

1902-1940



# 1902-1940

## STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

During the years 1918 to 1920, the percentage of women employed in teaching reached its highest point since 1860 (compare Figures 1 and 9). It gradually decreased from 1920 to 1928, and then more rapidly to 1940.

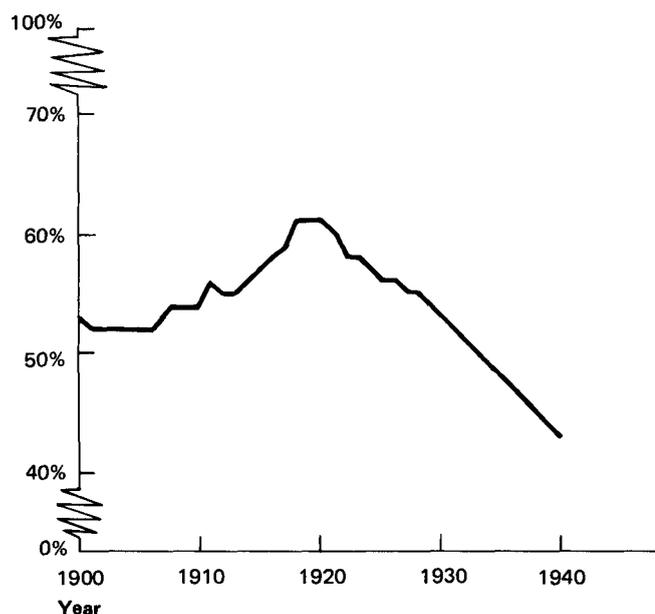


Figure 9: Percentage of female teachers in the teaching service, 1902-1940 (derived from Table 2)

## FACTORS INFLUENCING EMPLOYMENT

### Regulations 72 and 61

Perhaps reflecting the prevailing social attitudes towards women, a new Departmental regulation came into existence in 1902. It provided: 'Female teachers shall resign when they marry'. Thirty two years later the Department felt the need to elaborate on Regulation 71 and hence Regulation 61 came into effect. It stated:

A female teacher upon her marriage shall resign, otherwise she shall be deemed to have forfeited her office, and shall thereupon cease to perform her duties and to receive her salary.

This Regulation was strictly enforced. However, provision was made for the re-appointment of married women if they became the sole bread-winners through the incapacity or death of their husbands. They would then receive the same salary as an unmarried teacher<sup>1</sup>.

The Regulations must have forced the unwilling resignation of some women. Yet, there were no striking changes in the percentage of females resigning to marry before and after 1902 (see Tables 17 and 19). Social attitudes evidently

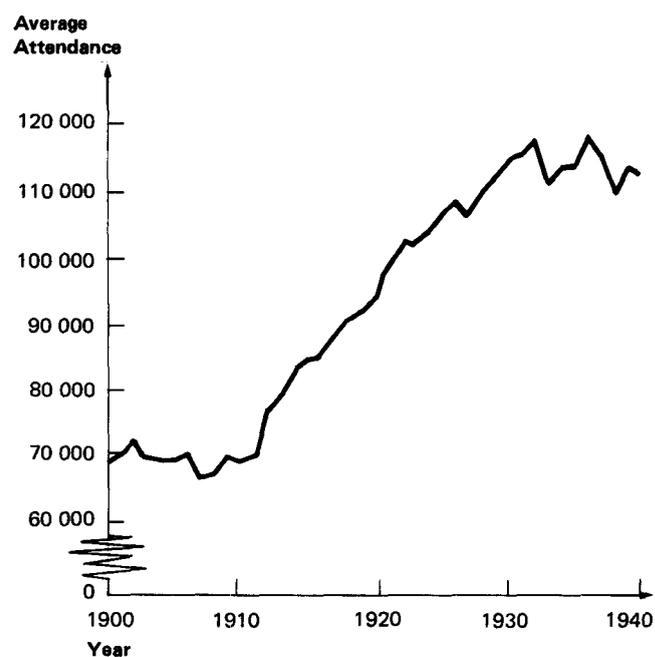


Figure 10: School population, 1902-1940 (derived from Table 1)

played a greater influence than Regulations in determining that women should resign when they married.

### Demographic factors

After reaching a peak in 1902, the school population decreased slightly until 1907 after which it rose quite rapidly until 1932. And then until 1940, the numbers tended to decline. As far as its influencing the employment of women, the demographic factor was not as important as social, economic and political factors (compare Figures 9 and 10).

### Social factors

The beliefs of a patriarchal society were an important influence on the employment of women as teachers during this period. Queen Victoria popularised one aspect of this, the doctrine of 'separate spheres'. The doctrine postulated that God created men and women differently and that women should not be in competition with men, but occupy a separate and different sphere of influence to that of men<sup>2</sup>. Because these beliefs became very influential during the first three decades of the century they exerted a restricting influence on the employment of women.

An exposition of the doctrine can be seen in a letter by a female reader to the editor of *The Brisbane Courier* on 13 October 1921<sup>3</sup>.

God made man and women two distinct sexes, and gave them each distinct callings in life. How can we expect men to show a chivalrous, protective spirit towards women if she insists upon competing with him in the daily life? Women are equal to men but their callings are as distinct as the two poles. If woman would do any real good in the world, let her look to her home . . . The happiest women I know are those who have loving husbands and little children round them - who are quite content to let their husbands fight for them but keep the home a little haven of love, where the husbands and children can turn for help and comfort. Woman's place is not to usurp the man's place in life, or to compete with them in professions and wages . . . Come, then, women let us not worry about entering Parliament, or councils, or making ourselves heard at meetings; let us start in our own homes; let us carry out our ideas there, and our husbands and children will carry them into the world for us. The need for purity and temperance was never so keen as it is now, and it is in the hands of us women, not by making our voices heard, but by our own living example.

Women who rejected this role were often ridiculed<sup>4</sup>:

There are women who, by inclination, and alas education of a kind, prefer to rub shoulders with the men in the marts and pleasure schemes of the world rather than take up the humdrum life of domesticity and child bearing. We are assuredly acquiring in our development a third sex. A neuter gender! By this pernicious training of our daughters the effect of this the future alone will show.

The implications of these beliefs for women teachers were constantly enunciated. *The Telegraph* of 21 January 1915 expressed the opinion that teaching was a career a girl pursued until she married. Reginald Row, General Inspector, said that their educational powers were not lost to the State but were felt in the homes and families<sup>5</sup>. And those women who choose to remain teachers instead of marrying were a decided loss to the country, according to a female ex-teacher at the 1921 Annual Conference of the Queensland Women's Electoral League<sup>6</sup>.

Commenting on the proceedings of the 1928 Annual Conference of the Australian Federation of University

Women Graduates, the editor of *The Telegraph*<sup>7</sup> wrote:

The note which rang most pleasingly through the debate was the human one which proclaimed the very necessary gospel that neither educational ambition nor professional success in the business world should deafen women to the sacred call of the home and motherhood.

The following day the editor of *The Daily Mail*<sup>8</sup> wrote in a similar vein:

... education can fit most women for no more important profession than that of wifehood and motherhood.

When a New Zealand publication, *National Education*, suggested in 1930 that women should be given teaching appointments on the basis of efficiency and not according to their marital status, *The Telegraph*s responded. The editor conceded that schools were established for the purpose of educating children, not providing men and women with employment, and from that point of view, the best teacher should be employed. From another point of view, the editor continued, it might be detrimental to the community to deviate from the tradition of the importance to the family of the wife staying in the home.

