

EDUCATION

Appeal to the LEAs

THE Architectural Association's School of Architecture is now "facing the future with confidence" according to Professor Alvin Boyarsky, chairman of the School.

After the doubts about the school's future since the breakdown of its merger talks with Imperial College, University of London, in 1970, the school claims to have overcome its immediate financial problems. Strict budgeting and a £120 a year rise in the school's fees last year have combined to give the school enough money for the next three years—even allowing for a 9 per cent annual rate of inflation—without the need for any increase in income. The school's £37,000 overdraft has been paid off, and by 1976, when its lease in Bedford Square expires, about £500,000 will be available to acquire new premises. This money is the result of the appeal fund launched several years ago to pay for a projected new building in South Kensington and of the unexpected sale of the AA's playing fields.

The school has now submitted evidence of its financial viability to local education authorities (LEAs) in the hope that they will support the British students which the school wants to admit this autumn.

The school's dilemma is that the very independence which gives it its particular character makes it ineligible for a direct grant—as it would be if it were part of a university or polytechnic. As

a result its fees of £580 are much higher than the £100 or so that an LEA grants to students at other architectural colleges. The AA points out that this is misleading because after taking direct grants to other schools into account, sending a student to the AA's school saves the country about £200 a year. With 300 students at the school in any one year whose fees are paid by local education authorities, this according to the AA represents an annual saving of £60,000.

The local education authorities, naturally enough, see it differently. To them, sending four students to the AA school can cost them as much in fees as sending twenty students elsewhere, and not surprisingly they have asked the AA to find ways of reducing its fees.

What the AA would like, although it is careful not to be specific, is to have its cake and eat it. A grant from central government would solve its financial problems, but the AA is not prepared to give up its independence by joining a university or polytechnic to qualify. It is therefore up to the LEAs—unless the government is prepared to allow for special cases in areas other than pay disputes—to foot the bill.

If the AA's new submission is rejected, the school intends to carry on by expanding the number of overseas students and taking only those British students who can afford to pay, or for whom grants of some sort can be found. It would be ironic, however, if the LEAs refused to support the school just when it has begun to put its own house in order.

POLLUTION

Waste Not, Want Not

"A WELL trained staff and a high degree of informed citizen participation are the ultimate keys to [the planning and operation of] a successful solid wastes programme" according to a World Health Organization report (*Solid Wastes Disposal and Control*, WHO, Geneva, 1971). The report, written by an international team of multidisciplinary scientists and public health officials, also recommends that governments should be helped in their planning of solid wastes programmes by "international, bilateral and private agencies". These agencies would provide finance as well as professional expertise.

The report, by recommending international participation in solid wastes programmes, flies in the face of the present practice of leaving general management of such programmes either to local government or to industry. The report also recommends that every country should have, at ministerial level, a body of experts to collect and collate data on solid wastes management and to draw up codes of practice for the guidance and training of personnel involved in wastes disposal. Governments should also set up regional authorities to "optimize the use of available land and to minimize haulage costs".

The committee emphasizes that international action is also needed to ensure that "adequate weight is given to public health considerations in all environmental policy making of broad scope and significance". The recent international agreement to limit dumping in the North Atlantic (see *Nature*, 235, 414; 1972) is only a small part of the overall plan envisaged by the committee, and it would like to see international agencies identifying specific wastes and disposal practices that are potentially deleterious to health and should therefore be subject to international control. Monitoring systems should also be run on an international basis as should any dumping of waste in outer space—this method of getting rid of radioactive waste was a suggestion canvassed recently by the chairman of the US Atomic Energy Authority.

Research and development is needed to develop methods and equipment for waste disposal—in particular in the underdeveloped countries. Such research, the committee feels, is again an international problem because inefficient waste disposal threatens the health of more than the inhabitants of that particular country. Industrial experience of disposing of toxic wastes would be helpful in applying waste disposal techniques on a world wide scale.

ECONOMY

Magic One Per Cent

BRITAIN is planning to increase the amount spent on overseas aid during the next five years. The planned expenditure until 1975-76 (*Public Expenditure to 1975-76*, HMSO, £0.68) shows that Britain will increase aid from the £206 million that is being spent this year to an estimated £290 million in 1975-76. Not only is this an absolute increase at an average rate of 7.6 per cent a year but as a proportion of the total public expenditure of the government the sum allotted increases from 0.86 per cent to 1.08 per cent. Details of the increases are shown in the table where all prices are 1971-72 prices with no allowance made for inflation.

Overseas aid covers British assistance to developing countries through

international organizations and the chief recipient of aid is the International Development Association, but the United Nations Development Programme and other UN agencies receive some contributions.

Even at the estimated aid for 1975, contributions from the government to the underdeveloped countries will still be far short of the one per cent of Britain's gross national product that the government, at the request of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), undertook to provide by 1975 (the GNP for the 1971 calendar year was £42,877 million). Private funds, however, are expected to add to the official government sum and the government has said that the total aid from government and private sources is "expected to make a substantial contribution to the UNCTAD 1 per cent target . . . by 1975."

Public Expenditure on Overseas Aid (£ Million) as a Percentage of Total Public Expenditure

1970-71 (provisional)	1971-72 (estimate)	1972-73 (estimate)	1973-74 (estimate)	1974-75 (estimate)	1975-76 (estimate)
206.0	215.8	234.5	245.2	266	290
0.86%	0.88%	0.93%	0.95%	1.02%	1.08%