

1860-1902



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STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

In the period 1860-1902, the proportion of women in Queensland's teaching force was moderately higher than the proportion of women in the total population. During those four decades, about 40 per cent of Queensland's population was female³. The proportion of women teachers increased rapidly after 1860 so that by 1875 about 51 per cent of the Colony's teachers were female. In the period 1876-1883 the proportion fell slightly to a

little below half, steadied at 50 per cent in 1883, and rose to slightly above 50 per cent from 1884 to 1902 (see Figure 1).

FACTORS INFLUENCING EMPLOYMENT

The rapid growth in the school population is the most obvious and important factor which encouraged the employment of women in education (see Figure 2). This growth allied to an annual teacher resignation rate of approximately 10 per cent, created a strong demand for teachers by the Board of General Education and its successor in 1876, The Department of Public Instruction.

Other factors such as the conventional morality and educational theories of the time demanded the employment of females. While married male teachers were put in charge of mixed schools with an average attendance of 30 or more

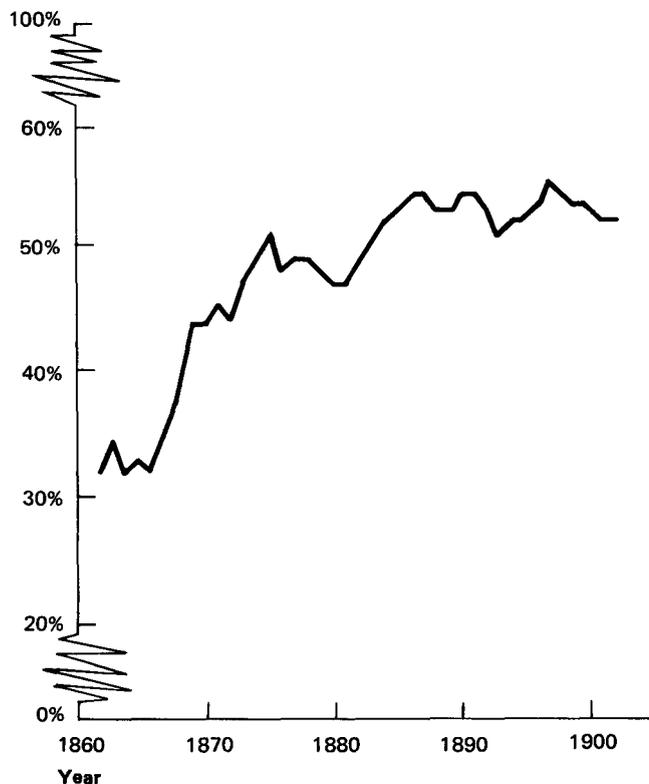


Figure 1: Percentage of female teachers in the teaching service, 1860-1902 (derived from Table 2)

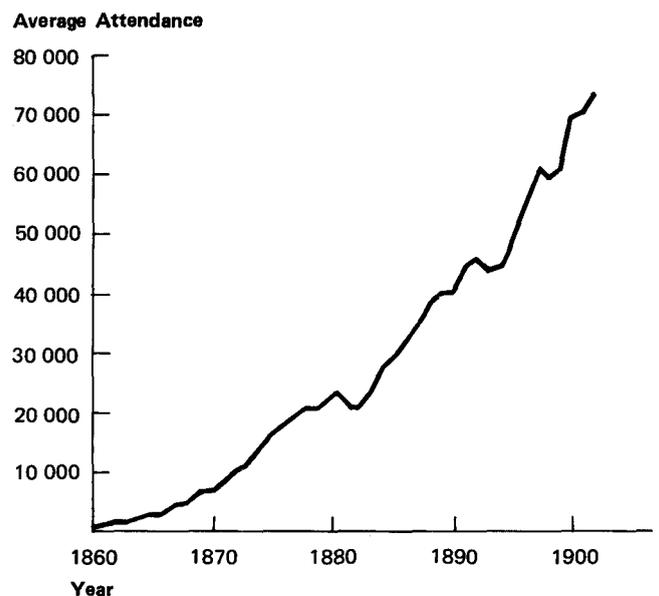


Figure 2: School population, 1860-1902 (derived from Table 1)

pupils, and men staffed boys schools and taught the upper classes in mixed schools, females were needed in girls schools, infants schools, and combined girls and infants schools. Females were also needed to teach the infants in mixed schools. As well, women were allowed to be head teachers of one-teacher schools with an average attendance of fewer than 30 pupils.

Economic factors also favoured the employment of females. In one 15-year-period (1860-1875), the Board of General Education had difficulty recruiting the number of males it required because males were being attracted to better paid jobs in banks and merchants' offices⁴. Consequently, there was a steady rise in the number of females recruited into teaching.

The Department of Public Instruction had less difficulty in attracting male staff between 1876 and 1880. Then, for the following 10 years, the colony experienced a period of prosperous economic expansion which resulted in another shortage of male teachers and a further increase in the proportion of female teachers.

A depression, together with a slight decrease in the school population between 1891 and 1894, led to some stagnation in teacher recruitment. From 1894 to 1902, more males were encouraged to turn to teaching as economic difficulties continued. During the same period, however, a rising school population renewed the demand for female as well as male teachers.

Throughout the whole of this period (1860-1902) both the Board and the Department had little difficulty in recruiting females⁵. According to Margaret Berry, Head Mistress of the Girls Normal School, it was the great ambition of most of the girls in her school to become pupil-teachers⁶.



Margaret Berry, Head Mistress of the Normal Girls and Infants School. Born and educated in Ireland, Margaret Berry was the first Head Mistress appointed to the Normal Girls and Infants School in 1860. Remaining there for 47 years, she trained many women teachers.

The reasons for girls seeking an occupation, especially teaching, are to be found in the general economic, political

and social developments of the time. Despite periodic depressions the economy was generally expanding. As well as the traditional occupations of domestic service, more jobs for women became available in industry. In commerce, for instance, new occupations for telephonists and typists soon became the preserve of females.

The suffragette movement and reforms in laws which discriminated against women encouraged women to become more independent. The effect of the changing social climate of the 1890s can be seen in the composition of committees such as Schools of Arts, University Extension and the Temperance Council of Brisbane, where women appeared for the first time. Women also formed trade unions and demanded the right to equal pay⁷.

During this period the marriage rate fell. A minority of women either postponed marriage or did not marry at all. Of course there were still social pressures which set marriage as the prime female goal; and a majority of women accepted that only widowed or deserted married women should work⁸. These social pressures can be observed in a debate in the Queensland Parliament in 1899 where J. C. Stewart said that a woman was much more in her place as the wife of a good man, or even of a bad man, than employed as a teacher⁹.

Those women who did take up the new occupational opportunities opened to them were, in the main, poorly paid. While salaries for female teachers were not munificent, they were still higher than the wages earned by their sisters in industry and commerce.

While some encouragement was given to women to occupy professional positions¹⁰, teaching was the only profession generally available to women. They were just beginning to enter medicine in the 1890s, which at the time was not regarded as a respectable profession for women. Other professions continued to exclude women, and the public service remained closed to females until 1902 when women were permitted to enter the lowest echelon.

Consequently, working class and middle class females with intellectual ability were interested in the teaching profession. It provided, in the patriarchal society of the time, a respected, if not prestigious, position in society before marriage and a permanent occupation for those who chose not to marry or who had become the sole bread-winners of a family.

TRAINING

Because there was no teachers training college in Queensland, teachers were recruited (except for some British immigrant teachers) through the pupil-teacher system. Since pupil-teachers taught classes under the supervision of experienced teachers during school hours, the system was not only an avenue of recruitment but an important part of the workforce. At one period (1878-1880) pupil-teachers represented 40 per cent of the total number of teachers (see Figure 3). In large schools the percentage was actually much higher because the total number of teachers included head teachers and teachers in one-teacher schools. In fact, Departmental regulations allowed up to two-thirds of a school's staff to be composed of pupil-teachers.

