

BRAIN DRAIN IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL: WHY TEACHERS LEAVE THE PROFESSION

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The Problem

Ethiopia's educational system, undersized as it is,¹ is harassed by a number of unresolved difficulties. Among the more important of these may be noted:- the absence of carefully worked-out educational policies; the lack of dynamic and professionally competent leadership; the unfair incidence and insufficient yield of the education tax; the patchwork character of the school curricula; the inadequate supply of suitable textbooks—even when suitable textbooks exist; the language situation, which bristles with difficulties, political and linguistic as well as pedagogic; the hasty and uncritical acceptance of recommendations from foreign advisers—or their equally hasty and uncritical rejection; the appalling shortage of qualified teachers.

Of all the components that go to make an educational system viable, functional, and productive, nothing is as crucial as the provision and maintenance of a qualified and satisfied teaching force. In the opinion of the present writer, the improvement and expansion of education in Ethiopia depends directly upon the ability of the University and the Ministry of Education to train and retain a sufficient number of appropriately qualified teachers.

The question of the supply of teachers has three main aspects: the recruitment and preparation of future teachers; the improvement of teachers now in service; the retention of teachers in the profession. In this paper the writer intends to discuss only the problem of retaining elementary teachers in the schools of Ethiopia. Do elementary teachers leave the profession? If so, what kind of teachers leave? What are the possible reasons for their withdrawal?

The Method

To ascertain which other forms of employment teachers generally find attractive, a group of forty-five teachers now in the service of the Ministry of Education were asked to identify the five employers most likely to attract teachers. Their replies, together with the observation of the writer, resulted in the following identification: Ethiopian Air Lines (S.C.), the Imperial Board of Telecommunications, the National and Commercial Banks of Ethiopia, the Imperial Highway Authority, and the Ministry of Community Development and Social Affairs. Other Government and non-government agencies were mentioned, but these are not included in the study.

A two-page questionnaire (in Amharic) was devised and distributed to ex-teachers now in the employment of the five organizations mentioned above. The fourteen items in the questionnaire dealt with the following topics:-

1. General background (1-6)
2. Reasons for entering the teaching profession (7)

1. UNESCO Educational Programming Investment Mission. *Reports on Investment in Education in Ethiopia*, No. 14, March 1963, p. 4.

3. Conditions in new job (8-11)
4. Reasons for leaving the teaching profession (12-14)

Of the 245 questionnaires distributed, 152² were returned completed, but, seven arrived too late to be included in the tabulation. Thus, the discussion is based upon a 59% response (145 completed questionnaires). In addition, a survey of the meager literature available on the question was made for background information.

* The Exodus from Teaching

Although there have been a number of discussions concerning the evaluation, improvement, and expansion of teacher-training institutions over the last five years, none of the committees concerned, so far as the writer knows, has given this question of teacher 'wastage' the detailed consideration that such a serious and urgent problem demands.

This is not a new problem; the Ministry of Education has been losing teachers for a long time now. Even fourteen years ago it was stated that of the 600 qualified teachers produced by one training college over a nine-year period fewer than 200 were still teaching in the classroom at the end of that period.³

Ironically enough, the greater the efforts made by the Ministry to increase the supply, the greater the loss becomes. In 1953-54 the school system lost about 70 teachers from the profession.⁴ In 1956-57, although 246 new teachers qualified, the net gain to the profession, after teacher loss had been absorbed, was only 93.⁵ In 1960, it was noted that teachers "are leaving the classrooms of the nation at a faster rate than ever before." A recent examination of Ministry of Education records by the present writer reveals that over the last two-year period elementary teachers have been leaving the profession at the rate of between 350 and 450 per annum. Thus, in the school year 1964-65, while the Teacher Training Institutions of Harrar, Debre Berhan, Addis Ababa and Asmara produced 788 qualified elementary school teachers,⁶ 400 of these were required to fill the vacancies created by those who had left the profession, and only 388 were left to meet the needs of the expanding education system. In the absence of accurate statistics for all the years under review, it is impossible to say exactly how many teachers have left the education service in the last ten years, but it is safe to assert that it is a very large number, ranging as it does from 70 in 1953-54 to 400 in 1964-65.

