HISTORY

OF

SPALDING DISTRICT ASSOCIATION

OF THE

NATIONAL UNION OF TEACHERS

by

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The Spalding and District Local Association of the National Union of Teachers

1886 – 1902

On Saturday, October 30th, 1886, a fairly well-attended meeting of teachers in the district decided to form a branch of the National Union of Elementary Teachers which had come into being in 1870 to oppose the Revised Codes or Payment by Results. The aims of the Association were to advance the cause of education, to afford opportunities for discussion of educational and professional topics, to protect and promote professional interests of teachers and to encourage friendly and social intercourse among its members. The subscription was to be 6/- a year.

An immediate attack was launched on the iniquitous system of payment by results, a system introduced "to get better value for less money". It meant that nothing could be taught outside the 3 R's, which were taught in the most mechanical manner, the bright children being held back, and the dull ones being driven to reach the required levels demanded by the inspectors at the annual inspection. The tricks and dodges that some teachers adopted in order to get their children through the exams were, to say the least, humiliating and decidedly unprofessional.

The questions set to Standard III, children of nine years of age, were attacked at one of the meetings. The questions in geography were considered to be too difficult for children of this age and more suitable for pupil teachers. In one school the children in Standard III were required to give the answer to this sum, "What is the cost of 1,000,000 penny stamps?" "Who knows what eleven times twelve are?" asked an H.M.I. and he received the answer, "God". The Rector, who accompanied the H.M.I. around the school, no doubt beamed with joy upon the pupil as he realised that his scripture lesson on the omnipotence of the Almighty had not fallen on stony ground.

The "half-time" system came in for much harsh criticism, although its effects were not so apparent in country districts as in the large industrial areas of the north of the country. School attendance was a problem, however, as children were employed on the land for potato-picking, often by farmers who were managers of voluntary

schools and who could arrange school holidays to fit their personal requirements. The Holbeach Board of Guardians allowed children under their care to absent themselves for a month after the usual holiday to work on the land. At a meeting of the Local Association in 1893, "H.M.I. Oliver was respectfully asked to represent the matter to the Education Department in view of the detrimental effect such action has exercised, not only in Holbeach, but in the surrounding school areas". This he did with satisfactory results.

Some of the teachers were envious of the Headmaster of Sutton Bridge School whose attendance for the whole school had reached 100% for several weeks in succession. This would have a marked effect on the amount of grant paid to his school. He was asked to give a talk on his methods of obtaining such good results. He apparently acted as a kind of school attendance officer, and went out into the highways and byways and compelled the truants to come in, at the same time berating parents who aided and abetted their children's absence.

Under the 1870 Act the School Board system provided a body of men who had opportunity of being acquainted with the needs of the town or village, qualified by residence to attend the meetings, and with large powers of raising money to carry on the work. In many places the power fell into the hands of one man, either a Clerk or the Chairman, who managed the School Board and the Board School. In other areas, poorly educated and narrow-minded people had the over-sight of the schools. This led to friction, frustration and downright tyranny. A row broke out in the Long Sutton area over the right of the Head Teacher in one of the schools to administer corporal punishment. The School Board ordered him to refrain from using the cane, and the matter was brought up at a meeting of the members held in 1892. As a result of this a vigorous protest was made to the Managers with successful results.

In 1896 the Headmaster of Gedney School was dismissed, and, in the opinion of the Local Association, unjustly. The matter was referred to the National Executive, but this body refused to take any action and even forbade the local solicitor to take any action whatsoever. This was surprising as the Union was fighting tenure cases energetically all over the country. The members were somewhat incensed, and instructed their solicitor to write to the Gedney School Board a vigorous letter of protest, but without avail. The feelings of the teachers were expressed in bitter correspondence between the local secretary and Headquarters, with the result that the members of the Executive expressed their regret that local efforts had been ineffective

and granted the Headmaster concerned the sum of ten pounds from the Sustentation Fund. The school was not black-listed, but local teachers were advised not to apply for the vacancy.

Not only could teachers be summarily dismissed, seemingly without right of appeal, but their salaries also could be reduced at the whim of the local board or clergyman. In one school, not local, a headmaster was asked to sign a new agreement whereby his salary would be reduced by £20 a year so that the money could be used for repairing the Church roof. In 1900 the Sutton St. Edmund's School Board reduced the salaries of two of its teachers. They refused to accept the reduction, were dismissed and the school was placed on the Union's black-list.