Very early, females formed a majority of pupil-teachers. For example, of the 13 pupil-teachers at the Brisbane Normal School in 1865, eight were female. The reason, according to General Inspector Randal MacDonnell, was that:

'while the teaching profession opens an honorable and

profitable career (perhaps the only one in this country) to educated women, it is by no means so attractive, either in its immediate gains or in ultimate pecuniary prospects, to young men who, as has been previously remarked, can turn a moderate education to better account in the banks and offices of the city¹¹.

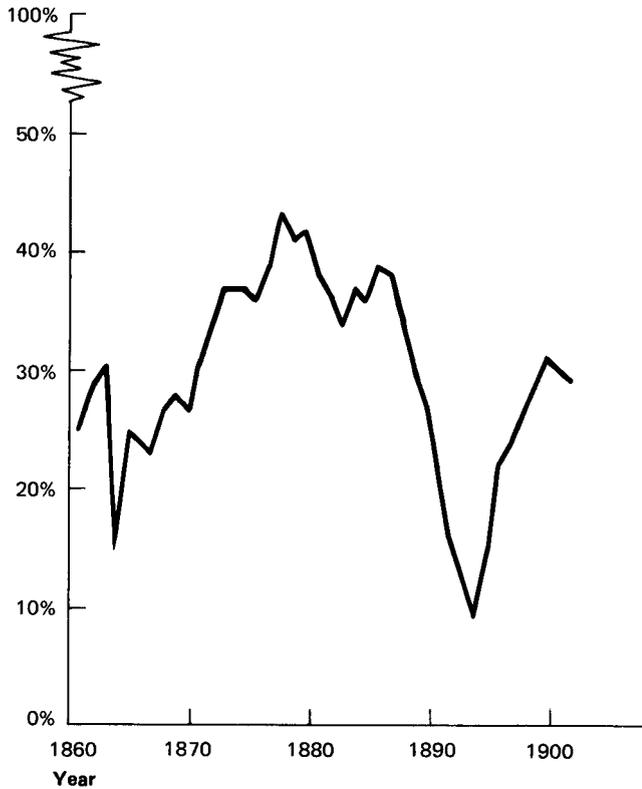


Figure 3: Total pupil teachers as percentage of total teachers, 1861-1902 (derived from Table 3)

The percentage of female pupil-teachers fluctuated significantly during this period (see Figure 4). Decreases in the proportion of female pupil-teachers tended to coincide with the slowing down in the increase in the school population (1875-1880), and with the Depression (after 1891). Because job prospects were so poor, the Department was able to employ more males during the Depression and so decrease the proportion of female pupil-teachers. The percentage of female pupil-teachers fell to 53 per cent in 1902, the lowest since 1863.

The rapid drop in the number of pupil-teachers - male and female - after 1889 was the result of a policy originating in 1887. In that year David Ewart, the General Inspector, claimed it was not in the financial interests of the Department to increase the proportion of teachers to pupil-teachers. While he thought it would be best to sack up to thirty female assistants, he rejected the idea on the basis of precedent which implied that teachers had security of tenure. Instead, Ewart advocated a policy which would remove a pupil-teacher's security of tenure when she or he finished the final pupil-teachers' examinations. This policy, put into effect in 1890, allowed the Department to select past pupil-teachers as they were needed¹². Another effect of this policy (implemented for 12 years¹³), was a reduction in the number of male and female applicants.

A common belief during the nineteenth century was that girls were mentally and physically too frail to cope with

study. Some doctors claimed that girls who did too much study would suffer from hysteria, neuralgia, nervous exhaustion, insanity, anaemia, stunted growth or headaches¹⁴.

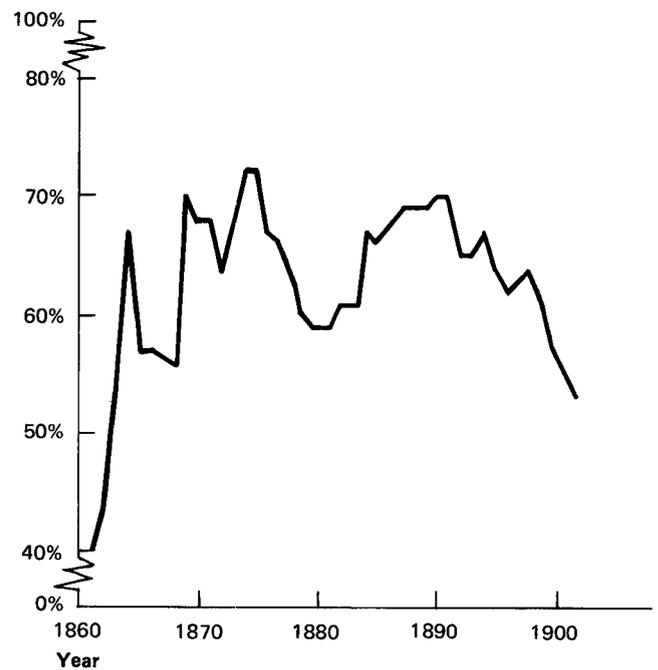


Figure 4: Female pupil teachers as a percentage of total pupil-teachers, 1861-1902 (derived from Table 3)

Hence female pupil-teachers were thought not to have the physical and intellectual endurance of their male colleagues. In 1890, District Inspector J. A. Canny, quoting an unnamed leading medical authority of the colony, said:

I have had several instances of female pupil-teachers breaking down under the extraordinary strain to which they are subjected over a period of three to four years just at the age when in this climate the greatest care should be exercised in conserving energy¹⁵.

In 1900 the editor of the *Queensland Education Journal* (the journal of the Queensland Teachers Union) said, without supporting evidence, that female pupil-teachers were under the eye of doctors more than other sections of the workforce¹⁶.

Despite these beliefs, female pupil-teachers were not spared. In 1899 District Inspector John Kilham complained of a practice which he regarded as too common. Many head teachers gave the large classes in the lower level of the school to pupil-teachers, while the assistant teachers took small classes in the upper school¹⁷. Because at the time 70 per cent of pupil-teachers were female and assistant teachers in the upper school were nearly always male, one wonders how physically weak females were. In fact, such practices resulted in charges, outside the Department, of sweated female labour¹⁸. (Not that Kilham's cause for concern was the physical weakness of females. He believed that more skilled teaching was needed in the lower section of the school¹⁹.)

Another accepted belief at the time was the 'inherent' difference between males and females in their mathematical ability²⁰. Consequently, in the training courses for pupil-teachers, up to 1899, the females did not cover the same range in arithmetic as did the males. For example, girls did not study mensuration.

Also, females began some aspects of arithmetic one or two years after the males. Males did percentages in the second year, while females did it in the fourth year²¹. Only males studied Euclid (geometry) and algebra, which were called 'mathematics'. Instead of mathematics the females did sewing.

So at the end of the four-year course, males were better qualified in arithmetic and mathematics. It is not surprising that the General Inspector in 1874 was able to claim that male teachers were better able to teach 'the higher branches', that is, mathematics²².

The differences in teachers' mathematics training were not eliminated until 1898 when algebra and Euclid were added to the primary curriculum. This meant that the Department had to ensure that female as well as male pupil-teachers had to study mathematics.

Two years later, Ewart reported:

My sympathy goes out strongly also to the female teachers and pupil-teachers who were brought suddenly face-to-face with mathematics, and on whom this year a further portion of arithmetic and mathematical work has been laid. I do not forget that they are handicapped with a subject more than the males, namely, needlework. I admire the way in which they have faced the new work, and the reference to them in this respect, in Inspectors' reports, are handsome and appreciative²³.

