

COMPARATIVE SALARIES

First, I want to emphasize that, since January 1, 1968, all of the hospitals in the city have had to go to a starting salary of \$7000 for *diploma school* nurses. This is for a forty hour week. They receive time and one-half for overtime work in addition to other fringe salary benefits. B.S.-degree nurses usually start at a higher salary.

In February, there appeared in the Evening Star an advertisement for nurses at Junior Village offering salaries of \$7053 for nurses with no experience, \$7572 with one year of experience, and \$8084 with two years of experience. Lest I be misunderstood or misquoted, I wish to state that I approve of these salaries. The significant fact about them is that the District Government realizes that it must pay these salaries to fill necessary positions and that local hospital boards have learned they must pay a starting salary of \$7000 if they are to staff the hospitals in order to take care of the sick adequately. Surely District teachers deserve as much.

On July 1, 1968 minimum salaries in grades 7, 8, 9 and 10 of the classified service were \$6981-\$7699—\$8462-\$9297 respectively.

The average starting salary in 1968-69 for teachers throughout the country has been estimated at \$5850 by the National Education Association. This is \$10 higher than the present minimum of \$5840 for local teachers.

The Endicott Research Report gives the average starting salaries which are being offered in 1968-69 to men in the various professions. The range is \$7464 to \$9168. (See attached NEA Research Bulletin, Vol. 46, Number 1, March, 1968, pp 8 and 12)

I fail to understand what it is in the thinking of the public in general, and of the District Government in particular, which make them feel teachers should be willing and happy to accept pay scales lower than those of other professional groups and that they should be satisfied to receive them after all others have received them. Six months have passed since the employees in the classified service of the Federal and District Governments, including all employees of the school system not under the Teachers' Salary Act, received raises. Teachers have no unseen means for meeting their financial responsibilities, for educating their children, etc. They cannot pay their bills with psychic income or a promise of a pay raise. As taxpayers, why should teachers be expected to subsidize raises for others at the expense of their own?

Mayor Washington has promised cooperation in securing the funds to finance raises for teachers. I suggest that he take a look in the future at the timing so that teachers will receive raises when all other employees of the District Government receive them. Present references to finding the necessary funds make it appear to the public that teachers are forcing tax increases so they can secure pay raises. The public loses sight of the fact that others received raises last October.

The restlessness among local teachers and others throughout the country should be ample evidence that they have reached the breaking point. They are no longer willing to be the after-thought as far as their own economic welfare and that of the children in their classrooms are concerned.

It is ironic that classroom teachers, rather than parents and local governments, are leading the struggle to secure adequate funds to provide the best possible education and the most highly qualified teachers for children—the nation's most precious heritage.