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# THE South Indian Teacher

Vol. IV]

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## THE PLACE OF GEOGRAPHY IN A SECONDARY SCHOOL \*

By

*Mr. K. S. Vakil, M. Ed., F.R.G.S., I.E.S. (Dharwar.)*

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

I thank you very much for the honour you have done to the profession to which you and I belong by inviting me to preside over this Conference. The usual custom is to invite gentlemen outside the teaching profession to preside at such educational conferences. You have chosen, however, to make a new departure by selecting one of your own fraternity for the purpose. Let us hope that the choice may not prove altogether ill-advised.

This Conference is, so far as I know, the first of its kind in this Presidency, and Principal Tawde and his co-workers deserve to be congratulated on the very notable and welcome step they have taken in singling out Geography from amongst the school subjects for discussion at this Conference. This very choice demonstrates in a telling manner the importance that has come to be attached

by present-day teachers to this subject as an item in the programme of school education.

To realise the remarkable change that has come over the attitude of teachers towards this subject during the last few years, we have only to recall how we were taught and how we learnt Geography in our own school days. Both teachers and pupils of the unhappy school days that are now happily gone, looked upon Geography as the most hateful of all school subjects and hated it as they hated none other, and wondered all the time they taught or learnt it, what could be the purpose of the educational authorities in including such an execrable subject in the school curriculum. They regarded it as a purely book-subject to be taught and learnt directly from the prescribed text-book without any deviation whatsoever from the order in which it was treated therein. Its teaching and study commenced, uniformly

\*The Presidential address delivered at the 1st Geographical Conference held at the Training College, Poona on 12 and 13th January, '31.

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in the case of all countries and continents, with boundaries, seas, bays, straits, and gulfs; mountains and rivers; products; political divisions; towns and cities; exports and imports; etc. Most of us can easily recall, for we can never forget, how our teachers in teaching the Geography of England and Wales, Scotland, and Ireland in High School Standard IV insisted on our learning the names of all the counties of these countries and the principal towns in each in the very order in which they were given in the text-book and how any change in the order in which they were given in the book or any omission therefrom was punished as a serious default. The only circumstance that somewhat enlivened the gloom that shrouded the teaching and learning of Geography was the occasional use of the school map to get the pupils to note positions thereon of seas, bays, gulfs, capes, mountains, rivers, etc. that they had learnt by heart. How changed are those irrational ways of teaching and learning geography! The movement for greater attention to this subject and for the adoption of rational methods of teaching and learning it began, if I mistake not, with its recognition as a separate subject of examination at the School Final Examination instituted by the Educational Department in 1905. Ever since then, it has received greater attention at the hands of teachers and pupils and inspecting officers have insisted on the adoption of better methods of teaching it. The school map has been supplemented by the pupils' atlas and the text-book has been supplemented by charts and pictures illustrative of geographical facts. The magic lantern has also come in as a useful aid in its teaching and the cinema is awaiting

introduction as a still more useful aid in enlivening its teaching and study, particularly the human aspect of it, which is by far the most important part of geographical instruction and study.

To school teachers and pupils, Geography is not the science of the Earth. It is, to them, the story of the earth which is their home, their dwelling place. While Literature unfolds and exposes man's inner nature, his passions and emotions, while History relates the story of man in relation to his neighbours, Geography tells the story of man in relation to his physical environment. For the study of man's nature, of his relations to other peoples, and of his relations to his natural environment it is necessary that every complete scheme of school education should include the teaching of Literature, History and Geography. That is why these subjects have been included in all school courses as obligatory subjects of instruction. Their teaching, however, fell in the hands of teachers ignorant of their value in the scheme of school studies and of the right methods of approaching, who knew little or nothing of the subjects beyond what was given in the text-books and who took it to be their duty to impart knowledge of these subjects as given in the prescribed text-books. Thus, teachers, instead of maintaining their position as masters of text-books, became their slaves. But text-books, though they are good servants, are bad masters. Once you allow them to be your masters, there is no end to the extent of your degeneration. You get satisfied with the knowledge of the subjects you have to teach as it is given in the text-books; you tend to adopt the text-book writer's method of treatment of the subjects; you cease to look

beyond and to progress; you become indolent; and you rust and fossilize. A worse fate overtakes your pupils. They are required to confine their study to the prescribed text-books and they are thus limited in their range of outlook towards the subjects, they have little or no interest evoked in the subjects and they begin to look upon their study as nothing less than imposition.

These attitudes of teachers and pupils towards these important subjects of school study, particularly Geography, were and are often encouraged by the ignorance and lack of vision on the part of inspectors and examiners. In spite of all the efforts on the part of teachers to rationalise the teaching of this subject, little real improvement or progress can be expected if examiners and inspectors ask questions which require pupils merely to reproduce and recite lists of names of mountains, rivers, and lakes; bays, straits, and gulfs; countries and towns; exports and imports, etc. As the late Lord Rosebury rightly observed while opening the London Day Training College in 1907, what we need is not merely training of teachers but also training of examiners and inspectors, for it is this latter class of functionaries that set or retard the pace of progress. If their methods of inspection and examination are intelligent and suggestive, they induce a progressive attitude of mind on the part of teachers; if their test and questions require mere reproduction or recitation of dry facts of physical, economical and political geography as given in the text-books, they tend to induce an attitude of self-complacency on the part of teachers and effectively block the path of progress.

To my mind, the study of geography could be easily deprived of all its dryness

and distastefulness and rendered positively interesting, if teachers were to treat it not as *formal* but *human*, having the closest relation to every-day life in the world in which we live and not at all requiring the text-books either by teachers or by pupils except as supplementary aids. To start with, the earliest lessons in Geography may well be based on common foods and drinks and on articles of clothing and of every-day use in the house-hold, such as rice, pulse, bread, vegetables, water, milk, whey, curds, tea, coffee, sugar, molasses, firewood, charcoal, oil, butter, kerosene, matches, bed, blanket, shirt, cap, etc., which would provide suitable subjects for interesting talks by teachers to pupils and for investigation by the latter in their own child-like manner. Attention may next be directed to the study of the school, its distance from the pupils' home, its location in relation to the home, its size, its constituent class-rooms, their length, breadth and height and the objects placed in them, its distance from notable places in the locality such as the temple, the mosque, the dharma-shala, the chavadi, the water tank, the river, the post-office, the railway station, the police station, etc. Attention may next be turned to the study of the part which these places play on the life of the people of the locality; to the different castes, races, religions, manners and customs, dress, food, etc., of the people; to local officials and functionaries; to local animals and plants, etc. Thus, the first beginnings of geography-study would be woven round the home of the pupils and would use, as materials for such study, not facts given in any particular text-book of Geography but things lying within the reach and daily experience of the

pupils. Thus, would the foundations of Geography-study be firmly laid and real interest evoked in the subject. Such study would involve more outdoor work than indoor class-room work and necessitate much free open-air movement on the part of the pupils round about their home and school and principal places in the locality and much detailed and careful observation of their physical environment which would all conduce to their health and happiness besides adding to their knowledge.

Teachers little realise what valuable use they can make in the teaching of Geography, of the local provision-dealer's shop, of the local post-office, and of the local or nearest railway station. The provision dealer would be able to show what provisions or articles of common food and drink he had to import from outside because they were not produced locally; the post-master would show how his post-office was the centre of communication with the outside world and served the various practical needs of the people, not only of the locality in which it was situated but also of those living outside—far and near. The railway station-master would be able to show the commodities being loaded into and unloaded from the goods-vans lying in the goods-yard and thus indicate which things were produced in larger quantities than were required for local consumption and which in smaller quantities or none at all. Thus would interest be created in local economics which touch the pupils' life as much as the local exporter's or importer's.

I would advise teachers to do all their teaching of Geography as far as possible without the use of text-books either by them or by their pupils in the class-room.

In my view, this is the only effective way of making it really interesting. The only aids that they and their pupils should feel free to use in the class-room are maps, atlases, charts, pictures, the lantern, and the screen. Remember that the ultimate aim in education is bookless teaching. The more we approximate to this aim in practice, the better will it be for us and for our pupils.

The next thing I would suggest to teachers is to endeavour to create immediate interest in the subject of their geography lesson by connecting it, as far as possible, with the pupil's life and environment. They should always ask the question—why should we study this subject? What interest has it for us? Thus, while beginning the Geography of our province, presidency, or country, we may evoke interest in it by introducing it as the story of the province, presidency or country to which we belong, as the story which we ought to know for our own sake if we would know our neighbours with whom we have to deal in the various affairs of our daily life. We may similarly introduce the Geography of Asia as the story of the continent to which we belong; the continent which was the birth place of our religion and of the religions of others who live with us; the Geography of Europe as the story of the continent to which our rulers belong the continent to which we own our postal system, our railway system, our telegraph system, in fact, almost every thing new which has made our life easy and enjoyable; the Geography of Africa as the story of the people who have suffered from their physical conditions more than any other people whose progress in the human race has been retarded by natural circumstances over which they had little or

no control; the Geography of America as the story of the continent to which we owe the wonderful motor car which has annihilated distance between the village and the taluka town, between the taluka town and the zilla town, between the zilla town and the capital city of the presidency.

Further, each lesson in Geography should be based, as far as possible, on the local or home geography with which the pupils may be familiar. Thus, if the subject of the lesson is the races of mankind, we can draw for the materials of our lesson on the different races of people who are living among us, and whom we have had occasion to see, *e.g.*, brown people, white people, black people and yellow people. The only people pupils cannot have seen are red people—the American Red Indians, whose story may be told through pictures illustrating their physical build and facial features, life and occupations, manners and customs. If the subject of the lesson is the climate of any particular country, the materials for it can be collected easily from the climate of the school locality. Thus, can local or home geography be made the starting point of each lesson in Geography.

Further, every opportunity should be taken to correlate geography with history. Thus, for instance, while beginning the Geography of Arabia, we may interest our pupils in it by telling them that it is the story of the country which gave birth to Muhammad, the Prophet of the Mussalmans who are living with us and who form one-sixth of the population of our country. Similarly we can introduce the geography of Bihar as the story of the birth place of Buddha who gave religion to one-third of the human race, of Palestine as the story of

the birth-place of Christ of China as the story of the birth-place of Confucius, of Portugal as the story of the birth-place of Vasco-de-gama, of Italy as the story of the birth-place of Columbus, of France as the story of the birth-place of freedom and popular government.

Further, Geography may be used as the means of explaining how the present social, economic, and political, condition of different peoples and countries of the world has been largely determined by their natural environment. For instance, it may be explained how great a part has Geography played in determining our present position, how mountains and seas encircling our country have circumscribed our view of life and our outlook on it and made us immensely orthodox, how bountiful nature, ample sunshine, sufficient rain-fall, and rich soils have made our country predominantly agricultural and our people self-sufficient, self-satisfied and unprogressive, how the Khyber Pass and Bolan Pass, the two narrow gateways to India on the North West, led to periodical incursions and expeditions to this country by peoples living beyond its frontiers and how the incoming of these foreign peoples has chequered its history.

Remember, however, that there is not one method of teaching Geography in schools. There are many. Each teacher is free to devise his own method, subject to the general educational considerations indicated above. Who would not feel interested in Geography if it were thus taught rather through maps and pictures than through printed text-books; as a subject of immediate interest to us; as a subject easily explainable and understandable through knowledge of our own home surroundings; as the story of the birth-

place of the world's greatest men; as the means of understanding what is largely responsible for our present social, economic and political condition. I am sure that you will agree with me that geography, thus taught, would be not only learnt without ears but thus its study would be pursued, with enthusiasm, as love's labour. Its study thus pursued, would have a most humanising influence on young learners and would tend to shake and ultimately knock down the barriers that divide the different peoples of the world and to unite them into one universal brotherhood.

"The National Union of Teachers, briefly quoted as the N. U. T. has been instrumental in guarding the interests of teachers in several connections, and some such force appears necessary to prevent abuse of power in a service that is carried on under publicly elected local governing councils, the Board of Education, as central authority, not being always to be depended on to insist upon justice being done in any dispute, partly on account of its political connection, and its tendency to put expediency before equity. The only check upon that is by means of *parliamentary representation*, and the N. U. T. having succeeded in getting some of its own members elected into Parliament, has so acquired the power of holding up the Minister for Education to public interrogation, beside the privilege of introducing or supporting Parliamentary bills whose passing into Acts of Parliament would be of benefit to teachers"—Mr. J. H. Garrett.

## EDUCATIONAL RECONSTRUCTION IN TRAVANCORE

BY

Mr. N. K. Venkateswaran, Vanchyoor, Trivandrum.