The 'frail' female pupil-teachers still managed to obtain better examination results than the males (see Table 5A). This may be partly explained by the fact that the brighter females had fewer occupational choices than the males and so greater numbers of females were attracted to teaching. In 1899, District Inspector, John Shirley, commented on this. He stated that the male pupil-teachers, at times, compared unfavourably with their female colleagues in 'tone and standard'²⁴.

PROVISIONAL SCHOOL TEACHERS (UNCLASSIFIED TEACHERS)

Females had to endure the hardships of being employed as poorly-paid provisional school teachers. With a few exceptions such teachers had little or no teacher training and were consequently unclassified. Provisional schools were first established in 1869 to cater for an average attendance of between 12 and 30 pupils. These schools usually operated until a State school was established*.

The Department estimated that the salary of a provisional teacher was enough to support one person, but not enough to support a family of two or more. In 1901 the salary was actually less than that earned by casual labourers²⁵. Consequently, a provisional teacher was sometimes a person with barely any education; a well-educated male who had failed elsewhere; or more commonly, an educated woman, sometimes as young as seventeen²⁶.

The Department became heavily dependent on provisional school teachers to the extent that, between 1892 and 1902, the percentage of provisional teachers ranged from 22 to 26 percent of all teachers in the Department. Initially they were mainly men, but the percentage of women quickly rose (see Figure 5).

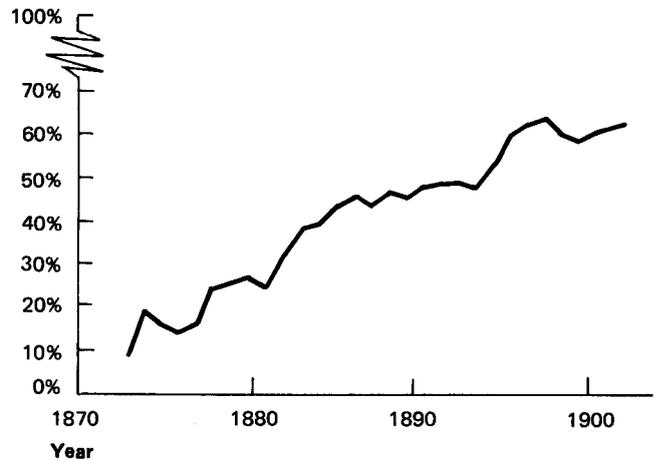


Figure 5: Female provisional school teachers as percentage of total provisional school teachers, 1873 -1902 (derived from Table 6)

These women were superior to the men, according to the District Inspectors. In 1880 one District Inspector, John Kilham, said that female teachers were better adapted to the work of small provisional schools than males, and the Department intended to replace the men with women as opportunities arose²⁷.



A group of provisional school teachers in 1902. Seated at right is Bertha Albion, Head Teacher of Taabinga Village Provisional School. Behind her is Maud Jennings of Horse Creek Provisional School.

* An average attendance of over thirty pupils had to be maintained; and parents had to raise one-fifth of the total cost of building a school which conformed to certain standards, before a State school could be established. Tents, bark huts, railways huts, rooms or verandas of private homes, deserted hotels, farm sheds and, sometimes, comfortable substantial buildings throughout Queensland served as provisional schools. Parents provided the school-rooms and the Department paid teachers' salaries.

In 1881 District Inspector John Shirley stated:

With one exception, the provisional schools along the central line are taught by mistresses, and their work is, on the whole, satisfactory. Of similar schools taught by masters, few compare favourably with them. In a country like Australia, it is scarcely to be expected that educated men of good moral tone can be obtained for a salary of £70 to £200 per annum. Again, in provisional schools, with a majority of very young children, while few men are good infant teachers, many women are so gifted²⁸.

The following year, Shirley gave more reasons why suitable men could not be obtained for provisional schools:

The provisional school teacher has neither the comfortable buildings nor the suitable furniture of the State school teacher; he works under many difficulties, and with little encouragement from those among whom he is placed; yet he does cheap, useful work for the State, and work that could not well be done otherwise. For such work a female teacher is much more suitable and more readily obtained than a male teacher, and, as a matter of fact, but few provisional schools gaining credit by inspection are taught by men²⁹.

Similar opinions were expressed by other District Inspectors in their reports³⁰.

After 1890 the Department adopted a policy of channelling some ex-pupils awaiting employment as teachers, especially females, into provisional schools. There, they had to wait for some years before appointment as classified teachers in State schools³¹.

John Anderson, Under Secretary for Public Instruction, saw these lowly paid 'lasses' as middle-class missionaries. In a paper to the East Moreton Teachers Association, Anderson said, 'These girls are really missionaries carrying with them into sordid surroundings not merely the lamp of knowledge but the grace of their culture and refinement and personal influence³².

When the enrolment of a provisional school rose above an average attendance of 30, the provisional school teacher was replaced by a married male classified teacher who was provided with an official residence. The majority of the 'missionaries' so displaced were offered the opportunity of employment in a small community elsewhere.

CLASSIFIED TEACHERS

A quasi *in loco parentis* relationship towards female teachers was adopted by the Board and the Department during the nineteenth century. In particular, the Department avoided transferring females from towns to remote country areas against teachers' wishes.

By 1881 the difficulties this caused led the Department to write to all large schools asking which female teachers, able to have a relative accompany them, were prepared to accept transfers to small country areas³³. This inquiry led the Secretary for Education, A. Archer, to complain of:

an accumulation of young female classified teachers in excess of the requirements of their schools. These teachers as a body show great unwillingness to accept appointments in outside districts where their services are most required. In their present positions some of them are doing work that can be effectively done by pupil-teachers at less than half the cost to the State³⁴.

In the remaining years of the century, females were transferred without consultation, but they could successfully refuse to accept the transfer if they wished. This was partly because Ministers were reluctant to enforce such transfers³⁵.

After 1890, Ewart's policy of creating a reserve labour force of past pupil-teachers by not automatically employing pupil-teachers when they passed their final examinations was implemented. Because fewer females than males were re-employed, this effectively put a brake on the rise in the percentage of female classified teachers (see Figure 6).

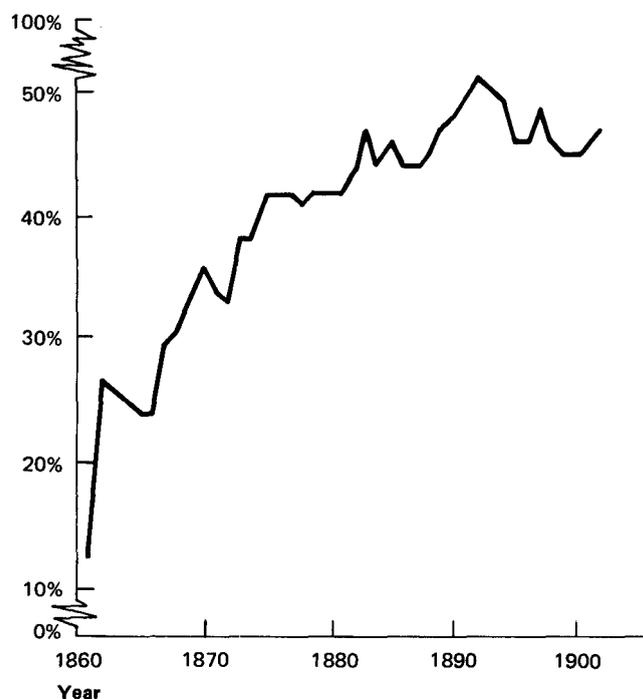


Figure 6: Classified female teachers as a percentage of total classified teachers, 1861-1902 (derived from Table 8)

In 1890, the percentage of female classified teachers had reached an all time high of 48 per cent of the total number of classified teachers. In the following three years it climbed to its highest point of 50 to 51 per cent when the last years of female pupil-teachers with security of tenure moved into the ranks of classified teachers. Then between 1893 and 1902 this trend was slightly reversed. During some periods less than 50 per cent of the teachers employed were classified (see Figure 7).