Praise for the Departmental Regulation forcing women to resign on marriage came from the President of the Queensland Women's Electoral League, J. H. Goldsmith, in 1932<sup>10</sup>. The Regulation, she said, upheld the marriage vows, companionship and the honour of home life. To allow women to continue teaching after marriage was likely to create disharmony in the home. Goldsmith believed that young women contemplating marriage should look forward to taking care of a husband and his home and to carrying out the responsibilities of married life.

Those women who choose teaching as a life-time career and did not marry were sometimes spoken of with scorn. In 1911, District Inspector John Shirley (later the first Director of the Teachers Training College) referred to American elementary education as being mainly in the hands of female teachers, many of whom were 'elderly celibates'<sup>11</sup>. He said that the training of young children by these women was unsatisfactory.

A similar view was expressed in *The Telegraph*<sup>12</sup> nearly twenty years later. Spinster teachers, according to *The Telegraph*, were a bad model for girls, and accordingly should be obliged to retire at 35 years of age.

The commonly held belief that women were physically, intellectually and emotionally inferior to men worked against their employment. In the 1920s, American psychologists were only beginning to assert that there was no great difference between the sexes in intellectual capacity<sup>13</sup>. In 1915, the editor of *The Telegraph*<sup>14</sup> wrote that female teachers were not as physically capable of enduring the hard life and rough conditions of 'out-post work'.

A female delegate at the 1921 Annual Conference of the Queensland Women's Electoral League agreed that women were not the equal of men<sup>15</sup>. 'I am old fashioned enough to believe that man is superior physically and mentally', she said. Her statement was greeted by loud applause from her female audience.

A male head teacher of a large Brisbane school also spoke out against the equality of the sexes in 1927<sup>16</sup>. Comparing teachers, he said that the better males had a more powerful intellect than the better females. They also had a broader outlook, and a more adventurous spirit as well as more initiative, originality, and resourcefulness. Besides, he said, a man could, and would, go anywhere, but a woman could not be sent where the surroundings were rough and

dangerous. He claimed there were more nervous breakdowns among conscientious women, as they could not endure heavy pressure of work and responsibility. The 'very nature of things prevented equality', he said.

Hostility in Great Britain to female teachers was given a thorough coverage by the Queensland press throughout the 1920s and 1930s. In Great Britain, those females who taught in boys schools were accused of being 'physiologically, psychologically and psychically' unfit to teach boys<sup>17</sup>. Also, boys taught by women were more likely to become delinquents, according to the head mistress of a girls school in Great Britain<sup>18</sup>. Another British school teacher claimed that female teachers in girls schools were sexless or homosexual, bellicose hoydens who were moulding girls into their own pattern<sup>19</sup>. Not once were these views challenged when they were publicised in the press.

It cannot be inferred though that the attitudes and values of a patriarchal society were accepted by all women in Queensland. Their opposition was recorded from time to time in the press.

For example, one woman teacher in 1903 had a remedy for the problem of sewing lessons in one-teacher schools staffed by male teachers - let the males do it. She maintained that if the women teachers had to tackle Euclid and algebra, darning and sewing were as easy as squaring a binomial<sup>20</sup>.

In 1914, a woman put forward the opinion in *The Brisbane Courier* that 'an old maid with an ideal is far happier and infinitely more useful than a married woman without' <sup>21</sup>. In the following year another woman pointed out in the same paper that, in New York schools, marriage and motherhood were considered a valuable experience for female teachers and that other school systems should similarly employ married women teachers<sup>22</sup>.

The topic, 'Is it possible for a woman to successfully combine a domestic with a public life?' was debated at the third annual function of the University Women Students' Club on 12 September 1919. When a vote was taken at the conclusion, the majority of those present voted in the

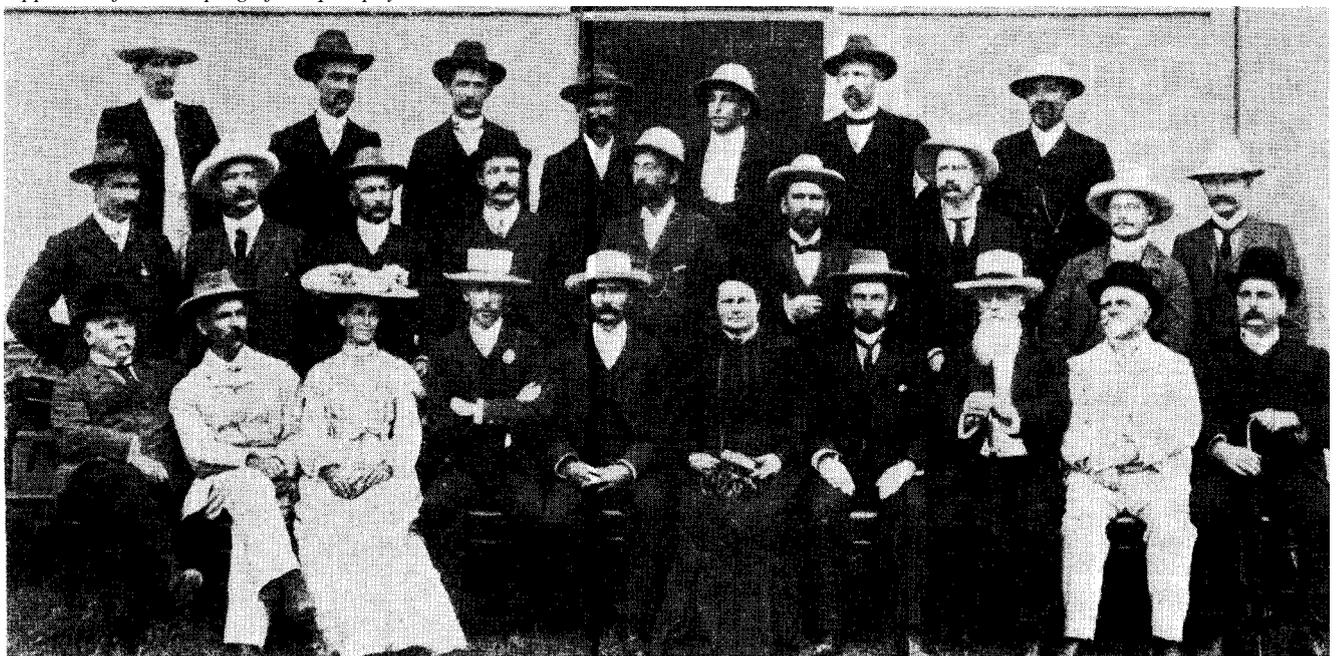
affirmative<sup>23</sup>.

There was 'a great deal of unrest among women of the present race' according to Mary Deacon, head mistress of Toowoomba South Girls and Infants State School. She spoke in 1920 of a need for women to fight for an outlet for their energies<sup>24</sup>. Deacon was herself, one of those women who chose teaching as a life-time career. She had managed to pass the difficult Class I examinations and had been described by various inspectors as bright, cheerful, intelligent, energetic, a successful student and a capable teacher<sup>25</sup>.

Another proponent of equality, Nina Westaway, pointed to the effects of social conditioning in a letter to the editor of *The Brisbane Courier* in 1921. She wrote<sup>26</sup>:

Surely, it is clear that a cringing, weakly, 'inferior' creature is less likely to have self-respecting children than one who realises that woman is half the human race (a very important half), and so is entitled to her full share of all that the other half enjoys in the form of duties, responsibilities, and pleasures. The mental and physical differences apparent between the sexes are not due to any inherent inferiority or superiority, but merely to the different conditions under which the two sexes live, and the differences in the educational atmosphere to which each is subjected right from the home. The women of some of the more primitive races, who have never lived as we do, are at least the equals of the man in initiative and physical endurance, and as it is agreed that all the races of mankind have developed along the same general lines, our race at one time, long, long ago, probably recognised equality between the sexes. Women practising in highly trained professions as doctors and lawyers do not regard themselves as inferior to their brother professionals, for they demand the same fees. Women in the teaching profession in Great Britain and in the Civil Service are unceasing in their endeavours to win recognition for this principle from the Government. Why should Queensland lag behind? It is high time that the women who are organised for political purposes should take steps to educate the public, and enlighten their own members as to the history of woman.