It is now generally admitted that the educational system common to all India has outlived its period of substantial use and that therefore an early revision of it is very desirable. From many years of generous and unceasing effort in the promotion of this educational system, Travancore has attained an unchallenged place in the forefront of educational progress in India. While, however, the State has been making steady extension of the system in behalf of its subjects, it can hardly be claimed that it has so far taken any serious thought to determine its content or quality in the light of changing needs.

The schools of the State, primary and secondary, English and Vernacular, find themselves to-day somewhat obstinately unresponsive to the actual facts of life. They are no longer able to disguise their lack of vitality and abstention from enthusiasm. As growth has come to a standstill, educational standards have fallen. Discipline as an important element in fruitful guidance is no longer active, and examinations have considerably declined in character. There is internal unrest and irritation in the schools, often more than meets even the careful eye. It cannot be truthfully asserted that boys and girls in the State, despite new ardours and strong temptations, are less willing than formerly to react to right influences, and the question of an educational system satisfying the spirit and

necessities of the times becomes supremely important.

It is not perhaps necessary to describe the prevailing conditions in detail in order to show that Travancore cannot wisely put off the problem of carefully reconstructing its educational system in conformity with the ideal of gaining increasing life for increasing numbers.

The reconstruction has become unavoidable because there are fundamental defects in the existing system. It is necessary to identify these defects and to insure their absence in the revised scheme.

There is a gross misuse of time involved in the devotion of about 11 years of juvenile life in the period of its greatest plasticity and cadence, to the acquisition of the School Final Certificate, which connotes, even if it were a reliable testimony to the quality of its holders, by no means any considerable addition to life's blessings and gains. If the present school-system were carefully examined it could easily be seen to be as much again redundant and repetitive as it is progressive, and what is taught in early classes appears in higher forms like obsolete things returning. It is true that boys and girls below the age of fifteen or sixteen years could scarcely be expected to possess 'the mind in body' presupposed by the School Final or Matriculation Examination, but that is no sufficient ground why all the ten or eleven years available for educational purposes in this juvenile period

should in the main be directed to passing the examination. For the purposes of the school terminal examination it should be enough for boys and girls to begin their school career at about the tenth year. Indeed, with the character of the schools as they are, such late commencement of learning and completion of the school course in the minimum time possible would be distinctly advantageous to pupils as, in case they do so, they should not be deprived of the healthful impact from a sense of employment before the certificate is acquired. The insidious educational malaise from which teachers and pupils alike appear to suffer in these days bears painful witness to an organic mistake in our school education.

It must be useful to appreciate the extent of this grave error for realizing how urgent and desirable is educational reform. The existing curriculum is limited to certain aptitudes and capabilities, and its operations naturally incline to produce ill-balanced results. While some aspects of juvenile life are sought to be unfurled too solicitously, others on no account less important are afforded hardly any scope for their normal exercise and growth. The pupils, therefore, advance and stagnate at the same time. Such fractional education being contrary to natural laws is a delicate process and takes a long time to carry itself out without causing acute disturbance in the neglected faculties. It, therefore, proceeds slowly and tortuously, taking about two years for its completion where one should prove enough if conditions had been more comprehensive and congenial. Frequent holidays and long vacations have to be called into aid so that the over-exercise of select functions might

not injure the organism. Coaching and drilling and swotting become respectable practices where elements of assimilation are abstracted from their natural harmony. The curriculum is said to be overloaded because while it deals with only a fraction of life it deals with the same with greater severity than understanding, with greater force than art. No child can grow on water alone, excellent counsellor as water is in matters of health and strength. This is the only plausible explanation of the serious misdirection of time and chance involved in the present school-system, which has yet to learn the first of all things in education that education must fit life instead of asking life to fit it.

In a word, the prevailing general education, both in its elementary and secondary stages, is narrow and oppressive. Language, Arithmetic, History, Geography etc., with an occasional homage to play fall pathetically short of juvenile desires, needs and capabilities. Even play joyously pursued is not enough to redress the balance. By far more than adults, young folks hunger for expressing themselves in concrete images and efforts. No system of juvenile education that fails to provide the most generous scope for this fundamental need for fulfilment of function can be said to be seriously concerned for children. The educational value of a subject must be ascertained from the chance and stimulus it is capable of giving to those who apply themselves to it. If this is conceded it is difficult to think of a more educationally valuable subject than agriculture, and it is extremely curious that, with its uncontested supremacy in the general life of India, no serious attempt has yet been made to introduce it in schools. Agriculture

is the greatest creative art, the oldest, the most gratifying and useful, in which since the dawn of civilization mankind has always found a field of activity in accord with itself. Handicrafts, which are only next in importance to agriculture, have greater appeal to young boys and girls than, say, arithmetic or history. Agricultural pursuits and handicrafts refine character and open life even more than all the prevailing school-subjects put together, and if it should be argued that the former must be less helpful than some of the latter in power of cultivating analytical intelligence it need only be recalled for an answer that analytical intelligence is not always the best of means for fulfilling themselves for the vast majority of human beings.

The distinction often drawn between general and vocational subjects is imaginary and it is often put forward to show that vocational studies are apt to be uneducational in nature and consequently to fail to strike the imagination of the young. Such fear will, on an impartial examination, be found to be groundless if we except certain purely mechanical occupations. The most elementary observation of children could tell that certain handicrafts, the fruits of which could directly be turned into food or clothes, appeal very strongly to the juvenile sense of activity and thought. The craftsman's son finds instinctive joy in the skilled labour of his father. He plays it at first and learns it in right earnest afterwards. It is this psychological instinct of imitation and emulation that has produced the fabled skill of Indian artisans flowing from father to son for many centuries. The tending of a plant, the making of a table, the weaving of a basket is in fact as educational as any

educational subject we are accustomed to boast of, but few would seriously contend that typewriting is. There is always something creative and substantive in the truly educational occupation, and when and if we argue that arithmetic is educational but earthenware is not what we perhaps mean to say is only that the one is slightly more intellectual than the other. But such is the sway of the orthodox intellectual habit of thinking in education that even a nourishing occupation like carpentry is often carefully educationalised in school-practice and thoroughly divorced from the real and living purposes of life.

Among good educational subjects that have a direct vocational value may be mentioned agriculture, wood-work, metal-work, rattan-work, coir-work, carpentry, sericulture, smithy, market-gardening, engraving, domestic economy, dairying, bee-keeping, poultry-farming, weaving, lace-making and spinning. It is absolutely necessary to include a suitable selection of these subjects in the curriculum of the revised scheme in order to rectify the seriously bad balance of the present system described above and to avoid its desperate consequences, to which our schools have so nearly succumbed to-day. If educational systems were really and truly educational the inability of educated young men and women to find suitable occupations, which to-day stares at us with grim determination, cannot rise in any serious aspect at all.

Before proceeding further with these suggestions it is necessary to indicate the place of English in the revised scheme. There cannot possibly be any difference of opinion regarding the importance of this great language to India, to-day, the third-

eye, as it were, of India. But it is a misfortune that English has happened to be installed as the medium of instruction in secondary schools. The normal study of the language has been much hampered by this very unpsychological makeshift, and the effect on the pupils and on the subjects learnt by way of the half-familiar tongue is retardation. In the contemplated scheme of reconstruction English must get better attention in teaching, but the other subjects in the curriculum will not be taught through her.

The State to-day maintains a number of Vernacular Middle and High Schools, which look like survivals no longer serving any definite cause or need. The impression they make on the onlooker is that they dispense a second-rate education in a left-handed manner. Such schools cannot obviously be allowed to steal into the new system.

The outlines of reconstruction as they naturally emerge from the foregoing discussion are as follows.

Elementary education will be the first thought, for any defect in elementary education would corrupt the whole overlying structure. We cannot let elementary education evaporate in the revised scheme as it so extensively does to-day throughout India. Primary education rich in quality and comprehensive in range is three quarters of the educational problem. A systematic five-year education for the elementary course is needed. The curriculum could be split into two almost equal divisions, one devoted to class-teaching and the other to out-door education. The class time-table would comprise language, arithmetic, hygiene, stories and geography, while practical agriculture

handicrafts and wholesome games would occupy the out-door hours. Mornings would be devoted to classes and afternoons to activities. Love of earth, plants, animals and birds would hang all round the elementary schools. There need be little hesitation in bending these schools to such ideal when even the most machine-loving countries are now waking up to real needs and lasting joys and trying to come back to the land.

There is little scientific reason why any great distinction between boys and girls should be made during elementary education.

The suggested curriculum would distribute its pressure on the various powers of children, and undue strain on any particular point or group of points being avoided, there would arise small need for long stretches of holiday, not even on behalf of the teachers, who would also naturally imbibe the stimulating properties implied in the diffusion of different interests.

Smaller schools set in larger open spaces will have to be the rule, but the houses might be unpretentious to the last degree.

I plead for the introduction of a master-bias for the land in the elementary education of children, and as far as Travancore is concerned, where agriculture has always been the high road to prosperity and still holds out unlimited possibilities for the future, much argument is scarcely needed to show the inadequacy and injuriousness of any predominantly bookish system of education diverging from both nature and life.

Elementary education thus amplified and harmonised with life on a sound equipoise of interacting forces and tendencies inherent

in human nature would at once be complete in itself and capable of further growth just as children grow and become men and women although they are beautiful and complete in themselves, often so beautiful and complete that growth is only looked upon as something inevitable. This further growth it would be the part of the secondary schools to assist, and an equal term of five years would be given to these institutions to fulfil the work. There would, therefore, be only two uniform systems of schools in the State, the elementary and the secondary, with no inferior subordinate branches such as the existing Vernacular Middle and High Schools to threaten the general modulation of the same quality.

English would be begun at the bottom of the secondary schools when the pupils are ten, eleven or twelve years old and possessed of a certain substantive accomplishment in general education. There are two chief schools of opinion regarding the question of when and how the study of a foreign language is best begun. One would have it begun as early as possible, and follow 'the direct method' of teaching foreign languages. 'The direct method' no longer holds the pride of place among ways of teaching 'other tongues,' and in Travancore, where it is the accredited way, the learning of English begun rather later than earlier has led to disappointing results. 'The direct method' and a suitable early age for its fruitful application are not quite practical propositions for India. It would be decidedly better to begin teaching English at the completion of a good and substantial elementary educational course and to follow simple ways of teaching such, for example, as 'the reading method' formulated re-

cently with notable understanding and ability by Dr. Michael West of the Dacca University. Of course, the old translation method will always have a certain use and appeal in the teaching of any foreign language. Let it not be forgotten that some comprehensive experience and a certain grounding in what may be called the linguistic sense are strong aids in the study of an alien speech.

In other respects the secondary schools would faithfully carry on the meaning and the mission of the elementary schools. The day would be divided into two parts, the mornings to class-teaching and the afternoons to open-air engagements. More agricultural activities and handicrafts will be pursued in the secondary than in the elementary schools, and the girth of the curriculum in both its sections will be richer and larger. Most of the holidays, especially the long vacations, will disappear under the influence of the new and larger interests. A distinction would be allowed between boys' and girls' schools in accordance with the special needs and traditions of Indian women, but the difference in any case would incline to be as small as possible.

The State has shown commendable enterprise in the erection of imposing school-houses, and the majority of High Schools contain surprisingly large numbers of pupils. These big institutions that have to-day quite enough to do in merely holding themselves together will not suit the new scheme. Small numbers and abundant grounds will have gradually to be evolved, for the ideal is to provide greater and greater opportunities for the growing generations.

These suggestions derived from life's necessities and juvenile dispositions refuse

no acknowledged law of education, and it is believed that they would be found worthy of being given a hearing in at least a few selected localities with a view to test their eligibility for more extensive application. Several progressive western countries are confidently going forward with the amplification of their educational systems along similar lines. Those who have come in contact with the irritations, obsessions and futilities of the prevailing system can only appreciate how very urgent and important is this question of educational reconstruction.

### THE MINISTER ON OUR EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

"As for the educational system, there is need for a great change. The problem is however beset with great difficulties. But the present system serves only the needs of a subject race. It is true to a great extent. It is suited only to conditions of political subjection. But the days of political subjection has gone for ever, never to return. A new era has already dawned and the time has come for the people to shoulder the responsibility of ruling themselves. The present system is entirely unsuitable to fit up our youth for such responsibilities, as would devolve on self-respecting citizens of a Federated India. The educational system that India wants to-day is one that would fit its youth for real citizenship and responsibility. I am painfully aware, that the ideas and conceptions I referred to are mere words now and the re-adjustments necessary will take a long time. But the time has come for making a beginning. The youth of the country must be taught their citizenship duties and rights."

## AROUND US AND ABOUT US\*

BY

Mr. M. S. Sabhesan, M. A.