Dissatisfaction with salaries was rife. The variation and marked differences between urban and rural standards were critically debated, and, in 1895, it was resolved that all teachers should be paid by the Department of Education, and that there should be a graduated scale of salaries according to the year of certification. Over twenty years were to elapse before the second half of this resolution became an actual fact. At the same time it was felt that the teachers in the district should be rescued from "non-unionistic indifference" and be persuaded to come and appreciate the "considerable displays of oratory", if nothing else. It should be remembered that only certificated teachers were eligible to become members of the National Union of Teachers as it was now called, the Elementary having been dropped in 1889. For every six trained or untrained certificated teachers there were eight untrained teachers, some of whom were eighteen years of age and over and had been vaccinated, the only qualifications necessary for a teacher.

In 1893 a resolution was passed, "that a National State-aided system of superannuation for teachers in Public Elementary Schools in England and Wales should be established at an early date". This was forwarded to the local M.P., Sir Halley Stewart, who was asked to support it. In 1846 the Government had promised to set up a pension system, but had broken its promise when the Revised Code was introduced in the sixties. Among the issues the founders of the Union determined to take up strongly was the implementation of the promise to provide a satisfactory pension scheme for teachers made some twenty-four years before. Resolutions from local associations were sent to their M.P.'s, persistent lobbying was carried out, and pressure groups formed. The result was seen in the passing of a Bill in 1898 which brought in a superannuation scheme throughout England and Wales.

From time to time members felt, and said, that they were not getting a fair deal from Headquarters, and that the rural areas were not adequately represented on the Executive. Other rural districts evidently felt the same, and a move was made to form an association of rural teachers to look after and further the interests of members serving in country areas. The local association joined this confederation, and it is interesting to note that Mr. E. T. Waring, who afterwards became Assistant Director of Education, was its first delegate.

It is not clear if a code of professional conduct was in being, but the action of a teacher who reported adversely on the teaching methods used by a colleague led to a heated discussion, but what happened cannot be discovered as the page in the Minute Book was removed by a person or persons unknown. The writing and issuing of secret reports on assistants by Head Teachers was the cause of bitter complaint, with the result that a minute was passed requiring Heads to make known to C.A.'s all entries in the log book concerning them. Assistant teachers were beginning to make themselves heard and felt in the local association meetings.

The social side of union activities was not forgotten and outings were arranged to Skegness, Hunstanton and Sandringham, but not solely for pleasure let it be stated. We read that a general meeting was held in the woods at Sandringham, in some shady glade perhaps, after a picnic lunch, but the setting and the post prandial somnolence did not lead to any national shaking decisions being taken and the members dispersed to enjoy the rural pleasures, typical of the times in which they lived.

They enjoyed the bracing air of Skegness as they took a leisurely lunch on the foreshore, to be further invigorated by a display of eloquence on issues of the moment from the platform at a well-attended meeting of teachers from all over Lincolnshire, followed, no doubt, by a paddle in the sea, for the more daring.

A most successful meeting was held at Whaplode Drove in 1900. After a sumptuous lunch provided by the Headmaster of Shepeau Stowe School the members adjourned to the parsonage, for bowls and skittles, beer not being mentioned. They observed, at a distance, the hiving of two swarms of bees, specially briefed for the occasion. After this they enjoyed a "superb microscopical exhibition", including the circulation of the blood in a frog's foot, in which lovers of nature revelled. Cool and refreshing tea followed under the beech trees with a speech from the Vicar whose aim, he said, was, "to provide intelligent instruction

and food for the mind, as well as food for the body." (Applause). The proceedings finished with a speech by the local doctor who dwelt upon the "amending value of true education", which teachers would "teach to the rising generation for ever". And so we must still press on.

The founders of the Union in 1870 were not unmindful of the needs of colleagues who might be in distress, and in 1877 and 1878 a benevolent and orphan fund was established. This enabled temporary relief to be given to members who were in need, to make grants to widows and orphans, and, in special cases, to grant annuities to old and incapacitated teachers. At local level funds were raised by subscriptions and levies from teachers, who also arranged social functions and concerts. Concern was expressed at the financial straits of the widow and children of a Headmaster at Holbeach who had died from pneumonia. A levy of 2/6d. was imposed upon every member to support her and her family until she became an annuitant under the B. & O. fund.

In 1890 a local branch of the Teachers' Provident Society was formed to provide members with sickness and life assurance benefits on favourable terms. Over 70% of the members of the local association belonged. Finance does not figure largely in the Minutes, but in 1897 the members were delighted to hear that the balance in hand was ½d., "the best for a number of years".