TEACHERS IN GIRLS AND INFANTS SCHOOLS

During this period it was unquestioned that girls were best taught by female teachers. Infants also were best taught by females according to educational administrators. The virtues of females as infant teachers were extolled before the Royal Commission on Education Institutions, 1874, by James Kerr, head teacher of the Brisbane Normal School and A. R. Campbell, District Inspector. Kerr said:

they [female teachers] deal with little children in a gentler spirit and their discipline is more effective whilst at the same time it is milder . . . they are more painstaking and patient³⁶.

Similar opinions were expressed in later years by other District Inspectors³⁷. Consequently, all the teachers in girls, infants, and girls and infants schools were female.

Not all female teachers were the quintessence of gentleness. Prompted by an indignant school committee, Anderson,

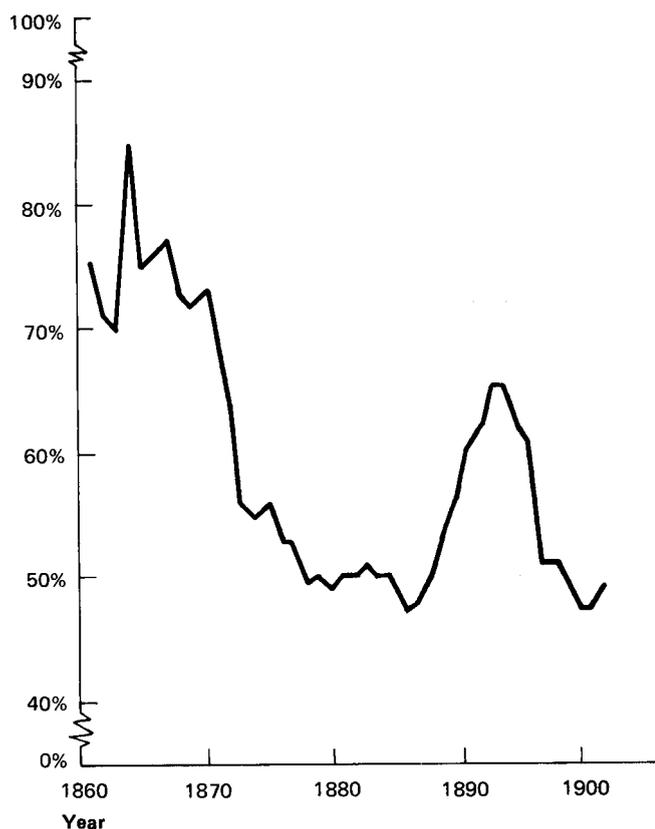


Figure 7: Total classified teachers as a percentage of total teachers, 1861-1902 (derived from Table 8)

Under Secretary for Education, had occasion to reprimand a female teacher. He said:

It is alleged that the parents all complain of your ill-treating the children, that you use the cane too freely, that you frighten the children by threatening to dash their brains out against the school wall and to chop them up into mince-meat, that you term them 'pigs' and 'dogs' ... that the children fear and dislike you ...³⁸.

TEACHERS IN LARGER MIXED SCHOOLS AND BOYS SCHOOLS

The most commonly held theory of staffing of mixed schools was clearly expressed in 1882 by District Inspector John Shirley who stated:

The infant class [Years 1-2] is best taught by a female assistant, whose requirements are a winning and attractive manner, a large amount of patience, and a sufficiency of firmness. The teacher of the upper-second class [Year 3] has to deal with what is frequently a class of idlers and irregular attendants left behind by their former compeers; he or she should therefore be an excellent disciplinarian. As new ground has to be broken in this draft, incisiveness in teaching should be combined with disciplinary powers. Finally, before leaving school [Years 4-6] the impress of a vigorous and intelligent mind is required; this is the position for one who combines the gentleman and the scholar, who can give the mint stamp of the school to the raw material supplied³⁹.

While the ideal may have been to limit females to the lower classes in mixed schools, financial considerations and the difficulty of employing enough male teachers meant it was not always the case in practice. Not only was there a rise in the proportion of females employed in mixed schools, but, after 1885, they were employed in boys schools (for boys 9 years and over).

The Department's administrators publicly defended this expedient change in staffing policy. Ewart in 1886 acknowledged it as an 'experiment', a departure from Departmental practice and one which should be extended if necessary to meet the needs of the service⁴⁰.

Privately, however, administrators of the Department of Public Instruction did not welcome these trends. On 6 May 1892, the Minister for Education wrote:

The growing preponderance of females over males on the staffs of mixed schools and the introduction of female teachers into schools for boys of late years, are not regarded as altogether satisfactory features of the administration, and it is intended to return as soon as possible to the original and long prevailing practice, namely to appoint only females to schools for girls or infants, only males to schools for boys, and to maintain a proper balance of male and female teachers on the staff of mixed schools⁴¹.

Five years later the issue was raised in Parliament by John Cross who said that there would be nothing to complain of if female teachers were restricted to educating female children and infants, but they were making inroads into an area that should be reserved for male teachers. He claimed the reason for the trend was to save money. David Dalrymple, Minister for Education, in the course of supporting his Department's policy of expediency, asserted that females were eminently suited to teach both sexes⁴².

On 5 June 1899, the editor of the *Brisbane Courier* stated that the substitution of the female assistant for the male may tide over a temporary difficulty, but as a system of management, it was disastrous⁴³.

Alarm was also expressed at the increase in the number of female teachers, particularly those at the Class III level, (the lowest classification - equivalent in standard to present Year 10) by the author of 'Notes and Jottings' in the *Queensland Education Journal*⁴⁴. He complained that primary schools' upper classes were passing into the hands of persons intellectually unfit. He was equally blunt in commenting on the action of a large boys school committee which had urged the Department to appoint female assistants to the school in preference to an increase in male pupil-teachers. He wrote:

We dissent entirely from that form of relief. Keep the women to the girls' school. In mixed schools the staff may be judiciously mixed. What would be thought if it were suggested that men should be sent to teach in girls' schools?

PROMOTION

Classified Teachers

Promotion was based on passing examinations and receiving satisfactory reports from Inspectors. After passing all pupil-teacher examinations, a teacher was classified as a Class III teacher. Success with further examinations was necessary to reach Class II level (the present Year 12) and Class I (equivalent to one to two years of study at present tertiary levels).

Until 1898 females doing examinations for higher classifications (I and II) studied arithmetic at a lower standard than the males, and were not required to study mathematics, which in those days was algebra and Euclid (geometry). Margaret Berry, head mistress of the Brisbane Normal School for Girls, and the only female Class I at the time, said in 1874 that she didn't know whether geometry was of value to girls as she did not know any geometry herself⁴⁵.

So when the curriculum change of 1898 introduced



Changes in the primary school syllabus in 1898 meant these teachers had to learn mathematics.

mathematics into the primary school syllabus, female teachers had to update their knowledge by studying mathematics in their own time at technical colleges⁴⁶.

A much lower percentage of females than males went on to pass the Class II and Class I examinations (see Table 12 which should be interpreted in conjunction with Tables 2 and 8).

No doubt the general societal expectation, that most women wished to marry and make housekeeping their future occupation, meant that young female teachers did not have the incentive to proceed beyond the Class III level. While they may have been fulfilling the role society created for them, it did not shield females from attack by some of their male colleagues for their low qualifications.

In 1897, the editor of the *Queensland Education Journal* expressed dissatisfaction with the low proportion of females at Class I and II levels. He also wrote that there was truth in the statement that,

the profession is being regarded by them as a mere dallying place until a convenient offer of marriage presents itself, or that they are satisfied with a lower status.