Mary Deacon (front row, third from left) at the 1905 Annual Conference of the QTU. Caroline Hardy (pictured) also attended as did Frederick Martin (middle row, fourth from right), a strong supporter of the campaign for equal pay.



Two days later in the same columns<sup>27</sup>, Margaret Ogg of the Queensland Women's Electoral League expressed similar views. She said:

Any thinking person who has read the earliest known records, say of Babylon or Assyria, must be surprised at the position women at that time occupied. Since then, woman has not gone back so much as she has been thrust back. It has been in the interests of many to do so. One wearies of the reiterated platitude of woman's physical inequality. It exists as an insuperable difficulty. Granted it exists, it is a reflection on our boasted civilisation that it does. Primitive woman referred to in your correspondent's letter was physically man's equal, and the fact of her being of the female sex did not affect her position. She was able to hold her own, and no doubt inspired primitive man with due respect. Since then a false system of education, now ages old, has consistently placed woman on a lower plane.

In 1930, *The Daily Standard*<sup>28</sup> quoted Winifred Stephenson writing in the *Clarion* that a woman was not created solely for marriage, and that no girl should be made to feel that the living of her life was only a subsidiary affair compared with the acquisition of a husband and the production of a family.

The first woman member of the Queensland Parliament, Irene Longman, added her voice to this discontent. In 1932 she asserted that it was a retrograde step for women to resign from teaching when they married. Women, even when married, were individuals and had the same right to choose their profession and the disposition of their lives as any other member of the community<sup>29</sup>. The democratic right of a woman to decide her own career was also championed by other women at later dates<sup>30</sup>.

Men who opposed married women working did so as a last desperate attempt to maintain their supremacy, according to the Australian President of the International Council for Women, I. H. Moss<sup>31</sup>.

Not all men accepted the general attitudes of the time towards women. James Jeffrey, District Inspector of the Maryborough district, in his 1926 annual report to the Department recorded his confidence in 'old maid' teachers<sup>32</sup>.

In this district quite a number of senior female teachers are employed as assistants. Almost invariably, I found them most efficient . . . A number of these teachers I consider amongst the finest I have inspected, and the school is indeed fortunate that has a leavening of them; their loyalty to their school and the Department, the interest they have in their work, and their never tiring energy and zeal standing out as an excellent example for the younger members of the profession to follow.

### **Economic factors**

The State's economy fluctuated during the period 1902 to 1940. For the first decade of the century the State was still recovering from the Depression and drought, but the period between 1909 and 1914 was marked by optimism and re-growth. The war years (1914-1918) were more of an interruption than a stimulus to growth. Two years of difficulty and some unemployment after the war were followed by an expansion until the late 1920s when the economy faltered and mass unemployment followed. While the economy began to recover by 1935, unemployment remained a problem until 1940.

The economic recovery immediately prior to the war seems to have created more employment opportunities for woman in teaching, possibly because males had better job opportunities elsewhere. The same opportunities for women

were not there during the boom of the 1920s when the percentage of females employed as teachers declined (see Figure 9). One explanation for the decline could be that higher entry standards and the consequent upgrading of the teaching occupation made it a strong attraction to males at that time.

A study of opinions expressed in the Queensland press suggests that the mass unemployment of the 1930s resulted in a greater emphasis on the doctrine of 'woman's sphere'. Women as well as men insisted that a married woman's place was in the home, and that males should be given employment preference over single females<sup>33</sup>. Unions also came out in opposition to the employment of married women who could be supported by their husbands<sup>34</sup>. In spite of these attacks, the general employment of women rose during the 1930s (see Table 21).

The general increase in the employment of Australian women during the 1930s did not occur in teaching (see Figure 9). By 1940, the percentage of women teachers was at its lowest point since 1868.

The difficulties of getting employment, as well as a decline in the school population, led to fierce competition for employment in State schools. As women resigned on marriage they were replaced by men. As well, a close check was made on those married women who were re-employed after marriage because they were the sole bread-winners (see Table 19). They had to give intimate details of their marital situation and domestic circumstances to ensure continued employment<sup>35</sup>.

### **Political factors**

World War I forced the Department of Education to rely more heavily on female teachers<sup>36</sup>. By 1918, 396 male teachers volunteered<sup>37</sup> and, as a result, by 1920 the percentage of women teachers reached its highest peak since 1860 (see Figure 7).

The Department's approach to female teachers had to be altered in 1914 in preparation for the expected war. Women's traditional role was expanded to the extent that they attended physical training instruction camps so they could instruct junior military cadets in schools. At the first of these camps, J. D. Story<sup>38</sup>, Under Secretary of Education, said that the Department wanted to spread the 'gospel' of physical instruction throughout the State, and prove that it was not only a white man's land, but a white woman's land, and a white child's land. The Department, he said, wanted to see a strong, healthy, virile type of woman to keep up the traditions of the pioneer women of the State - pioneer women of whom too little was heard.

According to Story, the 'country girl-teachers' were also pioneers. They left the cities, roughing it in the bush, endured privations, and did the work of the Department nobly and well. He urged them to continue to carry forward the 'torch of education' and to do their best to take part in the national defence scheme. Story added that the Department was so satisfied with the work of the camp that it would be encouraged to hold it annually. The women's training at these camps included marching drill, first aid, an explanation of junior cadet regulations and, for those females interested, miniature rifle shooting<sup>39</sup>.

By 1920 the soldiers had returned from overseas, and those who were teachers were able to return to teaching. Some soldiers, however, found themselves unemployed. An element of public opinion was that women who were working should relinquish their positions and return to their home responsibilities<sup>40</sup>.



Women teachers at a physical training camp in 1914. They were learning how to instruct junior military cadets in schools.

### TRAINING

Throughout this period, the Department aimed to employ a certain percentage of female teachers. This figure aimed at varied from 33 per cent in 1910 to 40 per cent in 1928<sup>41</sup> To achieve this aim, the Department continued to discriminate in favour of male entry (see Figure 12) when a policy

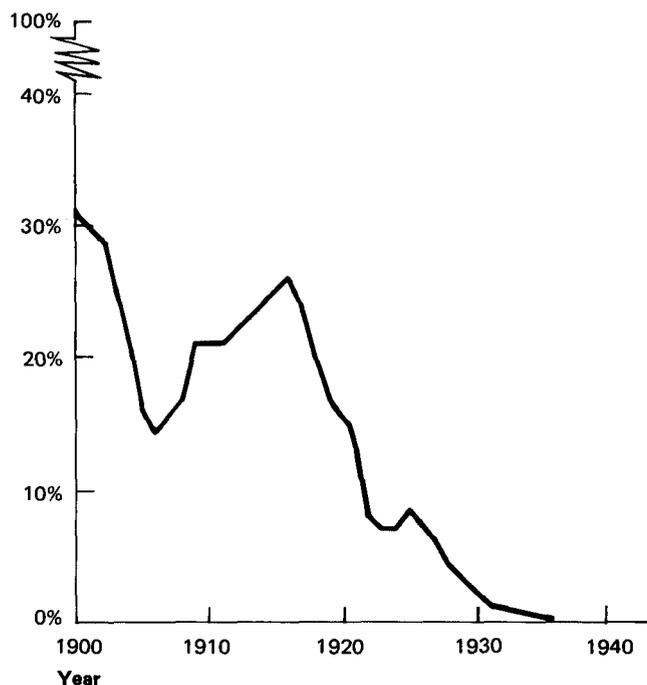


Figure 11: Pupil teachers as a percentage of total teachers, 1902-1936 (derived from Table 3)

of upgrading entry requirements was begun in 1921.

