationship that takes place almost every year. Sometimes it might go a little higher than 8 per cent, and sometimes it is near the lower end of 7 per cent. That is the point I am making. Would the Minister now respond to that?

The Hon. H. Allison: There are other variables, which were explained in answer to an almost identical question last year when Treasury sent in a belated response, which pointed out that there had in fact been an additional pay period in the last financial year. That was one of the issues that changed the statistics from what one might have anticipated that they would be. Another factor also emerged. I believe that in one of those previous two or three years, a proportion but not the entire amount of the round sum allowances was built into the Education Department lines. So that, to compare these statistics absolutely would not be accurate. I would have to refer back to the Treasury statement of last year which was either provided independently or incorporated into *Hansard* (I am not sure of that), and I do not have a copy of that with me.

The point which I would make is that over the past 12 years, from 1970 to 1981-82, statistics taken out by the department have shown that, in 1970-71, 21.7 per cent of the total Budget was allocated to the Education Department; in 1971-72, it was 22.9 per cent; 1972-73, 23 per cent; 1973-74, 23.4 per cent; 1974-75, 26.9 per cent; 1975-76, 27.4 per cent; 1976-77, 28.3 per cent; 1977-78, 30.1 per cent; 1978-79, 30.7 per cent; 1979-80, 30.6 per cent (a slight drop); in 1980-81, 31.5 per cent; and in 1981-82, 32.6 per cent. The estimates for the end of the financial year 1982-83 that were received from Treasury a few days ago, including the Education Department's share of the round sum allowance, would bring it to a fraction short of 33 per cent.

Those are the increases, and, as the honourable member says, they have not kept pace with inflation, but what we should remember is that other factors must be taken into consideration which are totally ignored when examining purely financial considerations. Some of these are that from 1975 onwards the Education Department has been losing students. I believe that in 1975-76 the Education Department

had the highest number of students in its schools that it has ever had when the figure reached about 236 000. This number has reduced to about 204 000 or 205 000, but perhaps my Director-General or Assistant Director-General can give me the precise figures for this year.

It must also be borne in mind that in 1970 we would have had within the Education Department 9 000 professionally-trained teachers and only a few hundred ancillary staff. By the end of the 1970s, when this Government came into office, in the 1979-80 financial year the number of professionally-trained staff had increased to 15 500 or 15 600. That was the peak but the peak of students came in the middle to late 1970s, when we had 236 000 pupils. In addition to that we would also have had about 6 000 to 6 500 ancillary staff, people within schools, which could have been reduced to about 3 500 full-time equivalent persons if we had grouped them altogether. So we had 15 500 professionally-trained and about 3 500 ancillary staff by 1980.

We have continued to lose students at a substantial rate, between 5 200 and 5 600 fewer students a year, from the Education Department. Not all of them have been lost to the State, because the independent sector has increased its share from I think probably 39 500 to about 43 000, so there has been some gain, but not entirely at the expense of the Education Department.

To consider simply figures alone is to ignore the fact that the teacher-student ratios have been improving as the student population has been declining. Certainly, the figures which I have just given, which show the Education Department's share of the total Budget last year, are significant when compared with the figure for 1970, which was only 21.7 per cent of the Budget, with 9 000 professionally-trained staff. In 1982-83 nearly one-third of the State's Budget is allocated for education and we have a little less than 15 000 professionally-trained staff as well as ancillary staff and yet the student population has been reduced substantially by a little over 5 200.

I cannot see the motivation behind the line of questioning, but I suggest that if the honourable member is allowed to pursue that line without taking into account these other factors, he and the public will have a distorted view of what is really happening in education.

The CHAIRMAN: I call the member for Mawson.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: Mr Chairman, I have my third question.

The CHAIRMAN: I am afraid that the honourable member has had the floor for the last 30 minutes, and he has had at least three calls.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: Some of them were for clarification of the debate about the tables.

The CHAIRMAN: The honourable member for Mawson.

Mr SCHMIDT: I would like to refer to the agency overview that appears on page 6 of the yellow book, where it is stated that there will be an increase of 85 teachers and associated ancillary staff to accommodate continuous enrolments and maintenance of satisfactory class sizes in primary schools.

Could the Minister elaborate on the measures being taken by the department to ensure that class sizes will remain at an adequate level? This concerned me, when I read articles in the press only a few days ago by the President of the Institute of Teachers who claimed that the matter had got out of hand in this State. I am more particularly concerned about the fact that in many primary schools in the outer metropolitan areas student numbers are increasing rapidly. I know that in my own district the Reynella East Primary School and a few other primary schools have classes of more than 30 pupils so this is of concern to me. I would like to know what the department is doing to ensure that

there is equilibrium between the class sizes in the inner and outer metropolitan areas.

The Hon. H. Allison: This is an interesting question and members of the Committee will be aware that two or three weeks ago the Government took the step of announcing an additional \$2 000 000 to ensure that class sizes were maintained, particularly in areas where there was some risk of the class sizes being increased. Since that announcement we have been subjected to some criticism from the South Australian Institute of Teachers which I find hard to comprehend because the immediate past President of the institute, with a few of his executive, came to see the Premier, the Deputy Premier and me regarding this and other issues. This particular question was one of two which were in the highest priority.

I am not surprised by that, because the Primary School Principals Association, led by its President, Mr Alec Talbot, from Kilkenny, had also had a conference with me and the Deputy Premier, as Chairman of the Budget Review Committee, several months before the negotiations with the Institute of Teachers at which we had established the same priorities. Therefore, there was some consensus. The Government's action was a result of negotiations between responsible people and I did find it belittling of the Government's efforts when, the morning after the announcement was made, there was a grinding comment I believe at the foot of about four column inches of comment from the institute to the effect that this may not be a bad thing when in fact it had given top priority to the request. It highlights the fact that, whatever one does, it is hard to please everyone, at least in some quarters. Others involved were loud and immediate in their praise.

The problem arises if we reduce the teacher population not in direct proportion to student reduction. We have lost about 5 400 students from the system and we reduce the number of teachers in the Education Department. But there is a constant factor throughout our schools, unless we happen to close down a school, which removes a host of administration staff. However, we have not been in the habit of closing schools down, for a variety of reasons. Alternatively, if a school descends below certain enrolment figures, around 200 students or less, the entitlement of such schools to a Deputy Principal changes. However, those instances are minimal, and the number of times that they occur can be counted on less than five fingers.

The problem is that, throughout the education system, as students depart from the system they go from individual classes, but the Principal, the deputies, librarians, counsellors and many other people involved in classes, but not full-time, remain in the school. Therefore, if there is a substantial reduction of staff, as the Primary Principals Association and the institute have pointed out, this would impact particularly severely on those schools losing quite a number of students, and it would impact upon the classroom.

Bearing that in mind, we decided to make available this additional sum of \$2 000 000 for the next school year, for two reasons. The first was that we will be able to maintain a satisfactory teacher/student ratio in those schools which were losing students. The schools that are gaining students have their own automatic compensation. Secondly, the substantial request was that we staff schools on the September enrolment figures in primary schools rather than on the February enrolment figures. The significance of that decision would be obvious to members, realising that in primary schools students are taken in either on a continuous enrolment or on a term enrolment and as they leave kindergarten and transfer, having become five years of age or sufficiently old for parents and the kindergarten to decide that they are ready for primary school.

This, of course, means that the build-up in primary school enrolments occurs in September when the peak is reached. Therefore, if staff are waiting in those schools until the children arrive, the children who are already in those classes will not have to be shuffled around, classes split and children will not have to front up to a new teacher as new teachers arrive during the course of the year. Those were the top two priorities of the institute and Primary Principals Association.

The Government acceded to those requests to the tune of \$2 000 000, and I believe that that has gone a long way to helping the situation. It means that the Education Department will be able to staff its schools much better than had it maintained what is referred to as a constant teacher/student ratio. We have removed that constancy from the ratio and given it a degree of flexibility. I now ask Dr Tillett, the Assistant Director-General, who is much more *au fait* with the precise workings of this, whether he would like to make an additional comment.

Dr Tillett: Part of the questions alluded to the fact that, whilst there may be an overall enrolment decline, there are schools in the outer metropolitan area that are experiencing enrolment growth, which is perfectly true. The implication of that is that there is a requirement for a movement of staff from those schools that are experiencing particularly large declines in enrolments to those schools with increasing enrolments. That certainly occurs at the beginning of each year and has been part of the mode of operation in terms of staffing of schools for a very long time.

The problems to which the Minister referred of the effect of the intake of five-year-old students during the course of the year and the fact that as school sizes diminish the administrative overheads form a larger percentage of the total staffing, and therefore the available staffing for classroom teaching diminishes relatively, are problems which have been addressed by the additional allocation of \$2 000 000 for the calendar year 1983, which the Minister mentioned, both in respect to the current financial year and the 1983-84 financial year.

I should indicate to the Committee that I believe that, of the funds that are available for the current financial year 1982-83, it has been determined to apply a portion of them to the provision of additional staff in primary schools for term three of 1982. At the latest count, the provision of that staff will create 44 additional positions. That has been done specifically to cater for those schools where the effect of the intake of five year olds has created a case for the provision of additional staff.

The numbers of additional staff required on both counts in 1983 is somewhat speculative because, as we have quite good enrolment projections for 1983, the actual enrolments which occur to some extent must remain uncertain. However, at this stage it is anticipated that about 75 to 80 additional teaching positions will be required to cover the effect of the two factors to which I referred.

Mr SCHMIDT: It is pleasing to hear that those extra 44 positions have been made available which will certainly alleviate the problems that occur in schools. Does the central office have any sort of overriding control over the displacement of staff within various regions? I hark back to the days before the current Government's administration, when the Morphett Vale South Primary School and the Morphett Vale West Primary School were established. There was a significant surplus of staff in relation to students which invoked quite a loud public outcry at the time.

I also know that at the moment there are several new schools in the southern central region that might be slightly overstaffed because of the fact that they are brand new schools and require persons to assist in getting materials together and setting them up. However, that becomes a

problem when adjoining schools that are not so far away, maybe only a few kilometres away are crying out for the majority of the year that they are understaffed by maybe one or two positions. Does the central office have an over-riding say in that sort of displacement of persons and can it determine that maybe a new school can survive without its additional staff who could then be made available to another school which is in greater need?

The Hon. H. Allison: I call on the Director-General to enlarge on departmental practice in that regard.

Dr Tillet: In the final analysis, the department would have an ultimate say in the matter. However, the department's style of operation is such that any changes of that kind are undertaken humanely and sensitively and in consultation with the schools and, indeed, the individual teachers affected.

The situation in the past has tended to be that schools have been staffed on the basis of estimated enrolment and if it happens (and indeed it has happened) that the actual enrolment has fallen well short of that estimated, the tendency has been to leave the staff at the school to which they were assigned to avoid the difficulties that are associated with displacing teachers from schools after the school year has commenced. It seems to the department that the resolution of that difficulty involves two factors: one is the improvement in the estimation of enrolments at schools, and the other concerns staffing in a manner that leaves more flexibility for relocation of staff or appointment of additional staff than has been the case in the past.

In respect of the estimation of enrolments at schools, it is a relatively straightforward matter to estimate the enrolments in total, across the State or enlarged geographic areas within the State, but to estimate enrolments in individual schools is a much more difficult matter given that parents by and large have a free choice of school.

Nevertheless, I believe that we are improving all the time in our ability to come up with enrolment estimates at individual schools which are accurate and reliable, although we will never achieve 100 per cent reliability in that regard. With respect to the second strategy I should say that it is the intention in 1983 to hold back a few salaries in reserve which can be used to make appointments to schools which have enrolments that turn out to be larger than had been anticipated, and it is hoped that in that way we will avoid to a substantial extent, although perhaps not entirely, the difficulty of having some schools overstaffed and others understaffed without the flexibility to readily move teachers from one school to another.

Mr SCHMIDT: Whilst I applaud the action taken at the primary school level, is any similar action being taken on the secondary school level? The four principal high schools in my area—Christies Beach, Wirreanda, Morphett Vale and Reynella East—have all exceeded their enrolments next year for year 8 students. Many of the schools have, I believe, gone beyond their quota, which creates a problem for those particular high schools and, more importantly, it is creating a problem for parents in the area to try to get students into particular schools. If you are holding back some salaries in reserve, would they be able to be used to assist such schools, or will that adjustment have to be made within the total school formula?

The Hon. H. Allison: I would ask the Assistant Director-General to respond to this question and reserve the right to make later comment.

Dr Tillet: The short answer to the question is 'Yes'; some salaries are held back which could be used in the staffing of secondary schools to accommodate the difficulty when their enrolments may turn out actually to be greater than estimated. However, in general the estimates of enrolments for individual secondary schools have tended to be more

accurate than those in primary schools, and this relates mainly to the fact that we already have in the school system students who are going to enrol next year for the first time in high schools and, consequently, we have better access to information about their intentions regarding high school enrolment.

With respect to the schools in question, it is true with at least some of them, if not all of them, that the enrolment pressures on them due to the growth in population in the southern area of metropolitan Adelaide is resulting in pressure on the accommodation which I assume all members of the Committee would be aware is likely to be substantially relieved by the opening of a new high school in that area at the Hub at Aberfoyle Park.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: To assist the deliberations of the Committee, I have one prefatory question to my question which I appreciate may not be able to be answered now and will need statistical information. What are the incremental creep estimates for the years ahead, and when will the salary scale situation stabilise? Has any money been received by the State Government to assist with the matter of declining enrolments and, if so, how much, and what are the financial implications for the years ahead of the declining enrolment situation?

I understand from reports that I have read that an amount of money was made available by the Commonwealth Government to States facing declining enrolment situations to take account of that very issue that Dr Tillet ably commented on which, of course, for some time has been debated in the community. Therefore, it is interesting to ascertain how much of the \$2 000 000 is in fact direct from uncommitted funds of the State education budget, and how much may have come from tied funds, anyway. The financial implications for the years ahead are quite significant.

Regardless of whatever estimates we work on as to how long enrolments will continue to decline (and I have debated that matter on a number of occasions in this place), we would all agree that at some time in the mid to late 1980s enrolments will start at one rate or another to start growing again, but the outcome of that is that at least for the next three years, possibly four or five years, we will have declining enrolments that will have the concomitant financial implications that were recognised by the \$2 000 000 that was made available by the Government two weeks ago, an amount which I commended at the time and still commend.

The Hon. H. Allison: The honourable member's questions indicate a terrible naivety when it comes to budgeting for a State, or indeed budgeting in any circumstances. Obviously, one can only spend money which is available, and the point I made earlier, that the Education Department (that is, education overall) is increasingly taking an increasing share of the total finances available, has to be of tremendous significance. Therefore, simply because we have the Keeves Report saying that savings should be redirected elsewhere, no automatic conclusion can be reached that there will be savings and, of course, why not? Therefore, two very significant reasons: one is that we are taking on relatively few new, young, freshly trained teachers on the bottom salary rung (that is, the cheapest and not necessarily the worst, by any means, teachers within the system), but what we do have is an ageing teacher population with a substantial incremental creep.

The Education Department is one of those Public Service departments (and you do not find very many counterparts in private enterprise) which has an automatic increase up to certain levels—year 11 without a degree, year 12 or 13 with a degree—and the salary automatically increases. So that, even with no salary increase at all being awarded under indexation, which used to be the system, or under negotiation, which is the current system, there is still a very

significant increase in the Education Department's budget. In past years, I estimated that it would be several million dollars a year. I believe that when I was on Opposition I was running to \$6 000 000 or \$7 000 000. It may have stabilised by this time. I do not have the precise details, and perhaps I will ask my financial officers to comment on that matter in a moment. However, the Education Department share has been increasing steadily.

Coupled with that, we have the substantial increase in salaries last year which ran well over the inflation rate, and one increase alone of some 6 per cent, I believe, would have absorbed \$18 000 000 of allegedly spare money. This, of course, is the round sum allowance allocated by Treasury each year to provide for that sort of contingency. However, one cannot assume that there is any spare money in Government. If the honourable member doubts that, I would simply point out that when this Government came to power in 1979 it said that it would reduce taxation and cut its cloth by steadily reducing the number of people in Government employ. It did reduce taxation very substantially: some \$30 000 000 or more, overall, was given back to the people of South Australia with the initiatives that were taken within a matter of weeks of our taking office.

We also have reduced substantially our overall work force, including a number of teachers, while at the same time improving slightly the teacher-student ratio because of the differential reduction in staff and students. As a result, we have been able to maintain a pretty well balanced budget. Let me remind the honourable member of the financial problems that have been encountered elsewhere, where New South Wales has had to take \$260 000 000 of needed money from the railways account in order to appear to be balanced within \$60 000 000 (and that is just like the five-card trick); in Victoria the newly elected Government said, 'No taxation increases at all,' and yesterday in the *Age*, a copy of which I have here and will pass over to the honourable member, a 23.5 per cent increase in State taxation is announced, stating:

No wonder the Labor MPs winced. After promises of no tax increases, there they were.

One cannot commit oneself to do more and more and to cut taxes, because when one comes to look after the State coffers, one is faced with the problem of obtaining the money. I simply point out that education has increased its share of the State Budget, and part of the problem that is currently faced in Victoria lies in the fact that deals were done privately regarding salary increases with the two Victorian teachers unions, which the *Age* said only a few weeks ago had cost the Victorian Government about \$300 000 000 in the financial year, not all, but a substantial part, of which involved sweetheart deals. We must manage our State affairs wisely and prudently, otherwise the people face a 25 per cent tax increase.

I ask the Committee to bear in mind that very important factor, because it underlines all the questions that are directed towards increasing expenditure. I can assure the honourable member that, were he in subsequent years to be in the position that I am in at present in addressing the House on budgetary questions, he would have to cut his cloth very closely.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: I will restate the questions that I have asked, because they have not been answered specifically. I was not asking the Minister for a commitment to do anything at all in regard to Government spending on education. That is not the role of the Estimates Committees: the role is to give information about the Budget and about the financial directions that may be facing a Government of any political persuasion in the years ahead. I wanted information and answers in that regard. I am not commenting on the amount of money that may or may not be made

available: I am not making reflections in that direction at all.

I merely assumed that such branches as the research and planning section, the finance office and the office of the Ministry in the Education Department would have been making calculations on the likely financial implications of a variety of factors which are facing the Education Department and which would have to be taken into account by any Government, regardless of its political persuasion. Therefore, I will repeat the particular implications on which I want some information.

What are the forward planning estimates for the incremental creep situation for the years ahead? I understand that this year it is \$6 400 000. At some stage that must stabilise, given the fact that fewer teachers are coming in, as the Minister pointed out. The situation will probably stabilise, and in the 1990s we may get back to the original position. However, I do not want information that far ahead: I seek information in regard to the next few years only.

There is an anomalous situation in that enrolments decline yet some class sizes are becoming bigger. That is acknowledged, and the \$2 000 000 was allocated in that regard. That situation must occur in the years ahead if enrolments continue to decline. Therefore, what are the financial implications of continuing enrolment decline? Any Government has to acknowledge that that will become a financial impost, limiting the amount of money available to be spent on other things, and acknowledging the limited resources available to any Government.

The Hon. H. Allison: I will respond to the question of class sizes first, because that is essentially a policy decision. The Keeves Committee of Inquiry pointed out that South Australia, by comparison with other States, has a very satisfactory teacher/student ratio, in regard to both primary and secondary education. Whatever interpretation one is to believe in regard to the recent Teachers Federation survey, I would indicate that the gentleman who is responsible in South Australia contacted officers of my department to point out that the interpretation of the Institute of Teachers was a substantial distortion of the truth (and I will not say a massive distortion). It revealed that South Australia in secondary education has a teacher/student ratio of 1 to a little over 12, and in primary education there is a ratio of a little under 1 to 25. Government policy is to maintain classroom ratios as closely as possible to those that we have presently achieved. That was a Keeves Committee of Inquiry recommendation.

There are a number of educational, research and philosophical arguments that would say that, ultimately, all of our class sizes should be reduced to 1 to 10 or 1 to 12, which is very close to what occurs in the kindergarten area at present (which is easily the finest in Australia as far as ratios are concerned). The reality is that, if one considers responsible reports on teacher/student ratios, one can see that Glass *et al* recommend that between 1 to 15 and 1 to 10 are the appropriate ratios.

There is also the 1979-80 report commissioned for the Toronto Department of Education. I believe that that report was responsible, certainly from the economic point of view, and it stated that, if one were to improve the student/teacher ratios from 1 to 25 down to, say, 1 to 18 or 1 to 17, the educational gains would be minimal. It is only when we get down to very small class sizes that the gain is substantial. I simply have to tell the Committee that, if one is to continue pressing for a smaller teacher-student ratio, that is, reducing the ratio from 1 to 24 downwards, while the improvements may be absolutely minimal from the educational point of view, but certainly very advantageous from the staff point of view (obviously, if there are fewer papers, fewer students, and less control, it is advantageous from the

staff point of view), one also has to remember that, for every additional 100 teachers, about \$2 000 000 is expended each year, and the end result is questionable.

So, from the Government's point of view and from the Keeves inquiry recommendations, we say that, while the current teacher/student ratios may be questioned in some educational areas on various grounds, there is not strong evidence to suggest that, if literally hundreds of millions of dollars were spent, the educational benefits to the students would be increased. That is of prime consideration. Of course, the secondary consideration is that one has to ask whether the public of a State of this size, which is already spending an increasing share of its money on the educational system, can really afford to go very much further.

These questions would have to be answered by individual Governments. Our Government has decided that it will address the question of class sizes by trying to maintain satisfactory class sizes. Of course, 'satisfactory' is a word that is subject to considerable debate. In the kindergarten area, the costs are about \$2 100 per student per annum on a full-time basis, but of course the kindergarten area involves half-time sessions. The secondary education system in South Australia is running at about \$50 per annum higher than that, and that is extremely significant when one looks at the difference in the educational challenges in secondary and pre-school areas. Of course, the Education Department's primary school sector is running at about two-thirds of that cost. These figures must be borne in mind when one undertakes a complete analysis of the situation.

Incremental creep is a matter with which I believe Dr Tillett is pretty well *au fait*. As I said earlier, that problem is recurrent, whether or not there is a salary increase. There are other factors to which the honourable member has not addressed himself. I do not know whether he was questioning whether we were *au fait* with what really happens and whether we are planning ahead.

When I came to office in 1979, the department was spending a little over \$1 000 000 on long service leave. Throughout the Public Service there had been no encouragement to staff to take long service leave which had accrued and to which they were legitimately entitled. Ultimately, the taxpayers of South Australia have to meet the bill for long service leave and other entitlements. That bill is at its smallest if leave is taken when it accrues, but obviously, if leave is allowed to accrue for 10 or more years, it is taken at the incremental salary applicable at that time.

As a matter of policy we decided to encourage as many South Australian public servants as possible, including teachers, to take long service leave as it accrued. The result has been, I believe, that over the last three years while we have been in office somewhere around \$5 000 000 has been expended on long service leave simply within the Education Department. Of course, the leave is an entitlement, so really the money is expended on replacement staff because we do not have gaps in classrooms. The full cost to the department of replacement staff has been somewhere near \$5 000 000 in the last financial year.

The honourable member may recall that we did take exceptional steps by calling in an additional excess warrant from Treasury to ensure that people who had applied for leave during the last financial year were able to take that leave. This year we are not quite so liberal, but it will only minimally affect staff, in that persons applying for long service leave in terms one, two, and three will be in excess in term two when replacement problems are to the fore—replacement in English, maths, the sciences, business, commerce and other areas.

Rather than disadvantaging students by permitting everyone who wished to take long service leave in term two, we have asked that they consider terms one and three in the

next year, 1983, as alternatives. It may be that a few, not many, will be asked to take leave other than at the time they choose but it will be a very substantial sum that has to be provided. Perhaps Dr Tillett can address himself to the incremental creep question and any other matters he may feel are relevant to that question.

Dr Tillett: Reference has been made to \$6 400 000 included in the 1982-83 Budget to provide specifically for salary increments compared with a figure of \$5 750 000 provided for the same purpose in 1981-82. That indicates the magnitude of the estimated effect of incremental creep in the last two years. However, it is quite true that the incremental creep phenomenon should soon begin to disappear as a major influence on the Budget. For example, I point out that, with respect to teachers not in promotion positions in primary schools, the average teacher salary is at step 10 of a 12-step scale and, in secondary schools, the average salary is at step 11 of a 12-step scale. We can therefore anticipate that the effect of incremental creep will diminish substantially in the years ahead. However, the Education Department has not made any dollar calculation of the precise likely effect in 1983-84 or the financial years beyond that.

I would like to also comment about pupil-teacher ratios. The department and Treasury have, in recent years, discussed the level of staffing requirements in terms of pupil-teacher ratios. It has become apparent that the pupil-teacher ratio is a fairly blunt instrument with which to address staffing needs and the fact that a decrease in average school size represents an increase in the administration overheads in the operation of schools, and a consequent reduction in the level of resources available for classroom teaching, is one (but only one) factor indicating the desirability of developing measures other than the pupil-teacher ratio to assess or negotiate staff level provisions. The department is examining a range of alternative measures that might represent a better approach to determining staff requirements than the pupil-teacher ratio approach.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: The information given by Dr Tillett regarding the incremental creep is very interesting. I take the point about long service leave and I assume by the Minister's raising the matter into the forward projections that will be incorporated in the later answers to be tabled. The other component of the question that I asked originally has not been answered, and I might just repeat that question. Has any money been received by the State Government from the Commonwealth to assist with declining enrolments? If so, how much? What are the forward projections, given the decline in enrolments for the next few years? How much will it cost the State to repeat the exercise done this year with the \$2 000 000, in the next financial year and the year following that, and so on, until such time as enrolments start to grow again?

The Minister commented briefly about class sizes and the effect of reducing class sizes. That is a very interesting and academic debate. It is a very vital question, but that is not the question I was asking. I presume the Minister has received an invitation, as I have, to meet Professor Jack Campbell next Tuesday morning, and he will be taking that up as I will be. We can discuss the matter later over a cup of tea.

The Hon. H. Allison: Perhaps Dr Tillett will respond to the question on Commonwealth funding.

Dr Tillett: The various components of Commonwealth funding relate, to differing extents, to involvement levels. The Commonwealth funds are, in substantial measure, directed towards specific-purpose programmes where what may be important is not the total enrolment situation but the number of students in particular categories, for example, in country areas if we are referring to a country areas programme, and so on. The other comment that perhaps should be made is that, while the Schools Commission's

funds are shared between the various systems roughly in proportion to the enrolment proportions between the systems, the commission has tended to recognise the fact that, if enrolments are falling, it does not necessarily lead to a consequence that the requirements for funds will be reduced proportionately.

Therefore, the formulae for the sharing of funds between systems are more sophisticated than simply a share basis strictly on the share of enrolments from one system to another. In respect to the utilisation of the \$2 000 000 to meet the problems of continuous intake of five-year-old students and other related problems, the expenditure of \$1 000 000 having been made in the current financial year on that account will, as a consequence, be built into the base from which negotiations will commence with respect to 1983-84. To be hypothetical for a moment, if there were no reduction in the real level of funds provided in 1983-84, then it would not be unreasonable to assume that funds to cater for the effects of continuous admission would be built into the base Budget for the next and ensuing financial years.

Dr BILLARD: Can the Minister supply figures about the level of per capita spending or per student spending over the last several years? The Minister referred to this in passing and gave very approximate figures in his reply to the member for Salisbury a few moments ago, but I wonder whether the Minister has more accurate figures and whether they can be compared over the last several years. If we are to include allowances for incremental creep and other factors which increase the cost of the education system without supposedly improving the standard, although I guess there is extra experience—

Members interjecting:

Dr BILLARD: They do not improve the teacher-student or class size factors: then the per capita figure is a relatively important one.

However, in saying that I also recognise that that in itself would not be the final answer because the per capita figure will become distorted gradually as school sizes become smaller and a relatively larger proportion of staff is absorbed into the administrative aspects of teaching.

In relation to that I would also like to ask whether the Minister has any information on where the decline in numbers is occurring throughout the education system. For example, is it occurring predominantly in large schools that are getting smaller or is the loss predominantly in small schools that are getting smaller? In other words, what is the distribution of the loss across the education system?

