

RECOMMENDATION No. 13

concerning

THE SALARIES OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

(1938)

The International Conference on Public Education,

Convened at Geneva by the International Bureau of Education and being assembled on the 18th of July at its seventh session, adopts on the nineteenth of July, nineteen hundred and thirty-eight, the following recommendation:

The Conference,

Bearing in mind that the elementary school teacher should have access to satisfactory living conditions, for himself and his family corresponding to his social status and also to the services which he renders;

That he cannot devote himself to his important mission with the necessary freedom of mind if he is preoccupied by constant material cares; :

That he should receive a salary enabling him to maintain his dignity and his good state of mind;

Submits to the Ministries of Public Instruction in the various countries the following recommendation:

1) Whatever may be the legal position of elementary teachers, whether officials of the State, the provinces or the municipalities, the conditions of work should be such that, having given the necessary evidence of character, qualifications and aptitudes, the teacher should be assured of employment for a sufficient length of time and should not be liable to be dismissed except for serious misdemeanour and after judicial enquiry;

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2) Taking into account the financial position of the country, teachers of all types should receive a salary corresponding to the importance of their mission sufficient to avoid the risk of placing them in a position of inferiority in comparison with categories of employees or of manual workers of a corresponding social level;

3) In principle, and except in special circumstances, the basic salaries of any one category of teacher should show no marked differences within a country. In particular, it would seem desirable that there should be no difference between the salaries of men and women teachers.

It is legitimate to establish differences corresponding to differences of qualifications or of functions; for example, teachers in higher elementary (senior) schools, in continuation schools, or in special schools for abnormal or delicate children, as also headmasters and headmistresses of elementary schools, by reason of their qualifications or the greater difficulties of their task, should receive higher salaries or supplementary payments. When the hours of service are comparable, infant school mistresses, whose teaching has made such remarkable progress of late years, should have the right to the same salary as other types of elementary school teachers;

4) In fixing the salary of urban teachers and of rural teachers account should be taken, on the one hand, of the peculiar conditions in towns (high cost of rents and of living) and, on the other hand, of the material difficulties of rural teachers and of the expenses to which they are liable, for example, in the education of their children, and in the provision of medical aid, etc. These expenses should be compensated by special allowances (for housing, or if necessary for lodging, high cost of living, costs of their children's studies, etc.);

5) It appears necessary that student teachers should enjoy a salary at least sufficient to meet the cost of living and of study, or a scholarship equal to these charges. Probationary teachers should receive a salary which allows them a tolerable standard of living pending the time when they will acquire a regular teaching qualification,

6) It is desirable that a special allowance, proportional to their expenses, should be made to teachers having family responsibilities;

7) Apart from promotion to a higher grade (obtainable by the acquisition of fresh university qualifications, by competition or by selection), teachers should receive, within the grade to which they belong, increments on grounds of seniority or selection. The commencing salary in any grade should not present too great a contrast with the maximum of the grade; moreover, increments should occur with

sufficient frequency to ensure that the maximum can be reached before retirement, and that the pension may be calculated on this maximum;

8) Teachers can legitimately associate with their ordinary professional work, outside paid employment. It is desirable that they should be willing to undertake post-school courses, and should take an active part in extra-curricular activities; at the same time and subject to appropriate safeguards, they can properly undertake individual coaching or organize the paid supervision of homework. They should not be permitted, however, to engage in occupations which are completely alien to their mission and which might threaten to compromise their moral authority;

9) The number of hours of teaching per week for teachers should be settled in such a way as not only to allow them to prepare themselves thoroughly for their class work, but also to afford them an opportunity for reading, for intellectual interests and for the relaxation necessary to those engaged in education. In any case, it appears necessary that the number of hours should not exceed thirty;

10) The members of the elementary school staff ought to be entitled to leave of absence with pay, in respect of illness or maternity and to more lengthy periods of leave of absence in special cases; they must equally be assured of a sufficient pension obtainable in good time and, if necessary, of a pension for widows and children under age;

11) Except for serious fault on his part, the teacher ought to feel insured against the consequences of accidents which may happen to his pupils, whether in class or in the course of exercises or scholastic excursions. It is therefore desirable that, in every country, the legal responsibility for such accidents should rest upon the employing authority which, however, should reserve the right of recovery from the teacher in the case of grave fault on his part;

12) It is desirable that the competent authorities should satisfy themselves that teachers employed in private schools enjoy adequate material conditions.