The upgrading involved phasing out pupil teachers (see Figure 11) between 1921 and 1935 and introducing, in 1921, a new system of teacher training. (The Teachers Training College opened in 1914 to provide training for secondary school teachers and subsequently short courses to prepare unclassified teachers to *serve* in small one-teacher schools.) The new system enabled a student to enter the college as a student teacher after the Junior Public examination. It wasn't long (1924) before this system was expanded to take also students who had done the Senior Public Examination.

Scholarships to the college favoured males (as did the earlier system for training secondary school teachers). In 1924, for example, scholarships were reserved for 10 males and five females after the Senior, and for 25 males and 15 females after the Junior Public Examination.

The new courses at the Teachers Training College reduced the time and stress involved in the Class III and Class II examinations as well as the actual time spent in teacher training. The age of entry into teaching was increased. While males did not always take up the places reserved for them, especially during the 1920s (see Figure 13), there was strong competition between women applicants who, as student teachers, therefore, tended to be more academically able<sup>42</sup>.

During the depression of the 1930s, more men sought the job security of teaching. Consequently, the Department obtained a greater proportion of males for the Teachers Training College and the proportion of females at this college decreased.

During the period 1905-1915, the female pupil teachers did not appear to do any better than the males in their final Class III examinations (see Table 5B). A different pattern

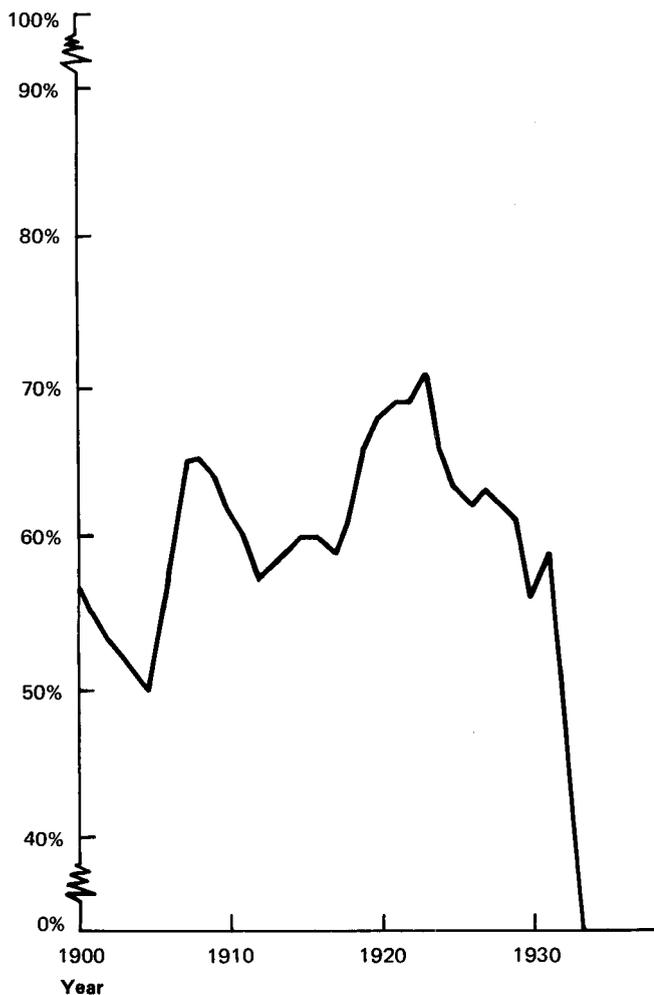


Figure 12: Female pupil teachers as percentage of total pupil teachers, 1902-1933 (derived from Table 3)

is revealed by an analysis of the examinations of teachers training college students during the period 1922 to 1939.

During the 1920s the results of the female teachers barely matched those of the males, but in the 1930s their results were far better. In 1939, for example, the first ten places of the Senior group Class III examinations were filled by females (see Table 5C). This is despite the fact that females had to study an extra subject (needlework)\*.

#### PROVISIONAL TEACHERS (UNCLASSIFIED TEACHERS)

In 1909, changes in educational regulations reduced the number of provisional schools to about sixty. Thereafter there was little change in the number of provisional schools until the 1960s when they were phased out. Most of the former provisional schools became small, one-teacher State schools. Many remained under the control of unclassified teachers, most of whom were female. During World War I, with a teacher shortage, the Department increased the percentage of female unclassified teachers.

Of the 1116 unclassified teachers in 1920, over three-quarters were females. After the establishment of the teachers training college in 1921, the Department replaced unclassified teachers with classified teachers. In the process,

\* An analysis of the individual subjects shows that the class average for needlework marks did not contribute disproportionately to the overall success of the female students. They achieved higher marks than the males in the academic subjects.

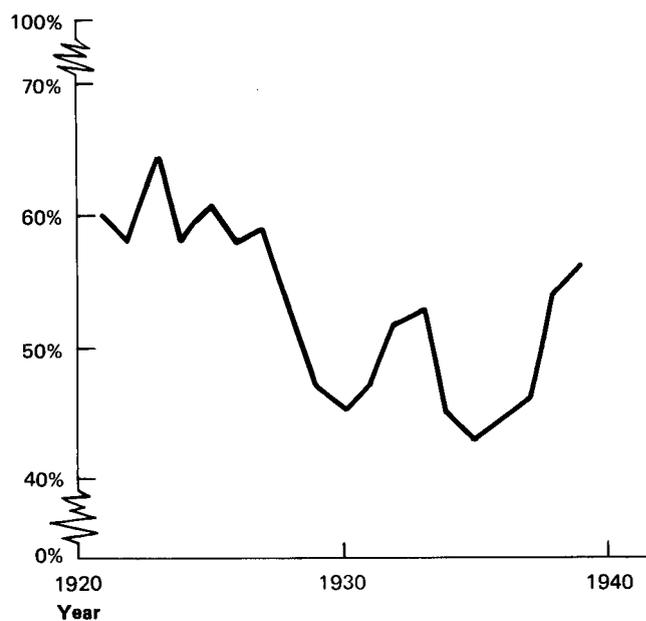


Figure 13: Female students as percentage of total students at the Teachers Training College, 1920-1940 (derived from Table 4)

the number of female unclassified teachers was reduced at a much faster rate than the males. The Departmental program of replacement was so effective that in a period of 20 years (from 1920 to 1940) the percentage of unclassified teachers had decreased from 25 per cent to 6 per cent (see Figures 14 and 15).

#### CLASSIFIED TEACHERS

A smaller percentage of female teachers were classified compared with males, but after 1920 the percentage of females classified rose at a faster rate than the males classified (see Table 8). From 1920 to 1940 the percentage of classified females rose from 52 per cent to 88 per cent and the percentage of classified males rose from 72 per cent to 92 per cent.

#### TEACHERS IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Throughout the period 1902 to 1940 there was a growth in the number of mixed schools and a decrease in the number of girls and infants schools. At the same time more females were employed to teach in mixed and boys schools.

In a move aimed at reducing expenditure the Premier, Arthur Morgan, in September 1904 proposed to the Minister for Education, Andrew Barlow, that male teachers be replaced by females. The proposal stated:

From experience, it is found that the female teacher is more pliant to the will of the head teacher, more industrious, more devoted to the work than the male; and at least as capable (with young children more capable).