This is the first time that I am having the privilege of addressing the Madura District Teachers' Guild and I need not say I am really glad to have this opportunity. Under ordinary circumstances I should have preferred to speak on an academic subject but in the stirring times in which we are living I deem it necessary to place before you a few points affecting our profession and to enlist your support for the programme of work to be undertaken by the Union.

Look round and see how rapidly conditions are changing here in the political field. We are witnessing a great national struggle for self-government. It may not be possible for any one to say just now what form the future constitution of India may take. But if the reports of interviews and impressions in the press be true, we may take it that the future constitution may contain two important provisions, namely responsibility at the centre and complete provincial autonomy. This is not the occasion for me to deal at length with the implications of the term provincial autonomy. You realise that this reform means the transfer of power to the chosen representatives of the people and it rests with them to make or mar the teaching profession. We have been familiar with the methods of administration by many public men who happen to pass for the chosen representatives in the local bodies and in the legisla-

tures. It will not do for us to express any doubt about the contemplated reforms for it will amount to cutting the face to spite the nose. Education happens to be a subject in which the state, the public men and the public and private bodies are interested and we cannot remain indifferent when powers are going to be delegated to democratic bodies subject to popular control. As was pointed out by Mr. P. T. Srinivasa Aiyangar in his address at Chidambaram, democracy is deaf and dumb and we have to shout that it may hear. It will be a long time before we can say to ourselves that we have "educated our masters" and it is necessary that we prepare ourselves against any situation that may develop in the actual working of the system.

The changes in the educational sphere all over the world are no less serious. There are currents and cross-currents in the world of education which make great demands upon the time and resources of the profession. The old time-worn methods and ideas in education are found to be unsuitable and inadequate to meet the needs of a society in a dynamic state. I shall just refer to a few tendencies in modern educational movement so as to indicate how the problems before the profession are becoming complex. First of all there is the great demand for extended facilities for public education. The Bill for raising the school-leaving age to 15 that is now under consideration in the House of

\* An address delivered at the annual meeting of the Madura District Teachers' guild held on the 7th February, '31.

Commons is an indication of the importance which public men have come to attach to public education. Education is to be no longer for any particular class or sex; it is for all, rich and poor, boys and girls, the patrician and the plebian, the endowed and the backward. In advanced countries an appeal is made by thoughtful educationists that the methods of education should not be uniform but should be such as to overcome the defects of the backward or defective pupils. On the other hand we have a section that believes that the demand for mass education is not based on sound facts or real needs and that extended facilities will prove a huge waste. Persons who hold this view argue that all pupils are not educable to the same extent and that the majority of pupils who cannot secure jobs in higher grades of employment will find no occasion for using the knowledge gained at the school.

This view takes us to the second tendency in Modern education movement, namely the correlation of school instruction to employment. The complaint is becoming too common that the school instruction is very formal and bears no relation to the future occupational needs of the pupils. The courses of study are severely criticised and the extreme advocates would go so far as to allow the school instruction to be dominated by the kind of jobs open to pupils. A compromise which is acceptable to all has yet to be devised.

While the environment around us is in this disturbed condition we should like to recall to our minds what our public men think of us. We have, first of all, persons of the conventional type. They profess they expect great things from teachers since

they are entrusted with the responsible task of training the future citizen. They point to the nobility of our profession and appeal to us to make the country safe for democracy. Secondly, we have our administrators who take great credit to themselves for strong common sense. The only point which they mean to emphasise every moment is the want of funds and they do not want to be reminded that there has not been even a single occasion all these 70 years, when teachers were told that money was available and that their representations could be considered. This plea of want of funds naturally lends them to make the heroic statement that teachers should be prepared for sacrifice since teachers of old subsisted on much less. Some among them who are artless blurt out that teachers enjoy holidays and cannot expect members of the managing bodies to pay from their pockets. Far more serious is the opinion which our public men hold about our attainments. They all agree amongst themselves that teachers will not be in a position to study any question other than education and to offer opinion of any value. There are swollen headed people in this group who will even maintain that teachers are not competent to express any opinion even in educational questions.

The changes around us and the impressions about us to which I have referred have a direct bearing on the status and work of the teaching profession. This is not the time for us to be replying to our critics. The situation is serious enough to call for a definite action on our part. Is it in the interest of our country that the teaching profession should continue to be like dumb-driven cattle? Can we be indifferent to the responsibilities which pertain to us as

members of a learned profession? Our goal should be the attainment of Swaraj in the sphere of education.

How is this possible if we are not prepared to understand aright the obligations imposed upon the members of a learned profession and to adopt a line of conduct in consonance with the best traditions of a learned profession. What then are the characteristics of a learned profession. I shall just mention a few important characteristics of a learned profession:

- (1) Expertness.
- (2) Professional solidarity.
- (3) Hope of a career.
- (4) Preparedness to take part in work of public or national importance.

Let me examine for a moment how our profession compares with the learned professions in regard to these characteristics. If it be found that my comparison is not much in our favour, I request you to bear in mind that I am speaking of the conditions in general.

*Expertness:* The lawyer or the doctor is accepted as an expert in his respective sphere and great credit is given to his opinion. Few will be found to consider the opinion of a teacher as expert opinion in educational matters. His opinion is seldom sought and it is treated with scant courtesy when it happens to come into conflict with the opinion of the lay administrator. The doctor or lawyer studies the case before him, listens to the history of the case and finally comes to a conclusion. This conclusion once arrived at, is not allowed to be altered by extraneous considerations and very often he considers it his duty to stick to his opinion. It is this tenacity on his part that wins for his opinion public esteem, and the

opinion is treated as expert opinion. Any question of reconsideration will be thought of only when fresh facts are brought to the expert's notice. If his opinion is challenged, he is up in arms and argument after argument will be advanced to maintain the original position even against tremendous opposition. The teacher also makes a careful study of the case, whether it be promotion, or selection, or aptitude for a special course and comes to a conclusion. But he is too often pressed by extraneous considerations to modify the original opinion. The line of least resistance, which most of us consider it expedient to adopt, is quite different from the firmness to be noted in a lawyer or a doctor. The public have been led to believe that a letter from a high official or from the chairman of the municipality or committee could go a great way in gaining their ends. It is not for me to go into the causes which have led to the abdication of the expert position but the fact remains that through a long period of inaction our faculties have become atrophied and we have ceased to consider ourselves to be experts. Have we not been talking all these years about Vernacularisation, Vocational bias, Reorganisation of secondary education curriculum? These are still continuing to be the questions for endless discussion in our platform, and this does not certainly enhance our reputation as a body of experts. As a matter of fact, we do not take a long view of things and suggest what is educationally sound. We agitated for the inclusion of the B-group in the examination subjects. Now we begin to cry that the examination will be a serious strain. We are beginning to support the idea of an examination at the middle school stage. It

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should be possible for us to judge each question on its merits and to suggest, not what will satisfy the men in power, but what is educationally sound.

*Professional Solidarity:* We often find the lawyers or doctors closely bound together by professional ties and determined to safeguard the professional interest. They are very jealous of the reputation of the profession and even the services of the top men are available to give the needed relief to their brethren in trouble. Think of the power and influence which the General Medical Council is able to wield? The opinion of even the apothecary at the bottom will in the majority of cases be backed up and his words will be treated with consideration. What about the Bar Council, recently instituted? Does it not statutorily bring all advocates together into one body which is to decide questions of professional conduct? But with us there is considerable hesitation in joining an association and the few who are willing to join are frightened by the frown, real or imaginary, of the District Educational Officer or Manager. Apart from promoting the material interests of the members and protecting them against meaningless attacks of the public, the spirit of professional solidarity will always exercise a healthy moral influence by setting before the members high professional ideals. But conditions of the teaching profession often act as disintegrating factors. There are the different managing bodies, the Government, the local bodies and private committees. The teachers in Government institutions are not ordinarily inclined to join the Teachers' organisations. They take a narrow view of the objects of Teachers' organisations and think that the organisations are more for

the teachers in private institutions whose conditions of services require to be improved. Teachers in the service of local bodies or private management have vague fears that by joining associations they offend the managers. We cannot also overlook the unreasonable and meaningless suspicion that prevails among the different grades of teachers. Consequently teachers have few opportunities of meeting one another and the spirit of professional solidarity can hardly be expected to grow under such conditions. The North Indian Tour organised by the S. I. T. U. showed clearly the advantage of meeting teachers from different parts of the country. But such occasions are few and far between. The inertia in the profession is something astounding. Take the Protection fund started by the S. I. T. U. with the object of giving relief to the teachers' families left in a destitute condition or to the poor teacher on his retirement. This scheme offers a common organisation where teachers of all grades can meet one another on equal terms and help one another. A large amount has been spent in propaganda through leaflets, bulletins and advertisements. It is nearly 3 years and yet the strength of 1,000 is not yet reached. The surprising thing is that many are still ignorant of the existence of the fund. A few who are not keen on joining the fund go on saying that the comma should be replaced by a full stop and they even make sneering remarks questioning the business capacity of teachers. It does not strike teachers that the fund is the teachers' fund and that it rests with them to work it in such a manner as to promote brotherly feeling in the profession. I invite the attention of the doubting Thomases to the

working of the Madras Teachers' Guild Co-operative Society. This society is classed under IA by the department and this should be enough to dispel any loathed melancholy or imaginary fear on the part of teachers. The Union has also been running a monthly journal with the object of promoting professional solidarity and of providing opportunities to teachers for discussing educational and professional questions and arriving at decisions. This is the official organ of the profession. In a well-organised profession no extra propaganda should be necessary to induce teachers and schools to enroll themselves as subscribers. A professional journal which has the sole interests of the profession at heart, should never be allowed to suffer for want of funds. It should be placed on such a basis as will enable it to voice forth the feelings of the profession fearlessly. How can an assured position be secured? Is it impossible for every school to subscribe for a copy? Will any management refuse to pay if the teachers in the school place the matter before the management? Is it beyond the resources of the Headmasters to subscribe individually for copies? Should not every Teachers' Association have a copy of its own? Cannot the teachers in a locality induce the reading rooms to subscribe for copies so that the public men may understand our view point. Is it not the duty of every teacher to do his best for the journal? Let us take a lesson from other bodies which raise funds through Poppy Days, Fancy Sale and so on. Our publications have been well reviewed by other journals in India, England and America. The proceeds of the sales go to the journal account and every teacher or school that cares to purchase a copy of the Proceedings of the 5th Con-

ference of the A. I. F. T. A. held at Madras or "On Teaching" by Mr. Venkateswaran will not only get an adequate return for the money, but will also help the journal. Letters which are now and then received show that teachers have no idea of the circumstances under which the work of the Union and the Journal is carried on. They seem to think that the Union is in possession of unlimited resources and that the office-bearers are unwilling to let the rank and file have the benefit. Our unlimited resource lies in a potential form in the large number of teachers in our presidency and it will be really great if they can be mobilised.

This inertia is highly prejudicial to the interest of the profession and of education. There are few journals devoted to education and it is lamentable to find that in a presidency which professes to contain the largest number of duly qualified teachers very few are found willing to think of educational questions and to express their opinion. Is it an indication of the professional spirit that little advantage is taken of the official journal though the existence of acute discontent is widely talked about. The teaching profession is to day a heterogeneous group of individuals who do not happen to be animated by a spirit of professional consciousness.

*Hope of a Career:* The inertia or indifference which militates against the efficiency of teachers is to a great extent due to the blind-alley nature of the profession. The profession does not hold out any career for the large number of aspiring capable men. The position of the budding lawyer may not compare favourably in the beginning with that of the teacher but he can aspire to a seat in the bench. The path

before the lawyer is steep and narrow but the goal is clearly in sight. He is therefore impelled to make strenuous efforts to be up to date with the result that he rises from place to place and fills up places of responsibility. The teacher who imagined himself to be better placed, finds himself stationary, feels he is not wanted, and may consider himself lucky if he be not sent out. The conditions of service are depressing. The salaries are very low; very often the salaries are in arrears; teachers are sometimes asked to take their salaries in dribbles. To urge for payment of salaries in time is to court dismissal. Public men who are busy at the time of promotion or admission, are not worried about the non-payment of salaries. It never strikes them that the education of their own children should suffer if teachers be not paid. That there is no security of tenure is admitted by all. The "contract remedy" attempted to be enforced by the department from its isolated position is highly appreciated by managing bodies since they can now without any qualms of conscience or regard for the education of the pupils systematically replace senior teachers by inexperienced teachers. Teachers are human and under the existing conditions they become discontented and indifferent. They lose their enthusiasm for work and become irresponsible. Nothing can interest them and the education of the children suffers.