The Hon. H. Allison: The last question is interesting. There has been a pattern throughout Australia for small schools to become smaller, particularly those in rural areas. In South Australia where the number of rural schools ran into thousands in the 1930s, over the last 30 or 40 years we have closed many of the smaller non-viable rural schools. In many cases they have been amalgamated into area schools and I believe the continuing pattern is for rural schools to diminish in size with the exception of a certain number of rural schools. For instance, in the South-East, in my own district, the Mount Gambier school is expanding, Penola is diminishing, Millicent is stable, and Port MacDonnell is expanding. Port Lincoln is another stable area as is Murray Bridge and parts of the Riverland but, apart from a few major centres, there has been a general decline in the rural population so that the decline in rural schools in those areas would be even more marked given that the rural population is not only declining but also is ageing. The country figure is probably fairly straightforward, given the decline in most rural areas. I am not sure of the distribution in metropolitan schools and I ask my senior officers to comment on that if they are able.

The request for information on cost per pupil can best be answered by saying that some of it is available in the Auditor-General's Report, as it has been for several years, where a three-year comparative statistic is given. On page 67 of the Auditor-General's Report it is shown that the per capita cost per primary student was \$1 132 in 1980, \$1 372 in 1981, and \$1 507 in 1982. For secondary students, the per capita costs were \$1 813 in 1980, \$2 103 in 1981, and \$2 312 in 1982. I believe that probably the honourable member was equally interested in the comparative statistics across Australia which emerged as a result of one or two surveys. I do have those surveys, but not in the Chamber with me, and I will make them available a little later.

A general statistic to which I was going to refer was to remind the Committee that in 1977 (only five years ago) in terms of spending on primary school education, South Australia was fifth in Australia, and in 1981, under this Government, which has been quite sorely maligned over the past three years, particularly by one organisation, we have become the top spender. So a Government which is one of the nation's under-achievers has gone from fifth place to first place in relation to primary school spending. In the secondary area we were running in the middle in 1970 and we have now reached second place, closely behind Victoria. Even to run second to Victoria is not too bad, because Victoria did not close down its technical high schools in the 1970s, it still kept them going, and as a result there has been a considerably greater effort over the past two or three years in the TAFE school-to-work transition programme than there has been in South Australia, where some of our effort has been transferred to the technical and further education area to compensate.

Children are being educated as post secondary students rather than as secondary students and this is an issue which might be debated a little more during the debate on TAFE as well as during the present debate. We have come through the field to a position of pre-eminence. At the same time I think everyone acknowledges that the aim of our pre-school kindergartens and child-parent centres of having a ratio of 1:10 has not been achieved (that would be a Rolls Royce operation), but we have achieved a ratio of about 1:12 across the State. There are better and worse classroom ratios, of course, but it gives us an outstanding achievement in the pre-school area.

Although those statements are general, I believe they can be substantiated by reference to the Auditor-General's Report, and Commonwealth and other States' statistics. The Australian Teachers Federation survey is very interesting, because the gentleman, who, I said earlier, had been responsible for compiling these statistics at the South Australian level, contacted my office to complain that the Institute of Teachers was misusing the statistics and emphasising the small degree of the worse figures and ignoring the large mass of good figures which do come from that survey, at least from South Australia's point of view. He did not come to me first; he simply pointed out that he had expressed his displeasure to the institute. It was not a case of reporting to the Minister before he reported to the institute. He did complain formally, and rang my officers to say that he had done so.

Why did he do so? The A.T.F. survey comparing South Australia's average class sizes with the whole of Australia gave the following figures: junior primary in South Australia 22.7, in Australia 24.6; primary in South Australia 26, in Australia 27; in secondary up to year 10 in South Australia 21.3, in Australia 25.6; in years 11 and 12 in South Australia 20, in Australia 19.5, and that was one of the areas where that gentleman from the institute believed that the misrepresentation was too bad, because this represents only nine classes in South Australia. Therefore, if we are worse than

the rest of Australia anywhere at all, it is in only nine classes, but a full page in the *Advertiser* at a cost of several thousand dollars was devoted to the Education Department's failure. We have over 30 in nine classes, where we are above the Australian average. The ratio of students to classroom teachers in primary (actual classroom teachers, not any one of those people to whom I referred earlier who are predominantly administration staff) is 24 compared with 28.7 for the rest of Australia; in secondary it is 16.4 against an Australian average of 17.6; in ancillary staff South Australia has 108 students to each primary ancillary staff assistant with an Australian average of 150 students per ancillary staff assistant (50 per cent worse); and in secondary we are close to the Australian average of 90 students with an average of 87 students, so we are still ahead.

These figures are repeated throughout the pages of that survey. I simply say that I do have to express regret that what claims to be a professional association should seize upon a few instances where South Australia is behind the rest of Australia and emphasise them *in extremis* when what it should be doing is joining John Keeves, who is one of the world's leading education researchers. He is acknowledged as being in that position and was responsible for the Keeves Report. Such people should be joining Professor Peter Tannock, Chairman of the Schools Commission, who visited schools with my Director-General and commented that South

Australia could hold its head high with the best in the Western world, not just in Australia.

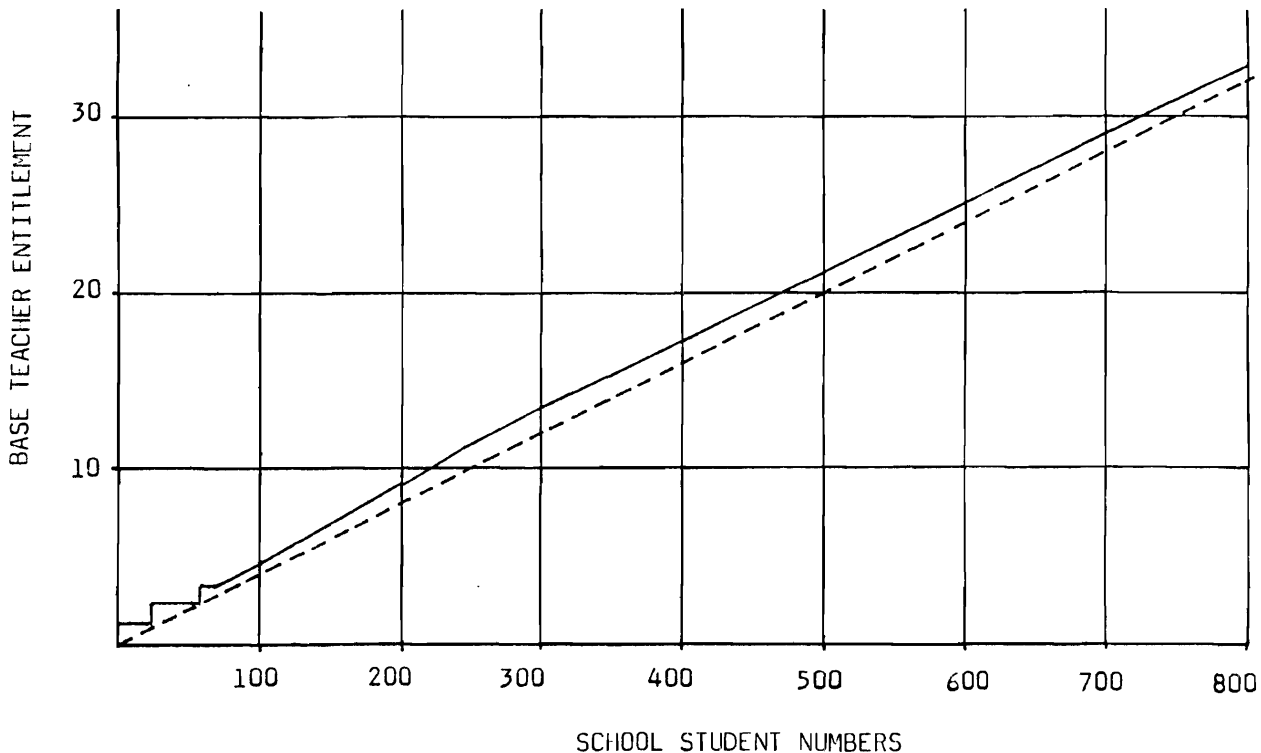
If any organisation is to be regarded as being professional, then surely it should be emphasising the best when the best is really by far the predominant proportion of what is happening—certainly it is in South Australia. I am not claiming the responsibility for that; I am simply pointing out that the present Government has built upon what the previous Government achieved. The Auditor-General's Report indicates that we are not racing backwards at the pace which has been alleged. We must ensure fair play which is all I am asking for and nothing more. We must ensure fair consideration. I thank the honourable member for pointing out that matter to me.

Dr BILLARD: I refer to a related subject, because obviously if some of the smaller schools are getting smaller at a greater rate than the larger schools that impacts on the staffing area. I refer the Minister to the staffing formula which is used and which I understand is used as a basis for negotiation with individual schools. In the past I have sought and received details of that staffing formula. I seek leave to have inserted in *Hansard* a graphical representation of that staffing formula.

The CHAIRMAN: Is it a purely statistical table?

Dr BILLARD: Yes, Sir.
Leave granted.

STAFFING FORMULA



Dr BILLARD: I recognise that the formula is used as a basis for negotiation. I drew up the table from a written representation of the formula. In my view the written representation contains ridiculously fine detail, as follows:

Schools with between 200 and 245 pupils have 9.1 teachers plus one for every 22 pupils ... schools with between 400 and 499 have 17.2 staff plus one for every 25.5 pupils.

It sounds terribly complicated referring to decimal points as far as teachers and pupils are concerned but, in effect, if one looks at the graphical representation it means that if a school has 25 more pupils it gets one more teacher and that if it has 25 less pupils it gets one less teacher; that applies

to schools except those with an enrolment of less than 250.

Reference to the graph shows that it is at a slope of one for 21, that is, one teacher for every 21 pupils. I realise that principals are not included, but I would also point out that the staffing formula is throughout the range normally of at least 1.2 above the one for 25 line. Therefore, the principal can be excluded but the outcome will still be in excess of one teacher for every 25 pupils.

Recognising that that staffing formula has applied for some time, when was the last time that that staffing formula was changed? I understand that that formula has been in operation for some years. Further, recognising that the for-

mula is a point of negotiation with schools, can the Minister indicate how many schools get staffing in excess of that formula? I note that the formula does not include librarians who are in addition to that staffing formula.

The CHAIRMAN: Before inviting the Minister to respond I point out that it is an observation of the Chair that this morning we have had only relatively few questions, some long questions and some long answers. I point out that it may be perhaps more worth while if we have shorter questions and shorter answers in which case the Committee could make more progress.

The Hon. H. Allison: The honourable member has raised an interesting issue. It is the same argument that I used in defence of my own position earlier today. Perhaps it would be of interest to honourable members if this graph is circulated. I will ask Bill Marsh to comment about it. What the honourable member is saying is that a ratio of 1:25 might be a simpler and probably an equally effective ratio to use when one considers the complexities of the ratios which are currently in use and which have been in use for several years. It is not a matter about which we can expect department officers to comment on immediately. I think honourable members realise that the department and Institute of Teachers have been negotiating for some time on a level, certainly well below Ministerial level, in an attempt to bring forward a number of alternative staffing proposals, none of which have been agreeable to all parties. The honourable member's proposition is an extremely simple one which I would ask Mr Marsh to look at. I do not know whether he would care to comment on it immediately.

Mr Marsh: I am pleased that the point was made that the formula is a matter for negotiation and that it is not applied in a rigorous sense except to establish a point on which negotiations can take place. I am pleased that that fact was recognised as indeed it is one that needs to be stressed. I wonder whether it is understood that, in reaching the figures about which the negotiations occur, the plus one for 22 or one for 25 is in fact applied on a pro rata basis. Therefore, if there are 11 teachers, 0.5 is added on to establish the point. The secondary formula can be expressed in terms of a graph similar to the one put forward by the honourable member. For a number of years we have tried to reach agreement with teachers, mainly the Primary Principals Association and other associations in regard to moving towards this graphical form, because it seems to be a simpler way to handle the matter.

However, we have not yet been able to reach a satisfactory conclusion and have continued to use what has become almost a traditional formula. As has been pointed out, we have tried this year to revise the formula and the discussions on that matter will continue and we may be able to agree to something that is closer to that which the honourable member has drawn to our attention. One final point concerning the graph is that the staffing formula is staggered at very low limits at schools where the enrolment is below 100 (that is certainly for schools where it is below 50), and negotiations are very real where enrolment is below 25.

The Hon. H. Allison: A report was submitted to the Keeves Committee of Inquiry which I do not think was made public but which pointed out that none of South Australia's secondary schools was staffed on a strict ratio and I believe that every school in metropolitan Adelaide had between three and five staff members in addition to the base formula as a result of a wide variety of extra entitlements, some Federal and some State. I wonder whether Mr Marsh could comment on that, or perhaps we could circulate the relevant section of the report?

Mr Marsh: That would probably be the best course of action.

The Hon. H. Allison: I think it is a significant matter that should be brought out for the attention of the public.

Dr BILLARD: I am not sure whether the line 'Special staff' under the heading 'Personnel Directorate' (page 56 of the Budget papers), refers to those categories of teachers who are allocated to a school over and above the staffing formula. I do not refer to librarians, but it could refer to environmental teachers, specialist remedial teachers or other teachers of a specialist nature who do not have a home class but who exist within the school for specialist purposes. So my question is; does that line relate to this area? I note on page 56 of the Budget papers that a hefty increase in funding of 18.9 per cent is proposed for that area. Does that reflect an increase in teachers allocated (I am not quite sure what the term is), as non contact teachers within schools?

The Hon. H. Allison: Mr Chairman, Dr Tillett will respond.

Dr Tillett: The line shown as 'Special' in the Estimates of Payments document, page 56, relates to teachers in special schools or in special classes in ordinary schools who work with children with a variety of handicaps or learning disabilities. It is interesting that the area of special education is one in which there is intended to be an improvement in the absolute level of staffing and other resources, made available during 1982-83. However, the increase is not major and the percentage increase in the proposed expenditure as compared with actual payments in the past financial year relates almost entirely to the effects of salary movements, full-year effects and price movements generally.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: My question relates to the amount of money allocated between the primary section of the Education Department and the secondary section. If I can just quote the figures. I am amalgamating the items quoted under Personnel Directorate, teaching staff, all other staff, Curriculum Directorate and Personnel Directorate and in terms of the vote (and that is what I am talking about), there has been a 14.2 per cent increase proposed for the primary sector from \$162 300 000 total to \$185 300 000. Within the secondary sector, the increase is 16.9 per cent, from \$148 500 000 to \$173 600 000, making an overall increase for the combined primary-secondary of 15.5 per cent from \$310 800 000 to \$358 900 000.

What is the Minister's intention regarding the opinion of the Schools Commission about primary and secondary relationships, that there has been a relative decline in the primary area compared with secondary in relative terms over recent years right throughout the country, the suggestion being that as resources become available a greater proportion should go to the primary area. From the figures that I have just quoted, if in fact the primary sector had a 15.5 per cent growth, it would have been allocated \$187 400 000, a figure of \$2 100 000 greater. May I anticipate two comments the Minister may make. As to the first one, I am aware that declining enrolments primarily at this stage affect the primary sector, but it would have provided an opportunity for two birds to be killed with the one stone: in other words, increase the financial allocation and take advantage of the declining enrolments to pick up the special needs, picking up the Schools Commission point about the hiatus in enrolments being used to address special needs. I am also conscious that the Minister, when he was then shadow Minister, made the comment in 1978 that for years primary schools had been the poor relation. He said that it was only recently that staffing had achieved some equality in terms of status for secondary school teachers. So any comment the Minister could give on his earlier expressed sentiment and on the Schools Commission expressed sentiment would be appreciated.

The Hon. H. Allison: The honourable member seized upon a comment which I made in 1978, and in fact it was

simply expressing a personal observation ever since I have been involved in teaching since the late 1950s. It was certainly an issue which was highlighted in 1975-76 in a Federal Government Senate Select Committee Report commissioned by Gough Whitlam. It was handed down to the Fraser Government and I believe that at about page 48, item (i) or (j), lost in that specific learning difficulties report was a single statement which said that until the problem of educating youngsters effectively in primary school was recognised and attacked, there would be no overall improvement in education. I believe that that statement was seized upon in the 'Primary means first' campaign which came out at about the same time as my 1977 or 1979 education platform, which also drew attention to that, and it seized upon that and said that we simply have to improve our primary education.

Now, there are a number of problems associated with that. One of the problems was that this Government decided that it would not be a retrenchment Government, and obviously it is not, because any reductions right throughout the Government system have been by attrition and not by dismissal. We have an expansion rate in secondary education this year, rather than a decline. We also have an additional problem, in that we had a number of secondary senior staff surplus to requirement, who again will not be dismissed; they will be absorbed within the system. Another factor is that we have a basic cost per teacher in secondary education, and a basic cost per student in secondary education which is recognised world wide as being well in excess of the cost needed to educate a primary or pre-school student although pre-school in this State does not bear that out; we have a very expensive system. Coupled with that, a fact that the honourable member mentioned, that we have a loss rate. We would have lost going on for 30 000 students in primary, so that literally we are getting an increased amount of money put into the primary school system as we decline in student numbers. There are more teachers there. This year it is evident, if one analyses the statements, that the primary pupil-teacher ratio in South Australia will improve again very slightly. We expect the secondary ratio to remain stable. There is no question but that some seven or eight years ago we had a teacher-student ratio in primary of about 1 to 27, and that included principals, deputies, librarians, and others. Now, if one divides the students into the people who are involved in schools (teachers professionally trained, not ancillary), then the ratio is down to about 1 to 17.6, so the improvement has been very considerable.

It has also been considerable in the secondary area, and I acknowledge that there is still the question as to when we should deliberately swing massive funding away from secondary and into primary. The theory is very sound: the practicality is that to do that would mean that we would have to make a conscious effort to spend literally hundreds of millions of dollars, not simply tens of millions in reducing massively the teacher-student ratio, and that would simply mean we would be going to the people for additional funds. I cannot imagine the Federal Government coming to the party, and I will explain why very shortly. So, really one has to achieve by degrees, that is slowly, given that one has a basic intention to do that.

In the Education Department currently one of the aims is something the Director-General gave me quite some time ago. It was stated through the Personnel Officer, Mr Laubsch, who normally would have been here assisting us. He has been here in previous years, but is now on long service leave. He is a very worthy officer, and he said that wherever possible no reception class should exceed 25 students.

We are aiming at that lower end, believing that, as we have said over the years, if we train these young people properly at the lower end, their problems will be less by the

time they go from primary to secondary school. It is very expensive to achieve that philosophy on an accelerated basis. The Director-General may like to comment in that direction. The question is philosophical and a matter of what the department has been able to achieve. I do not believe that anyone would question that we have gone a long way to improving both primary and secondary areas.

Mr Steidle: Yes, I have thought so. One must also recognise some of the imbalances that inevitably are built into the current dispensation of resources between those two groups to compare costs of teachers and the current disposition of senior staff. Both of those factors, of course, are the most expensive part of expenditure on education, and that tends to emphasise the difference between the two sectors. We are certainly aware of it, and it is one of the things that we endeavour to monitor.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: The point I was making was not that the amount spent per pupil in primary schools should be equal to that spent per pupil in secondary schools. Of course, that will never be so, because of the very point that the Director-General has just made. It will always be greater. I suppose that one can say *vive la difference* on that matter. What I am saying is that the difference between the primary and secondary was picked up by the Schools Commission as widening instead of narrowing throughout the country. In other words, the secondary area seems to be obtaining a larger share of the available resources generally in comparison with the primary sector, and perhaps it is time that the trend changed. It will never be that as much is spent per capita in the primary sector as in the secondary sector, but the size of the difference can be affected. I was a little bemused by the comment that the department has a policy that no reception classes will have more than 27 students.

The Hon. H. Allison: It was 25.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: I am even more bemused, because one of my constituents recently came to me bemoaning the fact that her child is in a reception class of 30 students. Obviously, something has gone wrong in the system somewhere. The point I was making was that secondary education in this Budget will receive 16.9 per cent more (according to the divisions I have isolated), and the primary sector will receive 14.2 per cent more. I seem to remember that the Minister said that, philosophically, the Government accepts that there should be a redistribution of resources towards primary education where practicable. Is that what the Minister was actually saying? Was he saying that this does not happen because of certain logistical difficulties?

The Hon. H. Allison: That included some 30 secondary staff over establishment. The honourable member may recall that, only last year, problems arose when 28 senior secondary staff refused to transfer from metropolitan to country areas and were supported by the South Australian Institute of Teachers on the basis of the relative lateness of notification. That decision and support cost the taxpayer through the Education Department lines ultimately about \$240 000, because those people were maintained in Adelaide surplus to requirement and they were replaced by either permanent or acting senior staff in the country where they were required. It is that sort of action that is reflected immediately in substantial additional costs to the department. In this case it involved an additional \$250 000 for secondary education.

The honourable member stated that a student of one of his constituents is in a class of 30 children. This was partly acknowledged and, in fact, was one of the arguments propounded by the institute and the Primary Principals Association when they stated that, in the current financial year, and in term 3 of the current school calendar year, there would be problems in primary schools where youngsters were being put into classes, so that classes would expand.

That was one of the reasons why the \$2 000 000 was made available. A proportion of that money went towards ameliorating the problems in term 3 and pulling back class sizes. The department requested the Minister to address this problem immediately. It is quite probable.

One question that has not been addressed in this session is how many classes we should have and how significant are class sizes to the argument. We have stated that we will allocate to schools a certain number of teachers to a certain number of students, according to a formula. The amended formula was just one of the alternatives put forward by Dr Billard. It has been stated in the House that at one metropolitan high school there are 60 Matriculation year classes, (but not all of the students are undertaking Matriculation studies), while at an adjacent Education Department secondary school, there are between eight and 10 Matriculation year classes. Of course, the decision as to how many different subject choices are to be available within a school lies with the principal and his senior staff and comes under the school council jurisdiction. Very often, an extra class will be incorporated.

If that is done within the existing formula, unless compensating staff are provided (and that can be very expensive if it is done on an *ad hoc* basis—it would run into tens of millions of dollars), a school-based decision could be made that would result in a large number of small, potentially non-viable classes at Matriculation level, which would surely have to be compensated for, at the discretion of the school, somewhere else.

We find that very often in the first two years of secondary education. To look at statistics hard and fast, and to ignore the other variables, is unwise. There are a number of factors which could mean that a parent could come running to the honourable member or to the Minister and say, 'My youngest is in a class which is much too big': in many cases, this would have been the decision of the principal rather than the fault of the Government or the personnel department within the Education Department.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: Knowing, as we do, that the Act covering Matriculation examinations is to be altered, I would like to know how this is being taken into account in the way of planning in the Education Department regarding estimated enrolments for Matriculation. On the assumption that if the Bill that at some stage comes before the House is to be successful, which I am sure everyone hopes it will be, there must be an increase in Matriculation numbers, and that must affect the situation facing the Education Department. I commented before on declining enrolments affecting perhaps primary levels at this stage more and perhaps secondary levels later. Can the Minister enlighten us as to which one of the various estimates that have been made publicly available is correct? If none of them is correct, what is the anticipated situation on which the department is doing its planning? I quote the information contained on page 400 of *Hansard* which lists the estimates contained in the first and second reports of Keeves and the information contained in answer to my Question on Notice No. 537 in the third session.

The Hon. H. Allison: First, I wish to point out that the honourable member is guilty of a false assumption, and that is that Matriculation numbers will increase even slightly or considerably (it does not matter really because it is a *non sequitur*). South Australia, we believe, has the highest retention level in Australia at Matriculation level; a point so significant, that Professor Tennant, Chairman of the Schools Commission, will be conferring with the Director-General and will be examining the South Australian schools system to ascertain the reasons behind that.

We also have the other side of the coin, and that is that His Honour Mr Justice Kirby, in Whyalla and also in the Education Building only a few months ago, commented

that, by comparison with the rest of the Western world, Australia has a comparatively low retention rate, so South Australia is also in a relatively poor state. I think he quoted Japan, with a retention rate of 82 per cent, coming down to around about 16 per cent, which is probably the worst of the very sophisticated Western nations. So we do have a long way to go. I think the comments of the Director-General will probably enlarge somewhat on that but I felt I had to make that comment on South Australia's relevant place in Australia and the Western world.

Mr Steidle: I do not believe that the new legislation will change the proportion of young people who undertake the Matriculation exam. The gist of the new legislation, as I understand it, moves towards a changed recognition of the certificates which will be offered and the machinery by which the examinations are produced. I should not have thought that it would substantially alter the numbers of young people who will elect to undertake the two styles of examinations—the current S.S.C. and the Matriculation examination as we currently know it.

Dr Tillett: Those officers of the Education Department who are concerned with projecting school enrolments revise their projections twice each year. One reason for this is that enrolment returns are received from schools twice each year (once in February and once in July). The July date is set in consultation with the Australian Bureau of Statistics and other State systems, and there is a common date on which all those systems work. As the annual enrolment date comes through in February and July each year it constitutes one, but perhaps not the only, reason for contemplating a revision of enrolment projections. I would not wish to allege that enrolment projection is correct in the sense that it states the enrolments which will in fact actually occur, but I would indicate that at any point in time the department would regard the most recent set of projections as being its best estimate of what future enrolments will be.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: Do you have the most recent figures?

Dr Tillett: The most recent figures are published on pages 642 to 644 of *Education Gazette* dated, week ended 17 September 1982, and they go through to 1986.

[Sitting suspended from 1 to 2 p.m.]

Mr SCHMIDT: In the agency overview on page 6 of the yellow book, it is stated that it is intended to retain tight controls over the replacement of absent teachers by temporary relievers. Can the Minister indicate whether that policy will be maintained, with sufficient scope being given for the replacement for teachers absent through sickness? I believe that this year's influenza epidemic placed an incredible strain on the teaching staff, particularly in relation to the number of T.R.T. days schools had available to them, and that many schools will be seeking additional T.R.T. days in order to compensate for the days lost because of the epidemic. I recognise that this would be a cost to the department, but will the policy be maintained to allow sufficient scope for the days to be maintained, because this has caused complaints in the past?

The Hon. H. Allison: We were hoping that it would be possible to exercise some savings on that line but certainly since the Budget was drawn up we have recognised the problem caused by so many absences during the influenza epidemic. There is no question in the minds of departmental officers that absences caused by illness will be covered by replacement staff. We are retaining a degree of flexibility, and we will not be hard and fast about it.

Mr SCHMIDT: Can the Minister give more information about the comparison of non-contact time with that of the other States because I believe the A.T.F. figures indicate

that South Australia's average is higher than the national average?

The Hon. H. Allison: In direct answer to the honourable member's question, the Australian Teachers Federation survey clearly showed that South Australia's primary school teachers have 2.8 hours of non-contact time a week which compares favourably with the national average of one hour non-contact time. South Australia's secondary teachers have 6.4 hours of non-contact time a week compared with the national average of 7.8 hours. Therefore, we are behind the national average in secondary schools and we are markedly above the national average in primary schools, which is our largest staffing area.

I have to draw attention to one of the South Australian Institute of Teachers' requirements in its recently released policy statement which says that we should aim at having 33.3 per cent non contact time. John Keeves addressed himself to that matter and costed that at an additional \$39 000 000 a year (which we expect would be now nearly \$40 000 000) were that single requirement to be met. That gives members of the Committee some idea of the magnitude of sums involved if the non-teaching time in the Education Department is increased extensively.

Mr SCHMIDT: What cost to the department is the programme of having overseas teachers in our schools? I believe that overseas teachers are allowed 10 days for observation. Are those 10 days replaced by T.R.T. persons or must they be covered by the school itself? What is the further cost to the department when one considers that the teachers we send overseas from South Australia are usually seniors or from higher positions and yet their replacements are usually classroom teachers? It means that the department would have to replace the persons who have gone overseas with temporary relief seniors or deputy principals. Has any costing been done on that and what is the overall effect of that on the department's budget?