In the same year teachers were informed that they need no longer attend courts to prove irregular attendance of children.

In 1898 we read that there was strenuous opposition to extraneous duties. Our forbears would be pleased to know that the opposition still continues.

In 1900 a long, exciting and acrimonious debate took place on the proposition that, "A uniform system of handwriting in the district be adopted". The motion was lost, no doubt, much to the delight of the children who already had their fill of copy books and the moral precepts they contained.

Sixty-three members decided in 1901 that military drill in mixed schools should not be compulsory. It evidently was in boys' schools as some years later I learned to obey the order, "At the halt on the left form platoon" with smartness and precision, together with some forty or fifty more boys in the same class.

1902 – 1918

The Education Act of 1902, the first of three to be passed while the country was at war, handed over the power of the old School Boards to Local Education Authorities with powers to provide secondary and technical schools and teacher-training colleges. This evoked but little interest among the teachers in elementary schools as the Board of Education seemed to be mainly concerned with the setting up of a network of secondary schools. The pupil ratio was one source of envy when it was realised that a teacher in a council school had fifty or more pupils, while his secondary school counterpart had seventeen to teach.

Teachers, however, were allowed to have their representative on the L.E.A., and this led them to recognise the desirability of forming a County Association with teachers from Boston and the surrounding district. At a combined meeting held at Spalding on July 25th, 1903, rules were adopted and the County Association came into being. The members were urged to combine together to carry out the new Act for the benefit of the children and the safe-guarding of their own interests.

The matter of salaries was uppermost in teachers' minds, especially as urban authorities were offering comparatively generous remuneration for services rendered. Teachers with good qualifications began to move to these areas, and the staffing situation in the county became serious. The Teachers' Representative was directed to support a scale for Heads of a minimum of £130, rising by increments to £170, for men, and £110, rising to £150 per annum, for women. An amendment for the maximum of £200 to be asked for was lost. The scale for assistants was to be much less, U.A. Man £65 - £80. For this they were to "Encourage regular and punctual attendance of the children; to have at heart the mental, moral and physical welfare of the scholars; to instruct them in habits of punctuality, good manners and language, of cleanliness and neatness; to impress upon them the importance of cheerful-obedience to duty, of consideration and respect for others, and honour and truthfulness in word and deed"..

As a reward children were to receive prizes for attendance, conduct, progress, cleanliness and tidiness. If these paragons of virtue were fortunate enough to attend for four years without absence, and without a stain on their characters, they received a medal and an illuminated certificate. There is no mention of a productivity bonus for the teachers responsible for carrying out the terms of their contracts with such outstanding results.

Reports of militancy and violence at Long Sutton Girls' School roused the teachers to take action, and a summons was taken out against a woman, who, breathing out threatenings and slaughterings, entered the school and attacked the headmistress, verbally and physically, depositing another teacher who got in her way, almost in the fire. The Teachers' Representative, who was in the adjoining school, proved to be a very present help in time of trouble and ejected the good lady, still protesting volubly, from the precincts of the school.

In 1904 the Managers of the Crowland School dismissed the Headmaster. He appealed against the decision, and made a personal appearance before a Sub-Committee of the L.E.A. supported by Mr. Fowle, the Teachers' Representative. As a result he was reinstated and the Managers concerned resigned.

Incorrect reporting by a local newspaper regarding the punishment of a child by a pupil teacher was referred to the executive, and an apology was given in its columns to the Headmaster of Holbeach Boys' School.

In 1906 the Chairman of Holbeach U.D.C. uttered some derogatory and damaging statements which were reported to the Executive for further action.

A member asked for legal assistance to defend himself against the charge of being the father of a child whose birth the mother had concealed. This was granted, but the result not revealed.

Thus did the Union look after its own and all for their 10/- subscription. This went up to 14/- in 1911.

The N.U.T. has always been opposed to religious and political tests for teachers, and it helped to kill the Conservative Education Bill of 1896, which involved the introduction of religious tests on Board School teachers. In 1906 a circular was received from the L.E.A., stating that an oral and written examination would be held on the syllabus for religious knowledge, or scripture, as it was called then. The reaction was immediate and violent. The meeting called by the Union was crowded, and was unanimous in condemning the re-imposition of an examination test, and a lengthy resolution to this effect was sent to the L.E.A., which withdrew the circular.