*Preparedness for work in other spheres:* There is an obligation on the members of every learned profession to look beyond the needs of the profession and to render service in other spheres wherever possible. Many institutions or organisations there are in the country which require the time, energy and

even the resources of the cultured and educated classes. I may mention for instance the Co-operative Societies, Temperance Leagues, Social Service League, Adult Education Institutes and so on. The progress of the country depends upon the number of willing honorary workers it can command for running the institutions. The public recognition which it is possible for any learned profession to enjoy, will in a large measure depend upon the contribution in men and money that it is prepared to make. Teachers labour under an inferiority complex and they are not seen to take interest in these bodies and to bear a part of the responsibility. It should be possible for the profession to supply a definite quota in each locality for honorary work. It is opportunities of this kind that bring the public men and teachers together and help them to understand each other. It should be our immediate object to win public recognition through our willingness to undertake public work.

It is clear that our profession to-day does not come up to the standard of a learned profession. It does not help us to be told that there are defects in other professions. Let us realise what our defects are and make an honest effort to get rid of them. The causes for this state of affairs may be partly internal and partly environmental. The task entrusted to us is of national importance and it is essential that our profession should rise to the full status of a learned profession so that it may be able to discharge its obligations. The remedy lies in organisation. The public will not at all be impressed with our capacity for training the future citizens so long as we do not show in action the value of organisation. A

sound organisation leads the way to Swaraj in educational sphere. The public men may or may not expect us to bear our responsibility, but we should not be found to hesitate. Let us strengthen the Union. Let a District Guild be organised in each district which should in its turn start local associations of teachers. Each District Guild should prove a strong outpost and should act as the connecting link between the Union and the associations. These are days of world-wide organisations. We have the All-India Federation of Teachers' Associations, Asiatic Federation, and the World Federation. Our power for good will depend upon the strength at the bottom. Let us remember that the increase of salaries or the amelioration of the conditions of service, is not the chief idea behind our mind. We want to be masters in our own field. How can public

men who are averse to be kept under leading strings fail to appreciate the natural desire on the part of the teaching profession to be free in their sphere? Swaraj in education which we have set before ourselves is rooted in organisation and is attainable through organisation. It is therefore the duty as well as the privilege of every teacher who wants to play his part to join the Union and to extend to it ungrudging support. We are engaged in the war against ignorance and an onerous duty is entrusted to us. Unless we are animated by a spirit of determination and sacrifice, it may not be possible for us to discharge our duty. A sound and efficient organisation into which we should like our S.I.T.U. to develop should prove in this struggle a heavy artillery under whose cover the soldiers of peace can carry on their duties unperturbed and march from victory to victory.

24 MAR 1931

Education is not a material thing. We cannot measure it by the yard, weigh it by the pounds, bottle it or hang it on walls. It is the contact of mind with the mind, of spirit with the spirit. It is truth, beauty, and light, held in the hearts of our pupils, discerned in their thoughts.

But Education is also the development of individuality. Too often in our schools, thought is an inert dead thing, gathered from text books or from teachers' notes. Creative thought is almost a crime in our class rooms. It does not pay in examinations. Pupils are receptacles to be filled. The best student is the one with the greatest power of absorption. The most popular teacher is he who can cram the greatest amount of knowledge into a given cubic space of hollow head.

It is therefore of great importance that we, teachers should keep prominently before ourselves that Education must at least reveal itself in the development of individuality and the creative spirit.

MR. A. H. MACKENZIE,

D.P.I., U.P.

## HEALTH OF CHILDREN IN SCHOOLS \*

By

*Mr. Murlidhar Pathak, B.A., L.T.*

It is universally accepted that health is very necessary for the attainment of every ambitious aim. In fact, the highest degree of individual success cannot be attained without sound health. In every avenue of life ill-health is a great handicap. A number of men are disqualified from service merely on account of physical disabilities. The investigation of the records of past three years in an Indian High School shows that the total number of absences in a High School class of 33 amounts to 4,672 periods in a year which means that one boy in a year loses 142 periods of school instruction. An investigation into the causes shows that illness was responsible for not less than 52 per cent. of such absences. 4 per cent. of such absences were due to eye complaints. But still serious is the consideration of those conditions which do not necessitate an actual absence of a child from school but keep him perpetually in a state of inefficiency and ill-health.

### Conditions Causing Ill-Health in Indian Children

An enquiry into the environments and health habits of Indian Children in a few High and village Schools has revealed the following facts. This is intended only to make the teachers realize the importance of the conditions affecting the lives of the Indian Children.

1. 40 per cent. of the children are under-nourished. Their diet seldom contains a

sufficient quantity of milk, green vegetables and fruits.

2. 30 per cent. of the children sleep with their heads covered at night specially during the winter season. Most of the houses of children are improperly built. 43 per cent. of the children sleep with their doors closed all night.

3. 77 per cent. of the children read till late hours at night when preparing for the examination.

4. 74 per cent. of the children read with poor light at night. 29 per cent. of the children read lying down. 32 per cent. of the children keep the book too close to their eyes even when their eye sight is quite good.

5. There is a lack of real spirit of play among children. Only a very small percentage of boys have a love for wholesome games and play with interest. Others go only through the form without getting any real joy out of it. It is impossible to build up good physical strength if the attitude of the children is wrong.

### Hygienic Doing

The above statements conclusively prove that under the teaching of Hygiene we have been imparting to children no more than the knowledge of the laws of health, of the principles of sanitation, or of the workings of the body. The mere storing of facts and information in a child's brain is almost

useless unless it leads to practical application in daily life. We should not be content by merely giving instruction on hygienic principles but we should train children to form healthy habits. It is absurd to suppose that merely talking to the boys about forming habits will lead to formation of right habits. The subject should be approached from practical point of view. Practice without interruption will lead to the desired results. A well trained child in hygiene would be able to take care of his health without giving such attention to it. It should be the aim of the teacher to see that the habits are well established. Unless such a result is achieved he should not relax his supervision. In short hygiene knowledge should be transformed into hygiene doing.

### Teacher's Main Task

Having realised that the formation of habits is the most important it in the teacher's programme his chief task is to determine the lines on which he is to proceed. Psychology teaches that no two children are exactly alike. A teacher who tries to deal with pupils as a mass is a failure. If a teacher says to a child "Your health is very bad, I hope you will improve it," there are very few chances of a child's improvement in health with the utterance of such a remark. But if a teacher analyses the habits of each child and tells "You have these defects. I suggest this practice," he will soon find that an improvement is made. What is needed is a careful survey of each individual child and the personal specific attack with reference to each individual child on the formation of health habits. The following type of questions will prove useful in making the survey for each child.

The questions are only suggestive. More can be added according to the requirements and environments of the locality in question.

1. Did you ever fail in any class?
2. Did you ever suffer from serious sickness?
3. Can you read the writing on the Black Board with ease?
4. Do you always hear the teacher?
5. Do you read after 10 P.M., when preparing for the examination?
6. What kind of light do you use for study?
7. Do you read lying down?
8. Do you drink milk and eat green vegetables?
9. Do you play in the open air daily?
10. Do you sleep with your head covered?
11. Do you sleep with doors closed?

The questions should be put very plainly and clearly to each child. Answers should not be suggestive; the conversation should not be carried on in a formal way but in such a way as to lead the pupil to tell all about himself. Then an individual set of different habits should be planned for each child. By the end of the first month of the year the teacher should be able to form a definite programme for the health work of the year.

### Daily Health Record

Experience tells us that the keeping of a daily Health Record will help in forming a correct health habit. This ensures the actual doing of a child with the regular instruction in hygiene. Boys should be required to copy the list of desirable habits in their note books with proper lines for the record of each day in the month. A little time at the beginning of each day, say three

\* A paper prepared for the Health & Hygiene section of the First All Asia Educational Conference.

minutes, might be devoted to filling up the records of the child's activities on the previous day. I required my own class to keep such a Daily Health Record and found the results very encouraging. 53 per cent. of the children succeeded in forming the desired habits. Weekly averages for each child might be made and the Record should be put upon the Notice Board to stimulate competition.

In higher classes the progress should be shown by means of graphs. In order to create interest in children they should be required to make their own individual Charts or other Records. It is possible that some children will deceive the teacher by giving false information; yet even in these cases they will constantly be reminded of practising the desired habits.

#### Teachers' note on child's Achievement

The teacher should himself keep a brief but accurate note of the child's improvement in health. This record might be made fortnightly or monthly. In the case of senior boys this can be made by the pupils themselves with the help of the teacher. The keeping of this record should be a part of regular class work. At the end of the term a summary of the Health achievement and future requirements for each child should be noted for the guidance of the next year. The health achievement of the class as a whole may also be noted.

#### Life in hygienic Activities

Children can be made to take an interest in these activities by adopting the following methods:—

1. Marks should be assigned for the practice of healthy habits. Children should

be marked as regularly and carefully for habits of posture and cleanliness as they are marked in English or Arithmetic. Prizes should be awarded to children who form most healthy habits.

2. Hygienic activities should be dramatized. A successful teacher when giving a lesson on the care of the eyes will gather round the table a number of boys. They will demonstrate how they would sit with reference to light and how far from the eyes they would hold a book.

3. The teacher should often inspect the hands and teeth of the children and should give his word of approval or disapproval as the case may be.

4. Boys may be required to act health plays.

5. A list of habits to be formed and to be avoided should be hung in the study room of each child.

6. Each class should be provided with rules for the preservation of eye-sight.

7. Each class should also prepare a chart showing the normal height and weight of the children corresponding to ages.

8. Children should be required to keep their own weight charts.

9. Formal drill should be supplemented by group games which should be organised according to the ages of children.

10. Corrective gymnastic exercises should be prescribed for the particular defective limbs of the child. Two periods a week should be introduced in each class for gymnastic exercises under the supervision of the physical instructor.

#### Correlation with other School Subjects

Nothing indeed is more dangerous to the formation of health habits than to regard

the health teaching as a separate subject of the school curriculum. While we advocate a definite place for hygienic instruction in the school curriculum we nevertheless realize that some of our most effective health teaching can be done through correlation of various school subjects.

1. Children may be required to make health posters. It does not matter if the drawing is crude. The object of health teaching is achieved because the child is expressing his idea in his own way. Children can cut beautiful pictures from health magazines. They can write a health slogan beneath it.

2. There is ample opportunity for correlation in English and Vernacular. The writing of health plays may be a part of regular work in English and Vernacular. In senior classes debates on health subjects should be encouraged. Health dialogues may be used in English conversation. Writing lessons may have health slogans for copies. Passages on health may be given in Dictation and Translation.

3. Arithmetic lesson may involve the cost of different articles of food. Geography can illustrate the importance of physical environment on health. History can point out the value of health in the success of armies in the battle-field. Lessons in Nature Study, General Science and Geography can better be studied on walks and excursions. A permanent love for taking long walks in fields should be created in children by arousing their interests in outdoor work. Let them love the ordinary things of the world of nature.

#### Health Supervision

The present system of medical inspection of children is an improvement over what

was in vogue a few years ago, but the desired results have not been achieved. As far as possible an effort should be made to secure the services of a fully qualified doctor who has a taste for the problems of ill-health in school children. He should visit the school at least once a week on appointed days and time. The supervision of the health of children should by no means be confined to the routine medical inspection of children but the pupil, the parent and the teacher should all combine to raise the standard of health among children. A thorough medical examination of all pupils at least once year is very essential. The case of physically defective children below the standard should be problems of special consideration for the medical advisor but in the case of majority of children the work should be preventive. Emphasis should be laid on those habits and activities which result in greater physical efficiency and provide a profitable use of a child's leisure.

#### Importance of Teacher's Work.

The teacher is the pivot on which the success of this work is to be hinged. It should be remembered that no matter how wisely and well a school health programme is planned its success will largely depend upon the enthusiastic and conscientious efforts of an individual teacher. The difficulty cannot be surmounted without the intelligent co-operation of teachers. The earnest enthusiastic efforts of a well trained teacher properly directed are among the most potent force that can bring about an improvement in children's health. The medical advisor can comparatively spend little time in any class. It is the teacher.

who has ample opportunities for observing the careless and insanitary habits of children. He should understand that a child is sent to school not only to acquire knowledge in Geography and Arithmetic etc., but to be prepared to make the most of his life. Even under the most unfavourable circumstances a teacher can find much about the health of his children and can do something to correct the ill-health of children.