He concluded by saying that women not studying for the Class I and II examinations were dragging the profession down and asked whether the Department was satisfied with this standard of scholastic efficiency⁴⁷.

Two other reasons for the low proportion of females at the Class I and II levels were put forward by District Inspector John Shirley, in 1884. He claimed that males had many more head teacher's posts available to them as an incentive and that females were reluctant to accept a promotion which took them away from home⁴⁸.

Caroline Hardy, Head Teacher of various Girls and Infants schools, encouraged other women to be more ambitious. She said that marriage should be a woman's destiny

but that such a destiny was not for all women, therefore, young female teachers should not brush off the future with the attitude that, 'I'll get married and so it does not matter if I get on or not now'⁴⁹. Caroline Hardy was one of the elite teachers in the Department. She entered the teaching service as a temporary teacher in 1878 at the age of 20. She had no professional training or experience as a teacher, but by studying at night she managed to pass the Class II and I examinations. The inspectors who visited her classes were very impressed. They used such terms to describe her as industrious, strong, active, energetic, abilities above average, shrewd, clever, good disciplinarian, management marked by zeal, tact and professional skill⁵⁰.

Head Teachers

Mixed schools

While females had no difficulty in becoming head teachers of the smallest schools (provisional schools) they were rarely put in charge of schools the next size up - one teacher State (vested) schools. The same was true for larger mixed schools. It was not only women who were excluded from these posts, but also single men.

No regulation justified this practice inherited from the NSW Board by the Board of General Education. This was made clear when a Parliamentary Select Committee in July 1861 investigated, among other things, why the Board had refused, earlier in the year, to grant aid to two Church of England non-vested (non-State) schools at South Brisbane and Ipswich.

The churches wanted to appoint assistants to the female head teachers of their schools and sought the Board's aid in doing so. They were told by the Board that assistance would be granted to South Brisbane if 'a competent master



Staff of the Mount Morgan Girls and Infants School, 1906. Caroline Hardy, the central figure in black, was Head Teacher.

be provided in accordance with the regulations for the establishment and conduct of non-vested schools in Queensland'. These regulations stipulated that the schools were to be 'conducted in conformity with the principles ... laid down for the management of vested schools'.

The Board considered that the 87 pupils at South Brisbane were more than a female head teacher could effectively superintend. The Bishop of Brisbane replied that the head teacher was efficient, had given much satisfaction to the parents and that a female assistant teacher would be of more assistance to the school. He also said that the Board made a judgment about the competency of the woman without any examination of the school⁵¹.

In the dispute between the Board and the Church about the Ipswich situation, the Reverend L. H. Rumsey of Ipswich asked the Board under which clause of the Regulations they were acting. The Board replied that the number of pupils (71) was greater than a school mistress could efficiently superintend. Rumsey later stated that although he could not see that there was any regulation dealing with this, he was forced to replace an excellent and efficient mistress because the Board would not provide aid to the school while a female was in charge.

The Chairman of the Board, the Hon. R. R. Mackenzie, told the Select Committee that the policy adopted in this instance was one followed in vested schools too. One of the Committee members asked,

'Do I understand that where a school mistress is considered efficient and competent to fulfil her duties, her sex bars her from employment?'

Mackenzie replied,

No, it was the number of children under the control of the mistress in this case that was the objection; the Board thought the number beyond her.

When asked what number of children was beyond a female, he replied that it was not so much the number as their being of mixed sex, and that the Board would not allow that for their schools⁵².

The General Inspector of the Board, R. MacDonnell, said in his evidence to the Select Committee that while he preferred separation of boys and girls, he would not insist on it. As far as the Regulations were concerned, he admitted that it was not contrary to the letter of the regulations for a mistress to be in charge of a school which included a large number of boys but it was contrary to 'the spirit' of the Regulations⁵³. Since the conduct of non-vested schools came under the same regulations as those for vested schools, MacDonnell's admission, applied also to mistresses in vested schools.

The 1861 *Annual Report* of the Board of General Education gave the Board the opportunity to explain its position of relying on past precedent rather than on regulations. An addendum stated:

This refusal to entrust a large mixed school to the charge of a mistress was founded not only on the rule of the New South Wales Board, but also on the regulations of the Privy Council on Education in England, as may be seen from the following minute:

My Lords will refuse to make grants to a mixed school under a mistress only, if it is the only school in the village; such a school is not fit for boys over 8 or 9 years of age, and my Lords could not in any public measure recognise such an age for leaving school⁵⁴.

The 'rule' of the NSW Board referred to was a custom, a practice, not a regulation⁵⁵.

The Board continued to rely on precedent and on the 'spirit' of the regulations to justify its staffing policy for mixed schools. Females were appointed, when expedient,

only to the smallest, mixed, vested schools. In 1875, for example, three females were in charge of vested schools with an average attendance of thirty or less.

The passing of the *Education Act* in 1875 and the subsequent drawing up of Regulations in 1876 may have seemed to present the ideal opportunity for the Department of Public Instruction (replacing the Board of General Education) to put its policy into writing. The new Regulations, however, failed to stipulate that a female could not be in charge of a large mixed school. The only reference to the matter was an implication in Regulations 23, 27 and 50 that head teachers of mixed State schools would be men. Furthermore, when it was expedient, the Department appointed females to small mixed State schools.

District Inspector R. N. Ross reported that two of the smaller mixed State schools in his Region were taught by female classified teachers in 1883. He presumed that their appointment was an experiment, but an experiment that was a complete success. These schools were in no respect inferior to schools of similar size conducted by men, according to Ross⁵⁶.

In 1902, 11 females were in charge of small, mixed one-teacher State schools. Without exception, these were schools where the average attendance was below 30 pupils. All 11 schools were in a transitional stage. They were either waiting to be reduced to provisional schools or, when their attendance averaged 30 pupils, to have a married male take over as head teacher. In effect the female head teacher of a mixed State school was a caretaker head teacher. Nevertheless, it was clear that nothing in the Act or Regulations prevented the Department from having females in charge of mixed State schools.

Girls and Infants schools

During the 1860s to the 1880s, educators, and the public generally, believed that it was necessary to segregate the sexes in schools after a certain age. Objections to the mixed school were stated by Joseph Landon, a nineteenth century educationist. He wrote:

... that the education of boys and girls, having somewhat different ends in view, cannot be properly made identical in the means: that a uniform discipline cannot be administered without much injury, the girls needing often to be treated in quite a different way from the boys; that the girls become forward and self-assertive, and lose, in a way never to be regained, that innate modesty and sense of propriety, that delicacy of both feeling and action, which distinguishes the sex when properly trained; that the girls, having to learn needlework and other things, in addition to the ordinary subjects, can scarcely be expected to make as much progress in these as boys, and for them always to figure as laggards is unfair; and finally, that where a master is employed there is no room for the development of those little affectionate traits which distinguish the intercourse of girls with a mistress⁵⁷.

Mixed schools were therefore only regarded as an expedient, to be established only in small centres. Consequently, in an expanding town, it was common practice to divide a growing mixed school into separate schools – a boys school, and a girls and infants school. Even greater population growth led, in some instances, to a further division of the girls and infants school into separate schools, each with its own head mistress.

This practice ensured that a certain number of head teachers' positions were reserved for females (see Table 14).

Usually the female head teacher of girls and infants schools

had a larger school and staff than her male counterpart in the boys school. For example, at Townsville, in 1881, the head mistress had a staff of eight while the head master had a staff of three. At Kangaroo Point the head mistress had a staff of 10 while the head master had a staff of six⁵⁸. While most male head teachers accepted the moral and educational reasons for segregation, they resented the effect that segregation had on their salaries and promotion⁵⁹.