The trend is likely to continue; the overwhelming majority of the 1500 or so teachers and administrators in the 14 provinces with whom the writer discussed the problem⁷ frankly admitted that they intended to quit teaching as soon as they could get another job. The efforts of the Ministry to expand teacher-training through budgetary increases, UNESCO, and bilateral aid programs will be of slight assistance if this massive flight from the classroom is not arrested immediately.

2. The writer would like to acknowledge his gratitude to Haile Selassie I University for financial support and to all those (employers and employees alike) whose cooperation made this survey possible.

3. Wrinkle, W. L. *The Improvement and Expansion of Ethiopia Teacher Education*, May 25, 1953, Addis Ababa, p. 7.

4. *Teacher Production and Retention*. November 22, 1960, p. 1.

5. UNESCO. *Op. cit.* p. 9.

6. *Teacher Education in Ethiopia*. Department of Teacher Education, Imperial Ethiopian Government Ministry of Education and Fine Arts. Addis Ababa. June 1965, p. 6.

7. The results of these interviews and discussions form a section of a larger study on the same topic which the writer is undertaking.

Teacher Loss in Relation to Teacher Qualifications

What caliber of teachers have been leaving the classrooms of the nation? (If the teachers that withdraw are only the most poorly qualified, it might be possible to regard the situation with less alarm). Who are the teachers of Ethiopia? What kind of people are they? What is their educational background? How do the teachers who leave the profession compare with those who remain?

In 1953 it was reported that there were 2013 Ethiopian teachers employed in the school system of Ethiopia. Of these 4 had studied at University level and 41 had had at least two years of training at secondary level. Thus, only 10 per cent of the teachers had finished elementary school and less than 3 per cent had gone beyond the elementary level. Of the remaining teachers 448 had completed Grade 6, 512 had completed Grade 4, and 848 had had less than four years of elementary education.⁸

The survey⁹ conducted five years ago by the Bureau of Educational Research and Statistics of the Ministry of Education gives much clearer and more comprehensive data on the elementary school teachers of Ethiopia. The survey covered 3684 teachers, representing 83% of the total number of elementary school teachers in Ethiopia (excluding Eritrea). According to this survey, two-thirds of the elementary teachers in Ethiopia were under 30 years of age; half of them had served for less than five years, and about three-fourths of them for less than ten years. Seven out of ten were married, and of these six out of ten had children. In other words, most of the teachers were young and had not been in the profession for long. It is not surprising that young married people with family responsibilities should be readily attracted by better salaries and working conditions elsewhere. This is perhaps a factor that the Ministry will have to reckon with seriously.

The survey also gave information about the educational background of the teachers; 36% of them had had less than 8th Grade education, 38% had completed Grade 8 (i.e. had completed their elementary schooling), and 26% had received an academic secondary education. Two-thirds of the teachers had received some teacher-training, but about 10% had never attended any kind of teacher-training course—even a short vacation course. (What value a teacher-training course can have for students who have received so little formal education themselves is another question.)

Eleven years later, in 1964, the picture was as follows:—Of the 5739 elementary teachers, 2973 had reached Grades 9-12, 2186 had reached Grades 7-8, 985 had reached Grades 1-6. In addition there were 495 priest-school teachers whose academic qualification was not defined but was thought to be below that of Grade 4.¹⁰

The picture does not change much. In any given year it will be found that fewer than one-third of the elementary teachers have advanced beyond the elementary level in their own schooling.

How good are the well-qualified teachers and how weak and are the sub-standard ones? The only indication now available for those who have completed their secondary education is their satisfactory performance in the various faculties of the University between

8. Wrinkle, W. L. *Op. cit.* p. 6.

9. The information in this and the two following paragraphs is taken from *Ethiopian Primary School Teachers Survey: The Imperial Ethiopian Ministry of Education and Fine Arts, Bureau of Educational Research and Statistics, 1962.* pp. 2-4.