#### Parent—Teacher Association

There is a special need of such Associations in the field of Hygiene in India because here in most cases the health habits of the home are not reasonably in a line with those which the school is inculcating. The work of the school is sometimes undone by uneducated parents at home by forcing the child to adopt an unhygienic attitude during the hours he stays at home. Geography, Arithmetic can be efficiently taught in schools but hygienic habits cannot be successfully established among children without the help of parents. Besides, there are some habits over which the home alone has entire supervision, e.g., hours of sleep, diet etc. In such meetings the parent and teachers teach each other some vital truth which ought to be known to both if the pupil is to derive the maximum good. The teacher secures the sympathy of the parents, is saved from unnecessary criticism and learns the conditions of the child at home. The parents become interested in school and realise the vast opportunities that lie in their hands for shaping the child's destiny. The parents will be pleased to know that the health of their children is protected. It is impossible to attain the best results unless both the teacher and the parent work together. These meetings should be held

regularly. The co-operation of local physicians should be secured by proper approach. This association should prove helpful in solving the problems of those parents who have been unable to secure proper treatment for their children, on account of pecuniary difficulties even when these cases have been referred to them by the school authorities. In order to make such organisations worthy of success the parent should be made to feel that the association is intended for the benefit of their children. Some of the best health records of boys may be posted on the walls for exhibition in such meetings. It would be profitable if the teachers are put in charge of a number of boys adjacent to their quarters for occasional supervision of their health habits.

#### Health Week

The object of this celebration should be to focus attention upon our most precious national assets—our boys. A few days in the year should be set apart for the special consideration of health problems. On such days the school should be expected to do some distinctive work in connection with health. This affords a special opportunity for enlightening the public on the pressing needs of the health problems of the day. There should be a display of hygienic devices and best health records of the boys. Health magazines might be arranged for inspection. New games which the children have learnt should be played on such occasions. Essays might be read. Lectures might be illustrated with lantern slides. We should not be discouraged if in our health work we do not attain all we hope for. We have great hopes that, though the effects of health work like mental training are not generally measurable, yet they may extend to future generations even if their immediate effect is not apparent.

## EDITORIAL

### Mass Education and Plain-Speaking

The nineteenth century witnessed important developments in the sphere of education. The advanced countries of Europe, which had felt the new impulse, began to realise the value of universal compulsory Elementary Education to national progress. They found that half-hearted measures could not go far enough. The demand for extended facilities for public education became more insistent and the view came to be expressed in political platforms that the state should be prepared to undertake the entire responsibility for public education. The great war has served to emphasise still more clearly the important part that education can play in the national crisis. The Bill for raising the school-leaving age to fifteen that is being piloted just now in the House of Commons is one more indication of the spirit of the times which it may be difficult for politicians to ignore. The recommendations of the Consultative Committee of the Board of Education contained in what is known as the Hadow Report, seek to reform the educational machinery on lines which will provide additional facilities for general and technical education. Proposals regarding public education may create an alarm in the minds of certain persons on account of the huge expenditure from public funds which may become necessary. There is nothing strange if critics be found now and then to present certain points of view so as to prevail upon the Government to "hasten" slowly in the matter of educational reform.

Mr. J. H. Garrett has attempted to make a critical examination of the problem of public education and the views which he

has expressed in his book "Mass Education in England" deserve careful consideration. Whether we agree with him or not we cannot fail to recognise the vigorous presentation of his case. He does not mince matters. He is certainly not a believer in *camouflage*. He raises certain fundamental objections to the current idea of public education and seems to hold that it will be difficult to justify the huge expenditure on public education. There is no attempt to conceal the feeling that the demand for further facilities for public education is by no means real and is sure to lead to wastage on a large scale. The attention of our readers is invited to the last chapter where his assumptions are seen presented together as "Aphorisms concerning Mass Education". We venture to refer to some of the chief ideas on which his thesis questioning the soundness of the public education movement rests.

(1) Pupils show a wide range of variations in the matter of educability and a fair percentage of pupils will not be of the educable type.

(2) The school curriculum provides for instruction in certain formal subjects which may have no bearing on the future occupation and many pupils either forget what they learn at the school or find no use for the knowledge gained at the school.

(3) "The tendency for the least educable, and for that reason the least educated, to be forced into the lower grades of employment is a reasonable provision of nature."

(4) A compulsory provision requiring all pupils to be at the school up to fourteen will be a wasteful process with regard to

years ago. Any change is attempted to be passed off as a reform, and teachers are perhaps supposed to have short memories. It is really significant that the new proposal has not been sent to the South India Teachers' Union for opinion. We understand that headmasters have been called upon to express their views on the soundness or otherwise of a public examination at the middle school stage. We are willing to believe that the procedure of consulting directly the headmasters has not been adopted with the idea of disarming opposition; but it will be in the best interest of education if the department should set up a convention of consulting the union which has been representing the opinion of the teaching profession.

The question of the proposed public examination is being now discussed at the meetings of our guilds, and opinion is naturally divided. The Ramnad Teachers' Guild condemns the proposal in strong terms, and other guilds which may appear to approve of the scheme, do so in a halting manner. Let us mention some of the arguments that are the stock-in-trade of the advocates of public examination. We are told that public examination will secure uniformity in the High School classes and promote efficiency by weeding out backward pupils. It is also pointed out that an examination of this type will divert a large number of pupils below the average to technical courses and thus prevent overcrowding in the higher classes. Some would urge the need for a public examination on the sole ground that it will check certain abuses in the school world where ideal conditions do not obtain. It does not strike these persons that a public examination is itself open to

serious abuses and that the remedy may prove worse than the disease. The vagaries of a public examination will be found to be more glaring and serious if it should be held at an earlier stage. If some of the teachers should countenance the idea of a public examination, they feel compelled to do so with a view to avoiding undesirable situations in the administration of schools. The authorities should know that teachers are not allowed a free hand in academic matters and are often feeling helpless when pressure is brought to bear upon them by men in power. Any teacher who means to stick to his opinion will be endangering his position, especially when he cannot count upon the support of the department which often regrets its inability to interfere and to do justice. Let the teachers be masters in their field, and the public examination at the middle school stage will find few adherents.

The teaching profession should decidedly set its face against this idea of public examination because it is nothing short of a crime to subject nearly fifty thousand pupils at the tender age of 11 or 12 to the strain of a public examination. The advantages that have been claimed for it are problematical but the evils that may follow are patent. The following observations of Mr. Garrett on an external examination of such a magnitude deserve careful consideration:—"Examination by an external Examination Board must require as a preliminary, the reduction of school teaching to a common variety. The Examination Board must assume the powers for general indication throughout the country, not only of the subjects to be taught, but of the extent and method of their teaching, before they can

set a general examination paper, and even then they would have no local knowledge of the peculiarities of the children of any single school. It hardly seems worthwhile discussing the desirability, or undesirability of such a proceeding, since it is a patent impossibility, notwithstanding the recommendations to the contrary of the Hadow Report. Where a whole subject, as represented in a text-book, or a definite part of a subject which has been selected, limited, and previously indicated to the student, is the matter for examination, the examination can be by external examiners, but not the general, variable, and indefinite learning of the ordinary elementary school. You cannot exclude the teacher from that, and there is no need to do so." We appeal to teachers to look at the question from all standpoints. Any step that we may suggest or adopt should not be open to the objection that the real interest of the education of children has been allowed to be ignored. Let us be prepared to face the difficulties and let us convince the department that a high standard can be easily maintained with their support and co-operation.

### Blowing Hot and Cold !!

The correspondence that has been recently appearing in the press in connection with the S. S. L. C. public examination seeks to appeal to the authorities to hold the public examination under the old rules alongside of the new examination for a period of two years. This appeal is made in the interest of those candidates who may not either be selected for the public examination or be placed in the eligibility list.

It may appear curious that teachers who are constantly pointing to the value of a

public examination in the matter of weeding out the unfit should themselves urge the desirability of holding the examinations under the old rules as well. One would like to satisfy oneself whether the new course is so radically different from the old one as to cause undue strain to the candidates who may fail this year. The chief point about the new course is the inclusion of the B. Group subjects in the list of subjects for the public examination. Among other minor changes may be mentioned a slight increase under second language and geography. Against these changes should be placed the deletion of one subject in the optional group and a reduction in the numbers of the books prescribed for nondetailed Study in English. There is also the distinct advantage that, under the new rules of eligibility no special minimum is required of candidates by the Madras University in each of the three major subjects Elementary Mathematics, Elementary science, and History and Geography. Candidates are required to score 105 marks out of 300 in all these subjects taken together and this cannot be considered as exacting.

It is not proper for teachers to advance the argument that students should be shown concession since they have not been paying any attention to the B. Group subjects. Taking all things into consideration, it may be after all a good thing for the students concerned to appear for the public examination under the new rules. There is another serious difficulty which teachers cannot ignore. The S.S.L.C. Board may choose to hold two examinations, one under the new rules and another under the old rules; but a deadlock will have to be faced if the universities in our presidency do not care to recognise the old course.

50 per cent. of the pupils and it will also spoil their chances in life either by depriving them of early opportunities of employment or by creating in them a dislike for the lower grades of employment.

(5) The slogan of "equality of opportunity" which is used as a pretext for the advancement of public education will only intensify the difference between the endowed and the backward.

(6) Education need not necessarily mean book-learning and the experiences which an individual gains in this work-a-day world

A 1910

| Standard                                | VII  | VI | V  | IV   | III | II | I | Under I |
|-----------------------------------------|------|----|----|------|-----|----|---|---------|
| Percentage of children 13-14 years old. | 25.7 | 32 | 24 | 12.6 | 4   | 7  | 1 | .01     |

B 1924

| Standard<br>B-Boys<br>G-Girls           | VII |      | VI |      | V    |      | IV  |     | III |    | I  |    | Unclassified |     |
|-----------------------------------------|-----|------|----|------|------|------|-----|-----|-----|----|----|----|--------------|-----|
|                                         | B.  | G.   | B. | G.   | B.   | G.   | B.  | G.  | B.  | G. | B. | G. | B.           | G.  |
| Percentage of children 13-14 years old. | 43  | 45.2 | 30 | 24.5 | 16.4 | 17.7 | 5.9 | 4.8 | 1.7 | .9 | —  | 1  | 1            | 4.8 |

which will bring the physical benefits necessary for self and family and render that assistance to the common result that is essential."

The arguments which Mr. Garrett has advanced to maintain his thesis are no doubt plausible but he cannot be considered to have proved his case. We shall confine our attention to one or two important statements. Mr. Garrett takes great pains to prove by statistics that pupils are not all of them educable to the same extent. For

are no less important. Before we proceed to offer our remarks on these views, we deem it fair to bring to the notice of our readers the following passage in his book where the author tries to explain the aim of school education:—"The great object of formal, or school education, therefore, is to assist the individual the better to get a living, and in doing so to perform his due part in the supply of national requirements, according to his ability, by a more effective performance of the acts and duties of occupation or employment, whatever these may be,

instance the results of the investigations of Dr. Burt on the distribution and relation of Educational abilities are cited to show that the average attainments of 33.6 per cent. of London school children were under "age expectancy". We are also referred to the standard war distribution of London children of 13-14 years prepared in 1910 and in 1924.

The facts culled out from reports may easily prove that educability varies with individuals. But these cannot be accepted as capable of proving that individuals or

groups of individuals remain uninfluenced by school education. As a matter of fact the standard war distribution quoted above indicates plainly that, with the adoption of improved methods of teaching in 1924, the influence of school education has tended to bring down the percentage of backward pupils. An argument which can prove the variation in educability can never be regarded as an argument against the utility of public education. The very fact that all classes of workers were able to rise equal to the occasion during the great war and to bear their heavy burden willingly is a convincing proof of the soundness of the public education movement. Turn to India where a well-regulated policy of public education is yet to be evolved. Commission after commission reports that progress is impossible in the face of appalling illiteracy. The second statement that pupils find no use for school knowledge and even forget what they learnt at the school is highly exaggerated and it shows that the author takes too narrow a view of the scope and aim of school education. He associates school education chiefly with livelihood. Breadwinning may loom large with the majority but few persons will agree with the author in his view that the labourers do not and should not look beyond. The experience of social-workers bears testimony to the great softening influence which art and literature can exercise in the minds of the working classes. Does Mr. Garrett contend that any intelligent co-operation and willing sacrifice which are now noticeable in the poorer strata can at all be expected in the absence of a sound system of public education. It may be that owing to competition all may not succeed in getting

into black-coated jobs. But this cannot be a justification for denying the facilities of education to the poorer classes so as to compel them to choose the lower grades of employment. We do not think that the extreme position of Mr. Garrett will ever be accepted by the modern politicians or educationists. His presentation of the case should, however, open the eyes of the statesmen at the helm of affairs to the urgency of educational reform. Educationists have already begun to consider how the school curriculum can be modified to suit the complex modern conditions. Educationists may not agree to let the school curriculum be unduly dominated by future occupational needs of the pupils but the feeling is growing strong in America that in the higher classes co-operation between schools and industries may with advantage be thought of. Mr. Garrett chooses to study the problem of public education primarily from the standpoint of employment. It appears perfectly natural to him to hold that "importance of limiting school education is, therefore, as great as that of extending it, and extension of education by increase of school years, or multiplication of subjects to be learned, must have a relation to class of employment and the numbers therein engaged, with remembrance that every place has to be filled." Comment is needless.