Mr Marsh: I believe that the overseas teachers being referred to are South Australian teachers on direct exchange with an overseas teacher. If it is necessary for additional T.R.T. days to be made available to cover the 10 days of observation, that would be taken into account when adjusting the allocation to the school. I do not think there is any difficulty with that. The statement that teachers from overseas are classroom teachers and the teachers who go on exchange are senior teachers, deputy principals, and so on, I do not think is true. I think we exchange classroom teachers with classroom teachers, by and large.

Mr SCHMIDT: I beg to differ on that. I know of a number of teachers who have gone overseas this year who are principals or senior teachers and they have all had to be replaced by acting principals or acting seniors. I wonder what the cost of that to the department would be. The reason I ask about T.R.T. is that many of our teachers who go overseas do not have that complementary observation period to enable them to observe their new students. I wonder why, when we offer that complementary situation to teachers who come to South Australia, we do not have a reciprocal agreement.

Mr Marsh: Perhaps the best way around this is to get the actual data over a number of years as to the status of teachers who have gone on exchange and make that available to the Committee and also the actual details of the conditions of the exchange which are worked out carefully between the exchanging departments. I think if the Committee has that information available it will be able to make a judgment on that matter.

With regard to the costs of the exchanges, we continue to pay the salary of our teachers while they are on exchange and the exchangees receive salaries from their own depart-

ments so that in that sense it is a one-for-one exchange; there is no additional salary cost involved in this programme.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: It had been our intention to pursue the matter of the provision of aides for buses transporting handicapped persons. Since entering Opposition the members for Price, Albert Park, Adelaide, Napier and I have been pursuing this matter. I have heard a report that the Minister has announced this morning that aides will be provided on buses transporting the handicapped. I am pleased that at last that decision has been made and the suggestions that have been put forward have been agreed to. Can the Minister advise exactly where the aides will come from?

On page 6 of the yellow book reference is made to an extension of the arrangements for the provision of free school transport for handicapped children, at an expected additional cost of \$80 000. I do not see that as referring to the aides mentioned in this morning's press release because on page 29 of the yellow book no staff level is indicated in the 'transport of handicapped children' line. I am perplexed that, although in recent weeks the Minister issued a press release indicating that the number of speech pathologists would be increased to 23, the document before us indicates no change on the number employed last year.

The Hon. H. Allison: To the best of my knowledge the \$80 000 referred to on page 6 would include provision for a number of additional staff, some of whom would be directly involved with transport and others of whom would service the acutely handicapped children. I believe that we are looking at the equivalent of two full-time staff to be spread across the school bus services, which would mean an additional number of people being involved on separate services.

Dr Tillett: A range of provisions is made for handicapped children which include, but are not limited to, provision for supervision of handicapped children while travelling on departmental buses, for which \$20 000 is provided. Provision is also made for school assistants to work with severely handicapped children, the purchase and production of Braille books for visually impaired students, and teachers to provide for increased services for visually impaired students. I cannot say precisely where each of these items can be found in the programme documentation, but they are all provided as items of increase in the Budget.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: The line in the document under which provision for handicapped children would sit most comfortably is simply silent. The other point I made refers to speech pathologists.

Dr Tillett: True, the Government has provided for an increase in speech pathology services. Indeed, only yesterday I received from the Chairman of the Public Service Board advice regarding the creation of four new positions of speech pathologist within the Education Department consistent with the Government's early approval through Cabinet for the increase in the number of positions. I believe that the reason why the increase in the level of speech pathology positions is not reflected in the programme papers is really a matter of timing, as the approval for the formal creation of the positions has only come through in the last few days, but it is expected that the number of speech pathologists appointed will increase soon because of the creation of the new positions.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: I do not have a copy of the Minister's press release with me, but it was made only recently. I should have thought that at the start of the day the Minister might say that the programme documents were wrong because they did not take into account his announcements on speech pathology and on aides for the school bus services. In view of staffing changes that may have been made, where else are the programme documents wrong?

The Hon. H. Allison: One may assume that the vast majority of the documents can be interpreted differently because the figures are usually based on an average throughout the year rather than at a precise date. As we are dealing with over 15 000 specific positions, a large number of which can be broken down into contractees, there might be variations on any one day in the financial year. Cabinet formally approved an increase from 19 to 23 in the number of speech pathologists. The matter was then referred to the Public Service Board for the creation of the positions. Once those positions have been formally created they will be advertised and included. Any one of these lines may vary during the year, depending on departmental and/or Cabinet decisions, but it is an oversight that the figures are not reflected in the Budget papers. On some pages there are specific references to actual dates, whereas on other pages the figures represent an average for the year.

Mr RANDALL: How many technical teachers graduated from our teachers colleges last year and how many were retained by the South Australian school system?

The Hon. H. Allison: I will get those details for the honourable member.

Mr RANDALL: I am given to understand that a significant number of the technical teachers graduating in South Australia last year was lost to other States because of the attraction there of a full-time permanent position compared to the short-term contract position available in this State. I questioned that, because I knew that some schools had to recall retired technical teachers on a short-term contract basis to fill existing vacancies.

The Hon. H. Allison: There are two aspects to be considered: First, the older technical teachers who the hon member says are being recalled are generally brought into the system as contractees. As I said earlier, long service leave is generally at a peak in the second term when, consequently, there are shortages in the maths, English, sciences, business commerce, and technical training areas.

Secondly, employers point out that trainees coming from our colleges who are trained in the technical fields are not experienced in industry or commerce and therefore lack the expertise that can be gained only outside the school system. On the other hand, many of the older technical teachers entered the school system from industry and were not college-trained. So we still have the problem that although we are training technical teachers in our colleges, some of the sophisticated requirements of commerce and industry are not being met by the employment of these graduates in our schools. It seems that a further qualification might be considered for trainee technical teachers and that they could be given additional practical experience in industry and commerce. I acknowledge that the honourable member has brought this matter to my attention before. I have been discussing the issue more widely as a result of his inquiries.

Mr RANDALL: I understand that curriculum development has taken place for our secondary schools and that it is intended to introduce into those schools a 'legal studies' subject, and that to implement that proposal graduates in the legal area will be encouraged to become teachers and that the department will be bringing in expertise in legal studies in the form of qualified legal people who will become teachers in the system. As that matter has been brought to my attention can the Minister say whether it will occur?

The Hon. H. Allison: I ask the Director-General, who is statutorily responsible for curricula, to respond.

Mr Steinle: The introduction of a course in legal studies has involved lengthy negotiation with the Public Examinations Board. We have been a little hamstrung in our planning for that because of the uncertainty about the introduction of the course. However, we are well aware of the fact that

the introduction of a new course requires various people as well as other provisions. Once the question of the introduction of a course is resolved it will be simply a matter of giving the matter of training people the green light and to provide for appropriate courses within the South Australian College of Advanced Education, and that matter is in hand.

Mr RANDALL: Will the training of teachers occur in the colleges of advanced education? I understand that that is what the Director-General has said. Will the people to train those teachers be recruited from within the South Australian colleges of advanced education or will they be from outside in the legal area? Will they be law graduates or people from within the system?

The Hon. H. Allison: One of the various alternatives is that the method of training would be purely at the discretion of the South Australian College of Advanced Education now that amalgamation has taken place. As is the case in other areas concerning the introduction of a new course or where there are apparent or imminent shortages which will occur in two, three or four years time we are looking at the possibility (and it is a very good one, too, because we would get very good quality graduates) of encouraging university-trained students to then undertake an end-on course, that is, for students after having done two, three, four or in the case of law, five years of study to then undertake a final year of education training. Therefore, various options are open to the Education Department.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: There are a couple of areas about which I want to ask further questions. I refer to Aboriginal education: I raised the point in the House some weeks ago about ancillary staff for Aboriginal schools. It is my understanding, and I may be wrong, that ancillary appointments in Aboriginal schools are in fact Commonwealth-funded and are not funded from our own Budget. Has there been any attempt or thought given to using the funds so liberated by the Commonwealth's decision to fund those positions (which has been the case for some years now), to provide staff support for Aboriginal schools? Whilst the Minister is talking about staff levels could he also comment on why page 11 of the Budget papers reveals that his own staff will increase by a third, up to 12?

The Hon. H. Allison: The honourable member has asked two questions. Dr Tillett has indicated his willingness to answer the second question in reference to the Ministerial section and I call upon Dr Tillett.

Dr Tillett: As the Minister pointed out earlier in answer to a previous question, figures that appear throughout most of the documentation are average figures, an average obtained by taking the total of the levels at the end of each month for a 12-month period and dividing it by 12. The fact that the figures for 1981-82 total 9.0 and for 1982-83, 12.0 do not reflect in that case any additional staff being appointed to the Minister's office for 1982-83: it is simply a recognition that in 1982-83 the 12 staff in the Minister's office and the office of the Ministry of Education will be there for a full year, whereas in 1981-82 the staff appointed to the office of the Ministry of Education was there only for a fraction of the year.

The Hon. H. Allison: In response to the question on Aboriginal education, I point out to the Committee that only a few days ago a letter was received from the Federal Minister for Aboriginal Affairs (Senator Baume) indicating that there is a strong possibility of a financial reduction in Federal allocations for precisely this line. Perhaps I should ask Mr Marsh to enlarge upon those implications.

Mr Marsh: It is true that employment of the bulk of the education workers, as they are called, or the Aboriginal education workers in the Aboriginal schools is funded from Commonwealth funds, but not entirely. The State contributes

to the employment of some teacher aides in this area and it will continue to fund those appointments.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: That is to say that if in fact the Federal Government does pull out of funding school aides and ancillary staff, the State will pick up all of that tab certainly until such time as the staffing ratios that apply in every other school in this State have been achieved.

Mr Marsh: Certainly, I did not mean my answer to be interpreted in that way. What I was saying was that it is not correct to say that the aides are entirely funded by the Commonwealth: both the State and the Commonwealth contribute to employment of people in that area.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: I shall restate the question then: if that Commonwealth component disappears tomorrow will we be able to guarantee to the Aboriginal schools of this State that they will have no less ancillary staff allocation per number of students according to the formula we have than any other schools in this State? I think that that is a question for the Minister.

The Hon. H. Allison: This matter reflects upon the whole range of Commonwealth funding and upon demands that are frequently made of the Government to expand when Commonwealth funds increase slightly or substantially. I believe that Governments and the Treasury over the years have pointed out that when Federal funds are diminished it becomes automatic for the State Government to pick up the bill.

Nowhere is it more obvious than in the pre-school area where the Federal component has stabilised at \$3 700 000 for the past five years with the State Government increasingly funding the pre-school area. We have gone from 20 per cent to 80 per cent of the total cost being funded by the State. As is frequently the case this is seed money.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: This will therefore be for ancillary staff in Aboriginal schools?

The Hon. H. Allison: Yes, it is certain that the Government will maintain staffing unless some other factors are involved, although I cannot think of any quickly. It may be that Federal funding diminishes because the need for a course diminishes. However, in this case where we have Aborigines forming an increasing proportion of the population, the possibility is very remote.

Dr BILLARD: My first question follows on from the question I asked earlier about the staffing of schools and the subsequent class sizes. Can the Minister tell us about the number of large classes in primary and secondary schools? I guess the cut-off point for class size in primary schools is normally considered to be 30. In regard to the number of classes in primary schools which have 30 or more students, what has been the trend in South Australia concerning the number of such classes? Secondly, how does that trend stand up to the national figure?

The Hon. H. Allison: This is an interesting question, and one has to hark back to only a few months ago when I believe almost simultaneous threats of strike action were being made in New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia, and the comparison, if one were needed, was never more obvious, than that in New South Wales and Victoria. The teachers federation affiliates were threatening action to reduce classes below 30, and in South Australia the figure was 25 which already is a tacit admission that South Australia is substantially better off than its larger and more populous interstate neighbours.

The Australian Teachers Federation's survey—the one which has been contentiously quoted recently—indicates that the total number of South Australian primary school classes with more than 30 students has dropped by nearly 100 in the last two years. To put that 100 in proper perspective, before 1980 we had 272 classes over 30. We now have, according to the A.T.F., 172. That is a substantial

drop of one third in only two years, and it represents the Education Department's attack on primary school class sizes. In secondary schools the number of South Australian secondary classes with more than 25 students (we will bring it down by five) has more than halved that in the past two years and, while these figures are being quoted optimistically by the gentleman from the South Australian Institute of Technology, they were of course the subject of adverse comment in a paid advertisement criticising the department, so on the one hand we have optimism, yet on the other hand we have pessimism. It seems that South Australia is doing extremely well, and in any case, the number of classes involved in that secondary area is relatively small.

Dr BILLARD: Do you have the national figure?

The Hon. H. Allison: I had forgotten that the honourable member asked for a comparison with the national figures. While we were considering class sizes of more than 30 students, in junior primary in South Australia, we have 20 classes of more than 30. That represents 1.4 per cent of total classes in the State. The Australian average is 14.1 per cent—from 1.4 per cent in South Australia to 14.1 per cent as the national average; that is junior primary. The primary figure is equally significant. We have 172 classes, as I said, with more than 30, and then marginally over (these are the extremes) we have literally thousands and thousands of classes well within size.

The South Australian figure is 5.3 per cent of the total number of classes. The Australian average is 27.7 per cent, so one can understand the concern of the Eastern States. In secondary, up to year 10, we have 113 classes, that is, 5.1 per cent of our total classes, and the Australian average is 9.4 per cent. In secondary, in years 11 and 12 we have 10 classes only, and that was a figure that was blown up out of all proportion. We are 50 per cent worse off than anyone else, and it still represents only nine classes, so that last figure, which is of less significance, is the one which was given maximum importance in a paid advert. That just highlights the ridiculous nature of that campaign.

Dr BILLARD: My next question relates to the assessing of potential staff. It seems to me that the methods of assessing potential teachers, must have changed radically over the last few years as the numbers offering relative to the numbers that could be put on, the proportion has changed dramatically and I would ask what criteria are applied now which may be different from those criteria applied in the past? For example, does the department seek to take on the most mature teachers, or does it seek to take on the most experienced teachers, those who have had perhaps 12 to 18 months experience, taking contract positions for a time? What criteria are applied?

Comments have been made to me that, in the last 12 months, new graduates have been given preference in taking on the contract positions or the T.R.T. positions and I can understand the philosophy behind that, that is, to give young graduates some experience and give them a chance to get their feet wet in the teaching profession, and perhaps to sort out the sheep from the goats.

However, it has been put to me that contract teaching in that sort of environment is not typical teaching, and that this may have some adverse effects if they are then assessed on that sort of teaching. In fact, it was put to me that T.R.T. teaching really is little more than child minding and that it is very difficult for a teacher that comes in for a few days at a time to undertake substantial programmes with a class, and that if teachers are then assessed on their performance with this sort of work, wrong decisions may be made as to who is the best teacher.

The Hon. H. Allison: The situation is much better than the honourable member has been informed. He has probably been given examples of the exception rather than the rule.

Mr Marsh is in charge of that section. I will ask him to enlarge upon the criteria and other relevant factors.

Mr Marsh: I would like to just make a few comments. The criteria are laid down and a copy of those could be made available to the Committee. Generally speaking, we are bound by and follow, Acts which govern equity in offering employment; sex, marital status and race. A person applying must be qualified, so that matter has to be taken into account. A person must be registered or able to be registered as a teacher in South Australia, so that is also taken into account. The matter raised in the question really deals with how we make a judgment among applicants who have a wide variety of experience. Some people who return to the service after a break and who have had a number of years of teaching have to be compared with existing students, with people who have done temporary relieving teaching, or have to be compared with people who have had contracts which could be for varying periods of time. This is a difficult task, and that is recognised.

However, we try to assist teachers who have graduated but who have not gained permanent employment by offering them contracts over as long and as continuous a period as we possibly can to enable them to gain relevant and useful experience prior to permanent employment. The method for doing this is to invite the applicant to provide the relevant data, to support it with references, and then on the basis of that, make a judgment by submitting the material to separate panels of people whose judgments are then compared so that we can, from the pool of applicants, choose the best that are available for permanent employment. Having done that, we then use the same lists of applicants to fill the contract positions.

Dr BILLARD: Regarding the last area, I was really looking for more detail, but I understand if perhaps that detail cannot be supplied. I refer now to the computing curriculum. What approach is being adopted in recognition of the Keeves Inquiry recommendations that technology, in particular computers, be introduced into schools? I recognise that the Angle Park Computing Centre in the past has operated with the specific role of providing a centralised computing facility and a service to the schools. That approach was not taken in Western Australia: in that State, the schools were encouraged to obtain their own computers. What are the plans for the future? Will the centralised approach be pursued, as it has been in the past, or are there plans to change the approach?

The Hon. H. Allison: I will ask Dr Tillett to respond.

Dr Tillett: The Education Department has been looking very intently at its policy and programmes in the area of computing in schools over the past six months or more, and quite recently has completed and achieved approval for a statement of policy on computing in schools. That policy gives priority to secondary schools, and in both secondary and primary schools it gives priority to educational applications as distinct from administrative applications.

The role of the Angle Park Computing Centre will remain quite vital to the whole operation. While we envisage that many schools will own their own computers and almost all schools will be able to obtain access by loan or share agreements to a locally based machine, it is absolutely vital that the activities of schools be as thoroughly co-ordinated as possible rather than each school going its own way, acquiring its own hardware, and developing its own software in ways that are not compatible with what is happening in other schools. To gain the maximum benefit, it is desirable that the schools use the same hardware and share software wherever the expertise is derived in the development of that software.

The staff of the Angle Park Computing Centre will perform this co-ordinating role. There has been a distinct shift in

the emphasis of the role of the staff of the Angle Park Computing Centre away from the operation of a large central machine, which is used in an endeavour to service the needs of all schools towards the co-ordination of a programme based on the fact that schools presently and will increasingly have their own computing capabilities. At present about 100 schools have purchased their own computers.

The Hon. H. Allison: Dr Tillett stated that schools would use the same hardware. I do not believe that the Committee should take it that one specific brand of hardware would be the only option. A number of machines might have reasonably compatible software. Perhaps Dr Tillett could comment in regard to what steps we are taking to ascertain that result.

Dr Tillett: There is a wide diversity of needs for computing equipment and also a diversity of resource levels in schools, so that some schools can afford to purchase quite substantial and sophisticated equipment, whereas other schools are not able to do that. Therefore, it is only to be expected that schools will acquire different kinds of machines, both from different suppliers and in the sense that they are different in terms of size, cost, and sophistication. Nevertheless, advantages are to be obtained by a degree of uniformity.

The reality of the marketplace is such that we expect that equipment that is deemed the most suitable for school needs today will, certainly in five years, and perhaps in a shorter time than that, be deemed to be not most suitable. Recently, the department went to public tender and invited tenders in relation to the supply of equipment to schools in accordance with specifications that were drawn up in consultation with the schools. That has led to a conclusion in which a different range of equipment will be recommended to schools than has previously been recommended, provided, of course, that the schools concerned are looking for equipment according to the set of specifications that was the subject of the tender call. In my view, it is likely that we will be working with suppliers as a result of the tender call for periods of only 12 months, protecting our right to recall tenders as the marketplace situation changes, as it is tending to do quite rapidly.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: I may say that we have been somewhat concerned at the frequency with which the Minister has chosen to beat the Institute of Teachers around the head in his answers today. We have had to spend some time listening to the Minister's repeated remarks on numerous occasions. We would be quite happy if the Minister sought leave to incorporate a standard paragraph in that regard, in answer to every question, instead of taking up time.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN (Mr Evans): Order! I do not believe it is necessary for the honourable member to take that line, but he may ask his question.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: Certainly, Mr Chairman, I just wanted to make that point. The Federal disadvantaged schools programme enables the State to pick up areas of special needs. Will the Minister outline what schools are involved in the programme? I appreciate that 112 are involved and that the Minister may want to incorporate a written reply later instead of reading out a list now. What changes have there been to the schools involved in the programme since 1979? Concomitant with that, what is the index of disadvantage that is used to determine what schools will come under that programme?

Related to that in one sense is the matter of school fees. The Government has indicated that it will keep the level of funding to schools constant in real terms, in other words, indexing that amount. Will the Minister indicate how the indexing has been undertaken? Is it worked out against the c.p.i., or against a specially developed schools material index, recognising that a number of schools would certainly have

approached the Minister (as indeed they have approached me) commenting that book costs and other school related costs that the schools have to face often exceed increases in the c.p.i?

Also related to that is the bad debt question. Some weeks ago I asked whether any provision would be made to assist those school communities that are suffering economically by being faced with a higher level of bad debts because many parents are not eligible under the Government assistance for students scheme, but face financial problems, cannot meet all of the fees, and so fall into a bad debt situation. I was told at that time to wait for the Budget. I have waited, and I have looked at the Budget, and I cannot see what assistance is being given to those schools facing increasing problems because of a bad debt situation.

The Hon. H. Allison: On the question of federally assisted schools, disadvantaged schools, there is a very comprehensive list covering 112 schools. These schools are annually reviewed, and some schools slip off and others brought on to the list and that has happened over the past several years to my knowledge. I will ask Dr Tillett to respond to that.

On the question of increasing school grants: instead of paying school grants out in a number of separate, isolated cheques in the course of the year, we have this year decided to pay the school grants by amalgamating the various areas into one, but notifying the schools individually of the precise breakdown of the individual components, so that they can see there is no specific change. It is simply for expediency; one cheque is better to send out than several. That method has accelerated payments and has simplified budgeting for each school.

The question of indexation has been before me for some time. When I became Minister I was faced with a 50 per cent reduction in school grants, and this was something we had to address immediately. The previous Government had reduced grants by a very substantial amount. That was reinstated and this year we have allocated some \$800 000 towards an increase in the overall schools grants. The question of precise indexation is one which Treasurers, over the years, have refused to be tied down by. Treasury usually allows a basic 4 per cent for indexation and then makes any allowances for any unusually high increase in certain areas. We have not worked out a specific policy for indexation, but I would assume that, somewhere along that basic Treasury allowance there would be a minimum. We will certainly have to review that matter during the next 12 months and see the effect of indexation and various other increases on the community. I suggest that what we have done is far better than was the system that we inherited and I think parents will certainly benefit from that initiative.

The matter of bad debts has been referred to me by only a very small number of schools, and I am not sure that it is an extensive problem. It may be that schools absorb bad debts without making a public outcry, out of deference to parents (not wishing to embarrass them), or for whatever other reason. It has been put to me as a significant problem and I have decided that it would not be appropriate either to set a very high figure to which parents could be tied, or to encourage schools, Government departments, to go into the collection of those debts.

I will be keeping a watchful eye on this aspect, and departmental officers will certainly bring it to my attention if it does assume a massive proportion. I know that individual schools are particularly disadvantaged because they would have a very high proportion of socio-economically disadvantaged parents—perhaps a very high proportion of single parent families, or for whatever other reason. Perhaps it may be better addressed in individual cases rather than to lay down a blanket condition. It is something that we will examine.

Dr Tillett: The disadvantaged schools programme is one funded by the Commonwealth through the Schools Commission, although there are of course a number of other initiatives taken by the department or the Government in relation to assisting schools or parents in low socio-economic areas. With regard to the disadvantaged schools programme, the Schools Commission lays down a number of criteria which must be met in relation to the selection of schools to be participants in the programme. One of the criteria which the Schools Commission lays down is that total enrolments in the schools selected must not exceed a pre-determined level. That level can and does change from year to year, which, in itself, may require alterations from year to year in regard to the schools included in the disadvantaged schools list.

The determination of which schools are included in the disadvantaged schools list is an exercise undertaken using a range of criteria; for example the proportion of students from non-English speaking ethnic backgrounds is a consideration, as is the proportion of Aboriginal students enrolled in the school. The key criterion is the proportion of students within the school qualifying as Government assisted scholars. A variety of investigations has shown that that is quite a good measure of the socio-economically disadvantaged of the school community as a whole.

When, either because the Commission has changed its criteria or because of changes in the composition of the students within a school, it becomes necessary to take a school off the list, it is normal departmental practice to achieve that in a phased operation so that the school does not find itself in the difficulty of being in the programme one year and suddenly, perhaps with very little notification, out of the programme the next year, and left with the difficulty it does not have funds or resources to continue a programme that it developed when it benefited from disadvantaged schools funding.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: The Minister indicated an increase of \$800 000 in school grants. If that were to be indexed to the c.p.i., that would indicate that last year's figure was something of the order of \$8 000 000 paid to schools in school grants. Is that the case or not?

Regarding bad debts, I do not care how the situation was addressed, but I raised it as something that has affected some schools in areas with which I am concerned. The Minister will recall that I raised last year the example of a school that chose to charge interest on bad debts, a practice which I thought objectionable. My raising the question in the House then, and my raising it again today is not so much to give weaponry to the school in order to extract what is obviously impossible to extract, but rather to ask whether it will be within the powers of the department to provide some sort of financial assistance to those schools that are met with high bad debts, so that if a school has a bad debt of say \$2 000 in a year it does not have to go to such objectionable practices as charging interest on outstanding money but rather it can go to the department and say that the school functions are being seriously undermined by being unable to collect all the money owing. The schools might say, 'Will the department consider giving us an allocation of money to take care of that fact, given that the bad debts, we would argue, are due to the economic situation?'

The Hon. H. Allison: It is not an issue on which I can be tied down. As I said, I am aware of only some three or four schools that have contacted me on this issue, and I do appreciate that they have special problems. I believe that it would be more appropriate for the Director-General and his officers to report back to me on how widespread or otherwise the problem is, and then we could examine it in the light of definite knowledge, rather than this speculative case that we have before us.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: And the \$8 000 000: was that the base figure last year for payments to schools?

The Hon. H. Allison: I was under the impression that the \$800 000 represented a little over a 9 per cent overall increase for school grants, and everything else.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: You are saying that is in real terms maintaining the *status quo*?

The Hon. H. Allison: Yes, that is a 9 per cent increase on last years vote, so that it is very slightly behind the inflation rate for the last financial year.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: There is a very slight decline?

The Hon. H. Allison: Yes, but nowhere near the decline in 1979 of 50 per cent plus.

Mr SCHMIDT: In the increase in grants to schools, what consideration has been given to weighting the factors for the particular technical, home economics and business side of the courses? Some of the cost increases will be astronomical in that regard when one considers that the cost of steel has gone up eight times in the last two years and the cost of timber has gone up by almost equivalent amounts.

Is any weighting factor in that allocation of funds for school grants and also within that sum what allowance has been made for increasing funds available to Government-assisted students? I know that last year the figure was \$30 and I know that in some secondary schools students have had no trouble staying within that \$30 but I have received a letter from a parent of a child attending a primary school which sets its own programme and the basic figure was \$31.40, which means that the parent had to pay an additional \$1.40 over and above the assistance available. Has any consideration been given to increasing the Government assistance to students?

The Hon. H. Allison: The matter of an increase in the basic grant has been addressed within the Budget and the figure I believe has been increased from \$30 to \$33 for the basic allowance which would cover the \$31.40 about which the parent referred to was complaining. An increase has been incorporated in the Budget.

Mr SCHMIDT: The first part of the question related to weighting of the materials for technical colleges and home economic courses.

The Hon. H. Allison: I am not aware of any specific weighting. I do not think the department has any practices other than the ones of which I have been aware for years, although there may be one or two specific purpose grants, and I will ask my Deputy Director-General to comment on them.

Dr Tillett: The formulae for grants to schools basically are a primary formula and a secondary formula. There are, of course, schools with both primary and secondary enrolments and the formula in that case is essentially a combination of the two. Special schools are schools which are so unique in their character and so relatively few in number that we do not provide grants to special schools on a formula basis but they are individually negotiated.

Our approach to primary and secondary schools is that in almost all instances the programmes they offer are similar and include in most instances a component of technical studies, home economics, and so on, and there does not seem to us to be any reason for trying to weight different secondary schools differently in regard to those elements of the curriculum. The exception at the present time is in relation to the schools which have special interest centres in music, where there is an additional provision made which is not large by any means and which is provided primarily to assist the school in maintaining its stock of musical instruments.

Mr SCHMIDT: The main purpose—

The CHAIRMAN: I will allow the honourable member to ask the next question. I suggest that the honourable

member proceeds. Time is running out and I am going to give each member from now onwards one call. The member for Mawson.