10. In-Service Education Project for Elementary School Teachers, June 16, 1964.

1958 and 1965. In the summer of 1965 an examination was administered to 990 teachers from all parts of the country whose educational attainment was below Grade 8. Results showed 53 performed at Grade 8 level, 150 at Grade 6 level, 204 at Grade 4 level and 583 below Grade 4 level. Thus, of close to 1000 teachers, as many as 60% performed below Grade 4 level.¹¹

What kind of elementary teacher is leaving the profession? Although reliable information is not as plentiful as might be desired, we do know that, in general, it is the highly qualified teachers and those with experience and ability who quit the classroom.

A sample study of 58 teachers named by school directors in Addis Ababa as "the best" in the 1953-54 school year revealed that 25 or 26 per cent of them had left by the end of the school year. The report further stated that "with about one out of five of all Ethiopian teachers in Addis Ababa and one out of four of the best teachers in the city leaving or having left the profession, it is evident that the school system in Addis Ababa is losing its best teachers at a faster rate than its loss of all teachers."¹²

Several school directors in the fourteen provinces visited by the writer characterize the teachers who leave their schools as active, responsible teachers, teachers who generally come forth with suggestions for the improvement of their schools. If those who leave teaching have the qualities ascribed to them by their directors, then the school system is being deprived of the members who are most likely to give useful service to the nation.

An examination of the employment policies of the agencies that attract teachers away from the profession reveals that they generally employ people who have completed their secondary education at least and have had a certain amount of experience in a responsible job. Four employers (out of the fifteen interviewed) confided that they give employment preference to men with teaching experience and a secondary-level education. It is clear that the teachers who get employment opportunities are those who constitute the thin upper crust of the teaching force, i.e. those with secondary education and some years of teaching experience.

Of the 145 teachers who returned the questionnaire, 94 (or over three-fifths) had had secondary education and half of them had had teacher-training. (See Table I.) The median length of service of those who left the Ministry's employment between 1949 and 1966 was 3.25 years. (See Tables II and III.) However, 84 (or about three-fifths) left the Ministry between 1958 and 1966. The tragedy of the situation is that those who leave have not only the proper academic and professional training but also the maturity and experience so badly needed in the schools today.

11. Memorandum by Lovegrove, N. S. to Ato Haile Yesus Abebe. *Comprehensive Report on Vacation In-Service Courses for Unqualified Elementary Teachers*. p. 5.

12. Wrinkle, W. L. *op. cit.* pp. 7-8.

TABLE I
Educational Level of Respondents
on entering Profession

EDUCATIONAL LEVEL	FREQUENCY MENTION
1. Completed "Grade 12" Academic Sec. School	55
2. Harar Teacher Training graduates	22
3. H.S.I. Day School One-year T.T. graduates	13
4. College level training	9
5. Acad. Sec. School grade 11	9
6. Acad. Sec. School grade 10	7
7. Acad. Sec. School grade 9	2
8. H.S.I.U. Day School, Four-year T.T. graduates	5
9. Addis Ababa T.T. graduates	8
10. Emergency Teacher Training graduates	3
11. Technical School Graduates	3
12. Debre Berhan T. T. graduates	1
13. Majite Training Centre graduates	2
14. Self-taught	1
15. Elementary grade completed	2
16. Data not available	3
Total	145

TABLE II
Resignations from Education Service by Years

YEARS	NUMBER OF TEACHERS
1949 - 1951	2
1952 - 1954	5
1955 - 1957	17
1958 - 1960	34
1961 - 1963	38
1964 - 1966	46
D. N. A.	3
Total	145

TABLE . III
Years of Service to Ministry before Leaving Teaching

YEARS OF SERVICE	NUMBER OF TEACHERS
15-17	2
12-14	2
9-11	6
6-8	23
3-5	42
0-2	68
D. N. A.	2
Median years=3.25	Total 145

TABLE IV¹³
Table Showing Teacher Loss during 1952/ 53-1960/ 61
Graduates of Teacher Training Institutions

YEAR OF GRADUATION	ONE YEAR T.T. ADDIS ABABA	4 YR. T.T. HARAR 4 YR. T.T. ADDIS A	COMMUNITY TEACHER T.
1952-53	—	30	—
1953-53	53	77	—
1954-55	143	134	—
1955-56	161	111	—
1956-57	150	78	114
1957-58	148	68	222
1958-59	118	89	241
1959-60	120	121	194
1960-61	130	155	—
TOTAL	1023	863	771
Calculated total on the survey	790	622	445
%	77.2	72.0	57.7
Calculated loss %	22.8	28.0	42.2