Once again, the Department of Public Instruction found it financially and administratively more expedient not to act in accordance with accepted theories. Consequently, it would sometimes allow a growing mixed school to continue under a male head teacher rather than establish a separate girls and infants school.

But by the 1890s the notion of segregated schools was being seriously questioned in educational circles. Opponents of segregated schools claimed:

... that the girls exert a refining influence upon the rougher and coarser natures of the opposite sex, and that the stimulus of working with boys improves their intellectual tone; that the shy, timorous, nervous manner of many girls is improved, and greater self-reliance implanted; that the system tends to check that rudeness and disrespect to women which are unfortunately so common, and that the girls brought up with boys regard them less as objects of wonder, and are thus less romantically inclined⁶⁰.

According to the Royal Commission on the establishment of a University of Queensland:

All who have, either as teachers, pupils or students, had experience of the co-education of the two sexes, bear testimony to its healthy influence on the character and progress of the young people who have been so educated. The Commissioners recommended co-education of the sexes from the kindergarten through to the final year at university⁶¹.

A combination of Departmental expediency and changing educational theory meant that the number of girls and infants schools, after reaching a peak in 1880, remained much the same up to 1902, even though the school population increased rapidly.

Although there was a ready supply of female teachers, up to the 1890s the Board and the Department occasionally had difficulty in employing females with the experience and qualifications to be head teachers of the girls and infants schools. Consequently, some teachers were occasionally brought from Great Britain to fill these posts⁶².

During the 1890s the number of female teachers in Queensland with the necessary qualifications and experience increased (see Table 12). Since the number of girls and infants schools remained much the same, the chances of promotion for female teachers decreased. Whereas in 1880 15 (68 per cent) of the 22 largest schools (average attendance of 200 plus) had female head teachers, 20 years later, only 10 (36 per cent) of the 28 largest schools (average attendance of 400 plus) had female head teachers (see Table 14).

One of the women who realised that the avenues of promotion were becoming more limited expressed the bitterness that some felt in an article in the *Queensland Education Journal*⁶³ of 1897. Under the pseudonym of Danae, she attacked a male colleague who, in an earlier Journal, had questioned the value of segregated schools.

Danae put forward several reasons for maintaining segregated schools. She wrote that children had closer contact with the head teacher in segregated schools. From the

Department's point of view, she pointed out that separate girls and infants schools cost less in salaries.

Women, Danae claimed, had as much a right to be head teachers as men. To women, the office of head was highly prized, not for its monetary reward but for its dignity and power for doing good.

Danae then turned her attack towards certain male colleagues:

In what safer hands can we place the training of our growing girls. 'In mine' says the poor man of little soul with his eye on his purse . . . Yes, little man, but what shall we do with our head mistress? Are any of them, think you, such poor creatures as to be assistants to you?

She then singled out one of her previous head teachers for special attention:

While being an assistant teacher to that Man (mind the capital 'M'), I had charge of the three infant classes, the domestic economy and the sewing. Setting sewing was, in his reading of the Regulations, *necessary work to be done before or after school hours*. My playground duty was from 12.30 to 1.00 p.m. and from 1.30 to 2.00 p.m. *every day*. While I paraded the grounds, and waiting for my work to be set, this 'Mirror of Chivalry' after enjoying a hot dinner, took a siesta on the drawing room couch.

In concluding, Danae reminded other female teachers, 'united we stand, divided we fall'.

In a later issue of the Journal, Danae complained,

The numbing influence of hopelessness, engendered by the thoughts of perpetual subordination, naturally blunts all originality of idea, readiness of resource, and individuality, leaving the woman in their riper years mere colourless nonentities.

At the same time, she accepted the convention that women should not be placed in charge of combined schools and staff, which would put them in a position of authority over men⁶⁴.

Another strong supporter of higher responsibilities for women teachers was Caroline Hardy. She advocated 'that in these days when women are coming to the front', females should be able to become Inspectors of infant schools and the lower classes of mixed schools⁶⁵.

MARRIEDWOMEN

Because of the prevailing social attitudes, most female teachers resigned when they married*. A small number of women, some by choice, and others through necessity, continued to teach after marriage (see Table 19). The Education Regulations from 1860 to 1902 did not prevent this.

A significant step against the employment of married women in provisional schools was taken by Davis Ewart, the General Inspector, when, on 15 July 1895 he recommended to the Under Secretary for the Department of Public Instruction,

I do not think you should encourage married women who have husbands to work for them, to expect to be employed while so many applicants are striving to enter the service⁶⁶.

The Under Secretary, John Anderson, agreed with this and so did his Minister, D. H. Dalrymple⁶⁷.

* This did not prevent females being ridiculed because 'they enter the service, in many instances, for the purpose of passing away the time until their marriage day arrives'⁶⁹.

A provisional teacher at Branch Creek, was the cause for this announcement. The teacher, Eileen O'Sullivan, had continued to teach after she married.

When, two months later, Mary Ann O'Sullivan of Kilcoy Provisional School requested three weeks leave of absence for her confinement, Ewart reiterated his earlier recommendation that the Department should not employ any more married women. 'Such women should be minding their husbands, their homes and their children', he said⁶⁸. As a result of Ewart's recommendations, no more married women, except those widowed or divorced, were appointed to provisional schools.

In 1902 Ewart and Anderson drew up a set of Regulations which included the new Regulation (71) stating that female teachers were to resign when they married. This forced the resignation of all married women teachers in both State and provisional schools. After 1902 the Department employed only those married women who were widowed, divorced or deserted by their husbands.

It would seem that this new restriction was quietly accepted by the majority of teachers, female as well as male. When the new Regulations were discussed in the

*Queensland Education Journal*⁷⁰, many in detail, Regulation 71 was listed as one of the minor regulations and no comment was made about it. Furthermore, no reference in the journal was made to the regulation throughout 1902.

Wives of head teachers in small towns and country districts had to help at the school. Regulation 20 of the Board of General Education (1860) specifically stated that the salary of a master included the assistance, for an hour-and-a-half daily, of his wife, whether or not she was a classified teacher. It was stipulated in Regulation 33 that she was to teach needlework at least one hour a day, every school day.

When the Regulations of the newly created Department of Public Instruction were published in 1876, they restricted the wife's duties to teaching needlework. The new Regulation (Regulation 50) stated⁷¹:

In mixed State schools, where there is no female assistant, the head teacher's wife (if any) is required to teach 'needlework to the girls for one hour on two school days in each week, which hours must be entered on the time table. She will be considered a paid member of the school staff; and the teacher's salary will be deemed to include remuneration for her services.

If this duty was not performed, a deduction was made from the husband's salary.

Those women who continued to teach after they married, and who taught full-time in the school in which their husbands were the head teachers, were dismayed when, in 1885, Regulation 22 was amended by the following addition⁷²:

Wives of teachers, acting as assistants under their husbands, will not receive the full salary assigned to their classification (if any) unless they hold staff rank. Staff rank was given to only a few women in the larger schools.

Instead of a salary, these women received an allowance of between £30 and £40. A teacher not given 'staff rank' could find her annual salary reduced from £150 to £30 - less than a first year pupil-teacher earned.

These two measures were extremely unpopular with all teachers⁷³ and motions designed to change them were introduced regularly at the Queensland Teachers Union annual conferences. The enforced resignation of married female teachers from 1902 eliminated the category of

female assistant teachers teaching in their husband's schools. It was not until 1913 that an additional £10 per annum was paid as a separate allowance to wives who taught needle work⁷⁴.

SALARIES

Pattern of Salaries

The majority of females received between 50 and 80 per cent of the male salary rate, with the exception of the wives of men in charge of small mixed schools who received no direct payment for assisting their husbands (see Table 22).