Mr SCHMIDT: I will get to my second question then, and that is, in relation—

The CHAIRMAN: Third question.

Mr SCHMIDT: I am on my second question now. It is in relation to facilities. The Estimates of Payments show that for general education facilities \$5 600 000 was allocated last year and actual expenditure was \$8 800 000 while this year the allocation is \$8 500 000. On page 40 of the yellow book under the heading 'Need being addressed', the statement is made that a priority needs basis will be the criteria by which funding will be made in education facilities. One of the broad objectives is to maintain adequate physical facilities in all existing schools. It is also stated in relation to delivery mechanism that research and consultation will be undertaken.

What criteria are used for determining categories A, B and C in allocating funds for the upgrading of schools? I make special reference to holding schools which are currently situated on the category C level. I think this is an area that needs to be addressed when one considers that obviously the research department would look carefully at other areas where new schools need to be provided. I believe Hallett Cove and Coorara Estate are examples of where planning is needed. The whole question of holding schools and their priority rating needs to be addressed in conjunction with how additional accommodation is provided in existing schools. For example, Christies Beach Primary School has 14 school rooms which are vacant or are hardly used and earlier this year one two-unit building was made available to Coorara Primary School which has not been used all year, and yet other schools nearby, for instance, Reynella East, Braeview, and the Hallett Cove primary schools have been asking for additional accommodation for some time. I have asked basically two questions in one: I raised the question of holding schools because I believe the Opposition is currently going around to them saying that it will make available \$8 000 000—

The CHAIRMAN: Will the honourable member come to the point of his question?

Mr SCHMIDT: I was just—

The CHAIRMAN: The Chair has been most tolerant, but I suggest that the honourable member has taken more latitude than is necessary.

Mr SCHMIDT: The problem relating to the holding school situation is that, if that category were changed from C to a higher category would funds be available for that to happen in view of the fact that the comment has been made that \$8 000 000 could be made available under a new Administration?

My other question is: what redress is there in relation to very careful supervision as to where additional accommodation is made available for schools, particularly where a need exists, if we go on the criteria of where a greater need is required, when one considers that there are so many schools where the facilities are under-utilised?

The Hon. H. Allison: The member referred to comments that additional funds would be made available under a new Administration. In that regard one can only refer once again to what happened in the Victorian Houses of Parliament last evening, when almost a 25 per cent additional taxation was sought. I can simply say that additional money is available from only two sources; one being additional taxation, and the other to transfer from one area to another the resources that are available. I cannot see what an alternative Administration would do. I call on the Assistant Director-General to respond to the more specific questions.

Dr Tillett: Reference was made to figures on page 57 of the Estimates of Payments under the heading 'Educational Facilities Directorate'. I should say that the sums shown there have virtually no relationship to the programme for the provision of buildings or their maintenance or repair. Those sums relate almost entirely to utilities, the costs for such things as water, gas, oil and electricity used by schools. Those costs are included in the analysis of the Department's budget under 'Educational Facilities Directorate'.

The funds for the school building and maintenance programme are to be found in the section relating to the Minister of Public Works. The categories of schools A, B and C have no specific fixed significance. During an exercise undertaken toward the end of last year schools were placed in those three categories. Category A includes those schools where projected work would continue unchanged; category B includes schools where work would proceed, but with a change in character or delay in the time table; and category C includes schools where projected work would be delayed for an indeterminate period.

The sole criterion for placing a school in a certain category was based on an objective assessment of the needs of that school. However, in objectively assessing the needs of a school one would first certainly look at those schools having a shortage of accommodation and enrolment pressures, where it was necessary to provide additional space because of increased enrolments. Certainly, once those considerations had been dealt with, health and safety factors would feature prominently in the selection of projects to proceed.

True, some schools have an accommodation surplus. One possible response to that, of course, is to forcibly direct students to another school in an endeavour to ensure that enrolments are as far as possible assigned to schools in accordance with their capacity. However, that seems to us to be an unreasonable attitude to take: we wish to retain for students and parents a substantial degree of choice of school, although we impose enrolment ceilings at some schools to ensure that there are not too many students at a school when we can accommodate more children at a nearby school that has surplus accommodation.

The Hon. PETER DUNCAN: Mr Chairman, will you be ruling that I can ask only one question at a time?

The CHAIRMAN: In reply to the honourable member, this discussion will conclude at about 3.30 p.m. Two members have had a substantial amount of time and I intended, because it is the normal practice, to allow certain time to other than official members to ask at least one question each. One of those members is present and the other was here a few minutes ago. This procedure is designed purely to give members an opportunity to ask their questions before time expires.

The Hon. PETER DUNCAN: I ask the Minister to request Dr Tillett to answer a question asked earlier by the member for Salisbury.

The CHAIRMAN: The Minister is responsible for all answers given. The honourable member must in no way criticise any officer. I am not suggesting that he has criticised an officer, but his remarks could be construed as reflecting on the Minister.

The Hon. PETER DUNCAN: I assure you, Mr Chairman, that I did not intend to do so. Will the Minister provide, either now or later, a list of the criteria used when drawing up a list of disadvantaged schools, as well as a list of such schools in the current period, which was the question asked by my colleague and not answered previously?

The Hon. H. Allison: The question was asked and I think we indicated that the list was substantial, having over 100 schools on it. It was indicated also that a copy would be made available. If the honourable member would also like

a copy of the criteria used in selecting such disadvantaged schools, I am sure it could be made available to him.

The Hon. PETER DUNCAN: Is Burnside Primary School on the list?

The Hon. H. Allison: No.

The Hon. PETER DUNCAN: I detected this morning from the replies given to questions that by and large the Minister in particular (and I gained the impression from the general answers given that by and large the department itself) considered that things are good educationally in SA. There seemed to be a warm inner glow feeling about the answers given. I am surprised at that, because I understand that some of the head office staff choose not to avail themselves of the undoubted benefits of Education Department schooling for their children. Does this indicate that some members of the head office staff of the department have so little faith in the work they are doing that they do not feel confident enough to have their own children educated at Education Department schools?

The CHAIRMAN: I point out to the honourable member that I will not permit him to reflect on public servants in the way he is doing. I do not believe that it is appropriate for this Committee to discuss the subject of where people send their children to school, whether a Government or a private school. That is a personal decision they must make.

The Hon. PETER DUNCAN: I note that you are ruling the question out of order, and no doubt others will note it. It has been stated that the number of students in State schools has declined. One of the reasons why there are insufficient students in my district, particularly in the high schools at Elizabeth, is that in that area there is a low retention rate. I do not believe that the Education Department is doing nearly enough to raise the retention rate in the Elizabeth district generally. If the retention rate in that district were the same as it is for the rest of the State, the whole question of reorganising the high schools in Elizabeth would not arise. At Smithfield Plains High School the retention rate is only 15 per cent, which in anyone's terms is disgraceful compared to the State average. At Elizabeth West High School the retention rate is only about 20 per cent, and in some other schools in my district it is about 25 per cent. What is the State average retention rate in high schools from the beginning of high school education until year 12? In particular, where in this Budget is provision made for greater assistance in respect of such schools that are obviously extremely disadvantaged as evidenced by the low retention rate?

The Hon. H. Allison: Regarding choice of schools, the question is probably no more relevant to the argument than the practice adopted by a former Premier—

The CHAIRMAN: I did rule that question out of order, so I suggest it is not appropriate for the Minister to answer.

The Hon. H. Allison: There are some very relevant answers to that question which I will convey to the honourable member later, because they are enlightening. Certainly, there is nothing involved which denigrates departmental officers or any other people. In regard to the question about what is being done within the Budget, or what may be additional to that which is in the Budget, to assist under-privileged schools, I point out that funds for school-to-work transition programmes have only just been finalised. In fact, Cabinet's acceptance this week of a sum of some \$3 700 000 which includes an indexation upwards of last year's amount of \$2 200 000 was conveyed to the Federal Government. Officers of TAFE, the Education Department and the Department of Labour and Industry will carry on with that quite remarkable co-operative venture to ascertain where best to use both State and Federal school-to-work transition funds.

I recall that the member for Elizabeth asked me some 10 or 12 months ago whether schools in his area might be included. That request will certainly be borne in mind by

departmental officers who will be looking at the matter. I am not sure that his reference to the situation at Elizabeth is entirely correct. One thing that the honourable member is ignoring is the fact that there is a great degree of parental and peer group pressure to which young people are subjected when deciding whether to remain in year 10, 11 or 12 at high school. The whole question of whether the six schools within the honourable member's district will pool their resources and provide better matriculation facilities through a matriculation school has not been properly addressed because of the emotional issues that were introduced into the debate and because of the attitude of one organisation which literally refused to contribute to the debate in a constructive manner.

The department will be taking note of comments made by parents and other people from the member for Elizabeth's district. We do regard the matter most seriously. I did not have a closed mind on that issue, but I can assure the honourable member that my departmental officers and I were very hopeful that the whole series of negotiations set in train by the previous Minister of Education would result in something better than that which has been achieved. Something must be done if we are to improve things. Therefore, I think that if the situation had been viewed in a more constructive light in the honourable member's district we might have been able to give something more positive to that area. I think the Director-General can contribute to this response, as he is well aware of the extent of the work that has been undertaken.

Mr Steidle: I regret that the impression has been given that there is a feeling of self-satisfaction about the matter of retention of students at the senior levels in secondary schools in this State. Figures have been cited which indicate South Australia's position in that regard in relation to other States. Our position has never been considered by the Education Department to be any cause for self-congratulation. Indeed, a great deal of work is being undertaken, and that work has been continuing for a considerable time. In fact, work was going on prior to the Keeves Committee and has been continuing since that time, because it was felt that it would be at least premature, if not improper, for us to make recommendations to Government of a profound kind while the Keeves Committee was considering that issue.

Keeves certainly addresses the problem; he does not indicate any remedial steps as such, but certainly points to the problem that the honourable member has raised. As late as yesterday a number of papers were discussed with the senior management of the Education Department, which discussions I hope will lead to a series of statements being forwarded to the Minister suggesting some possibilities for action in these matters. However, it must be stressed that changes of that kind cannot be contemplated in isolation. It is not a simple matter, because the types of problems that young people are encountering as they move towards the senior classes in secondary schools are not entirely those resulting from their schooling. Plainly, there must be consideration given to problems resulting from the present unemployment abroad and the general climate in the work force.

Therefore, some recommendations will be made to Government addressing that problem. I might add that the problems will be addressed in a somewhat different way following changes in the mode of operation of the Education Department. The need for new strategies in that regard is clearly seen, that matter has been addressed, and I believe that some very real progress has been made. However, I assure the Committee that within the department there is no feeling of self-congratulation or complacency about the problem.

The Hon. PETER DUNCAN: In the light of the fact that I am not permitted to refer to answers from the public

servants, I assume that one attributes the answers to the Minister. The Minister, in his answer, has not indicated where in the Budget these problems that I have identified (with which the Minister in his answer agreed) are being addressed. In regard to schools such as the Smithfield Plains High School, which I understand has a retention rate of half the State average, what steps are being taken in the Budget to address such problems, because they are very serious problems not only for the education sector but for society at large, as we all know of the relationship of unemployment and crime, etc? If we allow the Education Department to ignore those problems, they will arise later as problems of a more general social kind in relation to criminal activities, and so on.

The Hon. H. Allison: The response to that is partly built into what I said before. The Federal Government in its Budget announced an increased allowance for South Australia for its school-to-work transition education programmes. The Federal representative from the Department of Labour and Industry was discussing this matter only two days ago with departmental officers in Adelaide to reassess the split of funds: last year it was 60 per cent to TAFE and 40 per cent to the Education Department. This year the division of funds may be different. As I said, the matter is under review. In addition, there were extra funds available of which we were unaware when the Budget was framed. I have received assurances from Treasury that part of the additional money is for an escalation in salaries and wages. Part of the funds are additional to last year's allocation. When the apportionment of funds between TAFE and the Education Department has been decided, departmental officers will continue to serve on a committee, which is now of two years' standing, to determine the apportionment more widely of funds across the State in regard to secondary education than was previously the case.

In regard to the problem in the member for Elizabeth's electorate which is known to the committee, as the allocation of funds is now being expanded perhaps that problem can be addressed. I cannot give the honourable member a specific answer but I can assure him that the problem is very close to the hearts of those on the committee, the Minister and his senior officers.

Mr RANDALL: It is not my intention to try to exaggerate the situation, but I am a little concerned about the previous line of questioning which attempted to degrade the State education system. As a member of Parliament and one who grew up in the State school system and who supports it by sending one's own children to both primary and secondary State schools, I point out that we should be reinforcing the State school system and not attempting to run it down.

I refer to an article that appeared in this morning's *Advertiser* wherein concern was expressed about the number of overseas students (from Malaysia, I believe) who will be sitting for matriculation examinations later this year. Is the Minister's department aware of the number who will be sitting for those examinations, and can he say what effect those students will have on the matriculation examination rating system which is used to determine entry of students into a university or the Institute of Technology?

The Hon. H. Allison: That is not really relevant to the State situation. The Public Examinations Board of South Australia has been commissioned at the Malaysian Government's cost to provide examination, and I believe marking, facilities for Malaysian students, and these will be funded quite separately from the South Australian system in much the same way that we have been assisting the Northern Territory Government over many years, because that Government has not yet established its own education system. I believe that I approved the travel of a P.E.B. officer to Malaysia to discuss this problem at the Malaysian Govern-

ment's expense some several months ago, so it is not unusual. It simply is a reflection of the fact that South Australia's P.E.B. is recognised as being very soundly based, and it is a compliment to the system rather than any disadvantage. It will be paid for and administered separately.

Mr RANDALL: I was indicating to the Minister some of the concerns being expressed about accepting these students for examinations and about the effect it may have on the overall rating system, depending on their results, when the time comes for entry into university or Institute of Technology courses and the cut-off point may include some of these Malaysian students who have gained high marks.

The Hon. H. Allison: I am not sure about that but I had assumed, when negotiations were in train, that these students would not be part of the overall weighting but would be part of a separate component. Since the honourable member has raised that question and it is one that raises doubt in my mind, I will check with the Public Examinations Board and give him an accurate response.

The Hon. PETER DUNCAN: I take it from the Minister's previous answer to me that he agrees that this State Budget does not provide any additional assistance for increasing retention rates in high schools, etc, because he only referred to additional funding from the Commonwealth. I also want to refer to the disadvantaged programme on pages 32 and 33 in which one can see that, whilst additional funding has been provided for this programme, in terms of average full-time equivalents no additional assistance has been provided at all. That concerns me gravely, because when one looks at the programme description one sees that, under '1981-82 Specific targets/objectives/significant initiatives/improvements/achievements', there are two asterisked proposals there, namely:

Provision of increased information to country students about opportunities for further study in large centres.

Provision of opportunity for disadvantaged country children at the metropolitan accommodation site at Warradale Primary School.

Further on, under '... improvements/results sought', we see:

Fostering shared projects in country programmes.

Development of Warradale Camp School.

Extension of declared country areas.

It is obvious that this programme, without any increase in full-time equivalent staffing numbers, is going to be expanded to assist the so-called country areas programme. I have no objection whatsoever to the country areas programme: I think that that is a desirable addition to the socio-economic disadvantaged programme that was originally introduced by the Whitlam Government. However, it does seem to me that, if these targets are going to be achieved, there will be some redistribution within the programme itself, and that concerns me gravely because, with the increasing unemployment in our State and the greater socio-economic disadvantaging of the poor in our society, I would have thought that, if anything, even more resources ought to be applied to the original socio-economic disadvantaged schools programme. With the additional emphasis on the country areas projects, it seems to me that, if anything, we might be downgrading the disadvantaged schools priority projects arrangements. Can the Minister give us an assurance that that will not in fact be happening and advise the Committee how it is proposed to increase the activity in the country areas programme without reducing the activities in the priority schools programme, given that the actual level of employment in the programme will not change during the current year?

The Hon. H. Allison: I call on Dr Tillett to respond initially.

Dr Tillett: I think it does need to be appreciated that a good deal of the cost of this programme is provided by way of funds from the Schools Commission and that, secondly, the Schools Commission funds are assigned on a calendar year basis. The level of funds to be made available by the Schools Commission, or by the Commonwealth Government through the Commonwealth Schools Commission, for 1983 was not known at the time that this documentation was originally drawn up. Indeed, the legislation in relation to that level of funding has only this week been introduced in the Sixth Parliament. It is a normal event that over the period September, October, November, there will be discussions between the Education Department and Treasury to determine whether the funding levels fixed by the Commonwealth Government for the Schools Commission for the upcoming calendar year have implications for the Education Department's budget, and whether or not there should be adjustments to that budget on that account.

That has in previous years resulted in increased allocations being granted by Treasury to the Education Department as an event after the presentation of the State Budget in this House. The initiatives referred to in the description of this programme, such as the camp site at the Warradale Primary School, are intended to go ahead, and for the most part they will be funded as initiatives which have come into the programme with other initiatives being completed. It is not the case that all the expenditure of money from this programme is ongoing or recurrent in nature.

There are expenditures which relate to capital items and to one-off programmes or activities, and the cost of establishing the Warradale Primary School or, more accurately, the Warradale Junior Primary School as a metropolitan camp site has a great deal of that character about it and is fitting into the programme in place of activities of previous years which have now been completed and which entail no ongoing or very little ongoing cost. The extension of the declared country areas under the country areas programme, as it will now be called by the Schools Commission in 1983, is a step that has been welcomed in South Australia, because it will allow us to include in the benefits of that programme some schools in country areas which were not previously able to benefit from it.

The CHAIRMAN: There being no further questions, I declare the examination of the vote completed.

Works and Services—South Australian Teacher Housing Authority, \$800 000

Chairman:

Mr G. M. Gunn

Members:

Mr L. M. F. Arnold

Dr B. Billard

The Hon. Peter Duncan

Mr S. G. Evans

The Hon. R. G. Payne

Mr R. J. Randall

Mr I. Schmidt

Mr J. P. Trainer

Witness:

The Hon. H. Allison, Minister of Education.

Departmental Advisers:

Mr L. P. Fricker, Acting Director-General of Technical and Further Education.

Mr D. Carter, Director, Administration and Finance, Department of Technical and Further Education.

Mr L. R. Drew, Acting Manager, South Australian Teacher Housing Authority.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: The Teacher Housing Authority has been of considerable concern to a large number of teachers in South Australia. I have identified a major problem that faces the authority in regard to the ratio of income paid out in interest payments which has increased from 8.8 per cent in 1976-77, 24.7 per cent last year, to an anticipated 29 per cent this year, and which indicates a very severe cost-pressure squeeze on the authority. One of the worrying aspects is the danger that the T.H.A. may not be able to meet all of its financial commitments in the sense of providing rent reductions, paying for the higher cost of money on the loans that it takes out (and we see that this year loans are to be \$2 380 000), and undertaking maintenance on its houses.

Will the Minister indicate exactly what is the maintenance situation this year? Will maintenance be expanded in regard to T.H.A. houses? Is it anticipated that the T.H.A. will run a deficit over and above that met by subsidies from the Education Department and the Department of Technical and Further Education? If so, does that mean that Treasury has given permission for the department to run an overall deficit? Will that be financed by capital transfer?

The Hon. H. Allison: Treasury has not given any authority for an overrun of T.H.A. funding, and I believe that the honourable member will acknowledge that one of the major problems of the T.H.A. lies in the fact that there has been only one rent increase in the past four years for teacher housing. Whether or not the honourable member or the Institute of Teachers acknowledges that that is, in effect, a very substantial reduction by comparison with rents charged to Housing Trust and other occupants of Government accommodation is not really relevant. The truth is that it is a very substantial reduction. One increase in four years must surely be recognised by the general public as a reduction in rents. Generally, those teachers occupying T.H.A. housing are in a pretty favourable position.

This has raised an assortment of other questions, not the least of which has been the relative shortfall in funds for the T.H.A. to do other things, including maintenance. The honourable member may be aware that this matter was referred to a Cabinet subcommittee some time ago. The Minister of Housing, the Minister of Industrial Affairs and I conferred at great length, and the matter was subsequently widened to include all Government accommodation. The whole question has not yet been resolved and, in fact, the question of the shortfall of funds for maintenance has been referred to the Budget Review Committee for specific consideration as a post-Budget issue. This issue is not dead because there is no inclusion in the Budget.

The Budget Review Committee will have to examine the situation to see whether there is any alternative. I cannot offer the honourable member anything positive at present. The overall question of Government accommodation is still under review. The deliberations of the small Cabinet subcommittee were inconclusive and I believe that a number of problems still have to be resolved before we can come up with an answer. We acknowledge that the T.H.A. has a cash flow problem, and the Budget Review Committee is currently considering that matter. We hope that some assistance might be given.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: The T.H.A. receives payments from the Education Department and the Department of Technical and Further Education. Will the Minister indicate how those payments have matched the interest paid out by the T.H.A. in recent years? It is my understanding that five

years ago the amounts paid from the Education Department and TAFE exceeded quite significantly the interest Bill. It is now my belief that the reverse is the case and that the interest bill is higher than the money received. It is not simply a matter of what might have happened to rents as a result of any rent increases: it is also clearly a matter of the cost of money.

The Hon. H. Allison: The T.H.A. representative has pointed out that the relativity is tied to the rents that the T.H.A. receives from the Education Department and TAFE, which are considerably lower than they might have been had rents been increased annually.

Mr Drew: Over the past two or three years, interest rates have averaged about 25 per cent of total income. The reason for that stabilising is that we have been able to finance a substantial amount of our capital expenses by rationalising our housing by disposal to tenants and other private people.

The Hon. H. Allison: Part of the deficit has been offset by the sale of houses. I believe that at one stage the T.H.A. had almost 2 000 houses, and it now has about 1 950. The T.H.A. has received considerable income from the sale of houses to offset that deficit. The T.H.A. has disposed of 37 houses in the past 12 months at a return of \$888 000. The average price has been \$24 000, and 18 of the 37 houses were sold to teacher tenants.

Mr Drew: That money was put into capital programmes. Eventually, it offsets interest in that we do not have to borrow moneys, because of disposal programmes.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: Does the T.H.A. sell houses in any area if a tenant offers to buy a house, or is there a policy proscribing sale in areas where it is known that there is a high demand for T.H.A. accommodation and permitting sale in areas where there is low demand? Would it be somewhat easier for a person to buy a T.H.A. house within 100 kilometres of Adelaide where the demand for such housing may not be so great, whereas in areas such as the Iron Triangle it may not be considered policy? What is the policy of the T.H.A. in that regard?

Mr Drew: The policy is to rationalise the houses that we own in the metropolitan area and the nearer metropolitan area. In areas such as the Iron Triangle, the head regional education officer would have to justify the retention of houses. In most instances, he would be able to do so. When we sell the houses we use the services of the Valuer-General to negotiate with our tenants.

The Hon. H. Allison: The Committee might be interested in the distribution of houses across South Australia. Of the 37 houses sold, three were in the Central-Eastern district; seven in Central-Northern, 11 in the Central-Southern; none were sold in the Central-Western, and in Eyre, which will incorporate the Iron Triangle, one; in Murraylands, one; in Northern, four; in Riverland, two; in South-East, two; and in Yorke and Lower-North, six. Distribution is widespread, but the Teacher Housing Authority last year did indicate to me that it would at that stage prefer sales in the metropolitan area where teachers generally were resident across the city rather than being adjacent to a particular school. Secondly, there was a greater variety of accommodation available.

The main sales this year have been Central-Southern and I believe last year the predominance of sales was in the Central-Northern area. It is quite true that the directors of the regional educational offices are consulted and their opinions are sought by the T.H.A. and subsequently Ministerial approval is then sought and a recommendation is made to the Minister before any sales are agreed to. Generally, there would be little objection at Ministerial level once the other procedures had been followed.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: Last year the actual money used for the purchase and construction of houses was \$1 000 000 less and the amount used for modernisation and upgrading

of houses (which I am sure everyone is aware is a sore point with country teachers) was \$700 000 less than the actual vote in each instance. I further notice that this year the allocation for purchase and construction of new houses is in fact in line with last year's vote being therefore double last year's actual, whereas the amount for modernisation and upgrading of houses is more like last year's actual being only one third of last year's vote. Why were there reductions in the actual payments last year from the vote and what premises are being worked upon in establishing this year's vote?

Mr Drew: We went through a culling process in that what we put on to our programme at the beginning of the year is virtually the expectation of the regional educational officers. However, when it comes to purchasing a property, we go back to the regional officers and ask them to rejustify our having to spend money and, if it is at all possible, we would try and obtain leased accommodation from the Housing Trust or from private landlords.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: What about the modernisation and upgrading?

Mr Drew: The difficulty with purchasing and construction is that sometime in the future we would have to service the interest payments on the moneys we spent and we have to be careful about just how far we go.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: What about the modernisation and upgrading? Why has that been kept to last year's actual and not last year's vote?

Mr Drew: We would probably regard that as being a secondary consideration to actually providing houses. The principal priority at this stage is in remote areas of this State where teachers have no other alternative. We feel that if we put money into those areas it is better spent. I am talking now about Aboriginal areas in the North-West of the State and so forth.

The CHAIRMAN: The Chair could comment and say that it concurs with those commitments (but I do not know whether it is permitted to make that comment). There being no further questions, I declare the examination of the vote complete. The next minor vote on which I understand from the Committee there will only be limited examination is on school buses. Perhaps we could deal with that matter now. I understand that the further education debate will take a longer time.

The Hon. H. Allison: We would prefer to leave that until we reach the rest of the minor lines afterwards and continue now with the Further Education Department.

Technical and Further Education, \$65 300 000

Chairman:

Mr G.M. Gunn

Members:

Mr L. M. F. Arnold

Dr B. Billard

The Hon. Peter Duncan

Mr S. G. Evans

The Hon. R. G. Payne

Mr R. J. Randall

Mr I. Schmidt

Mr J. P. Trainer

Witness:

The Hon. H. Allison, Minister of Education.

Departmental Advisers:

Mr L. P. Fricker, Acting Director-General, Department of Technical and Further Education.

Mr D. Carter, Director, Administration and Finance, Department of Further Education.

Mr P. W. I. Fleming, Acting Deputy Director-General of Technical and Further Education.

Mr T. J. Beeching, Chief Accountant, Department of Further Education.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: My first question is in relation to the advice that has been proffered to the Tertiary Education Commission by the TAFE Council. I understand that for some time the TAFE Council has been concerned about State Governments that have not matched the provision of new facilities with increases in recurrent funding. I understand that the State/Commonwealth funding agreement in this regard has the following advice of the TAFE Council:

Nor would council regard staffing of a new facility at the expense of existing colleges as consistent until the thrust of Commonwealth support for the development of TAFE Council will monitor this staffing position closely.

In other words, the building of new facilities is not regarded by provided for as being the deprivation of existing facilities. Further, the same document states:

The TAFE Council has reported that it will require continued assurances from the State (S.A. included) that additional recurrent expenditure required to operate new TAFE facilities will be available, and will not be found by general reductions in other TAFE activities.

That was recommendation 2.26. The question has been asked with particular regard, but not solely, to the staffing requirements of the Noarlunga community college. I understand that in regard to the staff being made available there only about \$230 000 could be considered as being a new commitment, and the remainder can be considered as being the running down of commitments at other community colleges to provide those staff.

The Hon. H. Allison: I am well aware of the comments of both the Tertiary Education Commission and the TAFE Council, comments which were published in the Triennial Report 1982-84 and comments to which I have to admit I took exception and to which I addressed myself very firmly to the Acting Minister for Education who was in Adelaide on precisely the same day on which I was asked to give comment.

I took exception on the grounds that I received a draft copy of this report, and was asked to make comment as to its contents by the Friday (this was I believe very late on Wednesday afternoon). It was obvious from the sheer speed with which those comments were to be made, and the fact that this report was to be tabled within three or four days, that the report must surely have already been printed and ready to be tabled in the House and that any comment this department made was therefore irrelevant.

We objected strenuously because we felt we had very relevant comments to make, not the least of which was that we did dispute the 1977-78 date upon which comparisons were based. After protesting to the Federal Minister he did point out that the report was (as we had thought) published and ready to be tabled but, he said we should also note the favourable comments on page 22, as follows:

council acknowledges, however, that over a longer period—this was the 1977-78 period, the comparison date with which we disagreed—

the State's support for TAFE has been good and the overall level of provision of TAFE still compares favourably with that in most other States.