A new scheme for superannuation did not receive the whole-hearted support of the members. Many teachers never lived to collect

their pension at the age of 65 and, if they did, they died soon after. It was stated that if a teacher lived to reach the age of 72 he would get back the money he himself had paid into the scheme. The Post Office Savings Bank was a far better proposition. A resolution calling for optional retirement at the age of 55, for both men and women, was supported somewhat wistfully, and without much hope. Some satisfaction. however, was expressed at the Local Authority's new Sick Pay regulations in 1906. These gave teachers full pay for the first month of absence, half-pay for the second and one-third of full pay for the third month.

In 1910 a spirited discussion took place on women's franchise, and the members put on record their desire to "express sympathy with members of the N.U.T. who wish to possess and exercise the parliamentary franchise, but, because they are women, and, for that reason alone, are by law debarred from it". There were a few dissentients – possibly future members of the N.A.S. No decision was taken on the subject of equal pay for men and women, and a suggestion that they join the Labour Party was not entertained.

In 1911 militant pupils in elementary schools in several towns and cities went on strike, parading the streets, carrying banners and slogans, demanding shorter hours and the end of corporal punishment. The rural districts of the country escaped such demonstrations of protest by their children, who confined their militancy to sullen or bovine passive resistance as the occasion demanded.

The local teachers, too, seemed to accept the rising cost of living with phlegmatic indifference, and the attempts by the Union to obtain a national scale in 1913 received little local support. The letter from the Executive dealing with this matter was allowed to "lie on the table". No practical support was forthcoming for the Herefordshire teachers who came out on strike over the refusal of their Authority to introduce a single scale of salaries.

The local association, unlike others, silently acquiesced in the Union's decision to halt the salaries campaign at the outbreak of war in 1914, and decided to take no action, in spite of the increased price of food and other necessities, in asking for a cost of living bonus. In other parts of the country teachers felt that they were being left behind in the all-round increase of earnings, and protests began to arrive at Headquarters in large numbers, so that, in October, 1916,

the Union Executive resolved to 'initiate and develop a national movement to secure an immediate and substantial increase in salaries'. The local association was compelled to act, and a deputation was sent to the L.E.A. to ask for a war bonus. This was granted at national level, which meant a certificated man's minimum salary was £100 and an uncertificated woman's was £65. This was not a generous award when it is remembered that, in 1903, a certificated assistant man received £80 on his minimum and an uncertificated woman £50 per annum. I, myself, went with other boys from school picking potatoes from 1 – 5 p.m. for which we received 4/-. My father was earning £3 a week on the railways, and, in the munition factories, men and women were receiving much higher wages. There was little wonder that teachers left the profession for more lucrative means of employment. When my schoolmaster resigned in 1916 he was receiving £90 a year, and the Managers had refused to increase it. Strikes occurred in various parts of the country, but not locally. The teachers seemed to be quite satisfied, but it must be remembered that more than half of the men were in the forces and did not make their resentment known until after the war was over.

In 1918, An Advisory Committee of the government had issued a scheme for a scale of salaries for teachers, which moved the association to "respectfully ask the Holland Education Committee, according to their promise, to formulate a scale of salaries for teachers at their earliest convenience." In June a deputation met the L.E.A. Sub-Committee, and, as a result of the meeting, a scale of salaries was adopted as follows:-

Supplementary	MINIMUM £55		MAXIMUM after 15 yrs. £80	
	MEN	WOMEN	MEN	WOMEN
Uncertificated	£ 75	£ 65	£110	£100
Certificated Assistants	£100	£ 90	£200	£160
Heads – Grade II	£125	£110	£260	£200
Grade III After 18 years	£145	£125	£300	£230

A letter of thanks was sent to the Committee for its generous gesture, and the members expressed great pleasure at receipt of the same. Again the subject of equal pay was discussed, but no decision taken.

Because of the war only two meetings were held a year, and these had an average attendance of twelve. Only domestic issues were discussed at length. An approach was made to the local M.P. over the increase in the price of food and other necessities. A circular on hygiene in schools was talked about, but nothing was done. Two towels a week for 160 children, water drawn from a pump in the school yard for three or four wash basins, with little or no soap, and primitive sanitary arrangements gave plenty of ammunition to an acidulous gentleman who taught in a school building, "not fit to keep pigs in", and whose pupils had been laboriously practising the art of penmanship as they wrote, ad nauseam, that, "Cleanliness is next to Godliness", a maxim to which he could not cordially subscribe.