The Minister resisted this suggestion. He conceded that female teachers were better for infants and girls but he feared that female teachers would 'womanise' the older lads.

Ewart, the General Inspector, agreed with the Minister<sup>43</sup>. A frightening prospect to Ewart was that, if females taught older boys as well as young children, there would be no male assistant teachers to replace the male head teachers. He said that positions for male assistant teachers should be preserved, 'sacred from the audacious and predaceous rapacity of the female'. Concern as to the effects of

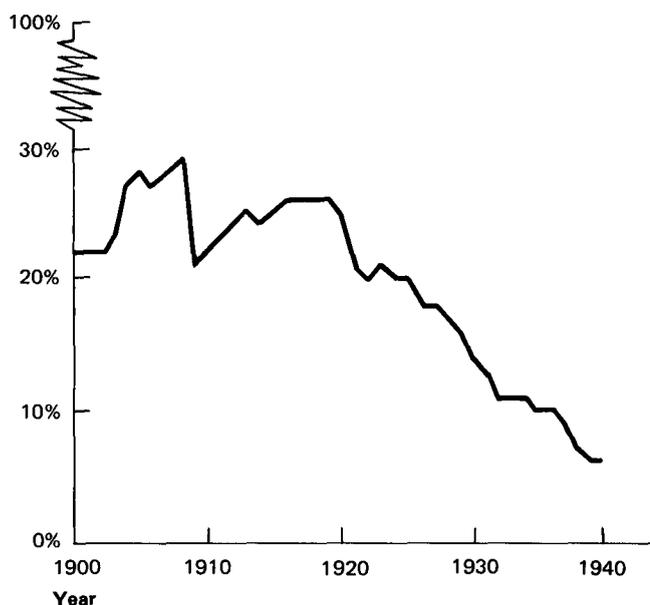


Figure 14: Provisional school/unclassified teachers as percentage of total teachers, 1902-1940 (derived from Tables 6 and 7)

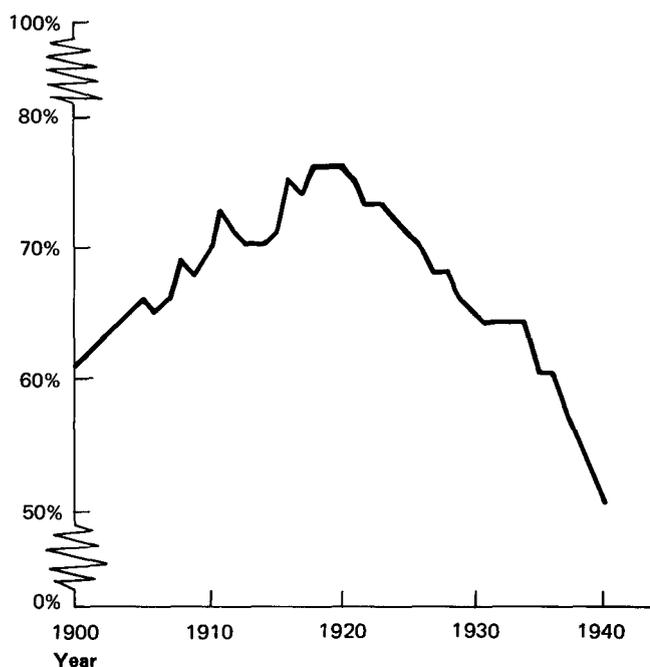


Figure 15: Female provisional school/unclassified teachers as percentage of total provisional school/unclassified teachers, 1902-1940 (derived from Tables 6 and 7)

womanisation were expressed by other General Inspectors at later dates<sup>44</sup>.

Most educators continued to believe that female teachers were better suited than males to teaching infants. As the number of large mixed schools increased at the expense of girls and infants schools, it became a widely accepted opinion in schools that male teachers were better teachers for older girls as well as for older boys.

One male head teacher of a large Brisbane school claimed that older girls profited from a broad, just and tolerant outlook which a man's wider interests alone could give<sup>45</sup>. This opinion was not shared by some women teachers, especially

head teachers of girls and infants schools and those female assistant teachers who saw avenues of promotion being gradually closed<sup>46</sup>. They maintained, clinging to the traditional view, that while older boys were best taught by men, older girls as well as infants were best taught by women.

The result was that women taught extensively in the lower classes of mixed schools and in boys schools. Since most head teachers considered the higher classes to be more important than the lower ones, they crammed large numbers of pupils into the lower classes to reduce numbers in the higher classes.

At Emerald, for instance, in 1922 the male head taught 19 pupils in one class while a female assistant (Classification level III 5) taught 69 children in three classes<sup>47</sup>.

Inspectors complained about this practice and one, W. Benbow<sup>48</sup>, claimed it was a reason for the physical breakdown of female teachers.

Expediency again proved a stronger factor than stated beliefs during World War I. Many of the boys and large mixed schools were stripped of their male staff and were almost entirely staffed by females<sup>49</sup>.

The work done by the women who took the place of the men was praised by the District Inspector for North-East Moreton, A. Mutch<sup>50</sup>. He wrote:

The female class teacher has proved a success in boys' schools. She is naturally more patient and painstaking, and has usually fine intuition. However, it is well for the boy pupil to come under the influence of both kinds of mind and character. Besides, teachers of opposite sexes working side by side are mutually corrective; indeed they are complementary. We know that the female class teacher in a mixed school is the equal, if not the superior, of the male class teacher. She is as sound in her instruction, and as a rule creates a better tone. The boys gain in refinement; and having in mind the woeful results of Prussian ideals as regard ethical culture, may we not urge that refinement in a boy is desirable both socially and from a national point of view?

### TEACHERS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

State high schools opened in 1912, and from then until 1940, between 26 and 59 per cent of the high school teachers were women (see Table 9). During the same period, the women were more highly qualified than the men - the reverse of the situation in primary schools (see Table 10).

### PROMOTION

#### Classified teachers

Fewer female than male teachers reached the higher Classifications of II and I (see Table 12). District Inspector C. Fox in 1914 believed that this was mainly caused by the lack of head teaching posts available and also possibly indolence and women's contentment with their lot<sup>51</sup>. District Inspector A. Mutch, commenting on this, noted that in his District some of the very best teachers were female Class III teachers. He believed that they were more able than male teachers, but that they were so unsparing of their energy in school that they were too exhausted after school to study. Mutch also said that there were too few headteacherships to provide goals for them. Another factor that Mutch put forward was that males had the prospect of a career, whereas, on marriage, the females had none<sup>52</sup>. An interesting feature is, however, the steady decrease in the gap between female and male qualifications over the period. (see Table 12).

An attempt was made in 1909 to provide a form of promotion for female assistant teachers. Mary Deacon tried to

gain the support of the QTU in securing a senior assistant teacher's position for a female in the larger mixed schools. However, the argument was raised that the position required a strong disciplinarian and females were lacking in this attribute. Deacon countered by pointing out that she had been successfully acting as head teacher of a mixed school for three months. Her attempt failed<sup>53</sup>.

### Head Teachers

#### *Attitudes to Females as Head Teachers*

Throughout the period 1902 to 1940, the policies of the Department of Education were strongly influenced by J. D. Story, first as Chief Clerk, then as Under Secretary of Education from 1906 to 1929, and later as Public Service Commissioner and frequent advisor to the Premier and Ministers between 1920 and 1939. In 1919, the Queensland Parliament requested Story to inquire into the Public Service. In his Report, which provided guidelines for the subsequent re-organisation of the Public Service, Story made clear his attitudes to woman in posts of responsibility. He stated that women in the Public Service should fill the lower jobs. The higher positions should be filled by males for economic and administrative reasons, and because of their family responsibilities<sup>54</sup>. The public service, which included the Department of Education, followed the course of action advocated by Story. Women were restricted wherever possible to the lower rungs of the Public Service, and males benefitted from positive discrimination, even in the lower rungs.