In the Technical and Further Education Commission Report (page 122 paragraph C.22) the council acknowledges once again:

The council acknowledges, however, that over a longer period, the State's support for TAFE has been good and the overall level of provision of TAFE still compares reasonably with that in most other States.

That is an identical comment, and it continues as follows:

The choice of 1977-78 as the base year for the current analysis of State effort may therefore be regarded as unfavourable to South Australia. Council recognises also the recent initiatives undertaken by the South Australian authorities to achieve improved efficiency in the delivery of TAFE, and the realignment of priorities within TAFE to give prime emphasis to courses of greatest community need.

So they were acknowledging that the renaming of the Department of Technical and Further Education, with the emphasis on 'technical', was part of the Government's aim to make it clear to the department itself that it was regarded as a prime provider of skilled training to industry and commerce. That is not to say that we have written off stream 6, which we still regard as a very important component of technical and further education, but we do believe that some of the department's past emphasis on stream 6 and its past reputation for being essentially a provider of stream 6 recreation facilities is a wrongly placed reputation in today's climate.

There was also recognition of the point brought out in the Keeves Committee of Inquiry and submissions put forward to Keeves that the productivity of the technical and further education staff in South Australia was amongst the lowest in Australia, and it was some many hours per lecturer per week short of the national average. Part of the increased efficiency that the department has been addressing itself to with, I think, good co-operation from staff members, has partly resulted in greater productivity with no commensurate increase in cost.

The department is to be congratulated for the manner in which it has tackled what appeared to be a serious problem. I say a 'serious problem' because the Keeves Committee and other inquiries have indicated that the productivity generally in the TAFE sector should be improved, not only in South Australia but in Australia generally. So, by comparison with others, we are already well behind and I would congratulate the officers for the initiative they have taken in improving that situation.

The other point I wish to make is also relative to TAFEC criticism, that this year there is an improvement in real terms in expenditure in technical and further education and that there is an additional sum for the streaming of Noarlunga College of \$430 000. That is mentioned on page 67 of the yellow book. Noarlunga will be brought on stream co-operatively with adjacent colleges.

I do not think that the criticism that have been addressed to the South Australian Government by the TEC and TAFEC commissions have been taken very seriously by those commissions or by the Federal Government when one realises that the Federal Budget, which has just been brought down, did include an allocation of funds for the commencement of what will be a \$25 000 000 complex by the time it is completed (in expanded financial allocations). I refer to the Adelaide College of Further Education which was recently commenced in Light Square, and also a similar development in South Australia, quite apart from other funding.

The discussions which we have had a Federal level with the Chairmain of TAFE, Federal Ministers and the Prime Minister on this whole question of TAFE, we believe have brought a realistic thinking into the minds much different,

I think, from what is printed in this docket. Had we been given time to comment before it was published I believe there would have been some further amendments.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: I understand that there is presently in draft form a further report from the TAFE Council to the Tertiary Education Commission and that that report repeats the sentiments. Have approaches been made to the TAFE Council by the Department of Technical and Further Education, by the Minister or the State Government to have these references deleted? Is the Minister saying that the allocation of recurrent resources to Noarlunga is not being done at the expense effort at other community colleges? Is he suggesting that any rundown of resources at other colleges will not result in a rundown of services provided at those other colleges?

The Hon. H. Allison: I will call upon the Director-General to respond to that question: he has a quite comprehensive reply.

Mr Fricker: Taking the two parts of your question, in the first instance I am not aware of any draft report which has been prepared by the TAFE Council for the Tertiary Education Commission. The document from which the Minister read a few minutes ago is the latest report and that came out about a week or so ago. To the best of my knowledge that is the most up-to-date statement that we have. In regard to filling up Noarlunga, we do plan, we have review committee approval and we have the funds now provided in the Budget for new staff to be appointed to Noarlunga. That does not mean that there will not also be some re-deployment of staff because in other areas we have programmes which are running down in terms of community demand. If, for example, enrolments in hairdressing or the building trades drop off in one area then clearly it is in everyone's interest to move the staff to where there is a demand. The staffing of Noarlunga will be partly made up by redeployment and partly by our new staff. To cover the point made earlier, the State Government is providing additional funds to ensure that the capital investment made in Noarlunga is being discharged by the State Government.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: In regard to equipment purchases for community colleges, the success of the Department of Technical and Further Education relies on the amount of equipment it has, the age of that equipment, the state of the art of that equipment and the like. Has the Government conducted studies into the likely cost effect of equipment replacement in the years ahead, including this financial year? What is the position concerning the upgrading of equipment to take into account generation changes in the state of the art? What are the implications of that for this Budget and for future Budgets?

The Hon. H. Allison: This has been a long-standing problem not only in respect of technical and further education but also in the Education Department as well. Over the past 10 years the major equipping of colleges has been done by the Commonwealth Government, and a college was built on a walk-in-walk-out basis with the equipment being installed. Replacement provisions have also been made intermittently in varying amounts by the Commonwealth Government.

An increasing problem is that the state of the art is not generally the latest equipment purchased, but is on the drawing board. Obsolescence is almost a fact before the new equipment is purchased. Over the past three years we have therefore, at meetings of the Australia Education Council including special meetings of that council, addressed the problems to the Commonwealth Government with a series of requests that it acknowledge the rapidity with which such equipment is becoming obsolete in technical and further education, and we have sought additional equipment grants. The same procedure applied as regards equipping in the two triennia from 1969 onwards in the Education Depart-

ment when a wide range of audio-visual and other equipment was provided and soon became obsolete.

This general problem has been experienced throughout industry, commerce and education, and where 10 years ago technical and further education was well ahead we now find that generally across Australia industrial and commercial concerns that have tackled the problem by taking advantage of depreciation and other taxation allowances are further ahead rather than behind. Through his senior staff the Director-General is setting up an equipment register to cover all our colleges, and once that is completed we shall be much better able to assess our total needs and the urgency with which such equipment needs to be replaced. During the current year the Commonwealth Government made available over \$900 000 to help meet our needs in this regard, but such a sum does not go very far toward re-equipping all our colleges.

Another problem concerns our older colleges when newer institutions have been brought on stream. Indeed, allegations have been rife throughout the department for many years that the newer colleges have been brought on stream at the expense of the old ones. The question relating to Noarlunga is part of the pattern of a long-standing series of questions as to what is happening in the colleges in this respect. That question and many other questions are being thoroughly examined.

Pleasingly, the new Adelaide college will not of itself represent a new and substantial drain on resources at present available for existing colleges. Indeed, its establishment will result in a rationalisation of courses scattered throughout the metropolitan area and will not produce fresh recurrent costs. In fact, substantial rent savings could result to the system. This general problem cannot be solved without the expenditure of large sums and we hope that the Commonwealth Government's latest grant of \$900 000 may be repeated, because it is the wish of the Commonwealth Government as well as our wish that we be enabled to provide the most modern equipment with which to train the work force.

Mr Fricker: During the current year we have taken into account the need of the colleges to keep up to date, especially as regards the micro-processor, so we have committed funds for the purchase of the numerically controlled lathes and other machines. Some of the latest computerised photo-printing machines required by the School of Graphic Arts are also being purchased. Not only will the benefit of the introduction of such equipment be felt in metropolitan colleges, but in the larger country colleges as well. We have taken into account the two reports that have come from the Council on Technological Change, a State committee headed by Professor Stranks, and we are happy to find that the programme on which we have already embarked is in accordance with the recommendations in his council's reports.

We have worked closely with the Industrial and Commercial Training Commission in this regard. Regarding the use of computers as distinct from computer-controlled machines, we are at present, with the backing of the Data Processing Board, in the process of acquiring a large main-frame computer costing \$350 000 or two other installations that will total about the same price. This will provide much more hands-on experience for our business studies students at Adelaide college and will also provide back-up assistance for the Regency Park Centre.

In addition, we are purchasing a couple of large micro-computers and a number of mini-computers that can be distributed throughout the colleges either as permanent or portable installations so that hands-on experience can be

provided on the data-processing and business studies courses and to some extent on the engineering course as well.

In particular, we are taking the lead in the industrial area with the computer-aid design, computer-aided manufacturer, and computer-integrated manufacturer installations. Regency Park has been working closely with the State bodies and the other higher education institutions in developing a complete package of assistance to industry that will not only provide a service but will offer training for operatives. A member of our staff has spent 12 months in the United States studying these installations, and I believe that the department itself is keeping up throughout the whole field of the technological revolution.

At Kensington, we are installing a word processor to train people, and we already have one at Elizabeth. We can always spend millions of dollars but, given that funds are always limited, I believe that we are keeping up with current developments within the framework of the funds available.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: Is the \$900 000 grant from the Commonwealth referred to by the Minister similar to the \$500 000 included in last year's Budget?

The Hon. H. Allison: The \$900 000 is additional to the funds provided by the State Government for the replacement of equipment.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: Then the \$985 000 referred to on page 122 is not the \$900 000 referred to by the Minister, so almost \$1 900 000 will be available to TAFE for the purchase of plant and equipment. The State grant shown for last year is \$500 000, but I think that another \$500 000 was received from the Commonwealth Government last year similar to the \$900 000 received this year, which meant \$1 000 000 was available last year. Is that correct?

Mr Carter: I have not those figures with me, but I think it is a matter of the difference between the financial year and the calendar year. The instrument was bought last financial year with about half the \$500 000 but, because of the lead time, we did not spend all the money in the last financial year, but we will probably spend it within the next six months.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: At least five senior members of the staff of the Department of Technical and Further Education are employed in an acting capacity. When is it proposed that permanent appointments will be made for all those positions so that the senior administration of the department will be able to feel some degree of permanency concerning the control of operations of the department?

The Hon. H. Allison: The matter is one that has been troubling me for some time. Members of the House would realise that some months ago we advertised the position of Deputy Director-General of Technical and Further Education. The appointment to that position was close to being finalised with recommendations about to emerge from the panel that was constituted by the Public Service Board. The then Director-General of Further Education (Mr Kloeden) indicated while he was on leave that he would be returning only to resign because of personal financial complications arising from superannuation legislation which meant that he was advantaged if he retired before 29 June and disadvantaged if he retired after that date.

Rather than appoint a Deputy Director-General with the matter of appointing a Director-General about to arise, and considering the qualities of the person whom we had already appointed, we thought that it would be more appropriate to appoint a Director-General and to then subsequently reassess the deputy's position. The panel which has been interviewing applicants is about to report which I believe will be almost immediately. Therefore, I assume that I should be in a position to make a recommendation to Cabinet in the very near future, after which I would hope

that the deputy's position will be finalised quickly and the acting positions down the line can then be resolved. I commend the officers at the table who are in either acting or permanent positions for the work that they have done. Their work has been exemplary.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: I was not reflecting on the officers of the department who are in acting positions. My concern related to the possibility of compromise of the department's policy making, given the preponderance of acting positions, and the fact that outside Government decisions from bodies such as the Budget Review Committee might interfere with the normal priority planning of the department more so than might otherwise have been the case. I take the Minister's point concerning the filling of the permanent position and I look forward to the result of that.

In regard to stream 6, the Minister indicated that in his opinion there is some degree of over-emphasis, implying a run-down of that area. The estimates of revenue indicates that an increase in revenue is anticipated. If there is to be a run-down of that section, if fewer courses are to be offered, an increase in revenue could be achieved only by an increase in fees. Is it proposed to increase stream 6 fees?

The Hon. H. Allison: Perhaps I can readjust the honourable member's thinking. I am quite sure that what I said was the image that had been presented to the public during the early 1970s was that adult education centres in South Australia (the name has changed several times, but originally they were known as A.E.Cs—Adult Education Centres) catered mainly for stream 6 courses. That position no longer pertains. I make it quite clear that I am aware that the emphasis on stream 6 is now at a minimum and that some 90 per cent of the effort of the Technical and Further Education Department concerns training in streams 1 to 5. I did not mean to give the honourable member that impression; I simply meant to indicate that the department's name was being changed to 'Technical and Further Education' to confirm the trend that has been evident over the past few years, namely, the emphasis away from stream 6 and towards technical training. Perhaps the Director-General would care to comment on the stream 6 fee structure. At present it is fixed at \$1.50 an hour. There is no immediate intention to restructure it.

Mr Fricker: There is very little I can add to that. There has been no decision to raise fees in 1983. The matter of stream 6 activities, the way in which they are funded and the extent to which participants can contribute are matters that are reviewed annually by Cabinet. At this stage there has been no recommendation or decision made to change the existing situation.

I take the opportunity to clear up what might have been a point of confusion in regard to equipment. There was confusion between the allocation for the TAFE Council during the annual calendar year and the financial year report in the papers before us. For the 1982 calendar year the grant from the TAFE Council for equipment was \$940 000 and in 1983 it will be \$900 000.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: Are any changes proposed for the concession element of stream 6 courses, providing the opportunity for courses to have a greater number of concession enrollees than may be the case at present or giving the individual community colleges greater autonomy to determine matters within their own areas rather than the application of some policy which could be (and which has been) interpreted to be somewhat harsh on community colleges sited in areas of greater socio-economic need?

The Hon. H. Allison: The concessions have been determined by Cabinet on an annual basis. Perhaps I should make one or two things quite clear regarding stream 6. The reduction of stream 6 courses does not necessarily mean that costs will be reduced within the Department of Technical

and Further Education. To a large extent fees are determined with a view to making courses self sufficient, but with the additional proviso that the concession allocation of a little less than \$250 000 a year is there to provide the funds necessary for pensioners who may want to take part in a course. In fact, some courses are attended only by pensioners.

Therefore, the reduction of a course may mean a diminution of revenue to the Department of Technical and Further Education, which is revenue for the State. The State then allocates funds for the department; funds go into the Government Treasury coffers first. Therefore, the Government encourages individual colleges to approach the operation of stream 6 courses on an entrepreneurial basis, that is, if they feel that they can put in a stream 6 course that is self sufficient, they can go ahead. Such courses are largely staffed by hourly-paid instructors; however, there is a component of permanent advisory and lecturing staff of which over 30 would be involved directly with stream 6 courses across the State, which is a more permanent charge against the department and which is there as an additional expense.

We encourage colleges to do their own thing, to get courses going and, if they are self-sufficient, that is all right; that provides the funds for the lecturer. Of course, there are other expenses involved for maintenance, cleaning, lighting, and other things associated with a college. The Government has no intention to alter the present allocation of \$250 000. As I have said, this is an issue that comes up annually. The amount of \$240 000, in fact has been put aside as a Government subsidy for assistance for 1982.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: How does that compare with last year?

The Hon. H. Allison: It was a slight reduction on the previous year, and there is no intention, as I said, at the moment to change that present level of subsidy.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: There is a reduction in money terms in that concession allocation, and, therefore, a significant reduction in real terms of that, at a time when certain areas of the State are suffering more severely from the economic downturn that we are presently in than others. In areas such as my own, and that of my colleague, the member for Elizabeth, there is a very severe downturn, greater than in other areas. That means that colleges such as the ones sited in those areas will have a harder fight to get access to a reduced pool of funding for concessions for concession students.

Alternatively, of course, it will mean that a greater number of concession students will be turned away or offered the right to do a course, provided they deem themselves not concession students; in other words, somehow they find money. Of course, the very act of being concession students is a recognition that they have not got the money. I find it somewhat amazing that particular area has not at least kept pace just with inflation over last year's allocation.

The Hon. H. Allison: The matter has been before the Cabinet, but currently it is under review by the department, which has really been holding a watching brief to determine when we reach the point of diminishing returns and whether attendances would fall off as a result of either one or both of diminished concession payments or the increase in fees. The department will be putting a submission to me in the very near future saying what it thinks should happen for the 1983 financial year. As I said, no decisions have been made either to vary the fees upwards or downwards, or to vary the concession allowances, but the department does have a submission. We will be looking at it at Cabinet level in the very near future.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: Inasmuch as we are the Estimates Committee looking at the Budget estimates for the financial

year, would it be possible for us to be enlightened as to what options may be being looked at by the department?

The Hon. H. Allison: It would have to be some degree of speculation. If one were to increase fees, would that in fact bring in an increased revenue? That is question No. 1. We cannot answer that without trying, but the evidence at present indicates that we have reached a level of fees at \$1.50 which may further diminish the number of students attending, and therefore it would be a diminishing return to the department and to Treasury, having a negative effect. That is one consideration. The second one is that if one were to leave the fees, would the student population begin to come back in an atmosphere of stability, knowing that they were not going to be increased? The third one is, if one were to reduce fees, would that increase the attendance sufficiently to further offset and mean that more courses could be brought on stream? There is a degree of speculation about it and the department is weighing the options and will be, I suppose, putting up one or two alternatives to Cabinet.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: I turn now to another area of fees altogether, and that is with regard to materials fees for students in the other streams. There are, of course, fees charged for consumables in a number of those streams. Are any policy changes envisaged in that area?

The Hon. H. Allison: The Director-General, Mr Fricker, will respond.

Mr Fricker: No policy changes are being envisaged at the present time. What we are doing as a bunch of officials within the department is looking very carefully at the existing situation, not only in South Australia, but also across the other States because practices across Australia vary from one place to another, and even in some cases from one college to another. I think that at the outset we should distinguish very carefully between fees and charges. It is not just a matter of semantics. There is a legal difference and under the Commonwealth-States agreement, all States are debarred from charging fees and the income here again forms part of the general purpose claim.

However, we have been looking at the question of equity across all the colleges to see how the imposition of charges for materials bears upon particular students and particular courses, what the effect is upon college Budgets, what the effect would be upon the departmental budget, and the legal implications of what is already current practice all over the country, and legal implications of any change. So, there is a great deal of investigation going on, and hopefully when we have got all the facts together and are in a position to make some recommendations to the Minister, we shall do so. I can reassure you that at the present time there is no suggestion of any policy change.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: The next question I would like to ask is, I suppose, supplementary to Question on Notice No. 57 that I asked this session. It referred to the printing and publications budget for the department. That has declined from \$140 000 in 1977-78 to \$92 000 in the last financial year. Could the Minister advise what the budget is for this year for that item, and why the reduction has been effected? Is that by improved productivity, such as that the output is still the same, or increasing, or is it by reduced output?

The Hon. H. Allison: Perhaps we could take that question on notice and get an answer to it. The information is not immediately available.

Mr RANDALL: My question relates to the area of the college which was in my day at the old electronics and electrical school at Kilkenny. I am wondering first of all whether the Minister or officers could indicate to the Committee the future of the college at Kilkenny and the plans in mind for it.

The Hon. H. Allison: Perhaps Mr Fleming will give us an indication.

Mr Fleming: Currently, the Kilkenny premises are being first of all used by the library studies programme, which is based at the open college, but its primary use in the last two years has been for transition education courses. The control of those courses lies with the Regency Park college. Some years ago when the Kilkenny premises were vacated, there was a range of possibilities for the use of those premises, and I do not think we quite envisaged what happened in the last two years, namely, this growth in the trade based transition programmes, and at the moment Kilkenny is very tightly used indeed, and it seems that that will be the case for some considerable time to come.

Mr RANDALL: It is my recollection there is a T.V. studio and associated equipment, I think audio equipment, there as well, which I believe is proposed to be transferred to the new college to be built in years to come.

The Hon. H. Allison: That is the subject of a current review. The importance of the multi-media centre, not only to the Department of Technical and Further Education, but also to other Government departments, including the Education Department, has been questioned by some people outside of Government and currently we have a review under Mr Mewett from the Public Service Board, who is ascertaining a number of things, one of which is whether in fact the South Australian Film Corporation legislation in itself needs changing, because it is restrictive upon the operations of the Department of Technical and Further Education. The department in its own right maintains that it does not wish to be intrusive upon the field of private enterprise, but is mainly concerned with the production of films for educational and Government departmental use.

I believe that that report will be forthcoming in the near future. Meanwhile, we have announced the Government's intention, with the use of Federal funding, to construct the Adelaide College of Further Education which, in the long term, will incorporate in one of the three stages a restructured multi-media centre. That will ultimately transfer from its present location to the new Adelaide College of Further Education in Light Square. The extent to which that centre is re-equipped and modernised, and the pace with which that occurs, have yet to be determined upon receipt of the report from the Public Service Board.

Mr RANDALL: I know from my own experience that a television tower was erected at Kilkenny, and I believe that a television transmitter was purchased for the purpose of educational television transmissions in this State, but is yet to be utilised. Will the report that is being prepared at present encompass the area of educational television broadcasting?

The Hon. H. Allison: That was the intention of the then Director-General of Further Education some 10 years ago. He envisaged that there would be a very complex radio and television network centred on the college. That was a quite grandiose scheme, which is highly unlikely to be realised. It will be a different operation; in fact, the scheme has never approached that scale of operation since it was constructed.

Mr RANDALL: Could we then envisage that the surplus equipment will be sold?

The Hon. H. Allison: As the Director-General points out, it is a little too far ahead to make a firm decision. What normally happens with Federal Government funding is that a new college is constructed and equipped on a walk-in, walk-out basis. Of course, that was one of the reasons why, some six or eight months ago, I deferred making available a considerable sum for the purchase of new equipment for the multi-media centre. I realised that there was a possibility of change of construction of a new college.

In fact, I travelled to Canberra in March this year to negotiate with the then Federal Minister for Education, Mr Fife, and this is the outcome. It may be that the multi-media centre will have to use the existing equipment for a little longer than was hoped, but in the realisation that there will be something much finer, at least in the way of equipment, when the new college opens. That matter has not been addressed, and will not be addressed until Mr Mewett brings down his report.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: I certainly hope that the report on the future of the multi-media unit will become a public document which can be discussed by all people involved in that sector of education and which will be made available to members of this place, because that was an area in which I took some interest when movements were afoot some months ago. A dramatic cut-back is proposed for music education in the vocational education area. What is the reason for that cut-back? How will the cut-back be effected? Apparently, there has already been a significant cut-back in the expanse of that course, because the outcome for 1981-82 was significantly down on what was proposed, and this year's Budget proposes to maintain the outcome of last year's expenditure.

The Hon. H. Allison: Perhaps Mr Carter, who is familiar with the accounting background, can explain what has happened. There is a significant discrepancy in regard to one of the figures.

Mr Carter: In fact, that reflects an error in the 1981-82 figures, rather than a cut-back in the music programme.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: Is there a simple explanation for the error, or does it involve mistransposed amounts?

Mr Carter: The department did not have information in the format of the Public Buildings Department presentation for the 1981-82 figures. We have been grappling with that problem over the past few years, and we are now in a better position to present more accurate information.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: The yellow book (page 75) shows that last year there was increased expenditure in the rural and horticultural area as compared to the proposed allocation. This year, it is proposed to increase the allocation still further. I might say that I believe that that will be very useful, because it will service a significant part of the State. In what way is that increase being put into effect?

The Hon. H. Allison: Mr Fleming will outline the progress that has been made over the past two or three years.

Mr Fleming: It has been predominantly in staffing. Proposals will go before the Budget Review Committee as the Minister endorses them in conjunction with rural studies lectures on Yorke Peninsula, Tatiara based on Bordertown, a pastoral co-ordinator based on Port Augusta, and a co-ordinator in the central office. A recent appointment was made at the Gawler college, and that appointee will be looking at both the viticultural side of the wine making industry and the on-farm programme between Gawler and the Clare and Mid-North area.

The Hon. H. Allison: A female lecturer has been appointed in agriculture and horticulture.

Mr Fleming: An appointment will also be made at the Noarlunga college, and the probable focus will again be the wine industry of the Southern Vales, in the cellarhand area, and the rural area that extends to Fleurieu Peninsula.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: Are there any proposals for further education courses for market gardeners?

Mr Fleming: Not at this stage.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: What are the estimated financial costs of the long service leave applications that will be processed in the coming financial year and in the immediate few years ahead, given the fact that there was a very large staff intake in the 1971-73 period, and those who stayed on from that intake will be due for long service leave.

The Hon. H. Allison: The long service leave provision has been about \$100 000. There has been speculation at the senior administrative level whether that sum will be adequate. So far we have managed to acquit long service leave applications from within the budget. Obviously, we will have to monitor the situation carefully, as we did in regard to the Education Department applications. Our philosophy is no different from one department to another. A sum of \$100 000 has been apportioned.

In regard to the previous question on market gardening courses, I might add that there are, of course, some stream 6 enrichment courses which are really enrichment vocational courses and which are directly involved with horticulture and market gardening studies. Those courses are scattered around the State on a demand basis.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: They would be aimed predominantly at the amateur rather than at the professional?

The Hon. H. Allison: I believe that, while quite a high proportion of stream 6 courses may be classed as amateur, lectures are given by very highly qualified people and, in fact, a wide cross-section of the community makes use of those courses. To say that stream 6 is amateurish is to belittle the standard of stream 6 education in a large number of cases. Mr Fleming pointed out that, included in certificate courses that are available in colleges, there are some horticultural components. That is a unit.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: I was not trying to belittle stream 6. The very fact that there are other streams indicates that a different sort of education is sometimes required. The issue of child care at community colleges was raised last year. Now the Government has decided to make available space, for example, at the Noarlunga Community College, space that was on the original plan, anyway, but the local students who attend that college have to provide the personnel for that child-care facility and to run it themselves. How far has that gone, and is there any extension of that same limited (and unsatisfactory) policy to other colleges that do not yet have any child-care facilities?

The Hon. H. Allison: There has been no change in Government policy on that issue. As I indicated at Noarlunga some months ago, in that particular instance no provision was made for creche facilities and, of course, the Federal Government does not normally fund pre-school or kindergarten facilities in its colleges of technical and further education; it never has done so. In that case we did say that the Principal would examine accommodation and, should he find appropriate facilities within the college, we would leave it to the parents to man, staff and use.

There are one or two other colleges in Adelaide that do have facilities built into them (Gilles Plains is one), and we would make available accommodation on the same basis. I would point out, however, that I do not really believe that it is the financial responsibility of the Department of Further Education to be providing creche facilities, and I have referred this matter to the Department of Community Welfare for its consideration.

Also, we have a large number of pre-school facilities scattered about the State, and I believe that parents should be looking towards accommodating their children in those facilities first, rather than relying on the Department of Technical and Further Education to provide accommodation. I would hope, in any case, that were accommodation to be provided within TAFE colleges parents would not look upon them as being a permanent place to leave their children but simply to keep their children there while they were attending classes and then to remove them.

Mr EVANS: I know that market gardening and horticultural courses are conducted at some colleges such as Urrbrae, and I am wondering whether a course in the growing of

flowers commercially has been considered along with those other courses. I believe that society has placed a greater emphasis on flowers than it has on vegetables. For instance, society will pay \$1.50 to \$2 for a carnation or a rose but it will not pay \$1 for a cauliflower, cabbage or a bunch of carrots. Also, we can export flowers, particularly proteas and that type of flower, at a reasonable profit but we have great difficulty in exporting vegetables at a profit. We usually find that other people are bringing their vegetables here in competition with our locally grown vegetables. In fact, we have lost most of the Northern Territory market to Western Australia and Queensland, and that could be because of transport difficulties.

I believe there is a magnificent opportunity for our State to provide facilities for the intense cultivation of flowers, because people seem to be far more interested in smelling or looking at something than they are in eating it. I wonder whether the department has looked at this aspect of further education.

The Hon. H. Allison: There would be limited scope for this. I take the comments from the honourable member as being constructive. Small units are contained within the existing horticultural courses conducted in some of our colleges. The point has also been made that quite apart from the Department of Technical and Further Education, the Department of Agriculture has extended its advisory service, particularly across the Northern Plains, but that does not include any advice on floriculture.

Mr EVANS: I thank the Minister for that. I wish to disclose that I have an interest in the question because I grow daffodils, tulips and hyacinths as an interest with a view to the future.