Efforts to get teachers appointed on the bench were unsuccessful, due to opposition of the local magistrates. It was 1929 before the Headmistress of Long Sutton Infants' School was appointed to the East Elloe Bench, the first and only one to be so honoured from the Local Association in the first fifty years of its history.

A discussion was carried on at several meetings as to whether they should federate with the Labour Party, and finally they decided against. The sponsor of the resolution evidently had a change of heart, for he was, in later years, a staunch supporter of the Conservative cause and its Club.

With patriotic fervour some of the teachers commenced school gardens, organised thrift campaigns and savings groups, but the action of one head teacher who publicly objurgated those children who would not, or could not, support his savings scheme was deprecated.

The Fisher Act of 1918 was welcomed by the Union as it raised the school leaving age to 14 and abolished the half-time system. It strengthened the powers of local authorities and extended the medical services. The local members would have been more pleased if the classes of elementary school children had been reduced in size, but a maximum of 60 pupils was still allowed and there were 7,000 classes with more than 60 in 1920 in various parts of the country, as well as in Holland.

1919 – 1945

After the passing of the Education Act in 1918, Lord Fisher proceeded to deal with teachers' salaries and instituted the Burnham Committee, which formulated the four scales for teachers in elementary schools.

In order to strengthen the local association, it was decided to admit uncertificated assistants into the union, thus falling into line with an executive decision by which 11,000 joined throughout the country. The secretary cycled all over the district recruiting members, and his efforts were such that the percentage increase was the highest in the country and merited hearty congratulations from Headquarters. This was done so that the association could negotiate from strength in any discussion with the local authority.

Which scale would Holland accept? This was the question which exercised the minds of the teachers and the deputation which met the L.E.A. It was hoped that it would be Scale III, and would have been but for an unfortunate admission by a member of the delegation, who thought that the teachers would be satisfied with Scale II, and the remark of a member of the committee who, looking at one of the teachers, observed that a man who could afford to wear such a good suit must be earning a very satisfactory wage. And so,
Scale II it was, commencing at £172 10s. 0d. for a male certificated assistant rising to £330.

The high hopes raised by the passing of the Fisher Act were to be dispelled in 1921, when an economic blizzard hit the nation, commencing the years of the Great Depression. As usual, the teachers were the first to suffer, and had to accept a voluntary cut of 5% rather than have a more drastic compulsory reduction. The Local Association called a meeting of protest which was attended by a record number of members, who pledged their support for any action the executive might take. The M.P. for Holland-with-Boston was visited and bluntly asked what he was going to do about large classes, the dismissal of teachers on economy grounds and the 5% cut in salaries. A Labour M.P., he beamed upon them, quoted Shakespeare, many of whose plays he knew practically by heart, sympathised with them, but, as he was on the opposition benches, he could do nothing.

The L.E.A. imposed the 5% cut, but other authorities reduced the salaries of teachers by 10% and the Union took vigorous action to stop the breaking up of the agreed national Burnham Scales. This happened at Lowestoft, where 167 teachers were on strike for eleven months and were sustained by the N.U.T. at a cost of £40,000. The strike ended on terms favourable to the teachers, and the principle of national salary awards was upheld. Their struggle was the teachers' struggle and the local association pledged its support to their Lowestoft colleagues. The subservience of the teachers in the district was beginning to crack.

The shortage of an adequate amount of money for the purchase of books, stationery, etc. was beginning to make itself felt in the schools, and the teachers requested that it might be increased forthwith. One official was heard to observe that all his teachers wanted was a piece of chalk and a blackboard and they could carry on. It was "talk & chalk" with a vengeance. Teachers in one school held a rummage sale of old books, and the money so gained was used for the purchase of new materials, the Authority allowing an equal amount of money from requisition funds for the purpose.

Heads and assistants organised all kinds of extra-mural activities for the purpose of raising funds to buy furniture, pianos, sports equipment, etc. Their action, not supported by every Member of the Union, created a precedent which was later to cause friction between teachers and H.M.I., when large meetings of protest resulted in high-level union action, which led to his removal to another district. They were stirring days from which one factor emerged that, although many teachers complained, when it came for the time to stand up and be counted, only the Headmaster from Gedney Church End agreed to sign the document listing the specific complaints, which enabled the Executive to act. But for his decision to soldier on to the bitter end, the meetings would have been "full of sound and fury signifying nothing." The Union cannot fight hypothetical cases as so many teachers would like it to do.