Table IV shows that over a nine-year period 23% of the graduates from the one-year training course at Haile Sellasie I Day School, 28% of the graduates from the four-year Training Institutions of Addis Ababa and Harrar and over 42% of the graduates from the Majite and Debre Berhan Community Teacher Training Institutions left their jobs. Disturbing as the figures are from the one-year and

13. Table taken from *Ethiopian Primary School Teachers Survey, op. cit. p. 4.*

four-year teacher-training institutions, the 'wastage' rate of the community teachers is much more disturbing since they were intended and trained to serve in the rural areas of the nation, and yet they are the ones who have left in the largest numbers.

The following observations may now be made on the above discussions as well as on the basis of the writer's observations and experience:

- ✓ 1. The majority of the elementary school teachers of Ethiopia, though much better in qualification now than a decade or so ago, are still poorly prepared for their job.
 - ✓ 2. The most highly qualified group — those who have completed two or more years of secondary education — constitute not more than a third of the teaching force.
 - * 3. The school system is losing a large number of its members since teachers are being attracted by better working conditions elsewhere.
 - * 4. The school system has been and is losing mostly from the academically and professionally best qualified group of its members.
- * If this process is allowed to continue unchecked, then the Ministry of Education may well end up as the storehouse where other agencies shop for qualified and experienced "goods". The "goods" left are likely to be of doubtful quality.

Factors Affecting Teacher 'Wastage.'

What factors contribute to or aggravate the draining away of teachers from the elementary schools? The remainder of this section summarizes the attitudes of the 145 teachers who completed the questionnaire.

It might be anticipated that teachers leave their jobs for two main reasons: unfavorable working conditions in the school system, and the fact that they entered the profession without any interest in teaching.

The following reasons were mentioned by the 145 respondents to the question why they became teachers in the first place.

TABLE V

Reasons advanced by the 145 respondents for becoming teachers

REASONS	FREQUENCY MENTION	RANK
- Interest in teaching as a career	55	1
Unsurpassed contribution to one's country	44	2
Could easily get teaching job	41	3
* Compelled by external factors: never interested in teaching	× 38	4
Contribution of teaching to personal educational improvement	25	5
* Deliberate use of teaching as a stepping-stone	18	6
Attractive nature of teaching at the time	17	7
To earn money like their friends	10	8
Miscellaneous reasons	6	9
TOTAL		254 ¹⁴

14. Total exceeds number of respondents since several respondents gave more than one reason or explanation for entering the profession.

Table V shows that although the positive, vocational reasons advanced for becoming teachers (interest in teaching, contribution to one's country, contribution to oneself in terms of educational improvement) rank as 1, 2, and 5, these are counterbalanced by the negative reasons given (the fact that one could easily get a teaching job, the compulsion of external forces, the use of teaching as a stepping-stone, and the attractive nature of teaching at the time) which rank as 3, 4, 6, and 7. These indicate quite definitely that several young people entered teaching without any interest in or inclination for it.

It is worth recording that several of the respondents enrolled in teacher-training courses simply because at that time there were no places available in the school of their choice. They were forced to enter teacher-training courses by officials of the Ministry of Education and school directors. They also admitted frankly that they had never intended to stay in the teaching force. They became teachers for the interim period until they got other jobs or passed the ESLCE and entered higher institutions of learning. Several expressed the opinion that for a beginner and for one who had no relatives to help him get a job, teaching was a good thing to turn to, since 'anybody' who applied to teach was accepted by the Ministry of Education. These factors throw light on the weaknesses of the selection policy and process both of the teacher-training institutions and the Ministry of Education.

Why the Best are Lost.

While many who never intended to be teachers left teaching after a brief period, many of the teachers who loved teaching, who were interested in teaching, also left the classrooms. Why did they leave? Two items in the questionnaire dealt with this point: Why did you leave your teaching job? What factors contributed to your withdrawal from the classroom? The remaining part of this paper attempts to answer these questions. Table VI summarizes the reasons and shows that they are varied and complex.