My next question relates to the mining industry. Because this industry is becoming a more dominant part in the economic future of our State, much more use will be made of heavy earthmoving machinery, particularly in relation to underground mining. Are courses available for people to learn how to handle such machinery, as opposed to their becoming mechanics? I am talking about the general use of the machinery. My experience in that field was quite lengthy before I came into this place, and I found that usually a person with no experience was put on to a machine worth hundreds of thousands of dollars. There was then a grave risk of damage being done to the machine, and often the person was not efficient enough to make full use of the machinery for some time. I wonder whether this aspect of training has been considered, because I believe there is a great opportunity in the future in this particular field.

Mr Fleming: The department has been having considerable discussion with the mining industry. We are already examining some courses that are specific to that industry. However, what we have found is that for the most part the requirements of the industry will be met by the courses we already run. Some of those courses are specifically in the areas the honourable member has spoken about, such as the one involving heavy earthmoving machinery. Only recently a successful course in the use of earthmoving machinery was run at the O'Halloran Hill college, whose staff have been having discussions with the mining industry about its future requirements. We are conscious of that, and I believe that we are in step with the industry's assessments of its future needs.

Mr Fricker: This is really a dual problem. One aspect of it is the need to look ahead to try to identify the needs of the industry, advance and then provide a fairly solid, almost formal course, or a certificate course, which leads to a qualification in that area.

The other aspect is the immediate response when a person with some technical background already, or perhaps even someone who has no formal training but has a wealth of

experience, wants to do a conversion course. The department responds in both these areas. We have curriculum committees. We have people designing courses in advance, and we have the response which Mr Fleming has just mentioned where we do run specific courses directed at a particular target, in this case the heavy earthmoving machinery. But until such time as the future of the mining industry is more clearly defined (and I have spoken to Mr Webb about this) we cannot say precisely how many people will be needed in two or three years time, or precisely what skills they will require.

It does seem to us, as Mr Fleming has said, that the people who are doing our various courses at the moment in the mechanical and engineering side will be well fitted to do specific conversion courses in the future when the need arises.

Mr EVANS: In a similar field, but in a smaller area of operation, there are the many unemployed people in the community who would like to learn how to handle small machinery. For instance, they might want to start a small lawnmowing business, or perhaps a business involving the cleaning up of yards which would require an ability to handle small machinery.

Many of these people's experience in doing manual work or using small machines is nil. Even though people might think that using a pick, shovel or hoe does not require skill, a person needs to know how to use the equipment methodically and effectively, and that is vital if they are going to be re-employed. In other words, if in taking up a contract to clean up a yard or to work a farm for a short period, many people are not methodical as they have not been taught how to use particular tools or machines. The owner loses faith in the ability of people to be able to do this work. The enthusiasm may be there, and they may wish to work, but they have never been taught to use, say, a shovel. For example, they may use only the front half of the shovel and the back will go rusty—the owner still has to pay for the back half, too.

So are we looking to meeting the opportunity, other than with some community-based programmes that may be organised by volunteer staff? Is further education looking at what might be called small business management in the practical field? From that area people can move on to bigger things, but they would be going in the right direction, learning how to be methodical.

Mr Fleming: We are very conscious of this group that you have mentioned. The earthmoving machinery course that I referred to, when responding on behalf of the Minister a moment ago, was directed at young unemployed people. About 15 did the course and, although I cannot be precise, my understanding is that almost all of them now have jobs in that area. That is one of some 80 to 100 courses of that kind that we are running this year directed at the 15 to 24-year-old age group, and particularly those who have experienced longer than usual unemployment.

We conduct a lot of those courses with Commonwealth school-to-work transition funds, of which the Department of Technical and Further Education receives quite a sizeable amount. Our usual practice is to look at industry and, where we identify employment opportunities for a group of young people, to design and run a course specifically geared towards the jobs we believe they can get in the area concerned. We generally find that most of these people get jobs. There is at the moment a course in Port Lincoln in the fish-processing area; we ran one last year, and every one of those people was employed before finishing the course. We anticipate that the same thing will happen with this course this year. A course which we run successfully is in the hospitality area—bar service, waiting and work of that type. Again, we have found that wherever we run this course employers are

only too willing to offer employment to the young people coming out of that course. There are innumerable examples, some of which seem quite obscure, but the main thing is that we are identifying that target group and lining up a job area in which we know they will be able to compete and obtain employment.

The Hon. H. Allison: There are some interesting statistics for transition education programmes for 1982, and perhaps I might also say that South Australia did pioneer the link course programmes some several years ago, a programme which was funded to the tune of about \$100 000 by the Federal Government in the first year. I think \$20 000 of that came to South Australia, just to one course, in the South-East—the pioneer course. Since then there has been a great degree of trial and error and culling of the least successful programmes, so that we are looking at a much more refined school-to-work transition programme in all its forms than we were three or four years ago.

Included in the pre-vocational trade programmes, with the nominal 15 students in each programme (which is a good teacher-student ratio), we have electrical trades, metal, metal fabrication, building (that is building in wood) and then pre-vocational trade courses for girls. A total of 631 youngsters have been trained in that line of studies.

Then, pre-vocation general, as opposed to the trade, includes business studies, commercial cookery, hospitality, fashion careers, gardening careers (which the members for Fisher and Salisbury will relate to their questions) and geological field assistants. Then, with the foundation courses, there is the educational programme for unemployed youth, involving 15 to 25-year olds—and in total there are a little fewer than 2 000 young people being trained. Then we have vocational preparation and link course programmes, and to these Mr Fleming specifically referred, with the returns showing over 3 000 youngsters being trained.

The nature of the programmes and their success, we believe, is improving year by year, and I believe that that is reflected in the additional confidence now shown in the way that the Federal Government is funding these programmes. There was a fear a few months ago that the Federal Government would restrict its allocation funding to link course programmes. There was a very strong rumour around that, after two years, they were reviewing it with a very negative approach. However, they have increased the programme, although admittedly they have incorporated the educational programme for unemployed youth (E.P.U.Y. scheme) within the Department of Technical and Further Education.

They have affirmed their confidence in the departmental schemes and brought the E.P.U.Y. under the ambit of TAFE, and I believe that the co-operative venture that we currently have, incorporating manpower planning, and with the Department of Labour and Industry and TAFE and the Education Department working in co-operation, is a vastly improved situation from that of a few years ago when each department was working in isolation, very often in competition with each other. The whole scheme would seem to be increasingly successful.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: I was intrigued by the member for Fisher's suggestion about flowers, and I will test the hypothesis by taking home to my wife a bunch of broccoli next time and see what response I get.

Port Pirie has a community college that is not in the best of condition. The Minister would be aware that I have asked a Question on Notice about that and the answer that came back was that any redevelopment of that community college is dependent on what B.H.A.S. decides to do in the town, or whether any new industry comes to the town. In any event, there was no certainty of Commonwealth funding for the project, which is estimated to cost between \$6 000 000

and \$9 000 000. Maintenance of this present college must be costing a significant amount. The college is in a very poor, dilapidated condition. It also is, to my mind, a poor commentary on the rights of the citizens of Port Pirie that they must be entirely dependent on the whim of a major investor in that town or any other potential investor whereas other communities are considered on a more demographic basis as to whether or not they get further educational facilities.

Members will recall that I commented last year, before we knew what was going to happen with the Adelaide college, that there was a considerable drain on State funds by means of rent and maintenance payments as a result of the condition and nature of the premises used by the Adelaide college prior to its new facility and some financial assistance could be expected when the new facility was put into effect. I appreciate that if Commonwealth funding is not available for this college there is not the saving to the same degree, but I believe, with the condition of the college being as it is at the moment, that good money is being thrown after bad in maintenance, trying to keep that college fairly useable.

The Hon. H. Allison: The plans currently are for the commencement of the Port Pirie project in 1984-85 but that partly depends on some resolution of the B.H.A.S. future and what the industrial activity will be there. That will certainly have some bearing on the scale of redevelopment of the new college at Port Pirie.

The whole future of the B.H.A.S. smelting works affects the demographic planning for the area, which has obviously stabilised in population after a decline. We have already discussed the construction of the college in two stages, and the college council has indicated support for that if it accelerates the commencement. We have talked with the Commonwealth Government regarding the future allocation of capital funds. The criticisms concerning South Australia contained in the TEC and TAFEC reports were addressed toward the expenditure on capital works rather than toward recurrent expenditure, with which they are satisfied.

We also asked the Commonwealth Government for a degree of flexibility because the former State Government and the present Government had varying plans for the Iron Triangle and its hinterland. Now that the various projects are firming up the future for that area is under closer review and, if anything accelerates industrial growth in the area, it will obviously result in a considerable change in the effort of TAFE.

So a number of factors are being borne in mind. The honourable member is correct when he says that some of the existing buildings are past their functional lifetime. For instance, a shed that was used as a drill hall before the First World War and has little life left should be pulled down. Appreciating this factor and other factors, we would like to accelerate the programme, but 1984-85 is currently the commencement date.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: I should have hoped that the answer tabled by the Minister in reply to question No. 127 would convey that information, but that answer was cryptic and cast doubt on anything at all being provided for the citizens of Port Pirie. Now, however, we are told that they are being seriously considered in respect of the development of facilities, and that is good news.

Courses are provided by the Department of Technical and Further Education in its own right, and others are farmed out to the Institute of Technology for certificate courses required under Acts of Parliament and regulations promulgated by the Government. In other words, people cannot engage in certain activities without having such a certificate. What is the cost to the department of running such courses?

The Hon. H. Allison: There was a reduction in the payment made to the institute for certificate courses over the past two or three years with no corresponding reduction in the nature of the courses. That was largely the result of negotiations between the Department of Technical and Further Education and the institute to determine whether the courses were being costed realistically. We believe that the funds at present allocated to the institute are realistic. We are currently investigating the costs (we had a disagreement over the costing) to ascertain whether it would be more economical to run more of the certificate courses within the Department of Technical and Further Education rather than within the Institute of Technology. That matter is currently under review. It may well be found to be more costly at the institute than within TAFE, but we are not certain. Current indications, however, are that the courses would be much cheaper to conduct within TAFE, so we may get higher returns for our expenditure.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: Is there a figure for the cost of such courses being run within TAFE?

The Hon. H. Allison: I will get that information for the honourable member.

Mr Fricker: Referring to the cost of certificate courses, we may be talking about courses leading to a certificate or vocational courses leading to a qualification recognised in the employment area, and I have the figures in relation to the latter. We have produced an analysis that shows that about 72 per cent of our total budget is directed towards specifically vocational courses.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: For instance, certain inspectorial occupations require a certificate. What is the cost of conducting courses leading up to those certificates?

The Hon. H. Allison: That would require specific analysis, and I will get the information.

Dr BILLARD: Earlier, reference was made to the difficulties encountered in trying to predict enrolments in Education Department schools and, in respect of further education, such difficulties would be even greater than those experienced by the Education Department. What facilities has the Technical and Further Education Department for assessing quickly the level of enrolments after the start of the year? Surely it would have to be on a course-by-course basis rather than on a school-by-school basis as it is in the Education Department for primary and secondary schools. Does the Department of Technical and Further Education make its prediction on a course-by-course basis of too few or too many students attending, and is this prediction used when considering the department's reaction? I am interested in the time of the reaction by management to what happens in respect of enrolments on the courses.

The Hon. H. Allison: That complex issue confronted me when I became Minister. In fact, one of the criticisms I addressed to the Director-General then and one that I had raised in Opposition was that it appeared that some of our new colleges, particularly the large metropolitan ones, had been constructed without considering any real evidence that the courses to be provided were in demand by members of the work force. At that time, the Director-General pointed out that there was a problem in getting accurate up-to-date manpower statistics from the Department of Labour and Industry, so our first move after coming into Government was to bring together the Department of Technical and Further Education and the Department of Labour and Industry to determine the extent to which accurate manpower planning might be set in train.

Those departments are still working independently of one another. We have representatives of industry and commerce on our various curriculum boards. TAFE has responded extremely quickly over the past 18 months to provide special training for young people involved in such occupations as

pipeline welding, in respect of which we set up what were almost emergency workshops for training.

Therefore, given an immediate incentive, that is, immediate work for young people on the horizon, we can make arrangements between the department and industry and commerce at very short notice. Given the declining employment situation the real problem is to be able to select accurately the positions that will be available in the longer term, which is a very difficult proposition. Therefore, flexibility is being built increasingly into the department. Both the Director-General and the Deputy Director-General have expressed the wish to make a further comment on this matter.

Mr Fricker: The honourable member's question consisted of two parts. The first relates to the longer term problem of forecasting some years ahead the total demand of the community for the service provided by the department. This future projection involves detailed calculations which are largely based on demography; in other words, one cannot project a number of students that will be in excess of the population of this State, even though some of the requests might give that indication. Further, the department has a well-developed approach to this problem of the number of people likely to be making a demand on our services.

I am greatly heartened by the fact that the Tertiary Education Authority of South Australia which has its own facilities and which has done a cross-check exercise on our work and came up virtually an identical result in regard to predictions of future demand.

The department then must take that total figure to try to relate it to the needs of the State as foreseen by industrial and commercial people and particularly by our own State development committee. The department has done much rationalisation or reconciliation in that regard to ensure that the respective figures are not widely diverse. These studies form a basis for planning our facilities and buildings as well as for the purchase of equipment and so on.

The second part of the honourable member's question related to management. This is a real problem because of the reaction time and it is a question to which Mr Carter and Mr Fleming have been directing their attention for the past 12 months. We are now well on the way to having a very good highly computerised system which can quickly return information to us during the year concerning enrolments, the loads bearing on various departments in colleges and various members of staff. Perhaps I could now ask Mr Fleming to comment.

Mr Fleming: We hope to have the new system operating by the end of the year which will considerably improve our ability to move staff about. A few things need to be understood to make sense of the problems that we have. The area that usually causes the most concern is the apprenticeship area. Of course, if an employer indentures an apprentice we are committed to enrolling that person, whereas for other courses if there is an oversubscription of people we tell them that we will try to run the course for those people in the following year. In those circumstances there is not the same obligation.

Therefore, if apprenticeships suddenly rise or fall it causes difficulties. It is not always easy to predict such fluctuations, although over the past couple of years the labour department has been able to give us a fairly good indication, at least in the macro sense. From that and from our own information from employers we are often able to identify in the preceding year fluctuations which might occur. For example, it was predicted that there would be a large increase this year whereas next year we suspect that there could be a decline.

In regard to staff it must be remembered that they are appointed to the department and they are moved throughout the colleges; they are not appointed to any one college in

particular and thus we are able to move them at short notice. Further, principals co-operate with one another and share staff. Therefore, a person might work half-time in one college and half-time in another, sometimes by central direction and sometimes by co-operative arrangement.

We have found that these days it is rather rare to find that numbers are down for a course; that tends to be very much the exception and our main problem is that numbers are too high. We have found that where we put on one course we should have put on six courses. In the engineering area if apprentice numbers fall, for example, there is so much demand from industry for specific courses, particularly of a retraining and updating kind, we find that we can backfill very quickly using the same staff and we have no difficulty in making such courses very productive in vocational areas.

We have a level of contract employees. Some of our staff are on short contracts. However, we want to improve that situation, which I think the new system will enable us to do, because sometimes we are in a situation where there is a fall off in numbers and we are unable to take up contracts. Therefore, we will be able to do some fine tuning. The important thing is the introduction of the new system which we hope will be operating by the end of the year.

Dr BILLARD: I appreciate that the staff at the colleges are fairly specialised in many areas and that you cannot shuffle staff between subjects. Moving staff from one centre to another can have quite drastic consequences on a whole range of courses that are available within each centre. I am aware of that problem and that is why I am concerned that management quickly obtains information about courses. How soon after the beginning of the year are consolidated enrolment figures available in regard to each course?

The Hon. H. Allison: For the trade area it is within a month. For stream 6 courses, for example the figures fluctuate from term to term and so the figures vary considerably from precise information that is available in trade apprenticeships which are closely co-ordinated through the I.C.T.C. chaired by Mr Milne, down to information about stream 6 courses which is available with less speed and accuracy.

Mr Fleming: In regard to the new computerised system about which I was speaking I would think that we should be able to work towards obtaining those figures within a fortnight from the beginning of the year and that thereafter we should be able to obtain those figures on a month to month basis, because sometimes the fluctuations during the year have as much effect as a surprise that we might get about the number of people who have enrolled at the beginning of the year.

On the matter of flexibility it should be appreciated that we employ large numbers of part-time instructors. We are rather cautious about getting too many specialists particularly in areas where we cannot be certain of forever having the numbers. Therefore, we tend to supplement our core staff with specialist people from industry, which has the dual effect of giving us a lot of flexibility. Perhaps equally importantly we get the most up-to-date people from various areas.

True, we do have many specialists staff but they are employed in areas where there is no question of demand being unpredictable and the number we take on is well short of demand but they are backed up by part-time instructors. However, I point out that that does not always work out totally in practice.

The Hon. H. Allison: That is one reason why we simply must have a certain proportion of contract staff at a time of rapid change and when there is a degree of unpredictability about future employment. So the department does maintain that flexibility which otherwise would hamstring it. There is always a problem too, that when staff are in short supply in any particular line of industry, it is very often difficult

to get training staff and we are faced with the question where on the wheel to break in, whether it is at university or C.A.E., the Institute of Technology, the department of Further Education. Somewhere one has to provide specialist staff either to train students or train or retrain staff.

The Department of Technical and Further Education has been flexible in that regard, too. It has had a high degree of co-operation from unions, from employers, from its own staff in making sure that in times of crisis it did swing in quickly to meet community needs. In that regard it is an efficient training department.

Mr RANDALL: My question is in the area of specialised courses for industries such as hairdressing. I have had a quick look at these three areas—I think there are three colleges in this metropolitan area anyway—that cater for that need, and I am aware that the hairdressing college will move to the new college that is proposed. Does this mean it will be centralised and the other two in the metropolitan area could be closed?

The Hon. H. Allison: It is being reviewed; nothing more than that at the moment—the Croydon Hairdressing College.

Mr Fricker: Basically the answer to that question will depend upon the community demand. If the demand for apprentice hairdressers drops off, then we will have to consolidate. If the demand goes up, then presumably the other schools will remain.

Mr RANDALL: That is what I was leading to. Obviously the department would keep some sort of figures on the demand. Is the demand improving or dropping off?

The Hon. H. Allison: The demand is declining according to Mr Fleming's latest information.

Mr RANDALL: I have an interest in asking that question because I believe there is some discussion (whilst it may be somewhat illegal to do so) because a private entrepreneur wants to set up a private hairdressing school. I realise that to become a registered hairdresser in this State one must first attend a recognised college of instruction. Is the Minister aware of any other privately run colleges being established in this State?

The Hon. H. Allison: I would remind the Committee that although legislation was brought before the House to repeal the licensing conditions that currently pertain, that legislation is still sitting on the Notice Paper. It will not be proceeded with during the present session of Parliament and, therefore, there is a requirement to be licensed, so that no college could legitimately be established, or no hairdressing course could be established unless it came through the Department of Technical and Further Education for licensing.

Mr RANDALL: On the basis of having obtained the certificate and the approval to go into trade, as it were, there is some talk that it could come under the guise of being a master hairdresser's certificate, which is not necessary by regulation in this State, but could be an incentive for the industry itself.

The Hon. H. Allison: Mr Fleming will respond.

Mr Fleming: The licensing provisions would still apply. If someone wishes to open a college for the purpose of technical and further education, then that person is required to seek a licence from the Minister. So, whatever course it was, I do not think that is the criterion. It is what goes on inside the institution. If that is technical and further education, then the Minister is the person who issues the licence.

The Hon. H. Allison: We have not heard of a college seeking to be established. I do not know if the honourable member has.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: Why has there been the significant change towards contract appointments on new appointments in the department? In 1981, 14 per cent were not contract. This last year it has fallen to 3 per cent which really means

only one person according to the answer to Question on Notice No. 73. Is that trend indicating that all new appointments in the department will be contract appointments?

The Hon. H. Allison: Mr Fleming will respond.

Mr Fleming: Over the last couple of years most of the appointments, which get the approval of the Budget Review Committee, have involved contracts varying from one to three years (usually three rather than one) for a variety of reasons. First, until the last couple of years the trend was exactly the opposite; almost invariably they were permanent positions. I believe that the objective of the Budget Review committee is to get a level of contract appointments into the department which would give it sufficient flexibility. It would seem to be approaching that particular level at the moment.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: What is that overall level?

Mr Fleming: Seven or eight per cent, but of that order. I could not give a precise figure, but we think it is of that order. We actually are looking at that particular figure. That is without the Commonwealth contract.

The Hon. H. Allison: The Committee will realise that Mr Fleming is bound by the question of Government policy in this regard, and it has largely been a Government decision to monitor carefully new appointments throughout the Government, not only in the Department of Technical and Further Education and, as Mr Fleming comments, the incidence of contract appointees would be close to 7.5 per cent.

The CHAIRMAN: There being no further questions, I declare examination of the vote completed.

Works and Services—Department of Technical and Further Education, \$985 000—examination declared completed.

[Sitting suspended from 6 to 7.30 p.m.]

The CHAIRMAN: I advise the Committee that Dr Brian Billard has been replaced by Mr Allan Rodda, and Mr John Trainer has been replaced by Mr G. Crafter.

Works and Services—Education Department, \$1 400 000

Chairman:
Mr G. M. Gunn

Members:
Mr L. M. F. Arnold
Mr G. J. Crafter
The Hon. Peter Duncan
Mr S. G. Evans
The Hon. R. G. Payne
Mr R. J. Randall
Mr W. A. Rodda
Mr I. Schmidt

Witness:

The Hon. H. Allison, Minister of Education.

Departmental Advisers:

Mr C. H. Podger, Transport Officer, Education Department.

Mr B. J. Grear, Executive Director, Office of the Ministry of Education.

Mr J. A. Sangster, Administrative Officer, Office of the Ministry of Education.

Mr EVANS: Has consideration been given to using diesel buses in lieu of petrol-driven buses? I believe that it is cheaper to operate a diesel motor and there is less fire risk in an accident situation.

The Hon. H. Allison: Yes, consideration has been given to that. I understood that one of the reasons why a change was not made was the difficulty in obtaining diesel fuel in the majority of areas where buses are used. We have discussed the question of reliability and other factors associated with diesel buses, but we have found that maintenance and the availability of diesel fuel in remote outback areas has swung the department essentially in favour of petrol engines.

Mr EVANS: Is there a problem in regard to the theft of fuel from petrol-driven buses?

The Hon. H. Allison: Ninety of the 450 buses, or 20 per cent, run on diesel.

Mr EVANS: There is a greater incentive for fuel theft as fuel becomes more expensive. Has the department experienced problems in regard to theft? At some future date I would be interested to know in how many remote areas diesel is not available. I do not believe that the unavailability of fuel is a valid argument, because I believe that diesel would be available in most places. There may be problems in servicing the vehicles in regard to pumps and the fuel injectors, but that is an infrequent type of service. How much servicing is involved, and how many problems would there be in changing to diesel?

The Hon. H. Allison: I am not sure how much evidence there is of fuel theft, if there is any.

Mr Podger: Fuel consumption is better with diesel engines. In our experience, this advantage has been offset by disadvantages in regard to servicing, remembering that the buses have to go anywhere in the State. They do not operate in one area only: there is a certain flexibility in movement, and that is one of the problems.

The Hon. H. Allison: I accept the honourable member's point. Two years ago I took up this matter with the department, but we could re-examine the matter.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: As there is a problem in regard to petrol sniffing in certain isolated communities, conversion to diesel fuel could present an added advantage, at least in regard to buses in those areas, despite the difficulties of supply.

The Hon. H. Allison: I thank the honourable member for that comment. We are all aware of the associated health hazards, although I have to say that the majority of cases of petrol sniffing have occurred where youngsters have easy access to petrol from parents' cars and from other family sources.

The CHAIRMAN: There being no further questions, I declare the examination of the vote completed.

Minister of Education, Miscellaneous, \$42 181 000

Chairman:
Mr G. M. Gunn

Members:
Mr L. M. F. Arnold
Mr G. J. Crafter
The Hon. Peter Duncan
Mr S. G. Evans
The Hon. R. G. Payne
Mr R. J. Randall
Mr W. A. Rodda
Mr I. Schmidt

Witness:

The Hon. H. Allison, Minister of Education.

Departmental Advisers:

Dr F. N. Ebbeck, Executive Director, Kindergarten Union of South Australia.

Mr B. J. Grear, Executive Director, Office of the Ministry of Education.

Mr J. A. Sangster, Administrative Officer, Office of the Ministry of Education.

The Hon. H. Allison: There was a straight mathematical error over pages 98, 99 and 100; new pages 98, 100, 116 have been prepared, and each member of the Committee will receive a copy. In regard to the commentary on resource variations between the years 1981-82 and 1982-83 (page 98), in the first line the amount of \$17 149 000 should read \$16 730 000, and on the second line the figure of \$1 165 000 should read \$750 000 or 4.7 per cent. In the second column, in the second paragraph, it is stated that the provision of facilities is to be considerably increased by an additional \$341 000, that is, 29.6 per cent. The 31 per cent has been left in, and that figure represents 29.6 per cent. There was a poorly printed section in the last paragraph of that column, which has not been changed. It was not \$30, but \$30 000 on the end of the first line in the last column, so that it reads:

Executive and Administrative Support Services expenditure is to increase by \$30 000 or 5.3 per cent...

Those extensions carry on. On page 100, fourth column from the right-hand side, 1 910 becomes 1 492. The column then totals not 1 930 but 1 512. At page 116 under 'Capital Expenditure 1982-83 Proposed' 1 910 is replaced by 1 492.

The CHAIRMAN: Are there any questions?

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: The area of early childhood services has been somewhat tortured over the past year, for one reason or another, and a number of changes have taken place and are reflected in the Budget papers before us. In order to assist the Committee to fully understand the implications of those changes, can we be advised what the effective vote was last year for Catholic education office, pre-schools, Education Department child parent centres, and the Kindergarten Union? These do not show figures for last year but only for votes this year. The other item concerns the Early Childhood Education Advisory Committee and of course there would not be a vote for that last year, but could we be told the exact equivalent figure which would be for the Childhood Services Council?

The Hon. H. Allison: The figures were not broken up precisely in that way and are not readily available. Will the honourable member give them on notice? We can have them analysed from C.S.C. records as far as we possibly can.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: Yes, I thank the Minister for that. My second question, I appreciate will have to be an order of magnitude question rather than specific as a result of the need to get the figures, but with the disbanding of the Childhood Services Council and the consequent creation of the Early Childhood Education Advisory Committee, what is the anticipated overall net saving from that exercise?

The Hon. H. Allison: There is an approximate saving of \$110 000, the difference between the Childhood Services Council and A.C.E.A.C. administrative costs to date.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: One of the reasons that was assumed in many people's minds to have been the cause for first of all the Burdett inquiry and the disbanding of the Childhood Services Council would have been the affair over the Budget operating grants to pre-school centres. What is the amount to be allocated this year for those grants, and what was the like figure last year?

The Hon. H. Allison: There is an additional \$90 000 put into that account, plus half a term that was previously to have been deducted from the last one; around about \$70 000 was reinstated at the end of last year.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: What do we add the \$90 000 to?

Mr Grear: The figure is not detailed other than in the Kindergarten Union area, where the details are in the Budget papers, but for the other sponsors that information is collected with all of the grants given to the sponsors and is not detailed in the papers.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: Budget operating grants in real terms have declined over a five year period. Is the effect of the \$90 000 increase in excess of the c.p.i.? In other words, does it at least maintain the real levels that applied last year, or does it go beyond that and take us back to the level that may have applied some time earlier?

The Hon. H. Allison: It does represent a real increase over last year's figures.

Mr EVANS: Does the \$15 000,000 for the Kindergarten Union include capital works, such as the construction of new kindergartens?

The Hon. H. Allison: There are two figures in the Kindergarten Union capital works: there is a figure carried over from loans made to the Kindergarten Union in 1980-81, and that figure stood at about \$600 000 at the beginning of the last financial year and we would have expended slightly more than \$200 000 to new kindergartens during the last 12 months. That means that there is a carry over of about \$400 000 from 1980-81, and that sum remained in the Treasury and is a separate loan borrowing for Kindergarten Union. This year the borrowing would be about \$600 000, so we would have around about \$1 000 000 available for redevelopment of new kindergartens capital works programme, representing new borrowings and accumulated borrowings still in Treasury.