Intense feelings were also aroused over the issuing of confidential reports by H.M.I. to the L.E.A. on candidates applying for the Headship of a local school. This led to the submission of a motion to the 1927 Margate Conference on the subject, which was supported by Boston, Grimsby and Nottingham Associations, but owing to lack of time the

motion was not considered. This was unfortunate, as the proposer and his seconder had carefully prepared speeches and would have done very well if their debating ability, so often shown in local meetings, is anything to go by.

In the twenties and thirties there were thousands of men who were willing and anxious to be self-supporting citizens, but who were unable to find work. Among them were newly qualified teachers who found great difficulty in finding their first post. An advertisement for a junior teacher in a Spalding School attracted over seventy applications, most of them from students who had just left college, and from some who had been unemployed for twelve and eighteen months. The letters that accompanied the application were grievous to read. For such there was no "dole", and the Union paid many of them a grant until they succeeded in finding a post. The local association used the medium of the local press to call the attention of the public to the plight of unemployed teachers, some of whom were to be found in our own district, and a donation was sent to an emergency distress fund which had been set up by the Union to help colleagues in distress.

The issue of the Handbook of Suggestions in 1927 received but passing notice in the Minutes. The Hadow Report with its recommendations for the re-organisation of all age elementary schools into separate junior and senior schools was not even mentioned. The main concern of the members seemed to be how to make the meetings brighter and more interesting, and how to attract new members into the Union. Cultural and social activities were arranged and were later undertaken by the Young Teachers' Section which was formed in 1934.

The economic crisis of 1931 and the proposed cut in teachers' salaries of 15% later reduced to 10% after vigorous intervention by the Union, caused much bitterness among the members, especially the younger ones. There was much talking, but little action beyond signing a petition requesting the government to restore the cuts, but it was 1935 before this was done.

Not only the cuts were regarded as iniquitous, but also the differentiation of salary between those teachers who worked in Scale I and II areas and those who worked in Scale III and IV. The formation of the Lower Paid Areas Association was generally welcomed by the association. Delegates were appointed to its meetings, and financial support given to the election expenses of its representatives on the Union Executive, who were urged to campaign for a national scale of salaries in 1936.

During the thirties the Union had to intervene in disputes between Managers and Head Teachers, parents and teachers, head teachers and H.M.I., head teacher and head teacher. This did not make for harmony and unity in the association, and a branch of the N.A.H.T. was formed in the district which would deal more effectively with matters of primary interest to Head Teachers. On the whole a happy atmosphere prevailed between assistant and head in spite of the remark of one head, who said at a meeting that the members ought to defer to his opinion, backed by the experience and ability which had brought about his promotion. There was a pregnant silence of unbelief which gave birth to "Dear! Dear!" of an honest non-conformist seated at one end of the row, and a more expressive expletive uttered by a gentleman, who, when applying for a headship of a voluntary school, would have described himself as a devout member of the Church of England. There were some of the younger men who thought and spoke of joining the Federation of Class Teachers, but nothing came of it.

In 1939 the deterioration in the international situation cast a shadow over the meetings, which now dealt with the problems of evacuation, this being a reception area under the government plan, the provision of shelters in and near schools, the use of gas masks, the fitting and storing of the same, and the training of teachers in A.R.P., including first aid. Meetings were reduced to the minimum. The black-out and restrictions in the use of petrol made travelling difficult, and many teachers served in Civil Defence, First Aid Parties, the Auxiliary Fire Service and the Home Guard.

The cost of living began to rise sharply, but the proposed 6% bonus evoked little comment. Several of these bonuses were granted during the war, and Holland, unlike some authorities which had to be forced to pay by the government, paid them as they became due. Additional increments for Uncertificated Assistants were asked for, but the request failed. However, in 1944 the Union did obtain a 25% increase.

The interests of 16 of our members on active service were adequately protected, and letters of congratulations were sent to those who had been promoted to commissioned rank.

A welcome was given to teachers of the L.C.C. evacuated to the district, but only one accepted an invitation to attend the meetings.

The employment of children on the land, supervised by teachers, came under some criticism, and the number of extraneous duties imposed on teachers as a result of the war caused bitter opposition.

The Butler Act of 1944 was the most important subject exercising the minds of teachers during the latter stages of the war. It was welcomed by teachers everywhere, removing as Sir Frederick Mander said, "the word elementary with its badge of inferiority from British Education".