TABLE VI
Reasons advanced by 145 respondents for leaving teaching.
In Rank Order

NATURE OF REASON	FREQUENCY MENTION	RANK
Economic and financial factors	241	1
Administrative reasons from within and without the school	116	2
Unfavorable work conditions in the school	43	3
The absence of further educational opportunity	38	4
Difficulties of rural life: adjustment problems	32	5
Isolation factor: feeling of being forgotten	37	6
Lack of careful selection of teachers and administrators	28	7
Low social prestige accorded to teachers by government officials, parents and the community	26	8
Miscellaneous considerations	19	9
TOTAL REACTIONS ¹⁵	580	

15. Total exceeds number of respondents since several advanced more than one reason or explanation for leaving teaching.

Economics Factors

The weightiest reason for teacher withdrawal, the one stated most often and at greatest length, is money. It was discouraging to listen to what teachers had to say about their salaries, their hopes of regular salary increments and their prospects of promotion by merit. Teachers complained that, although the cost of living varies from place to place in Ethiopia, the Ministry takes no account of these variations: the initial monthly salary is \$200, no matter where the teacher is serving. (\$200 is the initial salary of most graduates of Teacher Training Institutes; graduates of the Commercial School start with \$275 or more.)¹⁶

Apart from the low starting salary, the factors which seem to have aggravated the rate of 'wastage' in the Elementary schools are:- the absence of regular salary increments; the lack of a salary scale to indicate the maximum to which the teacher may aspire; the meagerness and infrequency of increments — which are not always awarded on the basis of merit; the lack of any provision for salary adjustment when teachers obtain higher qualifications; the preferential treatment given in the matter of salaries to teachers from Addis Ababa or from other favored or politically conscious areas; the lack of any apparent concern on the part of the Ministry officials about the future of teachers; the despair of those who have served the Ministry for many years without advancement.

TABLE VII
Median Salary and Years of Service of the
145 Respondents while in Ministry and in New Job

	MINISTRY	NEW JOB
Median year of service	3.25	2.45
Median starting salary in Eth.\$	174.74	241.44
Median salary at the time of withdrawal	198.55	—
Present salary in new job in Eth.\$	—	347.23
Difference in salary after service	23.81	106.79

The figures given in Table VII seem to bear out the contention of teachers that the starting salary in the new job is significantly higher than their teaching salaries. Moreover, the difference in salary after serving in the new job for a median period of 2.45 years is nearly $4\frac{1}{2}$ times that of their salaries from the Ministry after a median period of 3.25 years.

This appears to be what is driving teachers from the classroom — their service is not being recognized and recompensed. Teachers also referred to the total absence of any fringe benefits in teaching.

Administrative Inefficiency and Corruption

Money is not the only reason for teachers leaving their job. Teachers seem to have lost all faith in the Ministry of Education and its officials, whether these officials are stationed in the central offices, the provincial offices, the awrajas or the schools. The Ministry is described as the epitome of the 'Zemene Messafint' Administration in Ethiopian History—a house full of lords, each one circulating memos to contradict and weaken the stand of the others.

16. Information received from the Central Personnel Agency.

Teachers suggest that a Tewodros Minister of Education is needed to put the educational house in order. The Ministry is sometimes pictured as a remote island peopled with incompetent and corrupt clerks and administrators, whose sole preoccupation — besides coffee-drinking and gossip — is the devising of ways and means to oppress teachers. Teachers further allege that the degree of oppression and suppression increases proportionally with the distance of the school from Addis Ababa and the provincial capitals. This sense of ill-treatment by the administration is so deeply ingrained and so widespread that one wonders how the situation can ever be rectified. Teachers say that they are looked upon as menials to be moved about at the whim of officials, transferred or punished indiscriminately as awraja and provincial education officers think fit. There is, they alleged, too much favoritism based on family relationship, bribery, tribal affinity and the passing of information to higher authorities. Officials seem to have cut themselves off from the day-to-day problems facing teachers in the different areas of the country. It is generally believed by the teachers that officialdom has no satisfactory system of separating the honest, hard-working teachers from those who merely await the end of the month to collect their salaries. The teachers' sense of insecurity is heightened because, they fear, they have no one to guard them against exploitation, unfair treatment, unjustifiable mis-handling by officials, or unfair accusations by students and parents. The teachers are not provided with the minimum essentials when they are asked to go to places where they have to face personal danger. Teachers feel that they are fighting the world single-handed and it is not surprising that they prefer to work for employers who are likely to give them fair treatment.