In 1935, a case highlighting this policy was reported in the press. A female in the public service had failed to gain promotion in competition with a man even though her efficiency was conceded to be superior. The Queensland Women's Parliamentary Association fiercely attacked the discrimination of 'man-made laws'. Irene Longman, a member of that Association, stated, 'Women are up against it just now. We have to fight every step of the way, but we are doing it'<sup>55</sup>.

Furthermore, many male teachers were openly prejudiced against women as head teachers. This prejudice emerged publicly in 1927 following a report in *The Telegraph*<sup>56</sup> of a statement by Miss Johnston, Secretary of the Victorian Teachers Union:

It is remarkable how men cling to power in the educational sphere, and apparently resent the elevation of women to positions of responsibility in a Department in which women predominate almost two to one.

*The Telegraph* also presented statistics showing how this attitude operated in Queensland. Asked to comment, one male head teacher claimed that the chief defects in women as administrators were variability, proneness to favourites, petty restrictions and Mrs Grundyism (conventional propriety)<sup>57</sup>. Another stated that males were more efficient as head teachers in organisational ability, taking parades and dealing with school committees<sup>58</sup>.

These attitudes did not appear to extend to female head teachers in charge of small one-teacher schools. They were described in 1915 by the Minister for Education, H. F. Hardacre, as 'pioneers' serving in remote places and sometimes in depressing environments<sup>59</sup>.

#### *Mixed Schools*

For educational, administrative, social and financial reasons, the Department continued its policy of maintaining mixed schools in preference to separate schools for boys, girls

and infants (see Table 14). While women continued to be placed in charge of small one-teacher State and provisional schools, (see Table 13) the Department was not prepared to put females in charge of mixed schools with a staff<sup>60</sup>. There was strong male teacher opposition to the step, which, of course, would lead to fewer promotional opportunities for them. Such teachers stated that virile men would rather resign than 'tolerate petticoat government'<sup>61</sup>. There were some mixed schools with staffs, however, which were exceptions to general Departmental policy.

Occasionally, in a provisional school (the smallest mixed school), the enrolment increased rapidly. Especially in mining centres, the Department was hesitant to establish a State school until it was certain that increased enrolments were not temporary. In some instances, for example at Silverspur and Tolga in 1910<sup>62</sup>, it became expedient to send a female assistant to help a female head teacher for a year or more until it was clear that a State school was needed. When the State school was established, the female head teacher was replaced by a male.

When special classes were introduced in 1923 for backward children, it was accepted that women were best suited for this work<sup>63</sup>. Consequently, by early 1924, nine of the 12 teachers with backward classes were women. When the first school for backward children, the Dutton Park Opportunity School (a mixed school), opened in 1936, the first Head Teacher was a woman (Kathleen Sheehy). She had three female assistants. In 1939 a male assistant was appointed to serve under Miss Sheehy. Thereafter, male as well as female assistants were appointed to such schools<sup>64</sup>.



Kathleen Sheehy, first Head Teacher of the Dutton Park Opportunity School which opened in 1936. It was the first special school in the State.

More unusual was the case of Elizabeth Large. On 1 January 1920, the Brisbane Central Boys State School and the Brisbane Central Girls and Infants State School (both popularly referred to as the Brisbane Normal School) were changed to the Brisbane Junior State High School, under the previous Head Teacher of the boys school, Arthur Exley, and the Brisbane Central State School (a mixed school) under the previous Head Teacher of the Girls and Infants School, Elizabeth Large, who was close to retiring age. In 1920 Large was in charge of this prestigious practising school (it took student teachers) with an average attendance of 421 and a staff of 15, four of whom were men - a normal composition of males and females at that time. Large retired on 31 July 1921 and according to a male delegate to the 1922 QTU Annual Conference, she had been quite successful<sup>65</sup>.

#### *Girls and Infants Schools*

Aware of their diminishing chances of promotion, many female teachers became involved in a long, unsuccessful campaign through the QTU to have more head teaching positions available to women. At the QTU Annual Conference in January 1913, Caroline Hardy claimed that female teachers who did not marry had to wait for a school until the older woman died or retired<sup>66</sup>. Every year from 1917 to 1926 and again in 1930, 1937 and 1938, a motion was put to the effect that more positions should be available for women. It was usually made clear that positions as head teachers referred to girls and infants schools. The motion failed only in 1923, 1926 and 1930<sup>67</sup>.

Men who spoke against these motions saw such a Union policy as lessening their own promotional prospects. They said that an increase in girls and infants schools would lead to a decrease in the number of Class I schools available to them. One male went as far as to say that female teachers preferred male head teachers and that, because females had been dominated for so long by males, females were not yet ready for such responsibilities<sup>68</sup>.

At the QTU Annual Conference in 1928, some male teachers made a strong counter-attack in an effort to further increase the number of Class I schools available to men. They claimed that men were just as capable as women in teaching the young, and they passed a motion which required that all boys should receive their first few years of education in boys schools rather than in infant schools<sup>69</sup>. The Director of Education, Bernard McKenna, would not agree to this proposal, regarding it as most extraordinary that men should have this belief<sup>70</sup>.

The major spokespersons for the women teachers trying to regain lost promotional avenues were Mary Deacon, Rosemary Mowbray, and Margaret Hood. They spoke at QTU annual conferences, appeared in deputations to the Minister for Education, and sent articles and letters to the QTU Journal and newspapers.

Probably the most persistent campaigner was Margaret Hood. Born in 1862, she emigrated to Queensland from Scotland in 1872. At the age of 28 she was appointed Head Teacher of the Gympie One Mile Girls State School where she remained until she retired in 1928. She was a good scholar and passed her Class II examinations. She began as a mediocre teacher, but by 1890 inspectors regarded her as an excellent teacher<sup>71</sup>.

Hood said that the Creator had imbued women with the higher ideals necessary for the training of girls. Unfortunately, according to her, the existing trends made it appear

that soon there would be no room at the top for bright female assistant teachers, ambitious to become head teachers of girls and infants schools. This policy of men, to lower the status of women, was an attempt to put the clock back, she said. If mixed schools were indeed better, then head teaching positions in them should be accessible to females since there were many female assistant teachers who were better than many of the male head teachers. She stated that women were blindly looking to men for initiative, but men were resolved to eliminate all the natural leaders among the women. It was important, she said, for women to live true to the highest in themselves and not copy the men since no one could say the men were a success. Women had to solve their own problems. It was written, she said, in the 'Book of Fate' that one day women would rise and when that day came, men would rejoice and not mourn<sup>72</sup>.



*Margaret Hood (top) the Head Teacher of the Gympie One Mile Girls State School (1891).*

The QTU resolution, that more head teacherships should be available for women, was regularly presented by a QTU delegation to the Minister and the Director of Education. The Minister and the Director often expressed sympathy and agreement in principle with this resolution, but raised the problem of additional costs for separate administration of boys, girls and infants Schools as the major stumbling block<sup>73</sup>. At two of these conferences, male Union delegates were not very supportive on this resolution which in principle they were obliged to support.

