

At that time—ten years ago—Professor Ingram said the ministry was only interested in quick answers to questions and it was not at all interested in financing long term “speculative experiments”. For this reason he left the ministry to find a better atmosphere for research.

Professor Ingram also dismissed the myth that “the ministry knows”. When a member of Lord Rothschild’s staff came to see him last year while Rothschild’s report was being prepared he was asked whether the priorities within his institute agreed with those laid down by MAFF. Professor Ingram admitted then that he was unaware of any priorities imposed by the ministry and that he had been unable since then to find out what the priorities were—if indeed any existed.

Dr H. C. Pereira, director of East Malling Research Station, was concerned that the transfer of responsibility to the ministry would lead to the cutting off of funds for long term research projects, leading to job insecurity. In these circumstances there would probably have to be staff redundancies and it would be difficult to persuade scientists to work at the institutes. Also, Dr Pereira thought that it would be difficult to persuade scientists to become directors of institutes, and that they would also be reluctant to sit on councils.

UNIVERSITIES

An Upper Limit

THE number of students in British universities in 1980 could be 420,000 according to the University Grants Committee annual report published last week (HMSO, £0.24). The UGC based its estimates on a survey of building sites which universities can rent or buy within the next eight years. Of the 420,000 students envisaged, only 200,000 or 47.5 per cent could be resident within universities if all options on sites are taken up. The student population in 1970 was 228,189 with 87,000 or 38 per cent of these accommodated in halls of residence.

The UGC also reports that if options are taken up on sites that have been zoned for university expansion, but on which no contracts, agreements to purchase, or compulsory purchase orders exist at present then 500,000 students could be admitted to universities in 1980 with 230,000 accommodated within halls of residence.

This estimate of the possible student population is not a commitment to provide finance for this number by 1980, according to a spokesman for the UGC. He also said that it was highly unlikely that there would, in fact, be that many university students in eight years’ time. In 1963 Lord Robbins said

that a total student population of more than 500,000 should be aimed for by 1980 with 350,000 of them in universities and the remainder in other institutions of higher education. The Education Planning Paper of June 1970 said that there should be 394,000 students in universities in England and Wales by 1981, but there has been no ministerial support for this plan.

The UGC has succeeded in making some inroads into the problems of student housing during the past year. During the previous five years residential places within universities increased at the rate of 4,000 a year, but following a survey last year the UGC decided to press ahead and encourage the universities to expand at the rate of 10,000 places of accommodation a year until 1977. During the present academic year universities have set in motion plans that will result in the completion of more than 8,000 resi-

dential places during 1972–73, a total which the UGC considers “a fair start”. The finance for new building does not come entirely from the government, and the universities have obtained loans totalling £8 million—more than half of which was obtained from building societies. The subsidy from the UGC will amount to £3 million to £4 million a year for four years.

The report also shows that the staff/student ratio has remained substantially unchanged since 1960–61. In that year the ratio was 7.93 whereas in 1969–70 it was 8.16. During this time, however, the yearly expenditure for every full-time student has increased from £794.27 to £912.52 at 1967–68 prices. The cost of departmental salaries in the decade has only increased from £352 to £374 a student, and most of the increase has come from a near doubling of the cost of “academic services” and a 125 per cent increase in local government rates.

UNIVERSITY SALARIES

More Than Increases

AS was to be expected, university teachers have been awarded increases in salary which raise their total salary bill by about 7.5 per cent to about £120 million a year. Although this is only about half that claimed by the Association of University Teachers (AUT) on behalf of most academic staff in universities, it forms only part of quite a comprehensive agreement.

The new salary scales, which are backdated to October last year, are shown in the table. In the past, only a maximum has been laid down for the salaries of senior lecturers and readers, but under the new agreement a national scale will come into force and those at present in these grades will either receive an increase of 7.5 per cent or move onto the bottom of the scale, whichever is most beneficial to them. Two further steps are to be added to the top of the lecturer scale over the next two years so that the maximum salary for lecturers will become £3,852 in October this year and £3,999 in October 1973, at which stage there will be sixteen steps in the scale.

There are also two clauses in the agreement which improve the lot of those taking up lecturing posts in their

middle or late twenties. Lecturers appointed at ages of 26 or more will in future be placed on at least the third step of the scale, and the present efficiency bar at the eighth point of the scale will now operate five years after the end of a compulsory probationary period of three years, or, exceptionally, four. A spokesman for the AUT said this week that this is in line with its policy of raising standards.

The AUT has also succeeded in having the discretionary payments suggested by the Prices and Incomes Board in 1969 abolished. The aim was to encourage good teachers, as opposed to good researchers, by making merit awards worth one per cent of the non-professorial salary bill. The money saved by the ending of this scheme—one fiercely opposed by many academics—was redistributed during the course of the negotiations.

Prospects of promotion to senior lecturer are also enhanced by an increase in the maximum allowed proportion of senior lecturers and above from 35 per cent to 40 per cent. The AUT says, however, that the figure is at present about 31 per cent because of shortage of money within universities, and that although it hopes that the proportion will be raised to the new ceiling, it may be that it will turn out to be lower than 40 per cent.

Salary Scales for University Teachers

	New scale	Old scale
Lecturers	£1,641 to £3,705	£1,491 to £3,417
Senior lecturers and readers	£3,852 to £4,734	Up to £4,401
Professors	Minimum £4,850	Minimum £4,533
	Average £6,003	Average £5,610
London allowance	£162	£100