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Atavism in Education

Our educational system seems to be a fertile field for the occurrence of atavistic phenomena. The latest is the proposal for the revival of "the middle-school examination." If this proposal should materialise, we shall be having a complete reversion to the type of secondary education that was in force 30

The revised courses have been approved by the university and it may be a risky affair to expect the university to agree to the proposal. The universities may not be disposed to consider the question when they learn that all boys, irrespective of their fitness have been sent up with the idea of enabling such of them as happen to fail to get the benefit of any concession that is likely to be extended. If teachers and managers be really keen on helping the "Unfortunate innocents" they will do well to provide additional facilities for extra coaching if necessary. A number of teachers who have been consulted in this matter think that the students who do not neglect the B. group subjects will have no real difficulty, especially when in the three subjects including Elementary Mathematics a total of only 105 marks will be required as the minimum. If there be candidates who cannot come up to this standard, the only proper course left open to teachers is to advise students to abandon the idea of collegiate education.

### NOTICE

1. Subscribers whose subscriptions expired with the issue of the journal for Dec. 1930 are requested to remit their subscriptions early.
2. Subscribers who are in arrears will note that if their subscriptions be not remitted before the 15th March, the March Number of the journal will be sent to them by V. P. P.

*Note.*—The new postal rules regarding V. P. P. are very hard. A V. P. P. should be claimed with in three days. Otherwise it will be returned to the sender. It may be kept in the office of delivery on payment of two annas for every extra day. Hence subscribers are requested to send their subscriptions by M. O. The address of the subscriber should be clearly written in the coupon. It is also desirable to give the Number of the subscriber. The number is given in the address slips.

### THE S. I. T. U. PROTECTION FUND.

#### NOTICE.

1. The members of the Fund are hereby reminded that the Board of Management has fixed January, 15th as the date for the payment of Annual Contribution and Annual Subscription but as in the case of fixed calls, two months grace is allowed for payment.
2. The Fixed Call of each month is due on the 15th of that month.
3. Individual notices will not be sent from the office for the payment of monthly calls.
4. An account has been opened in the Madras Central Urban Bank Ltd. Mofussil members instead of sending their remittances to the Fund by M. O. can remit their money in any District Co-operative Bank, and get a Cheque on the Madras Central Urban Bank in our favour, and send it to us by post and thus they can save the M. O. commission.

16th February, 1931.

R. RAMAKRISHNAN,  
Hony. Secretary.

## GLEANINGS OUR EXAMINATION SYSTEM

Susan Platt

*Examiner, National Froebel Union; Hon. Secy. Examinations Enquiry Committee, N. E. F.*

Do examinations interfere definitely with educational progress? Is their value, as a spur, a stimulus, an incentive to effort, offset by the fact that we tend to make them an end in themselves, so that they become our masters instead of our servants?

Let us be frank and honest with ourselves. Let us not say: 'In my school no strain is put upon any pupil to pass examinations; there is no cramming, no special coaching—or at least not much.' Let us not say: "In a state-aided secondary school, under proper inspection, concentration on the five matriculation subjects to the even partial neglect of other subjects cannot possibly exist". We know that it can exist, and that it does.

We know also that in some elementary schools children of tender age are hastening to the goal of the preliminary scholarship examination which they must take at 10½ years. If this is not so, then why are clever children in some infants' departments so rapidly promoted that one finds them in the scholarship class at the age of nine? Are there no scholarship classes, concentrating on English and arithmetic to the partial exclusion of some subjects and a total exclusion of others? We know that such classes do exist, and we know that the whole future career of our boys and girls may be decided by their ability to pass certain tests in English and arithmetic on a given day and at a given hour, at the age of 11+. We know that the teacher whose pupils fail to get scholarships is looked upon too often as a failure himself. The child's failure is sadder still. The prestige of the school is often raised or lowered according to the number of scholarships gained.

Are there not many pupils who fail to pass the scholarship test, yet who are able leaders of all school activities, capable organizers, good workers, good craftsmen or musicians, good at games, stalwart in character? The teachers have far too weak a voice in the assessment of the quality of the work of their pupils. They should make their voices loud and speak out the words they so often mutter.

We are encouraging the activity of the young child; we are giving him freedom of the movement in the classroom, encouraging project

methods in the infants' school, and making provision for the better teaching of arts and handicrafts in the junior and senior schools. But if our pupils fail to pass the scholarship examination, many delightful avenues which we have thus opened up for them are closed.

We have struggled to get freedom for the children, a disciplined freedom which takes daily count of the rights of other children to live their lives equally freely. But we deny freedom often to our young enthusiastic teachers; we damp their eagerness and clip their wings because examinations dominate our programmes.

Why should our children of 11+, applicants for admission to the senior school, to the central school, or to the secondary school, not be judged on what they can do instead of on what they can not do? We shall find out what they can do by studying their school records, the reports of their teachers, of the head of the school, of the Inspector. Surely it is these who should say for what type of future education a boy or girl is best fitted at 11+.

We have reorganized our schools for the very purpose of giving the right direction to talent, the right opportunities, yet we put a barrier in the upward path which has no justification at all in such an enlightened system.

Let us turn to the secondary school. Here some hall-mark is needed at 16 years to give evidence of good work done, and ability to proceed to further education.

In the secondary schools, whose programmes are dominated by the matriculation examinations of the universities, the 'academic' type of boy or girl scores all along the line. Only five to eight per cent. of the pupils on secondary schools go on to the university, yet even in connection with those who succeed eventually in getting honours degrees, there are grave doubts that all is not well. Under our present system of choosing our pupils for the secondary schools chiefly on the basis of English and arithmetic, many enter who are not in any sense fitted for the type of education given there. We all know that break-downs among young teachers at their first posts are many and distressing, and an honours degree may be bought at

too high a price, to be paid for in the years of responsibility to come.

Fifty per cent. of the girls in our secondary schools leave without any certificate at all. We cannot suppose that these are failures. Many prove themselves to be capable citizens in after life. They are only 'failures' because we try to educate them in subjects in which they are not educable. Here comes in the plea of Dr. W. Edwards (formerly Chief Inspector of the Central Welsh Board) that *every* pupil should be given a 'certified records' and that we should cease to use the words 'pass' and 'failure'.

The universities as well as the schools are pleading that matriculation shall be dissociated altogether from the first school certificate. Heads of schools and assistant masters and mistresses are pleading for more recognition for cultural and practical subjects in the school programme.

The waste of talent at present is appalling—the talent of the enthusiastic, eager teacher narrowed into examination channels—the talent of the pupils to whom we refuse the education they desire because they cannot pass the unsuitable tests we set them. An embryo craftsman, whose work is artistic and beautiful, cannot enter a trade school because she fails in arithmetic. The young embryo doctor or scientist or linguist is not allowed to study a subject altogether congenial because he fails in one that is altogether uncongenial. The stress and strain of grinding up subjects in which we are not educable causes many a break-down. Doctors tell us that break-downs are very rare indeed where the subject studied is 'congenial'.

That initiative, leadership, and other fine qualities cannot be tested by our present examination system, goes without saying. That the nervous and highly-strung are often (though not always) at a disadvantage, is also true. It is to be deplored that many have to earn a living by coaching and cramming unwilling pupils, and by passing or failing candidates of whose individualities they know nothing at all.

Yet there are hopeful signs in the formation of committees of research and inquiry, and many reforms are even now being carried out. Reports from some of the committees are being published, including one from the committee of the New Education Fellowship.

The day draws near when employers will no longer ask applicants for posts if they have passed matriculation. They will go instead to the masters and tutors, as they do now in the central schools—those fortunate schools which

have no special leaving certificate. They will say: 'Is he an upright straightforward lad? What are his special outstanding qualities, his special bents and interests, his special subjects?'

The parent will no longer urge the teacher to get his boy through matriculation at all costs. The University authorities will say: 'Does this candidate really want to study languages further, or science, or classics, or medicine? Then by all means let him come to us, and if we find him to be a good and earnest student, with high ideals, and distinct aptitude for his subject, let him stay, and we will give him not only every opportunity to study under the best conditions but also our hall-mark at the end of his course.'

Parents should try to find out the natural bent of their children and cease to force them along uncongenial lines. Examiners and employers should give candidates every help to do their best, in viva voce or otherwise. There is no point to be gained by 'catching a candidate out'.

Teachers should have more faith and more courage, less patience with existing conditions, and less hesitancy in stating their convictions. And so to the millenium!

(From the New Era, Jan '31)

### Examinations in Primary & Post Primary Schools

At the 24th North of England Education Conference held at Carlisle on the 8th Jan'y, a crowded and eager audience assembled under the chairmanship of Alderman F.H.S. Aitken, C.C., President of the Association of Education Committees, when opening addresses on examinations in primary and Post Primary Schools were given, and an interesting discussion followed. Mr. Pickles in opening said that the Report of the Joint Advisory Committee of the Association of Education Committees and the N. U. T. established with some courage and clarity the place of formal examinations in public elementary schools. It was agreed that examinations rightly conceived and utilised, stimulated as well as revealed and served also as an index to character. The healthy movements in re-organisation and in extension of School life would not yield their increase without the courage to reform inside the schools, and to say that modern school work could be put to a real and efficient test was to show signs of a fatty degeneration. He then drew attention to the Joint Report and said that internal examination must be tightened up. Internal examinations and

school records would be valuable in the new school organisation in proportion to their efficiency and reliability. As internal examinations were "tightened up," the school record would become increasingly valuable; but some form and measure of standardisation would still be desirable" Dr. J.H. Steel, Headmaster, Alan Olens' School, Glasgow, maintained that examinations in secondary schools did not test any fitness, except the fitness to pass examinations. They did not test a teacher's work: a great many teachers would be better if they did less work and allowed the pupils also to do less work. The only reasonable incentive for the pupil was his conviction that a thing was worth doing, and his satisfaction with the result. Examinations consumed a large amount of time; they conditioned the curriculum, and the teaching methods, dictated the text books, had serious Psychological reactions, and had economic consequences of grave moment to those who fail, and not less to those who pass. For good or ill, they figured prominently in secondary school life. Their avowed purposes were to test fitness to enter upon a course or career, to test whether pupils had benefited from a course, and to discover whether teachers had failed or succeeded

in their work. It is extremely doubtful whether they properly fulfilled any of these purposes.

### The Joint Advisory Committee on the Double purpose of Examinations

"We deprecate attempts to combine an efficiency examination with a selective examination. For purposes of standardisation, some degree of externality is necessary in selective examinations, and they must be held periodically and at stated intervals. On the whole, we are of opinion, that a general periodical efficiency examination is in the great majority of instances more likely to operate as a narrowing influence leading to excessive concentration on results by ordinary teachers and ordinary pupils than as a wholesome stimulus to effort and due regard to essentials. We also consider that an attempt to combine an examination with a selective examination may have consequences detrimental to the process of selection itself, by increasing the risk that pupils advanced to the higher stages of education will not be those best capable of profiting by it. We are therefore of opinion that the single purpose of selective examinations should be maintained and emphasised."

## NEWS AND NOTES

### THE VIDYODAYA

"The Vidyodaya" Residential school was established in 1924 and after moving from place to place has now established itself in fine surroundings and open grounds of Rutland Gate, Nungambakkam. Mrs. Paul Appaswamy, the founder of the institute is in personal charge. It is equipped with a fully qualified staff, who have entered into the spirit of the directress. "A feature of this school is the residential facilities afforded to children of all castes and creeds from all parts of the presidency. In a catholic atmosphere of this type, the foundation of an education suitable to the needs and opportunities the generation affords, have been established. The management has sympathetically studied the requirements and needs of a newer point of view in education and one of the most interesting schools in the city of Madras has been established. The responsiveness, joy, and happiness of the children is a feature of the work. The standard of work turned out is extremely promising and indicates the possibilities of great expansion" (extract from the report of the Inspectress of Schools).

Of the 120 girls on the rolls, 40 are residential students, 12 Christians, 27 Hindus and 1 Mahomedan. It is regrettable that an idea that the School takes only girls from aristocratic families, should be prevalent. A majority of the pupils in the School come from middle class families and cases of a few girls in arrears of fees are not wanting. However, the school continues to attract pupils, as can be judged from the steady growth in strength. It is the main objective of the authorities that the girls in this institution should be trained to be good home-makers. Many of the teachers live in the school and by personal influence and example attempt to give them training in manners and character and in the home making arts. The Students are given ample freedom to think and plan social entertainments. They draw up programmes beforehand and contribute items like recitation, music, acting, dancing and orchestra, each of the items being arranged and originated by the pupils themselves. The writer once witnessed an entertainment got up by the pupils of the school. They were seen to appreciate the opportunity given to them and exhibited plenty of talent

and originality in managing it. In short it was the writers feeling whether the entertainment would have been so successful if some teachers were allowed to conduct it.