Mr EVANS: I wish to ask a question relating to the ability of the Kindergarten Union to maintain a staff-child ratio of around 12 and, where there is an imbalance at times now, where some kindergartens are short of staff and others may be overstaffed according to that ratio, to what degree are we achieving any balance in that area?

The Hon. H. Allison: Dr Ebbeck has the figures.

Dr Ebbeck: On the August figures the child-staff ratio was one to 11.5. With the proposed Budget, there being no decrease in the amounts of moneys for staffing and the Government's request that no numbers be decreased, and with the anticipated fewer numbers of children at age 4 coming into the pre-schools, we anticipate that the child-staff ratio of one to 11.5 will get better.

Mr EVANS: Is it thought that there will be any improvement in the areas where there is a significant increase in the number of children attending kindergartens, taking into account the past experience of the apparent inability of the union to be able to transfer staff from areas where there could be a surplus of over the average of 12 children per teacher to the areas where they are really in need? Do we see any possibility of that situation changing?

Dr Ebbeck: Yes, we do see that. Presently we are gathering data to mount another rationalisation exercise that will take effect in February next year. The funds so freed from the existing situation to be redeployed to areas of greatest need should alleviate quite considerably heavily populated kindergartens at the moment.

At the same time, the Minister has before him a request for some alleviation of the present difficult staffing in 13 or 14 kindergartens. He is considering at least a patch-up for this year whilst the rationalisation exercise takes place for next year.

The Hon. H. Allison: I point out that any expansion programmes, that is, capital works, will be covered under

the loan works programme, but for additional staffing to be provided would require an application to Treasury and an excess warrant to be provided. At the moment we are looking at any redeployment of staff to be within the Kindergarten Union for existing programmes. There is very little room for expansion.

Mr EVANS: Can I ask a supplementary question? Why do we retain the practice of deciding staff numbers by taking the number of children as at August, when we are thinking of the staff which is likely to be used in the beginning of the next calendar year?

Dr Ebbeck: That is one yardstick which I suppose is the basic yardstick from which we begin. The union in this current exercise is also taking into consideration children who, for one reason or another, are handicapped and, therefore, demand special attention. There is a special weighting given to these children, the isolated as well as the handicapped. We are also looking at the projected enrolment, asking the staff of the centres and with our knowledge of the statistics as they come from A.B.S. and other sources as to what the enrolments might be, appreciating that, as pre-schoolers, it is the first opportunity children and parents have to bring their children to a formalised schooling setting and the children come out of the woodwork for quite a few months after the beginning of the year. It is therefore difficult to estimate with any degree of accuracy just what the enrolment will be. We have a good idea from past trends and certainly our statisticians and planners help us with the future, so I do think we are taking a more long-term view than perhaps we have taken in the past.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: May I clarify one point supplementary to the member for Fisher's question? With regard to the new facilities, I take it that no special borrowings have been made this year. These were borrowings last year and not totally used up, or borrowing allowance that was not used up and, therefore, will be used up this year, taking the total loan outstanding repayable by the Kindergarten Union to about \$1 000 000; is that correct?

The Hon. H. Allison: Yes, the \$400 000 was from 1980-81 and it has been expended over the last two years, leaving an amount of about \$400 000 from 1980-81 with fresh borrowings this year, taking it up to about \$1 000 000.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: Where do the first borrowings this year appear in the Budget papers?

Mr Grear: They do not appear specifically in the Budget papers. They are loans taken up as semi-government borrowings. It is a statutory authority. It is reflected in the yellow book.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: I wanted to know why what appears in the yellow book does not appear in this. There has again been another area of debate with regard to pre-school centres and that is in relation to the staffing ratios. Earlier this afternoon the Minister made the comment that a 10:1 ratio, I think, was Utopian. It was a like phrase.

The Hon. H. Allison: The target.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: I thought the term 'Utopian' was used, which indicated that the target was not going to be achieved. What would be the actual cost of bringing the Kindergarten Union staffing to a 1:10 ratio and how many Kindergarten Union pre-schools could presently be considered to be staffed in excess of that?

The Hon. H. Allison: The additional cost would be around about 15 per cent of the present staffing total to bring it down to 1:10.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: What figure would that be, because we do not have the wages component?

The Hon. H. Allison: We are looking at around \$500 000 to \$700 000 at the present time for about 80 centres.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: How do the child-parent centres fit in?

The Hon. H. Allison: We are looking, I should imagine, at somewhere around \$400 000, at least.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: How many centres?

The Hon. H. Allison: That is the extension and bringing it down to the 1:10.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: You do not know how many centres might be in excess?

The Hon. H. Allison: No, but there are about 80 child parent centres. I am not sure how many are in excess. We will take that on notice and bring that back to the Committee.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: With the financial accounts for the Kindergarten Union for the year ahead, is it anticipated it will have a balanced budget, or will it run into deficit? If it will run into deficit has Treasury approved such a situation?

The Hon. H. Allison: Yes, the Kindergarten Union is aiming at a balanced budget but, as I said, there are one or two applications which have already been received for expansions and, as those expansions both in the Kindergarten Union and child parent centres are considered, then it will mean either running into deficit, or obtaining an excess warrant, whichever is the better of the two alternatives, from Treasury.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: Does it have the authority to run into deficit without Treasury approval?

The Hon. H. Allison: No.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: It would need Treasury approval to do that?

The Hon. H. Allison: Yes.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: I understand that there are to be two new positions in the central administration of the Kindergarten Union. I do not know how much they are going to cost and any information on that cost would be appreciated. Does that add any pressure on the funds available to the central administration of the Kindergarten Union. In other words, has any increase in funding for the central administration of the Kindergarten Union not only taken account of inflation on the costs of those features of the administration that are presently there but also adding in the costs of these two new positions?

Dr Ebbeck: It does place a strain on the funds for central administration but, acting under instructions from the Minister that there are no increasing funds for those positions, it is part of the restructuring subsequent to a Public Service Board review of the administrative structure of the union. There will be one and maybe two current staff members who have been declared redundant, simply because of the reorganisation. Their positions no longer exist and their talents are not suitable for the created positions, apparently. Both persons concerned have applied for subsequent positions which were advertised, which will cost about \$82 000. There is a \$42 000 position and a \$39 000 position.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: So that means there has been a changing of hats; two positions have gone and two new positions have been created. It may just happen that the people from the gone positions may end up in the new positions?

Dr Ebbeck: Yes.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: What were the actual titles of those respective positions, the ones which will be phased out and the ones which have been created?

Dr Ebbeck: One is the Executive Officer Policy Development and the other is the Principal Adviser, which is a field position. Those positions are being replaced with the Deputy Executive Director and the Director of Education Care Programmes, again a field position.

The Hon. H. Allison: There is one statistic which we have been able to obtain from existing records. The figure that the honourable member was looking for in the Education Department child parent centres was \$116 000, spread over 20 centres.

We are looking at about \$900 000 at present, as well as a number of expansionary programmes both within the Kindergarten Union and within the child parent centres of the Education Department, which would probably add another \$350 000.

Mr SCHMIDT: There seems to be a discrepancy between the proposed allocation of \$15 048 000 on page 59 of the Estimates and the allocation of \$16 730 000 on page 98 of the support document. Which figure is the appropriate one?

The Hon. H. Allison: We will check that and let the honourable member know.

Mr SCHMIDT: A ratio of 11.5:1 has been given in respect to kindergartens. Can the Minister say how many kindergartens have a ratio greater than that and how many less?

Dr Ebbeck: I cannot say, but I can give the ratios for the 13 most unfavourable cases which were contained in a list submitted to the Minister recently, as follows:

Happy Valley	13.1:1
Windsor Gardens	11.2:1
Munno Para	12.5:1
Maddison Park	13.1:1
M.L. Bailey	14.3:1
Dorothy Hughes (Tea Tree Gully)	13.1:1
Peterborough	15:1
Ritchie Crescent (Whyalla)	12.8:1
Brentwood Drive	10.7:1
West Beach	11:1
West Lake Shore	12.3:1
Taperoo	10:1
Flagstaff Hill	12.7:1

At Taperoo, the figure is slightly different because of the Aboriginal component at the kindergarten: it should really be 8:1.

Mr SCHMIDT: At page 100 of the supporting document, \$103 000 is provided for the staffing of kindergartens, and that is an increase of only \$3 000 on last year. This would seem to indicate that the number of staff will not increase this year. Will staffing shortages be made up by rationalisation or will additional staff be appointed?

Dr Ebbeck: There will be rationalisation as well as fewer children. Special consideration will be given by the Minister to certain cases so that immediate help can be given in addition to the Budget allocation.

Mr SCHMIDT: Is that matter receiving consideration or will it be considered at some future time?

The Hon. H. Allison: I received that list of kindergartens a few days ago, and the Education Department submitted a similar list. Both lists will be given post-Estimates consideration. I point out that the ratios quoted still compare favourably with those in other parts of Australia. The single extreme is 15:1 and the ratios range downward to 10:1. We are trying to further improve a good state of affairs in South Australia by making some special applications.

Mr SCHMIDT: Can the Minister say from which total figure we are operating?

Mr Grear: The figures in the support document include moneys from the Aboriginal Affairs Department and from the Office of Child Care towards the programme.

Mr RODDA: At page 104, the supporting document refers to speech pathology and medical advice to overcome developmental difficulties. It is stated that requests for additional staffing were successful in providing an extra speech pathologist position and that case load numbers had been reduced to more acceptable levels, with waiting time between referral and consultation being reduced. In the South-East, particularly around Millicent, parents with young children, some beyond kindergarten age, required access to a speech ther-

apist last year. Is anything being done to help such children in country areas in the way stated in the document?

The Hon. H. Allison: Speech therapists are attached to the Education Department based in Mount Gambier and move around the South-East. Extreme cases are referred to the departmental officers. The honourable member said that some of the children requiring attention were beyond kindergarten age, and they would be looked after by staff from the Mount Gambier centre. Doctor Ebbeck's resident staff would be based in Adelaide and travel throughout the State.

Mr RODDA: There seems to be a great need for this service in the South-East, some say because of the nearness of the sea. What effort is being made to meet the need to which I referred?

Dr Ebbeck: We are aware that there are acute problems in the South-East in this respect. Our staff work in close co-operation with the Child and Adolescent Services there, especially in relation to speech therapy, as it does in other country areas on other specific problems.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: In one school handicapped pre-school children are handled by a staffing ratio of 8:1. A few pre-school kindergartens have applied for special financial assistance to fund their handicap programmes, in addition to staffing ratio support. I have in mind especially the Vermont Kindergarten, which is known to the Minister and to Dr Ebbeck and which runs an imaginative programme for handicapped children. In 1981, support was received from the I.Y.D.P. and also from various service clubs. An earlier question concerning ongoing support for such a programme met with no success. Can the Minister now say whether his Government will consider granting financial support for programmes that encourage handicapped children to attend such a kindergarten as Vermont rather than have such kindergartens rely purely on what they can garner from scratching around?

The Hon. H. Allison: This issue has not been considered specifically in relation to this Budget but, as it has been drawn to my attention, I will discuss it with my colleagues and report back.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: How many kindergartens within the Kindergarten Union are located on Education Department premises? Under what terms and conditions do they occupy such locations, specifically as regards rent and building maintenance costs?

The Hon. H. Allison: Can the honourable member proceed with another question while Dr Ebbeck procures that statistical information?

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: In regard to child parent centres, and the allocated amount in the Budget of \$3 200 000, what can be regarded to be the administrative component of that amount? How much of that applies to the cost of centres and how much of that would be for administrative costs in the Education Department?

The Hon. H. Allison: We shall take that question on notice while the departmental officers check on the data.

Mr EVANS: I refer to the Kindergarten Union and the operation of kindergartens. Is there any comparison done by the unions concerning the actual cost of services paid for by each kindergarten, for example, cleaning, caretaking, power, water and telephone charges, etc.? Can the Minister say whether any guidance is given for a standard accounting practice so that in comparing operations of kindergartens one can make an assessment of their operating costs?

For example, the operating costs of one kindergarten might be exorbitant in comparison with another which might operate in a more frugal manner. Of course, when making such a comparison one would have to take into account the age and size of a building, the number of children who attend, the siting of a building (because commodities could be more expensive in some areas than others), and so on.

I have had some communication with kindergartens in my area and I was amazed to find that in one instance the telephone bill was double that of another kindergarten. In other instances I have found that the excess water consumption for some kindergartens was nil whereas for one kindergarten the cost is \$170-odd a year. Also, the cost of power, caretakers and so on is different for various kindergartens.

I point out that I am aware of the many hours of voluntary service that parent groups give to most of our kindergartens in South Australia which I believe is to their credit. For our society to operate it is vital that they do so; there is a large parent component input in regard to the operation of kindergartens as well as that from Government. If a closer look were taken at the operation of kindergartens and some guidance given, perhaps we could end up saving a lot of money each year. Kindergartens, by way of a standard accounting practice, could report exactly how much their costs were in certain areas and could draw comparisons from the overall results.

The Hon. H. Allison: The honourable member's comments were more by way of constructive suggestion than anything else. At the moment about two-thirds of the operating costs of kindergartens are met by charges on parent organisations, which vary considerably for the various kindergartens and child care centres across the State, according to how they raise funds. One-third of the operating costs is contributed by the State Government. But there is also an administrative factor. I do not know whether Dr Ebbeck would care to comment on the honourable member's suggestion that perhaps a greater degree of collaboration might result in co-operative action in regard to cleaning and whatever else. Perhaps that matter has already been investigated following the decision of the State Schools Organisation to encourage schools to take a closer look at many of the things they do. That organisation sells a useful booklet for \$10 which contains instructions on administration.

Dr Ebbeck: We do receive this information (broken down into various components for fuel, power and cleaning costs) annually from the committees, and this information is reflected in our annual reports. We give advice to committees on budgeting which is done at the beginning of every year.

However, the composition of committees change as do the treasurers and presidents, and therefore we are a little loath to be overly directive with committees, although I take the honourable member's advice that, perhaps as costs are escalating and committees are becoming more and more concerned about that we might have to be a little more directive in the type of advice we give in regard to the practices that are followed by committees.

The Hon. H. Allison: At some stage earlier I suggested that I would make a comment in regard to educational and other grants made available from the Federal Government. The Federal Government does have a habit of looking very closely at the costs per student across all the States and to make compensatory grants accordingly to those States which are under-achieving.

In education, including pre-school education in South Australia, we have become over-achievers in comparison with the targets set by the Schools Commission, and thus one is always in danger of receiving a smaller Federal allocation simply because of the high standard reached. In regard to South Australia's pre-school education, I mentioned a figure of about \$2 100 per capita. In fact that precise figure is \$2 047 per capita. That cost of educating pre-school children on a full-time basis is very close to that which is required to educate secondary students in South Australia. I draw that matter to the attention of the Committee again because South Australia's provision for pre-school children is literally second to none. The charge which parents pay is

in the vicinity of \$30 per term, compared with the cost in New South Wales which is between \$1 200 and \$1 500 a year. Therefore, the charge to parents (and this is other than money received from fund-raising activities) is extremely modest.

Mr EVANS: What I am suggesting is that if the union already receives reports from each kindergarten or pre-school centre concerning how much they spend on power, telephone and water, etc., shown as clearly defined items, it would be beneficial if a list were sent out to each kindergarten at the end of the year (not individually naming kindergartens but designating them as A, B, C, and so on) giving details of all kindergartens and showing comparative figures for costs and charges. The parent committees and the staff of kindergartens could then assess figures for the operation of the establishment with which they are involved and could perhaps make inquiries of others about how cost savings could be achieved.

I accept the fact that kindergartens themselves are raising two-thirds of the money they require but the raising of those funds is still a demand on parents and the community, and it would be a pity if people at certain places were telephoning friends or wasting money in other areas not directly associated with the running of the establishment. I do not think that we should be concerned about the fact that the Federal Government is examining the matter of funding those establishments that are not efficient.

Will the Minister, his department and the union consider sending out to each kindergarten a detailed list of what it costs the respective kindergartens within the State in the particular areas of expenditure that I have expressed?

The Hon. H. Allison: There is also the additional factor to be considered that kindergartens will vary quite considerably in size. We would have to assess that of course, country kindergarten telephone charges would be in excess of those in the metropolitan area, simply through communication with the Kindergarten Union head office and other factors, but certainly that analysis could be done.

Mr RANDALL: Before we move to any further questions, I think there are questions from the member for Salisbury which should be clarified at this stage.

Mr Grear: On the question of the pre-schools in the Education Department's administrative costs, while the appropriation is shown in the Minister's miscellaneous lines, the detail in the yellow books is, of course, shown in the Education Department allocation. Page 48 of the yellow book shows \$609 000 for learning and administrative support, that is, advisory people and administrative support of which an estimate of \$98 000 is the direct head office administrative component of that line for the child-parent centres.

Dr Ebbeck: I thought I had the numbers here, but it was for another reason this afternoon that I got the number for metropolitan Adelaide, which is about 10. I think it is 15 in the country regions. I have a sneaking suspicion that 27 is the total number, but I can get that information for the Committee.

Mr EVANS: My last question is in relation to the numbers attending kindergartens. In those areas where children in the four-year-old age group live within an accessible distance to kindergartens and desire to attend kindergartens, are there any on the waiting list, or are all of them being catered for? In some cases is it not a fact that kindergartens are perhaps encouraging 3½-year-olds (maybe even younger—I do not know) to attend in an endeavour to keep up numbers to retain staff?

Dr Ebbeck: On the question of 3½-year-olds who are not part of the special education programme (in other words, handicapped children or isolated children, however defined in that category) they are not counted on the staffing entitlement, and so the answer to that is 'No'. Not all four-

year-olds are attending kindergarten. Some are attending for less than the considered optimum attendance, which is four sessions per week; some attend three, and some attend two. In certain areas (and I think particularly the 13 cases that I cited before would be examples) children probably receive less than the four sessions per week of kindergarten.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: For the moment I wish to turn to TEASA, and the Minister will recall that last week I asked whether he would use his authority under the South Australian College of Advanced Education Act to consult with the council of that college in order to make representations on behalf of those whose contracts with the college were in danger of being terminated. Did the Minister undertake that, and what response did he receive from the council?

The Hon. H. Allison: I have not contacted the council, but on this and an associated matter, the question of migrant language instruction, I have contacted the Chairman of the Tertiary Education Authority in South Australia and the Director of the South Australian College of Advanced Education, Mr Ramsey, and called for a report. I was told that no decision had in fact been made. There is a lot of rumour-mongering going around, but I am told that the decision has not been made. The matter is still under consideration, so I would like to have the accurate information to hand, and I have asked for that as a matter of urgency.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: Obviously the college is funded federally through the Tertiary Education Commission, yet the Premier last year announced that there would be no retrenchments. One can debate the semantics of whether or not renewing a contract is or is not a retrenchment, but the fact that that statement was made indicated that the State Government at that time obviously felt that it had some capacity to determine employment at the college. How does the Minister see that the State Government can influence, as indicated by the Premier's comment, the employment practice of the college?

The Hon. H. Allison: I believe the precise words used by the Premier when the colleges were amalgamated were that there would be no risk of retrenchment, dismissal, at the time of the takeover but, to extend that Government guarantee *ad infinitum*, I do not believe was the intention of the Treasurer. Obviously one of the reasons for amalgamating the four colleges of advanced education is so that competing courses in the four colleges could to some extent be amalgamated. Precisely how that is effected would depend partly upon decisions of the college council and also, of course, upon the allocation of funds by the Federal Government to the Tertiary Education Authority of South Australia for disbursement to universities and C.A.E.'s. Once money has been allocated to any tertiary institution, the decision on how to utilise those funds rests purely with the administration, of the university or college council. For example, some concern was expressed a little earlier about the School of Engineering at Adelaide University, and that was rearranged internally. One would assume that these college councils, with their considerable degree of autonomy, are appointed, because they are responsible people, or elected by the staff because they are responsible, and from my point of view I believe that the Minister should exercise as little of his statutory authority as possible. In fact, it has been suggested many times that Ministers should intervene with great reluctance rather than earlier. So I have asked for that report and I will give that very careful consideration when it arrives.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: The other side of the coin, of course, to consulting with the college council is consulting with the Federal purse. Has the Minister made any representations to the Federal Minister of Education pointing out the effects that the cut-back in contract positions at the college will have, both within the college and also in certain

aspects of the State's development, given the fact that a number of those courses that will be affected do play a part in the employment structure of the State?

The Hon. H. Allison: When Federal funds are announced (and this happens at all times) the documents are forwarded to the Minister of Education and also to the Chairman of the Tertiary Education Authority of South Australia, who confers with me. There is always a response from the States, taking into account the point of view of the colleges and universities, expressing quite clearly the problems that we experience and what we would like to see happen, and also indicating what financial and other impact the changes in Federal funding would have on the State generally. That was done relatively early.

There has not been a more recent communication, although the funding was announced not all that long ago, and it takes a little while. The last communication that I had on this matter would have been some three or four weeks ago from the Chairman of the Tertiary Education Authority through my office. The Chairman would have negotiated that response in consultation with the colleges, the universities and the institute.

Mr SCHMIDT: The yellow book (page 100) shows that \$1 492 000 is proposed this year under the kindergarten line for capital expenditure, yet the Minister referred to \$1 200 000. Could the Minister clarify the situation, and in so doing outline, as he indicated in regard to the 13 worst affected kindergartens in respect to staffing, what are the top priorities in respect of provision of new facilities for various areas?

The Hon. H. Allison: In answer to the last question, we have not divided the 12 or 13 kindergartens into first, second or third priorities. As far as the Kindergarten Union is concerned, they are all priorities and have not been put into a specific order.

Mr SCHMIDT: What is the situation in regard to priorities for facilities in the 13 kindergartens?

The Hon. H. Allison: There are 11 proposals before us for capital expenditure, and there is a possibility that these will be staged for construction from the present time until the middle of next year, allowing us to expand and to provide some staffing in the ensuing financial year. Already, a few of those matters have been considered, but the whole list is currently before me. Proposals for Craigmore, St Agnes, Hallett Cove, and Tanunda have already been approved, and a number are awaiting approval. The programme that we are looking at for expansion and construction of new premises will extend to the middle of next year.

I point out that a little while ago a proposal was approved in Mount Gambier on the proviso that no additional staff were to be made available and that an existing kindergarten was to be phased out steadily while the staff were utilised elsewhere. Rental will be saved on one project, and accommodation will be provided elsewhere by means of a new kindergarten. That was a local rationalisation. Future developments do not necessarily mean expansion programmes. We are looking to relocate a kindergarten at Modbury rather than expanding.

Mr SCHMIDT: Does the \$1 492 000 relate to expansion of facilities?

The Hon. H. Allison: The programme that we have in mind totals \$1 580 000, but it extends into October the next financial year. So, with the capital works and the loans already in hand of \$1 000 000, construction and payment would flow on into the next financial year. The programme is actually larger than the funds in hand. That was quite deliberate, because we saw that the Loan works programme would extend beyond 30 June 1983.

Mr SCHMIDT: It is pleasing to hear that Hallett Cove is among the four approvals for expansion. Can the Minister

indicate when that will be undertaken? This matter is supplementary to a question that was asked in regard to the metropolitan area, where numbers are increasing. Aberfoyle Park, Happy Valley South and Flagstaff Hill are also in dire need, and it would be encouraging to know that consideration has been given to those areas. I am sure that areas of need exist in the north. Can the Minister indicate when approval will be given for those other centres? I believe it has been indicated that Happy Valley South has been considered.

The Hon. H. Allison: Happy Valley South did not appear on the list. Additional staffing is being considered in that area. We are currently running a programme from a mobile unit located in the school.

Dr Ebbeck: It is located in a scout hall—very substandard premises. There is a question whether that kindergarten, with its rapidly declining numbers, should continue or whether it should be relocated elsewhere. I had discussions in that regard this week, and I believe that we need to re-look at the total Happy Valley South situation.

The Hon. H. Allison: The honourable member referred to Hallett Cove, and provision has been made for land purchase in the Karrara area as a first step.

The Hon. PETER DUNCAN: Regarding the Tertiary Education Authority of South Australia and the funding of the College of Advanced Education, I am particularly interested to know whether or not the Minister considers the potential sacking of 50 so-called contract staff, many of whom have been employed in these institutions for long terms, to be in breach of the undertaking that the Premier gave at the time of the last election, I think, that there would be no retrenchments under this Government?

I can imagine that one of the arguments that the Minister might put up would be to say that the colleges of advanced education are, in fact, statutory authorities and are not covered by the undertaking. I believe that that would be taking a legalistic view of the undertaking, in the light of the fact that no one had any doubt that that undertaking applied to daily paid workers of ETSA, which is a Government statutory authority and which is in a similar position, set up under legislation in a similar fashion to that under which the South Australian College of Advanced Education was set up.

The Hon. H. Allison: I am not sure whether the honourable member was in the Chamber when I responded to a similar question from the member for Salisbury, but in addition to the response I gave, I would say that the change in staffing at the College of Advanced Education is the result not of the amalgamation but of a change in Federal funding. Whether the colleges are on four separate campuses under separate administrations, or as they currently are on separate campuses but under one administration, the simple fact is that the Federal funding has been considerably reduced.

It is a financial constraint imposed by the Federal Government, rather than a result of the amalgamation. I still maintain, as to the undertaking that the Premier gave, that there would be no retrenchments or dismissals at the time of amalgamation: that was not a guarantee that can be extended *ad infinitum*, in view of the fact that Federal funding is the main criterion for employment. There are two factors: the State Government did meet its commitment by ensuring that when the amalgamation took place and with the change of administration and the revamped council, there were no retrenchments, no displacements. However, the purpose of the amalgamation is rationalisation of course, the removal of competitive courses, the structuring of the college so that courses which were barely viable might be amalgamated with others, and to ensure that the existing staff were more easily transferrable within the college, rather than for staff to have to resign and be appointed elsewhere.

There were a considerable number of advantages to be gained from the amalgamation, but these potential retrenchments are, as I said, a result of changed Federal funding.

Mr PETER DUNCAN: Have the Minister and the Government accepted the changed financial arrangements that the Commonwealth has apparently introduced? If the Minister does not accept them, will the Minister and the Government consider temporary supplementary funding of the South Australian C.A.E. until such time as the position in relation to Federal funding can be reviewed?

The Hon. H. Allison: The honourable member knows as well as I do that to take up responsibility for projects federally funded is to provide the thin end of the wedge for the Federal Government to say 'Right, you can carry on with other projects too'. That has not been open to the Governments in the past. What we have done is to pick up the tab for essential State projects which have been ceded, funded partly by Federal Government. The Childhood Services programme is a classic and there are no doubt many others, including the Aboriginal educational programmes where we have a hint of scaling down on Federal funding. As I have said to the member for Salisbury, we have responded to the Federal Government through the Chairman of TEASA who has consulted with the universities, the Institute of Technology, and the colleges of advanced education. We did set out before the Federal Government what we believe to be the disadvantages to South Australia as a result of the revision in Federal funding. That was an automatic reaction about three weeks ago, when the Federal Minister was contacted. I can obtain the precise date, the letter would be on the file. Yes, we have taken steps to inform the Federal Government and that information has already been given to the Committee.

Mr PETER DUNCAN: I might comment that the Minister (some members might say and I would agree in this particular instance) is very wise to keep well away from the activities of the Prime Minister: he seems to be a King Midas in reverse. In light of the fact that the South Australia C.A.E. cuts seem to be largely in relation to courses, for example, affecting women, such as women's studies, migrants and migrant education etc and also Aborigines (as I understand it), will the Government consider examining the way that the college has apportioned its budget, particularly as these disadvantaged groups seem to have suffered. I may not be correct, but it certainly seems from the press reports that those three areas have featured largely in the cuts that have been made. Will the Government examine the way the college has apportioned its budget, possibly with a view to the Minister's exercising his power? I can remember he was very anxious to get the powers originally and maybe this is appropriate time for him to exercise them.