On 17 May 1918, Rosemary Mowbray, one of the Department's more successful and skilful assistant teachers, presented to the Minister, H. F. Hardacre, a case for more head teacherships to be open to women. At one point in the discussion, one of the members of the deputation, Charles Reinhold, Head Teacher of West End Boys State School,

actually opposed the resolution by referring to the plea for separate schools as an unnatural plea because children were in mixed schools in their homes before they came to school, and then at the university. A very brief clash then took place between the Minister and Reinhold, with the Minister supporting the principle of the Union resolution, and Reinhold opposing it<sup>74</sup>.



Rosemary Mowbray an Assistant Teacher at the prestigious Normal School (1918).

In the following year, Mowbray once again went into bat during a deputation to the same Minister, Hardacre. The Minister suggested that it would be too expensive to make separate girls and infants schools. He also said that he thought it would be difficult for the Department to find out which schools could be separated. Mowbray then said that she thought that the Secretary of the Union might get the information. W. B. Geraghty, the Secretary, who was with the delegation, quickly made it clear to her that she could expect no help from him. He said that it was the business of the Department to get the information<sup>75</sup>.

The issue was occasionally taken up in the press and one of *The Brisbane Courier* reporters, 'Vesta', took a strong stand on it<sup>76</sup>. 'Vesta' was a pseudonym for Henrietta Young. She came to Queensland in 1869 from Scotland at the age of 6 years. A most outstanding pupil teacher, she subsequently passed the Class II examinations and at the age of 25 became the Head Teacher of the Brisbane Central Infants School. The Inspectors heaped praise upon her, referring to her as an earnest, intelligent and sensitive teacher, a firm, finished disciplinarian and overflowing with energy. She resigned in 1891 when she married, and later became a reporter for *The Brisbane Courier*. In 1919 she was re-employed by the Department in the important position of Supervisor of Women's Work (Domestic Science) at the

Brisbane Central Technical College<sup>77</sup>.

'Vesta' in 1918 referred to the shortcomings of men in charge of large mixed schools.

The men! Bless them - and we toast them with all reverence - are splendid fellows, but, whisper it gently, they are not all wise always, nor all knowledgeable in training the girls of the State.

'Vesta' claimed that it was tradition, not greater intelligence and expertise, which placed men in charge of large schools composed of boys, girls and infants. She asserted that the result was limited choices of promotion for women and therefore all large population centres should have separate schools for boys, girls and infants (with the girls and infants under head mistresses). She claimed that in large schools the current practice was for the male head teacher to delegate women to undertake responsibilities for girls and infants, a practice which went unrecognised and unrewarded.



Henrietta Young in 1927 when she was Officer-in-Charge of Women's Work (Domestic Science), Central Technical College, Brisbane.

Writing about female teachers, 'Vesta' asked, 'Why, oh why are you all so dead frightened of her'<sup>78</sup>?

Another strong case was presented by 'Femina' in *The Brisbane Courier*. 'Femina' gave statistics which showed that girls did well in competitive public examinations, especially girls in girls schools, who did better than girls in mixed schools. She deduced from this that women were good teachers. She also claimed that teaching was one of the few careers open to brilliant girls, who, with few prospects of promotion, would often be forced to work under men very much their intellectual inferiors because outstandingly brilliant men did not as a rule become State school teachers<sup>79</sup>.

The issue was also discussed in certain women's organisations. For example, in 1933, the Queensland branch of the National Council for Women passed a motion which expressed regret at the practice of converting girls schools into co-educational schools<sup>80</sup> and a similar motion was passed in the following year by the Queensland Citizenship League<sup>81</sup>.

These efforts proved fruitless. The number of females in charge of girls and infants schools continued to drop

throughout the period, 1902 to 1940. In 1900 there were 37 girls and infants schools. By 1940 this had been reduced to 27. While in 1900, 10 (36 per cent) of the 28 largest schools (average attendance 400 or more), had female head teachers, in 1940, one (4 per cent) of the 24 largest schools had a female head teacher (see Table 14).

### Inspectors

The first woman inspector appointed in Queensland was Marianne Brydon, appointed in 1919 to supervise the teaching of domestic science classes in Queensland schools<sup>82</sup>. Domestic science classes were an additional avenue of employment in teaching for female teachers<sup>83</sup>.

Brydon was an outstanding educationist. After a series of scholastic triumphs as a student, she became a teacher at the Brisbane Girls Grammar School. She opened the private South Brisbane High School and Kindergarten in 1895 and later held teaching administrative positions at the South Brisbane Technical College and Brisbane Central Technical College prior to her appointment as Inspector<sup>84</sup>.

Efforts were made by the QTU to have female teachers appointed as Inspectors of needlework and infant work<sup>85</sup>. Support for this proposal occasionally came from other quarters. One Parliamentarian during the Supply debate on 21 January 1920 stated that he believed that female Inspectors would be more effective in girls and infants schools<sup>86</sup>. Furthermore, at the 1930 Conference of State Directors of Education, the consensus of opinion was that women Inspectors were preferable for the organisation and inspection of kindergarten and infant work, needlework, domestic arts and physical training for girls. The opinion at this meeting, however, was unanimous that women should not be recommended for the position of District Inspector<sup>87</sup>. When a QTU delegation approached the Director of Education, L. D. Edwards, with a 1938 Union resolution that a female inspector of infant schools should be appointed, Edwards pointed out that there were only seven infants schools and therefore he dismissed the resolution<sup>88</sup>.

### SALARIES

#### Salary Trends

A comparison of the salary rates shows that the salaries of

females relative to the salaries of males, improved between 1902 and 1940, especially for females in the lower categories (see Table 22). During the Depression of the 1930s the salaries of public servants, including teachers, were reduced. Women teachers continued to occupy generally, much lower salary ranges than men (see Table 23).

### Equal Pay

An analysis of the proceedings of the Annual Conferences of the QTU and of letters and articles published in the QTU Journal reveals that the equal pay issue became and remained the most important single issue for women teachers. Five women stood out in providing leadership in the struggle to obtain equal pay. They were Rosemary Mowbray, Margaret Hood, Mary Deacon, Rubina Phillips, and Blanche Ludgate. In addition, one man, Fredrick J. B. Martin, played a particularly consistent supporting role. The females were quite forthright in putting their case, and on occasions made the claim that in many instances they were not only as good as men, but better<sup>89</sup>.

On the first few occasions that women raised the issue of equal pay at the annual conferences of the QTU, they were unsuccessful. Their first success in having it accepted as a resolution was at the 1911 Conference, and from then until 1919 they met with as many failures as successes. After 1919, the equal pay issue became established as a general policy which the majority of QTU members, male as well as female, accepted in principle<sup>90</sup>.

Opposition within the Union to equal pay took various forms. One was ridicule<sup>91</sup>, another was delaying tactics<sup>92</sup>. A wide range of opposing reasons included the following:

- Equal pay overlooked the law of supply and demand<sup>93</sup>.
- Equal pay would result in the male salary being brought down to the female's salary<sup>94</sup>.
- Males had to be paid more so that they could support a family and support girls at home until the girls were married<sup>95</sup>.
- Sound financial independence would encourage women to refuse to undertake the duties of motherhood<sup>96</sup>.
- There were districts females could not be sent to<sup>97</sup>.

On the first few occasions that a QTU deputation to the Minister referred to the equal pay resolution, the Minister



Marianne Brydon (front row, extreme right) and other staff of the Central Technical College, Brisbane in 1919. Brydon was Supervisor of the Department of Domestic Science at the College.

rejected the principle because of the law of supply and demand, the added family responsibilities of males as well as the cost of its implementation<sup>98</sup>.

On 27 September 1919, a meeting of women teachers at Rockhampton Girls Central State School passed a motion that the time had arrived for the adoption of equal pay for equal work. The reasons in support of the motion reflected a strong element of bitterness and a sense of injustice. The resolution stated:

We must live. That is not the sole privilege of men.