Teachers are also bitter because their salaries, meager enough after various deductions have been made, do not always reach them on time. There are instances of teachers having had to wait up to three months for their salary. In the interval they are obliged to live on credit and beg or borrow from their neighbors to avoid starvation. Fifteen percent of the respondents said that they had left the Ministry of Education for this reason alone.

Unfavorable Working Conditions within the School

Teachers are immensely handicapped by the unfavorable working conditions in many schools. Teaching aids are unavailable, blackboards and even chalk are in short supply, a desk for the teacher is a luxury. Classrooms are overcrowded to the point where teachers feel that their efforts are futile. Directors assign teaching duties regardless of the teacher's qualifications—or lack of them—in the subject he is required to teach. In certain areas, such as Gambela and Assossa, teachers find that the curriculum given them requires so much adaptation to local conditions as to be almost worthless. Yet they are not permitted by school directors to depart from it—at any rate in those schools where the director has neither the professional qualifications nor the administrative capacity to lead and advise his staff. School directors, it is alleged, are selected on the basis of every criterion except ability and professional qualification. This alone has caused teachers to resign in disgust.

Lack of Opportunity for Educational Improvement

Several teachers entered the profession¹⁷ apparently because they believed that teaching is learning and that they would enjoy unsurpassed opportunities for continuing and improving their education. The improvement of their own education, they say, is in the best interests of their students as well as of themselves. The Minis-

17. See Table V

try, however, has never come forth with any plans for the continuous in-service education of teachers, the need for which is especially great in the remote rural areas.

The position with regard to further education is, to put it mildly, unsatisfactory. Successful performance in the ill-organized vacation courses have rarely brought any appreciable monetary reward. No attempt has been made to cater to the desire of rural teachers for afternoon or evening classes, correspondence courses, mobile professional libraries, or scholarships for further study within Ethiopia. When teachers see their colleagues in Addis Ababa and other favored areas getting the opportunity for further education and getting higher salaries as a result, they naturally seek ways and means of getting a transfer or, failing that, quit teaching altogether and find another job which offers them the possibility of educational advancement.

Difficult Living Conditions: Adjustment Problems

These include: the physical hardships of life in underdeveloped rural areas; language difficulties; social problems created by the teacher's ignorance of the habits and customs of the area.

Under physical hardships can be listed: the absence of decent houses to rent; lack of water; the difficulty of finding servants; the absence of health centers or even simple clinics; the inaccessibility of the school; the hazards of travel by horse or mule in certain regions; the lack of any fairly determined hardship allowance; climatic difficulties; the loss of salary (up to 30%) sustained by teachers in some of the coffee-growing areas when they change paper money, which is regarded with the deepest suspicion, into acceptable coins; the high cost of foodstuffs and manufactured goods; the unavailability in some areas of cereals which form a basic part of the teacher's diet.

Language often occasions difficulty. Sometimes a teacher with only a sketchy knowledge of Amharic is found teaching Amharic-speaking children. Sometimes the Amharic-speaking teacher finds himself attempting to teach lower elementary children whose mother-tongue he does not know. Language barriers can effectively shut off the teacher from the community in whose midst he is obliged to live and work.

It is not only language that may set the teacher and the community apart. The teacher's ignorance of local customs may also cause misunderstanding and resentment and make the teacher long for the day when he can escape to a more familiar environment. It should be borne in mind, in this connection, that for many young teachers their posting to a remote rural area is their first experience of living away from home for any length of time.