From time to time there had been animated and acrimonious discussion at local level on the iniquities of dual control as it affected teachers, especially by those who taught in church schools and had suffered thereby. They viewed with acute interest the fierce controversy which led up to the 1944 Act over religious education, and the role churches should play in the schools. Because of their religious affiliations and beliefs, several of the members were engaged in wordy disputation and argument with the local M.P. as they campaigned for the end of "dual control", and many teachers wished they had succeeded. However, they had to be content with the "conscience clause" for teachers and a place on the committee, which was formed to draw up an agreed syllabus to be used in the schools of the local authority.

The implementation of the Butler Act was not easy. Shortage of materials, of staff and of money added to the difficulties. The introduction of posts of special responsibility, and their allocation, caused envy and resentment and divided staff rooms from top to bottom. Rumblings of discontent were heard from teachers who were supervising school meals five days a week, and over the next twenty years they were to grow louder and louder until they reached explosive force in the sixties. The Primary School teachers expressed their fears that the new secondary schools would receive better treatment in the matter of financial allocation, and that they would become the Cinderella of the new state system as envisaged in the Act, an issue that was to become paramount in the 60's. Members were disturbed about the possible transference of teachers to other schools as a result of re-organisation, and wanted a firm assurance from the Authority that their cases should receive sympathetic treatment.

The difficulties of newly appointed teachers in finding accommodation were mentioned more than once at the local meetings. In one school three teachers were living on the premises, cooking their meals on the gas stove in the kitchen and sleeping on the staff room tables. Urgent letters were sent to local urban and rural district councils and to the press, and action by some of these relieved the situation, but only touched the fringe of the problem.

"The teachers will still have to make bricks without straw", said the President at the dinner given to those who had returned from the Forces. Events proved him to be right for in the early 50's the country was faced yet again with need for economy. And as usual education was the first to feel the pinch. Increased numbers of children were entering the schools, owing to the post-war rise in the birthrate. Crowded conditions in the schools with oversize classes were the lot of local teachers, who strenuously objected to having to improvise, accept more duties outside the classroom and to find that unskilled workers were being paid better wages than they were receiving. In one school it was reported that a boy of 14 received £50 for holiday work, at the same time the monthly salary of a Certificated Assistant man on his maximum was £60 a month before any deductions were made. It is not surprising that this sense of frustration and injustice made itself apparent in angry meetings, letters to the press and visits to the local M.P. However, much was said and so little done. One member did offer to refuse to take over forty in his class, but he was advised by a permanent official of the Union not to take such precipitate action.

In 1954 another cloud appeared on the horizon when it was learned that there was a deficit in the Superannuation Fund. The surge of anger that swept through the profession was experienced in the Local Association when the teachers were asked to increase their contributions to 6% to cover the deficit. The local meetings called to protest against the increase attracted large attendance and deeds instead of words were called for. For the first time industrial action was resorted to, and the teachers refused to take National Savings Contributions. "Considerable gratification was expressed at the way the ban had been operated in the district and the excellent press coverage which had been obtained."

The teachers still had to pay the six per cent, although the salary award in 1956 raised the basic scale for men from £475 to £900, thereby cancelling out the effect of the increased pension contribution. With this award were taken the first steps to establish equal pay for women which was to be fully implemented by 1961. Not all the members of the local association hailed this "momentous breakthrough" with unqualified approval.

The passage of arms between the local secretary and the member of another union, waged in the correspondence columns of the press over extra allowances to teachers in secondary Grammar Schools, was noted with considerable satisfaction. Considerable dissatisfaction was expressed over the failure of the Union to include provision for widows and orphans in the new pension scheme, because of the opposition of the education authorities.

While these momentous events were taking place at national level the rules of the Local Association were revised after "full discussion and considerable discretion". The disgraceful conditions, under which school dinners were being served in some schools, amazed as well as disgusted the teachers in the district, and the protest led to the decision by the Authority to employ ancillary staff in small rural schools in 1958.

The invasion of the garden of a certain schoolhouse by minions of the Architect's Dept., and its desecration by their underlings, raised a storm of protest by the few members present at the meeting. Disciplinary troubles in secondary modern schools were discussed at great length. The causes and effects were generally agreed upon, but

the "hawks" greatly outnumbered the "doves" in suggesting appropriate remedial action in order to bring sinners to repentance. The claims of the Primary Schools for parity of treatment were stressed again and again, especially by the younger members of the union, who said that work in these schools should be made more attractive financially.

In 1957 the introduction of Block Grants by the government resulted in much controversial discussion locally, especially in the field of education. The local teachers emphasised that long overdue building and sanitary projects would be deferred; classes would become larger and teachers could become unemployed; and Holland could once again hold the unenviable position it held before the war as having the cheapest run education service in the country.