The Department and the head teachers acknowledge that we do equal work with the men.

We teach an additional subject - needlework.

We have to pay the same income tax, board, tram and train fares.

We have to pay dearer for laundry work.

We have to pay more than men for our clothes.

We have to pay higher contributions towards the Super-annuation Funds.

Women doctors and other professional women command the same fees as the men, therefore we, who also belong to a profession, should also receive equal pay.

That the present rate of salaries is an injustice<sup>99</sup>.

In October, the 32nd Annual Meeting of the East Moreton Teachers Association supported the Rockhampton motion<sup>100</sup>, and at the meeting Frederick J. B. Martin said that he was pleased that women were becoming more militant. The next month, a meeting of women teachers at Toowoomba also passed an equal pay motion<sup>101</sup>.

When the resolutions were sent to the Minister, he informed those involved that it was a matter for the determination of the Court of Industrial Arbitration. It so

happened that the salary claim of the Q TU was soon to be lodged<sup>102</sup>.

Putting the Q TU case for equal pay at that Court in 1919 were Martin and a 39-year-old assistant teacher, Blanche Ludgate. Ludgate was one of the very few teachers who managed to struggle out of the ranks of provisional school teachers through to Class I status. She also held a Bachelor of Arts degree - a rare qualification for any teacher in those days. Described by Inspectors as studious, self-confident, firm and stimulating, she was one of the few women teachers who taught scholarship classes - a task nearly always reserved for male teachers<sup>103</sup>.

Advocate for the Crown was Story, Under Secretary of the Department of Education. In addition to denying the equal efficiency of women, Story enunciated the theory of supply and demand. He also made two suggestions aimed at discouraging male teachers from supporting the equal pay claim. He suggested that if the claim for equal pay succeeded, the Department might assess teaching to be women's work and provide a salary adequate to keep one person and not a married man with dependents. He warned that another result might be that women would be able to compete with men, on the basis of equality, for the positions of head teachers of the larger mixed schools.

At one point in the hearing, Ludgate made the accusation that, 'a man is naturally biased in favour of a man'. Judge McCawley replied, 'We will admit that'<sup>104</sup>.

McCawley rejected the equal pay claim. The following extract from his judgment contains the essence of this important decision which provided a precedent to be followed for the next 50 years.



Blanche Ludgate (centre) in 1914 with members of her class at East Brisbane State School who won scholarships to secondary schools.

Do males and females perform the 'same work' within the meaning of the Section [of the *Industrial, Conciliation and Arbitration Act of 1916*]? This Court has held that for the Section to apply the work done by either sex must be the same in kind, quantity, and quality. In one sense all teachers perform the same work teaching; in that sense the teacher of carpentry and the teacher of needlework perform the same work. But the Court is not confined to the consideration of generic resemblances, and is entitled to examine with reasonable particularity the various species of work done by male and female teachers respectively. Females are more suitable for kindergarten work and the teaching of girls; males for the teaching of boys, certainly the older boys. Females may be unsuitable for the control of mixed schools. In certain other grades their merits may be equal. In the teaching of certain subjects males excel; in the teaching of other subjects females excel. But it has not been, and cannot be, proved that the work of men and women teachers is equal. Women are better teachers for some children than are men teachers; men are better teachers than women in other grades. It cannot be said that the work of male and female teachers is the same; the work the female teacher can do, taken as a whole, and the work she does do, differ in kind and quality from the work of the average male teacher, though in certain respects and in certain particular kinds of work there may be little or no difference. It may be that the work of the female teacher is of more importance in kind or more valuable in result than the work done by males; but this will always be a matter of opinion; results in education are not measurable. But even if the work of the female is shown to be equally or more important, or equally or more valuable, it is not established that the work is the 'same work'; for importance and value are not the only attributes which must be compared. Nor can the word 'profit' in the expression 'returning the same return of profit' be regarded as applying to anything except business profit. The Minister for Public Instruction is not conducting a business, certainly not a business which makes 'profit' in the commercial sense<sup>105</sup>.

Some teachers expressed their dissatisfaction with the decision<sup>106</sup>. One form of this expression was a poem by 'Retnuh'. Since 'Retnuh' is hunter spelt backward, this poem was probably written by Henrietta Hunter, who had changed her name to Young when she married. The poem concluded:

Fast to his point the modern Pharoah clings,  
 And with grim lips of steel delivers forth His  
 judgement. Fierce resentment rings  
 In hearts of those who listen. South and North East  
 and West, and Midland teachers at him glare,  
 Portraying anger in well-educated stare<sup>107</sup>.

The QTU made another unsuccessful attempt to gain equal pay in 1925<sup>108</sup>. Throughout the 1930s, the Union was too concerned with salary cuts to press for equal pay, but the issue was still a live one for women teachers. During the New Education Fellowship Conference held in Brisbane in August 1937, few of the overseas visitors received the support that L. Zilliacus, Principal of Helsingfors Experimental School, did when he stated that in Finland female teachers received the same pay as men<sup>109</sup>. While the efforts to gain equal pay failed, it is highly probable that they contributed to the more favourable relativity of salaries achieved in 1919 and 1924 (see Table 22).

### Allowances

An allied issue was the payment of district allowances to teachers in more remote districts. Females were paid two

thirds of the male allowances. In spite of continued efforts throughout the QTU, female teachers made no gain in this area up to 1940.

Another financial issue was that of rent free residence. Female head teachers waged a strong campaign to obtain the same concessions enjoyed by male head teachers. Motions supporting this campaign were passed at QTU annual conferences, but Blanche Ludgate claimed that motions supporting issues of concern to female teachers were treated lightly by the Union. Petitions and deputations to the Minister about this issue failed to gain any concessions<sup>110</sup>.

### LEAVING THE SERVICE AND RETURNING

The female rate of leaving the service was much higher than that of males. After 1920 the female (and the male) rate of resignations declined. The decline in the percentage of females leaving the service during World War I because of marriage was followed by a rapid rise from 1919 which levelled off during the 1920s and then rose higher during the 1930s. While prior to 1920, two to three per cent of female teachers were re-employed after resigning, after 1920 this percentage became almost insignificant (see Table 18).

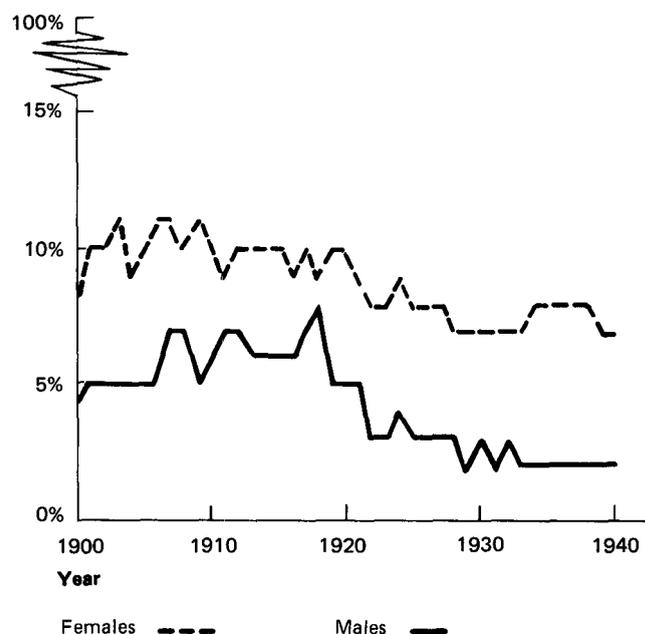


Figure 16: Proportions of females and males who left the teaching service, 1900 to 1940 (derived from Table 17)