Attitudes of various groups

Official attitudes

The reasons for this difference in the remuneration of the sexes were given by the General Inspector of the Board of General Education, A. R. Campbell, in 1874⁷⁵. He said: A wide discrepancy exists between the salaries paid to males and those paid to females. In course of time, the difference will doubtless be reduced, and very properly so. We are willing to recognise, in theory, the justice of the payment according to the work done, rather than according to the nature of the instrument by which it is done. There are but few cases, however, where a woman does a man's work [that is, most females taught in girls and infants schools]. The equalisation of the salaries could only be done by augmenting those of the females, or by diminishing those of the males; the latter would be unwise, the former is impracticable - the cost of maintaining our educational institutions would thereby be increased by about one-third. The present generation of the stronger sex will therefore, I fear, prevent any serious action designed to regulate the matter contrary to the law of supply and demand.

The law of supply and demand and the cost of equal pay remained the major reasons given by the Department of Public Instruction to justify the status quo. The Minister, the Hon. J.G. Drake⁷⁶, told a delegation of women seeking increases in 1900 that while it was cruel to talk about the law of supply and demand, he could find no other way of describing the situation. Because a teaching career was not sufficiently attractive to young men, the Department had set males' salaries at a higher rate. He also said that because so many young women of the colony were anxious to get into the service, the Department was not justified in providing attractive salaries for them. Therefore, he said, he could not see his way clear to grant the women's request, whatever his own feelings might be. Drake went on to point out to the women the need for greater expenditure on improving other aspects of the education system.

The press

Newspapers occasionally gave attention to the salary discrepancy issue. In an editorial in *The Brisbane Courier*⁷⁷ in 1897, the editor wrote that the work done by women teachers was just as effective as that done by men. The editor claimed that female teachers were paid less than males for the same reason as existed in other occupations - women were willing to work for less because they found it cheaper to live and because they looked at marriage, not teaching, as their major occupation.

The following year, the editor wrote in favour of equal pay for women⁷⁸:

Is the woman to receive the smaller pay simply because she is a woman? That strikes us as one of the most glaring injustices of our social relations.

The editor of *The Telegraph*⁷⁹ was not of the same view when he wrote, in 1900, that women did not need equal pay because they had the advantage of living at their parents' homes.

Parliamentarians

The majority of parliamentarians accepted the status quo on the issue of equal pay. However, the issue was taken up by some of them as early as 1875. In the *Report of the Royal Commission on the Educational Institutions in the Colony*⁸⁰, the Commissioners, several of whom were leading politicians, stated:

It has been the practice to pay the female teachers of the colony at a lower rate than the male, for similar services rendered. We are not prepared to recommend the entire abolition of this distinction, but we may call your Excellency's attention to the fact that it has been already abandoned in the State of California; and that the advisability of either abolishing it, or adjusting it more equitably, is now occupying the attention of the Minister for Instruction in Victoria.

By the 1890s the cause of equal pay was openly espoused in Parliament. In 1893, C. McDonald⁸¹, MLA, stated that there should be equal pay for equal work for female teachers. The following year, George Jackson⁸², MLA, expressed the opinion that it was difficult to support the discrepancy in wages because the male teachers did not have a superior intellectual capacity. He referred to the fact that during recent teachers examinations, 63 per cent of the females passed, compared with 42 per cent of the males.

Frank McDonnell⁸³, MLA, well-known for his stand against female sweated labour, told Parliament that female teachers should get the same remuneration as males for the same work. He claimed that in good business houses, for example, in drapery houses, the women in leading positions received almost as much as men.

Female teachers' salaries were inadequate and should be the same as males' salaries, G. Thorn told the Parliament in 1902. When he maintained that the cost of living for females in the north and the west was higher because men could rough it, another Member, George Kerr, interjected that some of the females could make 'good catches' by going there. Thorn replied that he stood as a champion of the women and that other Members held similar views⁸⁴.

Trade unions

The equal pay issue was taken up at trade union conferences in 1891 and 1892. Conference delegates voted for salary and capitation allowances paid to female teachers to be the same as those paid to male teachers of equal classification. When the issue was debated again, only two males voted for equal pay⁸⁵.

Teachers

A minority of teachers, females as well as males, appeared to support the principle of equal pay. However, a majority of female teachers strongly resisted attempts made in 1898 to widen the discrepancy between male and female salary rates.

Margaret Berry, head mistress of the Girls Normal School, told the Royal Commission in 1874 that women teachers felt they should get more pay. But when the Vice Chairman of the Board of General Education was asked if any formal complaints had been made to the Board about differences in salary rates he said. there had been none⁸⁶.

The Royal Commission reported that when 185 head teachers of schools, including provisional schools, were asked what improvements could be made to the existing system of primary education, two said that female teachers should receive the same salary as males. Approximately 20 per cent of the 185 were female⁸⁷.

A similar situation emerged during the 1888 Royal Commission on the Civil Service. Of 30 writers commenting on the pupil-teacher system, one supported the principle of equal pay; and of 22 writers commenting on assistant teachers, one referred to the injustice of the different rates of pay for males and females⁸⁸.

'The Salary Question as it Affects Lady Teachers' was the topic for discussion at the East Moreton Teachers Association in 1898⁸⁹. Two of the three papers presented concluded that female teachers were inadequately paid for their work. These two papers claimed that women had a special aptitude for teaching, especially teaching young children. While women may have disabilities, so did men. But on an average, women's work was as efficient as men's, and their classes gave equal satisfaction to the District Inspector. These two papers also claimed that women's pupils made equal progress, mentally and morally, and lower salaries for women would result in women teachers becoming more numerous, with adverse effects on men's remuneration.

The third paper, taking a different point of view, claimed that a woman's destiny was to be mistress of the home. The end of a female's pupilage was therefore near the end of her professional career. 'Too high salaries might induce many of her professional sisters to live a life not ordained by the dispensations of Nature.' Furthermore, the writer claimed, women were 'bad financiers'.

A leading article in the *Queensland Education Journal*⁹⁰ in 1900 opposing equal pay re-stated previously heard arguments - the supply of females was in excess of demand; women could live more cheaply than men; women can't do some duties which men can; men have a wider market for their labour; and some positions men can fill more capably.

It may have been the flood of these economic and

ideological arguments, as well as the fact that they were still better off than their sisters who worked in shops and factories⁹¹, that influenced females not to voice their discontent in any concerted way. They were, however, moved to mobilise forces when the relativities between male and female salaries were changed to the detriment of female teachers.

This change took place in 1898 when the salaries of male assistant teachers were raised but the salaries of female assistant teachers remained unchanged. When the women tried to stir their Union (QTU) into action, they initially had a lethargic response. A study of the Union's Journal, the *Queensland Education Journal*, of 1900 lends to the conclusion that the editor was not sympathetic towards the women's cause. He dared them to fight, but his tone suggested that he did not believe they would.

The women showed a perhaps unexpected militancy by holding well-attended meetings for female teachers, writing petitions and sending deputations to the Minister for Education and parliamentarians. Some of them expressed, at meetings and through the columns of the Journal, dissatisfaction with the Journal and the Union. The Journal quickly became more supportive, as did the Union as a body, on the issue. And then, when the women, by their actions, showed a considerably independent spirit, the Journal exhorted them not to disregard the Union⁹².

The first effort to redress the situation through the Union was an attempt to censure the Union executive for its failure to oppose the Department on the issue. While the motion failed, the following resolution was passed at the Union conference in January 1900⁹³:

This Conference regrets, that while improving the position of the male assistants, the Minister did not see fit to include female assistants in the benefits provided, and moves that he be requested to take action in the matter.

Three months later, during a deputation by the Union to the Minister for Education, James Drake, the 'ladies



Delegates to the 1903 Annual Conference of the QTU. Women delegates were (second row from the left): Harrietta Forsythe, Constance McKiernan, Julia James and Janet Stewart.