At the A.G.M. of 1958 the most important subject of discussion was the salary question, and the delegates to Conference were instructed to support a structure ranging from £600 – £1,200. What would have happened if the resolution passed at a meeting of the Spalding and District Local Association held in 1895 had become a fact of history, "That the government be responsible for the payment of Teachers' salaries"? Would we now be Civil Servants with no superannuation to pay, have a widows' and orphans' pension scheme and a far more equitable promotion policy? It is an interesting conjecture.

The events of the past ten years are too fresh in the minds of the members of the union for any historian, however humble, to dwell upon them in any great detail especially as some are still continuing and unresolved. The sixties were notable for the publication of reports following the Crowther Report in 1959, which, among other things, called for the raising of the school leaving age to 16. This was not cordially endorsed by those local teachers who were battling it out with classes of 40+ "C" and "D" types. It also called for more G.C.E. courses in Secondary Modern Schools, and this was heartily supported by teachers whose children had failed the 11+ examination. The Newsom Report on children of average or less than average ability called for the raising of the school leaving age to 16. Most of the members accepted this, provided that a fair and adequate share of resources were available, and that staff, suitably trained and remunerated, were provided.

They were not unduly moved by the Robbins Report which recommended provision of all types of education beyond the school leaving age, one cynic observing, "sufficient to the day is the evil thereof".

The Plowden Report on Primary Schools was welcomed by the teachers, who had been voicing their claims since the 1944 Act for equalisation of educational opportunity in our own district and throughout the country.

The introduction of the C.S.E. in 1965 was received with enthusiasm as it gave the teachers the opportunity of running their own examination, and union members sat on committees and subject panels.

In 1961 yet another salary crisis had to be faced by the Union as the government attempted to cut the recently negotiated award. Again the local meetings were well-attended and the militant mood of the members aggressively expressed. There was greater support for strike action, and when a compromise agreement was reached in London, there were those who felt that they had been let down by the Executive, and said so in no uncertain manner.

For years the resentment against the compulsory supervision of school meals had grown until it reached flash point, and Conference set up a committee to plan a phased withdrawal from the carrying out of this duty, and, at the same time, ending the employment of unqualified teachers. Members supported the former wholeheartedly, but there were those who, recognising the great contribution to the work of the schools made by people who were now regarded as "persona non grata" by officialdom, and comparing them with some of the new entrants into the profession, had grave doubts about the wisdom of the decision to dismiss them.

The problem of school meals having been resolved, the salary question now assumed priority, especially as the governments 3½% limit on the increase of wages had been broken by increases given to dustmen, miners and other groups. For the first time in its history teachers belonging to the Local Association withdrew their labour, and, together with teachers throughout the country, staged half-day strikes and supported financially those of their colleagues who came out on strike for two weeks in areas selected by the Executive.

What of the future? The nation will be dependent on education in order to maintain its economic existence in the world of the seventies. All types of school must play their part to train children to take their place in highly competitive and industrialised society, a world in which the child is influenced more and more by the modern techniques of mass communication and mass persuasion. An eminent authority has suggested that by 2000 A.D. the expenditure on education will be trebled. What the teachers' share of this would be was not stated, but one fact is certain that the union's objective will still be the achievement of a higher status for the profession.

In this area much of the union work has been done by the County Association and its Teacher Representatives on the Education Committee, and of this another important chapter could be written.

I have purposely refrained from mentioning names in this account of the 86 years of local association history for the list would be too long and of little interest. Presidents come and presidents go, some good and some not so good, but the Association has been extremely fortunate in its choice of secretaries and they must be named, Charles Wesley Beavan, Henry J. White, Herbert Staley and Utterby Snaith. It has been my good fortune and privilege to work with three of them and to know them intimately as men of the highest professional integrity, who have devoted their time and talents to the work of the Union, work which at times has been arduous, personally unrewarding and often unrecognised, work which has sometimes meant unpopularity with officialdom, and, not infrequently, with their own colleagues and work which took its toll of the health and strength of one of them. They have never "cringed before officialism" and have fought constantly and consistently for the good of their colleagues and the profession to which they have belonged.

We are their debtors.

Arthur J. Watkinson.

Secretary of the Young Teachers' Section	1934 – 1937
President of the County Association	1939
President of the Local Association	1947
Local T.P.S. Secretary	1959 – 1964