It is rather unfortunate that an institution of this kind which is doing pioneering work in girls' education should not be in receipt of any financial assistance from the Government. 'Want of funds' is a plea which is extended by our educational department on all occasions. But schools like the Vidyodhaya richly deserve their support and it is hoped that the Director of Public Instruction, who is reported to have visited the school on more than one occasion will do his best. But Government's help will always be in proportion to the help which an institution can command from the public it serves. It is Mrs. Appaswamy's earnest request that all well-wisher of education and all those who sympathise with the ideals of the Vidyodhaya will help her to carry on the work she has undertaken.

### The International Bureau of Education

The International Bureau of Education was started in December, 1925, to serve as an international clearing house for educational information and documentation. In July 1929, with the co-operation of a number of constituent members, it was reorganised and made an organisation of general and public interest, controlled through its council and its executive committee—by its members, the majority of which are governments and which have undertaken its financial support. The Secretariat of the Bureau

consists of three divisions, for administration, research and information. It seeks to carry out the technical work entrusted to it in virtue of the statutes. It holds annually a special course for teachers on "How to make the League of Nations known and to develop the Spirit of International Co-operation". It has opened a permanent exhibition on the teaching of Peace and International Co-operation and has gathered together an extensive collection of children's books from 30 different countries.

It publishes in French and English a quarterly Bulletin, telling of the activities of the Bureau, and giving the results of the enquiries undertaken, as well as information grouped under the following headings: the Educational World; General News; Education for Peace and International Collaboration; Moral Education; the Struggle against the Exodus from the Land; School Legislation; Bibliography.

Bulletin No. 17, published in October, 1930, a copy of which has been very kindly sent to us is a periodical of great value. It contains among other things a review of the *Progress of Education in India, 1922-27*, the Ninth Educational Quinquennial Review by the Commissioner for Education with the Government of India and the *Interim Report of the Indian Statutory Commission*. The results of an enquiry into the education Budget of certain States is published. The absence of details regarding India is significant. Figures for 26 European countries, 14 American States, 6 Asiatic countries, 6 African territories have been given.

The Bulletin contains besides, a report of educational activities in several countries and a critical account of recent publications.

paper, disclosed, that any ideal teaching is incompatible with multiplicity of examinations. The second paper was on "Elementary Science in High Schools" by Mr. P.K. Raghunathan, B.A., (Pallatur); and in the warm and rather prolonged discussion, there was a notable consensus of opinion, that plant and animal life had best be taught in the Lower School, the physical sciences being reserved for the Upper Forms. The third paper contributed by Siromani Ramachandra Sastri (Pallatur) was on "the Teaching of Sanskrit Grammar".

The papers over, the Conference adjourned for lunch and on re-assembling, the news of the

passing away of the great patriot, Pandit Motilal Nehru, had become widely known, and the President moved a vote of condolence, which was passed by the whole conference standing in silence; and on a resolution to that effect the meeting was adjourned till 6-30 p.m.

When the adjourned Conference assembled again, the following resolution severely condemning the projected revival of the Middle School Examination was passed by a large majority:—

"This Guild while reiterating its unqualified deprecation of the institution of any external examination in the middle of a High School Course, strongly repudiates the implications of such a proposal (1) that the Headmasters and staffs of most schools are not capable of properly regulating promotion in various forms of their schools; and (2) that large failures in the S. S. L. C. Examination are mostly due to lax promotions and not due to defects inherent in the scheme itself and to inconsiderate demands of the University authorities."

Four resolutions bearing on the S.S.L.C. Examinations were next passed and they were:—

I. In fairness to pupils trained under the old S. S. L. C. scheme, this Guild requests the S. S. L. C. Board to conduct Public Examinations under the old scheme during the years 1932 and 1933, alongside of these under the new scheme.

II. This Guild requests the S.S.L.C. authorities

(1) to abolish the C group subject introduced into the revised S.S.L.C. curriculum;

(2) to permit pupils to bring up for the S.S.L.C. Examination any three out of the five subjects now included in the Elementary Science curriculum;

(3) to alter the examination rule relating to Sanskrit Translation (vide lines 4 & 5 at page 29 of the S.S.L.C. notifications etc.) so as to permit of translation from an appropriate vernacular into Sanskrit and vice versa.

III. This Guild reiterates its past resolution earnestly requesting the S.S.L.C. Board so to arrange the time-table of the Public Examination as not to subject candidates to more than one examination a day.

IV. This meeting requests the University of Madras so to amend the rules relating to eligibility as to secure admission to university courses to pupils taking any of the commercial subjects like Book-keeping or Commercial Practice in the S.S.L.C. Examination, in view of the

fact that a B. Com. degree has been instituted by the University.

Three more resolutions were passed, which were all requests addressed to the Government. One requested that agreements between teachers and managements might not for the present be insisted on, in view of the general dissatisfaction with its present form and the need for amending it; the second desired the Government to provide additional grant to give the benefit of the special Teaching Grant to all trained teachers, irrespective of their salaries; and the third prayed for the removal of restriction with reference to the age of contributors to the Teachers' Provident Fund.

Every resolution adopted was the outcome of considerable discussion among the delegates, under the able guidance of the President. After the concluding speech of the President, the Conference closed at 9 p.m., when the delegates were treated to a sumptuous dinner by the Pallatur Teachers' Association, who acted as hosts throughout, and whose arrangements for the Conference contributed not a little to its success.

### The Anantapur District Teachers' Guild.

The annual meeting of the Anantapur District Teachers' Guild was held on Saturday the 31st, January, 1931, at 6-30 p.m. at the Board High School, Penukonda, with Mr. F. Maltus Smith, M.A., (Oxon), President of the Guild, in the chair.

Delegates from almost all the Secondary Schools in the District were present, and were received by Mr. C. Subbarao, B.A., L.T., Headmaster, Board High School, Penukonda, who, in his welcome address, after referring to the historic traditions and glory of Penukonda left behind by Krishna Devaraya, eloquently pleaded for united action on the part of teachers so that their status and dignity might be maintained among the democratic public.

On behalf of the delegates, the Chairman, thanked Mr. Subbarao for the welcome, and in a brief but important speech, pointed out the necessity for a strong organisation of teachers and at the same time warned them against tendencies endangering their dignity and self-respect.

Then, the report of the Guild for the year ending 31-12-30 was placed before the meeting and adopted. The report indicated that action was taken on every resolution passed by the Guild during the year. The Secretary observed with great pleasure that every secondary school

## NEWS FROM ASSOCIATIONS

### Ramnad District Teachers' Guild

A Conference of Ramnad District Teachers' Guild was held on Saturday the 7th instant in Pallatur, at 2 p.m. in A.C. High School Hall. As many as fifty delegates attended, who represented eight of the affiliated Associations. The Guild's President, Mr. N.S. Venkatarama Ayyar, M.A., L.T., presided over the Conference.

The Conference met precisely at 2 p.m. After some preliminary remarks from the chair, three papers were read, the first being on "the Ideal Teacher of English" by Mr. S. Kuppuswami Ayyar, B.A., L.T. (Sivaganga). The discussion that followed, which was appreciative of the

in the District has become a member of the District Guild and hoped for a large number of elementary teachers' organizations joining the Guild to make it a strong and powerful organization in the district. He addressed the audience on his impressions of the All Asian Educational Conference, Benares, which he attended as a delegate.

The following office-bearers were elected for the year:—

- (1) President: Mr. C. Subbarao, B.A., L.T., Penukonda.
- (2) Vice-President: Mr. S. Kuppusami Aiyer, B.A., L.T., Anantapur.
- (3) Secretary: Mr. C. Ranganatha Aiyangar, M.A., L.T., Gooty.
- (4) Joint-Secretary: Mr. M. Appurao, B.A., L.T., Gooty.
- (5) Auditor: Mr. Natesan, B.A., L.T., Hindu-pur.

Though it was the unanimous wish to re-elect Mr. Smith, as President, he regretted his inability to accept, as he would be going home (England) on furlough.

The outgoing officebearers Mr. Smith and Mr. K. C. Seshan, B.A., L.T., Dharmavaram were then felicitated on their work in the year under report.

The following resolutions were passed:—

1. This Guild reiterates the resolutions of the 22nd Provincial Educational Conference held at Coimbatore in May, 1930, regarding Provincialization of the teaching services, security of tenure of teachers, standardization of salaries, and Provident Fund.
2. This Guild requests the authorities of the Madras University to keep the force the M. A. Degree Examination for the benefit of teachers at least without insisting on attendance for Post-graduate studies.
3. This Guild confirms the resolution of its Executive Committee regarding refresher

courses in Geography and Elementary Science and authorises the Committee to take necessary steps to conduct the classes before the next hot weather.

4. This Guild regrets the attitude of Local Boards and Municipalities regarding grant of Travelling Allowance to delegates attending the Annual Meetings of the Guild and urges on these bodies the necessity for the grant in the interest of sound education in the District.

5. This Guild regrets that the Secondary Education Board of this district is not meeting frequently and pleads for increased activity on the part of this body, since the educational needs of this district are to be considered by this body which is the only non-official medium between educational institutions and Government.

6. This Guild resolves to request the authorities to exempt children of Secondary Grade Teachers, Pandits and Instructors in the Secondary School from payment of school fees during the course of their secondary education.

7. This Conference resolves to request the authorities to exempt teachers from payment of the proposed Profession Tax as contemplated in the amended Local Boards Act.

8. This Guild do take up the responsibility of organizing a common examination for the district at the end of the Third Form Course.

9. This Guild understands that attempts are being made to reduce the salaries of teachers in certain Secondary and Elementary Schools in this district and enters its emphatic protest against such steps, as teachers are already underpaid and as any reduction in their salaries will cause discontent leading to inefficiency.

10. Resolved that the managements of schools in the District be requested to grant leave on full average salary on medical certificate to the teachers who take sick leave.

C. RANGANATHA AIYENGER,  
Secretary.

## TRICHINOPOLY DISTRICT TEACHERS' GUILD

### 40th Annual Meeting

(From our District Representative)

The 40th annual meeting of the Trichinopoly District Teachers' Guild was held under the auspices of the St. Joseph's College High School Teachers' Association, on 7-2-31 in the Lawley Hall, St. Joseph's College, Trichinopoly under the presidentship of Rev. C. S. James, M. A., Principal, Bishop Heber College, Trichy. Delegates from all High Schools of the district

and representatives from the staffs of local colleges attended in large numbers.

Rev. Fr. Arulnather, S. J., Headmaster, St. Joseph's College High School delivered the welcome address. After referring to Pundit Motilal's death, the Rev. Father touched upon the S.S.L.C. Eligibility rules, the proposed Middle School Examination and the attendance of pupils in Schools and urged upon the authorities concerned the need for safe-guarding of the interests of Scholars in any reforms that might come. Rev. C. S. James then delivered his presidential address. In the course of his thoughtful address, the President pleaded for a new orientation to the prevailing educational system with due regard to the national needs of agriculture, industries and village-life.

Then the Secretary of the Guild read in 40th annual report. The following are extracts from the report:—

*Strength:* 350 members including members of 15 affiliated Teachers' Association in the district and individual members.

*Meetings:* 4 quarterly meetings at Ariyalur, Kulitalai, Lalgudi and Trichinopoly.

*Subjects discussed:* Tagore's educational ideals Preliminary Certificate. Examination agreement between teachers and managements.

Consolidation and concentration of Elementary Schools. S.S.L.C. reconstruction.

*Some notable events:*—Trichy Districts' prominent part (1) In the 5th All India Federation of Teachers Associations, Madras, through its representatives' work;

(2) appreciative references to Guilds' work in Trichy Dt. Board administration report and

(3) notices to quit on 3 teachers in the district.

### Trichy Guild's Recommendations on Elementary & Secondary Education

#### IV. Our recommendations.

Having regard to the fact that we have been considering ever so long, schemes and syllabuses in Elementary and Secondary education, and also to the fact that teachers, organisations are sometimes charged with want of definiteness in their resolutions, it is well to recapitulate in a nut shell at this stage, some of our main recommendations.