Isolation: the Feeling of Being Forgotten

Teachers in the rural areas and in the smaller towns feel convinced that once they leave Addis Ababa or the provincial capital they are forgotten by the education officers and administrators. A one-year assignment to a particular locality stretches to three, four or more years, and, if the 'exile' does not decide to quit teaching, may well become a life-sentence. The absence of a comprehensive transfer policy known and understood by all teachers is partly responsible for this unhappy state of affairs. Teachers in the more remote and inaccessible schools believe that the Ministry makes no attempt to assess their quality or achievement. Schools are not visited by Ministry officials--apart from inspectors or supervisors who occasionally descend upon them to find fault with the teachers, regardless of the conditions in which they work. There is no regular contact with the provincial capital and even less with Addis Ababa. Teachers are unaware of changes and developments taking place in the country or even in their own province. They do not receive newspapers, educational journals or even letters to persuade them that they have the moral

support, at least, of their superiors. They are, in their own belief, forgotten men.

Lack of Careful Selection of Teachers and Administrators

Several respondents suggested that the situation in the schools might have been better if the selection process had been able to weed out those who had no vocation for teaching. Others complained that the selection of directors was determined by considerations which had nothing to do with education.

One consequence of poor selection is that there are still too many autocratic directors who discourage any exchange of opinion upon school matters and turn a deaf ear to all suggestions for the improvement of their schools.

Another consequence is that the profession is burdened with a number of people whose character and behavior are a source of embarrassment to their colleagues. Some teachers say that they have quit teaching because they cannot work with people of this type and have no desire to be associated with them.

Low Social Prestige of Teachers

Some teachers have left the classroom because of the low social prestige accorded to teaching by parents, government officials and the community at large. Police officers, district governors and other officials treat teachers almost as if they were schoolboys, order them about and do not even regard them as Government employees. On public occasions, too, for example at the banquets given by district governors on public holidays, teachers have no place. When a teacher meets a friend in some other occupation the question he is likely to be asked is, "Are you still a teacher?" Teachers have been known to answer "No" rather than make the shameful confession that they have failed to escape from such a low-class occupation. Nevertheless, Government officials are jealous of teachers and express their jealousy very openly because teachers get a higher salary than many officials. The fact that salaries are not paid punctually, however, means that it is sometimes impossible for teachers to get servants; servants will not tolerate unpunctual payment in the way that teachers do. Marriage is sometimes difficult for teachers; parents would like their daughters to marry men who enjoy the respect of the community. Sometimes teachers incur the dislike of parents simply because of their youth; many teachers in the rural areas are younger than their students. The most frequent judgment passed on teachers by officials and the community is: "One who spends his time with children remains childish." The status of teachers vis-a-vis the community, their treatment at the hands of Ministry officials, and the worsening discipline of students inside and outside the classroom are serious impediments to the retention of teachers in the profession.

Miscellaneous Considerations

Some of the teachers in the survey left teaching for health or family reasons. Others left teaching and transferred to other Government agencies because they believed that they would then be respected by the community and their services might be adequately recognized by the Government. The fact that decorations for service are given to other civilians but not to teachers seems to be taken by teachers as an index to the low esteem in which teachers are held by the Government.

Conclusion

These, then, are some of the reasons which compelled the 145 teachers to quit teaching — reasons which, their experience suggests, accounted for a large proportion of the teacher 'wastage' in the elementary schools of Ethiopia. It is noteworthy that some of the reasons given are very similar to those found in earlier small-

scale studies.¹⁸ The reaction of 1022 teachers who completed another questionnaire and the results of the interview and discussions with 1478 teachers in the 14 provinces seem to support most, if not all, of the major conclusions, viz. that economic, administrative, professional, educational and social reasons coupled with the hardships of rural life are the crucial factors in teacher wastage in Ethiopia.

The sample study was a small one, and there is, therefore, room for argument about some, if not all, of the conclusions reached. Clearly there is room for a further study on a much larger scale. Nevertheless, even if there is merely a possibility that the factors discussed are depriving the children of Ethiopia of the quality of education that they deserve by driving away the best qualified teachers, then these factors demand our attention. If the welfare of our young people is the welfare of the future of Ethiopia, then everyone concerned, Ministry officials and members of the Government, must take a long hard look at the situation and make a bold attempt to remedy the defects as soon as possible; it is dangerous to trifle with the future of a country.

18. *Teacher Production and Retention*, *op. cit.* p. 1, and Wrinkle, W. L. *The Improvement and Expansion of Ethiopian Teacher Education*, *op. cit.* pp. 7-8.