Women attending the 1908 Annual Conference of the QTU (front row from left) Anne Crosser, Margaret Hood, May Roberts, Annie McMillan and Miss Shiers.

resolution' was raised⁹⁴. Drake told them he could not promise to do anything because the continuing larger supply of females showed that they were satisfied with their pay, that young ladies were not able to do the work of males, and that the enforcement of compulsory education would require additional expenditure.

Following this set back, a well-attended meeting at the Brisbane Central Girls State School on 22 April of female assistant teachers made plans to reverse this decision and sought the co-operation of the Union's executive⁹⁵. Then during June, a number of Union deputations of female assistant teachers met the Premier, Robert Philp, and the Minister, Drake. They sought to regain the previous relativity to male teachers' salaries. From the evidence, it appears their major reason was that they were having a struggle to live on their salaries.

In early June a deputation of six women at Charters Towers called on the Premier. A spokeswoman for this group was Rubina Phillips, a 28-year-old, Class II assistant teacher at the Charters Towers Girls State School. Inspectors described her as conscientious, hard working and a Rood disciplinarian⁹⁶. Phillips pointed out that some female teachers received less money than they did in 1891. Furthermore, the deputation claimed that females with needlework as an extra subject to study and teach, were doing more work than men, and therefore there should be less disparity between the rates of salary⁹⁷.

Several days later when Philp was in Townsville, another deputation of females consisting of Margaret Scully, Gertrude Landy, Constance McKiernan and Mary McLennan, called on him. They gave him a not uncommon instance of a female teacher, paid £72 plus £10 for cost of living a year, who after paying board, had only £17 left to clothe herself and pay for washing and the many incidental needs of life. They also gave him figures which showed that a domestic servant was better paid than a female Class III teacher; and that female teachers in New South Wales and

South Australia were better paid than their Queensland counterparts⁹⁸.

Further down the coast, at Rockhampton, the female deputation to Philp consisting of Elizabeth Herbert, Annie McMillan and Isabella Grant had support of two men, G. Potts and F. H. Perkins⁹⁹. Potts was the head teacher of Rockhampton Central Boys School and Perkins, president of the Central Queensland Teachers Association.

Some of the consequences of low salaries were pointed out to Drake by Julia McMahan, Agnes Bruce, Isabella Laking and Sarah Farquharson, when he visited Toowoomba on 28 June¹⁰⁰. They told him about a female assistant at Emerald who received only enough for the bare necessities of life and who had to get financial help from home to return home for Christmas. They said a teacher at Roma was in a similar situation.

Departmental records show that the women were not exaggerating. In 1890s, from a salary of £85 per annum, Frances Quirke paid £52 for board and lodging at Adavale (near Charleville). The cost of the fare from Adavale to Brisbane was £8 return¹⁰¹.

The second part of the women's campaign began when they started to lobby Parliamentarians. Even though women did not have the right to vote at that time, they managed to enlist the support of the majority of Members.

They were so successful in gaining the support of Parliamentarians that, on 28 September 1900, a deputation of Parliamentarians approached the Premier and the Minister for Education requesting a restoration of salary relativity. According to the *Queensland Education Journal*, this deputation represented the vast majority of Parliamentarians and every shade of political opinion¹⁰².

Some members of this deputation attacked the logic of the supply and demand argument used so often to support the disparity in male and female salaries. Thomas Glassey, MLA, asked why, if the argument operated against female teachers, it could not be used in the public service,



Julia James (front row, third from left) at the 1902 Annual Conference of the QTU. The other woman present was Elizabeth Large.

particularly in the higher echelons, where there were so many applicants for positions. Some others said that the logic could be extended to Parliamentarians as well and that their salaries could be cut also¹⁰³.

A petition with 802 classified teachers' signatures was presented to Drake, the Minister, on 20 October¹⁰⁴. The deputation presenting it was strengthened by the presence of QTU President, Charles Reinholdt, and the Secretary, Berthold Krone. Since there were 468 female and 559 male classified teachers in 1900 (see Table 8), the petition must have been signed by a majority of men as well as a majority of women.

Julia James read out the details of the case. She claimed that many female teachers in Brisbane were the principal bread-winners of their families. She concluded¹⁰⁵:

We would impress upon the Minister that we do not seek the equalisation of male and female salaries. We ask no more than that there be accorded to us like treatment, and in like measure, as was extended to all other public servants when returning prosperity allowed the Government to relax its hand upon the public purse. You Sir, informed a deputation of female assistant teachers, who waited upon you at Toowoomba, that the sum of £3000 would be required for this purpose. Parliament, we rejoice to say, has given an indirect sanction to our claims. The press, through all its phases and shades of political thought, is with us. It is hardly possible for the

consensus of public opinion to be stronger or more solid in our favour.

Drake, after a series of questions which strayed from the issue, said he would refer the matter to the Premier and his colleagues.

Both Ewart and Anderson consistently opposed the female teachers' claims. As late as 14 November 1900, Anderson wrote a seven-page memorandum to the Minister presenting a case for refusing these claims¹⁰⁶. Both the Premier and the Minister had, however, been subjected to considerable public and Parliamentary pressure. According to the *Queensland Education Journal* the claims were supported by *The Brisbane Courier*, *The Telegraph* and *The Worker* and 66 members of State Parliament¹⁰⁷.

When McDonnell asked the Premier in Parliament on 17 December 1900 whether the Government would grant an increase in the classification salaries of female assistant teachers, Philp replied that it would if the Committee of Supply expressed a favourable opinion when the Education estimates went through¹⁰⁸. McDonnell repeated the question on 21 December and Philp replied that the increase was to be granted from 1 January 1901¹⁰⁹. The next month, the Minister, requested Anderson to submit a scheme which would implement the decision¹¹⁰.

A meeting of female teachers on 8 March evidently attributed much of their success to McDonnell because they

thanked him for his support. They did not acknowledge support from the *Queensland Education Journal*, much to the chagrin of the Journal's editor¹¹¹.

LEAVING THE SERVICE

The average rate at which females left the teaching service (see Figure 8 and Table 17) was much the same as that of the males (10 per cent compared with 8 per cent). Also, the range of leaving rates for females (7 to 16 per cent) was not as great as that for males (4 to 17 per cent). During this period, therefore, females constituted a work-force which was as stable as that of males (see Figure 8 and Table 17).

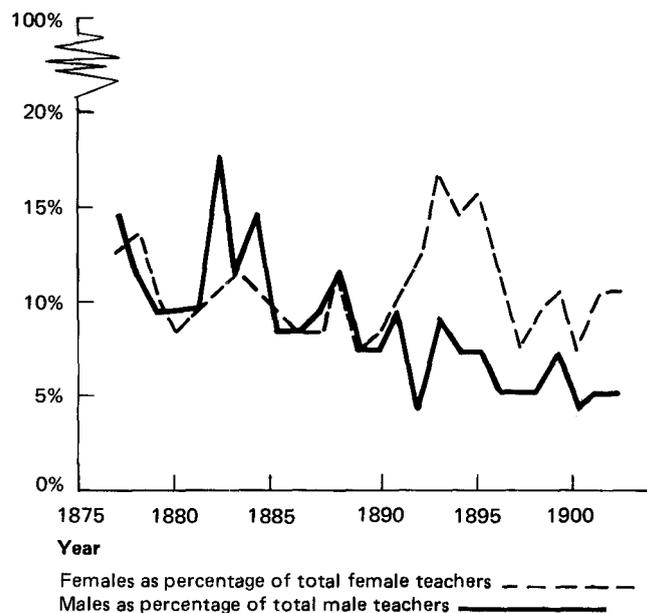


Figure 8: Percentage of teachers who left the service, 1877-1902 (derived from Table 17)