The Hon. H. Allison: I am not sure what the inference was in that last comment—that I was anxious to get the powers originally—but I do recall taking some unusual steps without power very early in the piece, but that was quite a different matter. As I said to the member for Salisbury in answer to an almost identical question a little while ago, I have asked the Chairman of TEASA and the Director of the South Australian College of Advanced Education (Dr Ramsay) to re-examine any potential action and to report back to me as a matter of urgency, particularly with regard to the alleged recommendations in the migrant service, the interpreter course. The reassurances that I have been given in response to an immediate call were that the college council has not made any decision and the matter is still under review. The whole matter is currently back with the Chairman of TEASA, the Director of the college and an urgent report has been called for. That letter would have been sent out probably two or three days ago and I am still awaiting a result.

Mr EVANS: Can the Minister indicate whether any new kindergartens are planned for this forthcoming year, as I have concern in my own area about one at the Aberfoyle Hub?

The Hon. H. Allison: The Aberfoyle Hub project is on the list of projects awaiting approval. It is one of a number still coming before me. The capital cost of that would be around \$140 000 for the building.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: I wish to ask a question that really relates to the manner in which the tertiary educational authority is spending its allocation. The Minister on 26 August answered a question from the member for Semaphore about accreditation for mechanical engineering students and made the comment that he had discussed the delay in the accreditation of such students. He said:

It has apparently been dragging on for several years. The matter has been drawn to the immediate attention of the Acting Director-General of Further Education and the Chairman of the Tertiary Authority of South Australia. I have asked them for an immediate resolution to this long-standing problem.

I raise this matter again tonight because the authority does have the capacity, I would have thought from the funding made available to it, to make decisions on matters such as this fairly promptly. I was very concerned to have had delivered to me correspondence from the Minister dated 23 March 1981 in which the Minister on that occasion wrote:

Until 1979 such courses were accredited by the South Australian Technician Certificate Board and that board also awarded the certificates. However, during 1979 the Tertiary Education Authority of South Australia (TEASA) was established and was made responsible for accrediting such courses. The South Australian Technician Certificate Board was allowed to lapse

Further, the Minister went on:

The Department of Further Education has had to clarify the new accrediting procedure in conjunction with the new accrediting body, TEASA. This has been a lengthy and complicated procedure and, in view of the continuing delays and inconvenience to students such as yourself—

this was a letter to the student—

the S.A. Technician Certificate Board has been reconstituted with the intention of prompt accreditation of the mechanical engineering course as a technician-level course.

The Minister went on to say:

The Department of Further Education does not act independently in deciding the names of its awards; it consults with TEASA and national bodies.

The Minister said that on 23 March 1981. On 26 August this year the Minister is saying he is asking for an immediate resolution. There is something bottling up the works somewhere. Will the Minister please ensure that that bottleneck is cleared as soon as possible?

The Hon. H. Allison: The simple answer is that the young people who should have received some form of recognition, that is, either a certificate or whatever else, have been waiting for a decision for five, six or seven years. I suppose the main stumbling block to an award has been the fact that the recipients of that award believe they should have received a diploma rather than a technical certificate. The intention of TEASA in March of this year was to reconstitute the board, but there has been debate on and off campus urging that the award, when it was made, should be a diploma.

In South Australia I believe diplomas have been the sole right of tertiary institutions, the Institute of Technology and colleges of advanced education. In other States diplomas are awarded for courses similar to the one which is currently being held in South Australia for mechanical technicians. The matter is not quite so simple to resolve, because the course has changed considerably over the last several years. It is possible that the recipients of a diploma who studied several years ago would be awarded a diploma for a course which varied considerably from the course currently under

study. The question of who is to accredit the course has long been a contentious one. I learned only a few days ago that the Chairman of TEASA was submitting two alternatives to the council under Professor Mills, Chairman of the Institute of Technology. One was for the board to be reconstituted immediately and for a technical certificate to be awarded to all of the students so they would have something with which to negotiate with employers.

A second step to be taken was that the question of having a diploma awarded was also to be examined by Professor Mills's committee and, subsequent to a decision being made and if a diploma were to be awarded, those people with a technical certificate would qualify for a diploma. The time slot for that extends two or three weeks away into October.

An initial meeting has been held by TEASA and I have received a recommendation that that course of action should be followed. I have asked the Chairman of the Tertiary Education Authority whether, in the light of the strenuous representations that had been made, I believe, to all of us by those graduates, the double option should be offered and whether we might not from the outset apply for a diploma, which is really what these young people are after.

It is not within my authority to make that decision, because accreditation is a complex procedure involving procedures in other States and overseas but, from the point of view of technical and further education bodies in South Australia and other States, South Australia is the State that does not have diplomas for its technical courses. This matter involves a little more than simply accreditation for only one course: it is a test case involving the Department of Technical and Further Education, the Institute of Technology and the colleges of advanced education as to whether a diploma might now be legitimately awarded for this and other TAFE courses. Being extremely sympathetic to these young people, I can understand their frustration since I am experiencing frustration over the same decision. The recommendation that went back to TEASA yesterday was that we should be looking at a diploma application, and that would become a test case. I hope this matter can be resolved soon.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: What definition of need has been established by the Government regarding the 3½-year-old programme? Is it correct that 43 per cent of children in that age group would qualify according to that definition? How many children are presently picked up in that programme?

Dr Ebbeck: In 1981 there were just over 1 000 children in the 3½-year-old programme conducted by the Kindergarten Union. That represents 1 000—over half the three-year-old cohorts. Therefore, a total of about 17 000 or 18 000 means that about one-ninth of the children would be in Kindergarten Union centres. That is part of the special 3½-year-old programme. There are about 3 500 3½-year-old children in our centres with programmes in the wider servicing of community needs.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: What is the estimated client population in respect of those in basic need, having regard to the definition used for that programme?

The Hon. H. Allison: It is only an approximation: it could be about 3 000. The degree of need would be difficult to establish. Currently, we believe that the first priority should be to establish new programmes in this waiting list which will be before me in the next few days. The Education Department also has a small 3½-year-old programme covering about 10 centres with about 200 children. However, the emphasis of the Education Department varies substantially from that of the Kindergarten Union, as the department tends to emphasise a strong education component for 3½-year-olds.

Although I would have been convinced 18 months or two years ago, today I am not convinced that that was essential,

because I have seen the 3½-year-old programme of Dr Ebbeck operating extremely efficiently, with the experience gained sociologically and educationally by those 3½-year-olds rubbing off and bringing them on by leaps and bounds. So there are two philosophies at work that are interesting to observe. That was part of the assessment programme. The Education Department's approach is varied, and I understand that it will be further reviewed. I should be interested to hear Dr Ebbeck comment if I have assessed the programmes wrongly.

Dr Ebbeck: I do not think so.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: I refer to a matter that was mentioned some time ago in regard to Federal funding for pre-schools. The point was made earlier today that the State had gradually picked up more and more of the responsibility for that funding. It was acknowledged by both Governments that that is a fact of life. However, a comment made by the Minister some moments ago is one that I think should worry all members of the Parliament, and I refer to his comment about the possibility of our subsidising in an indirect sense pre-school development in other States. In other words, because of our advanced state of the art, we are receiving less, being regarded as over-achievers, which therefore means that funds are being allocated to Governments of other States.

The automatic conjecture is that this money is being allocated to other States because of their laziness or whatever has occurred in years gone by but has suddenly brought them some kind of windfall due to the assiduous work achieved by the respective Governments over the years. This matter touches on a number of areas of Federal/State funding, but I am particularly referring to pre-school funding at the moment. Has representation been made by the Minister to his Federal colleagues pointing out this effect, and how this is considered to be a delayed action prejudicial event as far as this State is concerned?

The Hon. H. Allison: An incorrect assumption is that the Federal Government has varied its funding across Australia. In fact, for the past five years funding has been consistent from State to State, so that if a State was up or down in comparison on a per capita basis or whatever criterion was used, that State has remained that way in its relationship to the other States for the past five years. The sum allocated to South Australia of \$3 730 000 has remained absolutely constant for that period. It has remained at that amount with no indexation of any description and exactly the same situation applies to the other States.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: Can the Minister explain the term 'over-achiever' which he used, and how that state of affairs could be to our disadvantage?

The Hon. H. Allison: Yes, I said that the Federal Government had looked at the pre-school line as well as the area Aboriginal education, primary and secondary education, as well as the programme that South Australia has for the integration of handicapped children within the normal school system. The Federal Government indicated that it may be reducing or withdrawing funds for Aboriginal education and the provision for teacher aides; that was a recent hint.

The Federal Government has also pointed out to all States that the object was to arrive at the Schools Commission targets (and most schools have arrived at that point several years earlier than was projected much to the surprise of the Federal Government). As I said earlier, South Australia has come through the field to a position of pre-eminence regarding early childhood services and primary school facilities, and is running a very close second to Victoria as regards secondary education.

The Federal Government is assessing all its funding and not simply funding for pre-schools. The Grants Commission makes recommendations based on the current achievement within a State. Therefore, South Australia was certainly

disadvantaged by the Schools commission, which looked at South Australia's policy of integration of handicapped children in normal classes and maintained that that was an excellent idea. It maintained that South Australia's achievements were good and that it should be giving money to other States to enable them to do the same thing. Therefore, substantial grants were made interstate and we missed out on funds for some 18 months to 22 months. The Director-General and I drew that matter to Peter Tannick's attention when he became Chairman of the Schools Commission. We also referred the matter to Mr McKinnon, when he was Chairman of the Schools commission. Peter Tannock informed us that the matter would be redressed, which it has been. However, South Australia lost out for two years because we were ahead.

It is this question of level of achievement from State to State which is constantly under review by the various commissions which make recommendations accordingly. As the member for Salisbury inferred, it was possible for a State that is over achieving to be given a smaller grant because of that fact: the Federal Government maintains that a State does not really need the funds because it is doing well and that it will look at the States which are under-achievers. So, that really begs the question of whether one should put in extra effort and see that subsidy reduced as a result. It is a matter of which all Governments are wary. Certainly, South Australia, having achieved a higher level in education services over the past two or three years (despite the constant criticisms made of the Government), does face a possible reduction in Federal funds; we are constantly fighting that injustice at Premier's Conferences, at education conferences, and elsewhere. So, it appears that over-achieving is a hazard.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: I am not sure whether the matter to which I refer comes under the section we are considering or under the education section, but as it relates to a pre-school area I imagine that it is under the area of child care centres, because the organisation to which I will refer is considered to be one of them. The RICE (Remote and Isolated Children's Exercise) programme. Can the Minister advise the Committee what allocation has been made to that programme and whether it is a maintenance of effort, an expansion of effort or a decline in real terms?

The Hon. H. Allison: We increased the effort of the State Government about 18 months ago, in time for the previous Budget last year, where we gave a grant of \$500 per student and the qualification that it was to be based upon the same criterion that entitled students to Federal grants. There has not been an expansion of that for the current year; there has been a maintenance of effort.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: Taking inflation into account?

The Hon. H. Allison: The amount remained constant at \$500. Mr Grear has indicated that he would like to make a comment on this matter.

Mr Grear: On page 54 of the Programme Estimates information appears concerning the services for remote and isolated pre-school children as part of the Education Department. The expenditure last year was \$70 000 and the expenditure proposed for the current year is \$90 000.

The Hon. H. Allison: We are talking about two different issues. I was referring to the RICE grant for children from outback areas who are studying in the metropolitan area, which is a \$500 grant. Therefore, I point out that there are two aspects. Mr Grear is correct in saying that there has been an increase in effort in the lines which appear on page 54 of the Programme Estimates.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: In other words, that is the amount made available for travelling by the staff of RICE which would have kept pace with petrol price increases and other increasing costs?

Mr Grear: Discussions have been held with the management group from RICE. Certainly the inflation rate is

increasing faster than that amount of money because of their concern. They had some funds available from previous years to help them, but there is a problem because of the very high expenses for maintenance of vehicles, petrol costs, working in those remote areas.

The Hon. H. Allison: Accelerated depreciation.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: The final outcome of it is that there will be a maintenance of effort or a decline of effort?

Mr Grear: Maintenance of effort.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: Can the Minister say what is involved in the expansionary programme of child parent centres referred to earlier? Where will it be taking place?

The Hon. H. Allison: The possible expansion in child parent centres has to be considered. There was a very substantial application by Ruth Rogers, who is in charge of that for the Education Department, and that will be discussed between the Director-General and myself before expansion is permitted. It is possible that some of the applications or some of the centres that are being considered for expansion already have programmes running, but which are not being funded by the State. There are centres which have been attracted towards the school by the principal or for other reasons, and whether the State now accepts them as an on-going State expense still has to be determined, and there has also still to be resolved the question as to whether the Kindergarten Union or the Education Department will be responsible for future expansions in this whole pre-school area.

That is one of the questions which Mr Grear's committee is still examining with Dr Ebbeck and Ruth Rogers. The three will be reporting back, and the honourable member will realise that his motions in private member's time before the House address this question in part, but he simply referred to the question as to whether the Education Department and the Kindergarten Union should remain separate entities, which issue is not a difficult one to resolve, but the other questions which were part of the terms of reference of Mr Grear's committee were whether in fact there can be some additional supervision of early childhood education, or the former Childhood Services Council, and who would be responsible for future expansion.

This really was the contentious point before Judge Olsson, and the matter has not been finally resolved, so the matters referred to in the member's debate are one issue, but the expansion and consideration of Dr Ebbeck's application and the Education Department's application are partly still within the ambit of that small inquiry. The matter should be finalised in the very near future.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: Does that mean that the Minister is not waiting for Mr Grear's interagency committee to report?

The Hon. H. Allison: Yes, I am waiting, otherwise I would have addressed the subject much earlier and you would not have had a need to debate in private member's time.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: So the expansion of the child parent centre network will depend upon that?

The Hon. H. Allison: Yes, Mr Grear has said that he will be reporting in ample time for us to make a decision.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: The Family Life Movement of Australia has a constant vote allocated to it; therefore it means a decline in effort. What is the reason for that?

The Hon. H. Allison: I think that the honourable member is partly responsible for that, because the Education Department considers that the health programme, which is now part of the Education Department's accepted curriculum, is doing very well, and that the Family Life Programme and the Education Department's health programme are to some extent in competition, so the Family Life Programme has been kept at a constant figure or close to a constant figure

with no room for expansion, and the Education Department itself has been putting increased effort into the syllabus and the training of staff who are taking over in the schools. The programme still has to be completely adopted within the Education Department, and therefore family life does play an important part in some schools. In others, they have already swung over to the department's curriculum, and believe that the family life programme is of less importance, so it is a valued judgment, very often at local level, but we saw the two as being competitive, and we are really encouraging the Education Department's health curriculum. I understand the honourable member was part of the committee which established that curriculum.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: Yes, I was a member of the project team. The project team generally regarded the Family Life Movement as one with which they co-operatively associated rather than one with which they competed. They did see all agencies of a like kind fulfilling a useful role in education, so it was not really competition between agencies. It was working together to achieve a common end. The Aboriginal Education Foundation has maintained the vote on last year, but declined on real expenditure. What is happening with regard to the transport of children to what I think is now called the Albert Yelkindjeri Kindergarten?

The Hon. H. Allison: That matter has been resolved amicably. I had a pleasant interview only a few days ago with Laurie Bryan, who has done such sterling work with the foundation for very many years. Mr Bryan did not come to seek additional funds, although the amount is being reduced from \$11 000 to \$8 000. In the interim we made provision through the Kindergarten Union for a bus, and the running expenses and costs of the driver have now been absorbed by the Kindergarten Union so that the expenses that were previously on the shoulders of Mr Bryan's organisation have been transferred to the Kindergarten Union. Mr Bryan now has \$8 000 with which he can do a few more good works. He came to see me about other projects which are under consideration.

The Hon. H. Allison: The \$8 000, plus additional funds, was required for the running of the bus and taxis, so that that cost has been removed from the Aboriginal Education Foundation. I believe that the foundation is quite happy about that, because the \$8 000 can be used elsewhere.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: Will the Minister advise what percentage of the non-government schools per capita grants applies in the figure of \$18 300 000?

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: Will the Minister advise what percentage of the non-Government schools' per capita grants applies in the figure of \$18 300 000?

The Hon. H. Allison: We are up to 23 per cent of the formula cost of educating a State school student.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: What is the spread and the amount actually received by non-government schools in greatest need at the top end as compared to those in less need at the bottom end, working on that per capita amount? Could one say that schools at the top end would receive 24 per cent and schools at the bottom end would receive 22 per cent? What is the spread?

The Hon. H. Allison: If I can take that question on notice, I will provide the figures. I can assure the honourable member that the range is not as wide as he intimated earlier in a debate in the House. Money is certainly allocated on a needs basis, but the spread is not very broad. I will obtain precise figures. The lowest is about 60 per cent of the highest.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: This year there has been a change to the model standard school cost, I understand. The model was formerly based on a mathematical figure?

The Hon. H. Allison: Yes. We have had a succession of debates on the nature of the formula and the fact that

schools are unaware of precisely how the formula was arrived at. This year, after almost 12 months of negotiation, we arrived at a commonly acceptable formula, which I believe the independent schools organisation in South Australia has put to the national body as a model. It represents a satisfactory compromise between the Government and the independent school sector, and the schools can predict the amounts that they will receive, if there is any variation to the allocation on a needs basis. The base formula would still give them a precise indication.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: Will the Minister advise what figures were used in the model this year?

The Hon. H. Allison: Does the honourable member want a copy of the base model?

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: That would be useful, but I wonder what the final figure was.

Mr Grear: The model is based on a primary school size of 160 students and a secondary school of 150 students. Therefore, it takes the same staffing formula as the Education Department and the average staffing salaries of Education Department officers in that range. The calculations this year are \$330 in the primary area and \$536 in the secondary area. The appropriation in the Miscellaneous line is based on the expected number of students who will attend those schools multiplied by those figures.

Mr EVANS: There appears to be an increase in the Workers Education Association line to \$124 000. Does the association own or rent premises and, if so, how much is spent on those premises?

The Hon. H. Allison: The W.E.A. does own property. I was informed 12 months ago that it was considering selling that property. I do not know whether that has occurred; the Director may be able to provide more precise information. We did not insist on that sale when the W.E.A. applied for a very considerable increase in its funding allocation 12 months ago. We examined the administrative staffing and concluded, with the association's agreement, that the administration was top heavy. The person in charge of the W.E.A. programming decided of his own accord to re-enter the field of lecturing for the W.E.A. and for the administration component to be reduced to a minimum level.

The Workers Educational Association line was increased last year, following a request for a substantial increase because of a substantial overdraft or deficit. The association suggested that it would sell property to defray that deficit. Of course, the association has other income sources in the Education Department allocation. The allocation was arrived at following consultations with the office of the Ministry and did not involve any other agreement; it was simply an agreed allocation.

To place the W.E.A. contribution to further education enrichment and other courses in perspective, that would approximately represent the Technical and Further Education Department's contribution at Brighton Technical and Further Education College. It is about that proportion. The department has a total stream 6 output of about 10 per cent of the total TAFE budget, so the W.E.A. allocation is relatively small by comparison (probably \$3 500 000 to \$4 000 000).

Mr EVANS: Are the Minister and his officers satisfied that the W.E.A. is carrying out an effective and satisfactory role or does it need to change direction or increase or decrease its operation?

The Hon. H. Allison: In my opinion, the W.E.A. has been providing courses in different fields than those provided by the Technical and Further Education Department. It has a strong entrepreneurial flair. The W.E.A. charges fees substantially higher than those charged by the Department of Technical and Further Education. Some of the courses provided are very unusual, even outlandish. They vary from one extreme to the other, but there seems to be a market

for them. We assist the association by providing accommodation within our schools and colleges wherever possible. Increasingly, the association has been paying for that accommodation, whereas a few years ago it would have been supplied on a nominal basis.

Nowadays, the schools and the colleges are tending to charge on a more realistic basis. To say whether the W.E.A. is doing a good job or not would be presumptuous of me, because the people who go to the courses obviously are quite prepared to pay for those courses, and that is the criterion on which the W.E.A. should be judged. I believe the W.E.A. would scale down its operations considerably if it found that Government grants and other sources of Government funding were such that its fees went up and its attendances came down. It would be a hip pocket decision by the W.E.A.

Mr EVANS: By what method is the distribution made of money made available for school visits to the Adelaide Festival Centre? An amount of \$42 000 is allowed, an increase of \$2 000 on last year. Who makes the decision as to who receives the money? Is it just a matter of schools stating that they are taking a group of students to a performance and the department picking up the tab for that? Perhaps at the end of the year there is a surplus, or it could be that some schools are told 'No, sorry you have no opportunity to attend with any payment'?

The Hon. H. Allison: An approximate estimate is prepared by the Assistant Director-General, Jim Giles. He has been involved for a considerable time with the 'Come-out Festival' and visits to the Festival Theatre. That approximation is an average number of students who would be expected to attend the centre for various reasons and then the allocation of funds by the Education Department is directed to the Festival Centre, as their cost for performing that service for the Education Department. The schools can apply on an *ad hoc* basis: I do not think any formula is applied.

Mr EVANS: So, in fact, there is no strict check of the numbers attending as against the cost of the tickets the students would normally pay and the amount finally claimed?

The Hon. H. Allison: No, as I said, we would have an approximate idea.

Mr Grear: The information is provided by the Adelaide Festival Centre Trust each year, listing the number of schools who have visited, the programme that they attend, and the number of students who attended each of those programmes from the previous year. If the actual amount does not meet the amount that was appropriated, that is reduced off their funding in the following year. My observation has been that in each year there is a very close relationship between the actual figures and the figures that were estimated prior to that year. The funds are in fact a contribution to the subsidising of those entrance fees.

Mr CRAFTER: I refer the Minister to page 264 of the Auditor-General's Report dealing with Kindergarten Union. The statistical chart provided on that page shows, as at 31 December 1981, a substantial increase in enrolments in kindergartens (my calculation is an additional 1 434 enrolments). Yet, there were only an additional five staff persons in the whole of the Kindergarten Union structure; one in administration, two aides, one child care and resource van driver, one consultant and an advisory person in that capacity. There was also an additional registered branch of the union in that year. Has the Minister available now or later more current information on enrolments and staffing breakdowns in the kindergartens?

The Hon. H. Allison: I am just comparing the figures which the Director of the Kindergarten Union and I have been referring to over the last few weeks, and I must admit that I had not checked through the Auditor-General's Report. These figures seem to be at variance with the figures we

have been considering and I would believe these to be more accurate.

Dr Ebbeck believes that the figures contained in the Auditor-General's Report represent a much wider catchment than that of the Kindergarten Union. We cannot decide precisely, but Mr Grear suggests that the programme for three and a half year-olds came into consideration at about that time. Of the 3 500 youngsters in that programme 2 500 were already involved, anyway, so they should not have represented a considerable difference. An additional 1 000 children were accounted for by way of Government funds. Therefore, the substantial differences between the Auditor-General's statistics and those of Dr Ebbeck are as follows: enrolments for 1980 were 14 324; for 1981 14 419; and for February 1982, 14 204. Those figures increased during the year.

There is generally a retention rate in the Kindergarten Union after August of each year because schools do not take children after the beginning of term 3 and those children tend to stay in Kindergarten until the beginning of the next year. The August figure for 1982 is a little short of 14 700 and is quite different from the figures of 18 000 and 20 000 shown in the Auditor-General's Report. These are reliable statistics which I can expand on further.

As at June this year enrolments within the pre-school policy (that is including special three-year-olds, four-year-olds and the retained five-year-olds who have not gone on to junior primary school) totalled 14 505. I have just mentioned the August figure of 14 700, which is three short of that figure. Approved staff for those centres totalled 641.3 in June. That figure has remained constant until now. The child to staff ratio for June was 1:11.3. Because of the retention rate that has extended to 1:11.5; that is the average. Child sessions numbered 53 634 in June and increased to 55 840 in August, so there has been an increase in the number of sessions. I will have to check the source of information contained in the Auditor-General's Report in order to arrive at that much higher figure. That figure may include vocational courses and a whole range of other projects such as playgroups and child care.

Mr CRAFTY: I would appreciate the Minister's providing that information. However, my concern was not merely about enrolment numbers, although that information is of interest. My chief interest relates to the relationship to staff levels. That is the discrepancy to which I referred.

The Hon. H. Allison: The figures appearing in the Kindergarten Union's Report are much more stable than this would suggest.

Mr RODDA: I turn to the line 'Miscellaneous-National and Technical Further Education Centre' which shows a proposed amount of \$26 000. However, when I look at pages 84 and 85 of the yellow book I cannot reconcile the two figures. What does this \$26 000 involve? Is that embodied in those figures?

Mr Grear: The figures on pages 84 and 85 relate to technical and further education and bear no relationship to the figure of \$26 000 in the line Estimates.

Mr RODDA: Where do we pick that up?

The Hon. H. Allison: The \$26 000 figure, which was increased from \$23 000 last year, represents a win for South Australia. Eighteen months ago it was suggested by the Australian Education Council, that is, the council of all Ministers, that there be established in Australia a National Technical and Further Education Research Centre to analyse a whole range of problems that were relevant to TAFE education across Australia, and South Australia offered accommodation. We also had a very fine multi-media centre, which could be involved in the production of material at cost, for the whole of Australia subsequent on the research having been completed.

South Australia's contribution for a \$500 000 staffing

project was only \$26 000. We were assessed on a per capita basis. So, having won the that centre for South Australia, we have an income of nearly \$500 000 from all other States and the Federal Government, which funds half, and the centre is on Payneham Road in South Australia. That is established for three years, after which it will be reassessed. I believe that it is doing such good work that it will continue. It is one of only two national TAFE centres in Australia. Both of them will be in South Australia. One is the national saw-doctoring course in Mount Gambier, which was approved by the Federal Government last week for a \$1 600 000 expansion, and the other is this National TAFE Research Centre. So, we have the only two national TAFE centres in Australia located within this State.

Mr Grear: The correct reference in the yellow book is page 135.

Mr CRAFTY: I refer once again to the Auditor-General's Report at page 262. I notice that amongst the sundry debtors a total of \$82 000 is owed to the Kindergarten Union by branch kindergartens. I think that \$34 000 refers to last year's indebtedness of a similar nature. There seems to have been a fairly substantial increase there in indebtedness by branch kindergartens. Is some difficulty being experienced by kindergartens in paying money owed to the union?

Dr Ebbeck: I believe those debts to be part of the endowment loan, which is a low-interest rate loan that we make to kindergartens on request. They pay back over a period of time for improvements such as parks and gardens, land, ground improvements, or perhaps even to add on to the building. I believe it also reflects the difference between the receipts from the Office of Child Care, Department of Social Security, for the union's care activities and the payments made for salaries for those. That would be the only Commonwealth Government part which is mentioned here. I think the rest relates to the endowment loans made to kindergartens. I can clarify that and let you have it.

The Hon. H. Allison: It is quite possible that the statement, 'It is considered that no provision for doubtful debts is necessary' is because it is Government guaranteed.

Mr CRAFTY: Do kindergartens have any difficulty in repaying that money that is owed?

The Hon. H. Allison: We have additional information that the variation is mostly due to the timing of reimbursements from child care centres. That is Commonwealth care funds, so Dr Ebbeck was very close to the mark.

Mr LYNN ARNOLD: This is the last question from me for the night. Upon what does the Australian Education Council spend its money?

The Hon. H. Allison: The State makes a contribution to the A.E.C. Secretariat, and the Secretariat annually submits to the A.E.C. meeting a budget for the ensuing year. It is analysed by the members of the Council, who are all State Ministers. Then the allocation to each State is decided on a predetermined formula. In effect, it is a question of each Minister examining what the secretariat does and then deciding whether to commit at that level. I may say, for the benefit of the Committee, that the breakdown is for administration, whatever research is done, the printing of reports, and also for the Secretariat, travel expenses to the various venues. Each State hosts the meeting in turn. At the last two meetings there has been increasing concern expressed at the rate of increase of costs for the A.E.C. secretariat. I believe that at the next A.E.C. meeting there will be a much closer analysis of the costs. We asked the secretariat to come forward with some way of pruning its costs or, at least, reducing the rate of increase.

The CHAIRMAN: There being no further questions, I declare the examination of the vote completed.

ADJOURNMENT

At 9.52 p.m. the Committee adjourned until Tuesday 28 September at 11 a.m.