In Elementary Education, the Guild stands for—(1) A universal primary education for four years, *enmasse*, (2) provisions for post-primary

schools in Taluk centres with suitable general curricula and vocational subjects, (3) removal of dualism between the upper standards of the Elementary School and the lower forms of the Secondary School and the consequent development of Higher Elementary Schools into Middle Schools, (4) expansion, with one school for one village as the motto over a definite period to run concurrently with consolidation (5) unity of control of Elementary Education in District areas with adequate representation of the teaching element in school committees.

In Secondary Education, the Guild recommends (1) shortening of the course by one year, (2) compulsory vernacular medium throughout, (3) removal of specialisation and inclusion of a prevocational or commercial subject, (4) lightening of the syllabuses and alternative courses in elementary science subjects, and (5) revision of the eligibility rules. There are two schools of thought in regard to specialisation in the High School course but this Guild has always recommended as an alternative to the foregoing recommendations, and as a *via media* between specialisation and non-specialisation, that the general course could be completed by the end of the IV Form with a district examination and certificate by a Board and that specialisation should be confined to the VI Form regarding it, as the preparatory class for the college course with an entrance examination by the University.

The report concluded with the following observations.

The question is shall we work for Educational aims and ideals, or for better pay, prospects and privileges, or for jobs even, under humiliating conditions! "Ours is a simple problem: we want to live a decent life with no worry or anxiety about our security of tenure, with opportunities for self improvement, and with recognition as public servants." As it is, and as stated by the Madras Mail in its comments on the Coimbatore resolutions. "Our status is absurdly low, our remuneration ridiculously small, and our employment exceedingly precarious."

The one solution consistently and continuously agitated for by Teachers organisations all over, is—to create a service organisation for teachers in non-Government schools, to adopt at least modest minimum standard scales of salaries of 20 years duration for all grades of teachers, to apply the public service rules for leave of all kinds, to universalise the provident fund system under state control as in state Railways, to constitute a Provincial Board of

Education for controlling the teaching service and to make provision for transfers of affected teachers. Certainly we are not asking for the moon, but only for a feasible and workable order of things, which *must* be, and *ought* to be within the reach of a mighty and yet paternal Government, with ample resources and an overflowing exchequer. Soothing words and platitudes are poor substitutes for bread and service. Sometimes imaginary excuses as—the diversity of managements and their alleged opposition, open taunts as supply and demand, managements as mercenaries, invidious comparisons, and counsels of despair are resorted to by men in position, authority and influence in their public utterances and in deputations. Knowing as we do, our managements, their hearts, their abiding interests in their schools and their teachers, the state of public finance and the solicitude for other services, *who* does not know among us that such utterances, excuses, and taunts are only somersaults to evade a solution, or skilful manouvres in negative criticism? A feeling of despondency runs in the hearts of our teachers, lecturers, when they often ask, of what use are our Guilds and conferences in this hopeless struggle for bare existence? No scheme, no reconstruction, no extension of Education, would ever flourish under such depressing and deplorable conditions of actual workers in the field. It is up to our representatives and patriots in the councils of Government to put up a strenuous fight for our cause and bring us redress. "Hope springs eternal in the human breast," and we do hope once again that our appeal will not go in vain.

The annual report was unanimously adopted. The following office, bearers were elected for 1931-32.

*President.* Rev. C. S. James, M. A., Principal, Bishop Heber College.

*Vice-President.* Messrs. M. C. Rajagopal Nayadu Srirangam, B. A. L. T.; S. S. Krishnaswami Ayyar B. A. L. T., Karur.

*Secretaries.* Town. Mr. G. Varadachariar M. A. National College.

*Moffussil.* Mr. M. M. Balakrishna Ayyar, Kullitalai.

*District representative on the S. I. T. U.* Mr. S. T. Ramanuja Iyengar B. A. L. T., E. R. High School Teppakulam.

*Committee members.* Secretaries of affiliated associations.

*College representatives.* Messrs. M. S. SUN-  
DARAM M. A., St. J. College.

G. Krishnaswami M. A. Bishop Heber college.  
K. R. Krishnaswami B. A. L. T. National College.

The following resolutions were then passed on *Service conditions of Teachers.*

This conference of Teachers in the Trichy District respectfully urges on the attention of the Hon'ble Minister for Education in Madras;

1. That since the Great war, various services Imperial, Provincial, upper and Lower subordinates have had their salaries revised, many times, but that the large body of Teachers in Non-Government schools, have been left in cold neglect;

2. That promises made to do something for these teachers, by the remission of Provincial contribution, have unfortunately not been fulfilled, causing not a little disappointment to the ardent expectations of Teachers all over;

3. That in addition to the salary problem, the feeling of insecurity of Tenure, has year after year grown in volume and intensity, by the sudden notices to quit and by other hard service rules in vogue in institutions.

4. That consequently a feeling of despondency runs in the hearts of the entire body of teachers and that such a mentality is not conducive to the best interests of either teachers, or pupils or institutions generally.

5. That the only solution for the problem lies in the creation of a service cadre for Teachers in non-Government schools including Board, Municipal, and aided, in the introduction of time scales of 20 years duration for all grades of teachers, in Government bearing all increment charges on the salaries of teachers, in the application of public service rules for leave of all kinds to the said teachers, in universalising the different Provident Fund system in schools into one scheme under State Control, as in State Railways; and last, but not least, in the creation of a Provincial Board of Education to control the entire teaching service and to make provision for transfers of affected teachers;

6. That a legislative Committee of Enquiry be instituted at once to inquire into the service conditions of teachers in Non-Government schools, to take evidence, and to report their conclusions to Government and the public.

7. That as a first step in the scheme of service re-organization as aforesaid some adequate provision of at least 4 or 5 lakhs of Rupees over and above the usual special teaching grant of a lakh of Rupees, be made in the next budget,

to satisfy the crying needs of teachers in Schools at present.

8. And that Government's policy towards teachers in Non-Government Schools be clearly set forth on the lines of the recommendations stated *supra*, and that a programme of giving effect to that policy over a definite period, be outlined and adopted.

Re-assembling after lunch, the guild passed the following further resolutions:

(1) Resolved that the guild representative on the S. I. T. U. be an ex-officio member of the guild executive. (Chair).

(2) Resolved that the S. S. L. C. examination under the old scheme be continued for two years and that the privilege of attending the same privately be given not only to failed candidates but also to candidates who have completed their course but have not been sent up for the Examination. (S. T. Ramanuja Ayyangar).

(3) Resolved that, in view of the hardships to students caused by the raising of the percentage of attendance to 75 from 60 the said percentage be kept at the original 60 per cent. (M. M. Balakrishna Ayyar).

(4) Resolved that the following members be requested to wait in deputation on the chairman and Vice Chairman of the Trichy Municipality in connection with securing a site for a guild office in Trichy town:

Messrs M. C. Rajagopala Nayudu Garu. S. T. Ramanuja Iyengar, K. R. Krishna Ayyar (con-  
vener) G. Varadachariar, M. Natesa Mudaliar, M. S. Sundaram Ayyar and S. K. Devasikamani (S. T. Ramanuja Iyengar).

(5) Resolved that the S. S. L. C. be remodelled by cancelling C. Group, by insisting upon a minimum of 35 per cent in languages, and 25 per cent in each of the other subjects with a grand-total of 35 per cent in non-language subjects, and by the establishment of a moderation board to meet very hard cases. (P. E. Subramanya Ayyar).

(6) Resolved that compulsory vernacular medium be adopted in all High Schools and college classes. (Mr. G. Krishnaswami).

Regarding the proposed Middle School Examination, the official resolution expressed itself against all external examinations but suggested the institution of the proposed examination with certain conditions. But after prolonged discussion, the conference vetoed all resolutions, including the official resolution.

The services of the retiring Town Secretary, Siva Ramakrishna Ayyar were placed on record.

The President congratulated the guild on its active work, on its Unselfish discussions and endorsed the need for the guild holding to its opinions on examinations and the vernacular medium on patriotic and practical grounds.

## TANJORE DISTRICT TEACHERS' GUILD

Resolutions passed at the Meeting of the Tanjore District Teachers' Guild held at Tiruvarur on the 31st Jaunagy, 1931.

I. This Guild resolves that the revival of the Middle School Examination will, under the present circumstances, be helpful in maintaining the requisite standard of admission to the High School Classes, provided that it is held at the end of the Fourth Form Course, and that for the purpose of conducting the examinations, the whole Presidency be divided into convenient groups, each making arrangements for the conduct of its own examination under the guidance of a Board consisting entirely of teachers actually engaged in Secondary Education.

II. That this meeting of the Tanjore District Teachers' Guild requests the authorities of the Madras University to so amend the rules relating to the eligibility for admission to University courses of study as to permit boys taking any one of the Commercial subjects like Book-Keeping or Commercial Practice in the S.S.L.C. Examination, in view of the fact that a B. Com. degree has been instituted by the University.

III. It is resolved to request the Director of Public Instruction to provide an additional teaching grant to enable all trained teachers (irrespective of their salary) to participate in the Special Teaching Grant to be distributed to schools shortly.

IV. Resolved that the S.S.L.C. Examination under the old regulations be continued for another period of two years, and that pupils who have put in the necessary attendance this year be allowed to appear for these examinations whether or not they are sent up for the examination this year.

V. Resolved that the C. Group optional subject introduced into the curriculum of the Remodelled S.S.L.C. scheme be abolished.

VI. Resolved that out of the five subjects in Elementary Science option be given to pupils to study any three of them.

VII. Resolved that the agreement between teachers and managements of Secondary Schools referred to in clause 12 V of the M. E. R. be not made a condition of recognition of Schools, as

the agreement proposed in no way betters the condition of teachers, as contemplated by the Government.

VIII. This guild resolves to request the Government to so modify G. O. No. 3780 L. & M. dated 23-9-30 as to invest Presidents of Local Boards and Chairmen of Municipal Councils with powers to grant exemption to

teachers in their employ for holding offices in Co-operative and Mutual Benefit societies and insurance companies whenever they are satisfied that such exemption will not be detrimental to the efficient discharge of their duties as teachers.

Mayavaram, } N. KALYANARAMA IYER,  
8-2-1931. } V. RAGHAVA IYENGAR.  
Joint Secretaries.

## SALEM DISTRICT TEACHERS' GUILD

### AUDITOR'S REPORT 1930

SIRS,

I have the honour to present the Audit Report of the Salem District Guild for the year 1930:—

The account book and the correspondence register maintained by Asst. Secretary Mr. K. S. Chengalraya Ayer, are in excellent order. All items of expenditure are supported by voucher's and are duly sanctioned by the Committee as per rules of the guild. All postal expenses incurred by the Asst. Secretary were verified

with the letter book maintained by him and found to be correct.

The year opened with a balance of Rs. 67-7-3. The total receipts of the year from the members fees were Rs. 83-0-0. Protection Fund Rs. 13-0-0 and Defence Fund, Rs. 15. The total expenditure comes to Rs. 131-8-3, leaving a balance of Rs. 46-15.

Herewith is appended the Balance Sheet of the Guild Accounts. The closing balance of Rs. 46-15 0 is with the Asst. Secretary.

### Balance Sheet.

| RECEIPTS.            |             | CHARGES.                                                                                |             |
|----------------------|-------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
|                      | Rs. A. P.   |                                                                                         | Rs. A. P.   |
| Opening Balance      | ... 67 7 3  | S. I. T. U. Annual Subs. 1929-30                                                        | ... 15 0 0  |
| Annual Subscriptions | ... 83 0 0  | Do. 1930-31                                                                             | ... 20 0 0  |
| Protection Fund      | ... 13 0 0  | T. A. to Asst. Secretary, (Protection Fund)                                             | ... 4 8 0   |
| Defence Fund         | ... 15 0 0  | " " to meet the Presdt.                                                                 | ... 1 10 0  |
|                      |             | " " to meet the Secretary                                                               | ... 2 0 0   |
|                      |             | T. A. to Mr. K. S. Chengalrayan to attend S. I. T. U. Executive Bd. meeting, Coimbatore | ... 12 8 9  |
|                      |             | T. A. to Mr. K. S. C. Iyer for Benares Confce.                                          | ... 10 0 0  |
|                      |             | Protection Fund                                                                         | ... 13 0 0  |
|                      |             | Defence Fund                                                                            | ... 25 0 0  |
|                      |             | Postage and M. O. C.                                                                    | ... 25 6 6  |
|                      |             | Covers and Note-Books                                                                   | ... 1 11 0  |
|                      |             | Cost of Binding S. I. Teacher Vol. II.                                                  | ... 0 12 0  |
|                      |             |                                                                                         | Rs. 131 8 0 |
|                      |             | C. B. ....                                                                              | 46 15 0     |
| Total                | ... 178 7 3 | Rs.                                                                                     | ... 178 7 3 |

(Sd.) K. N. SUBRAMANIA CHETTY, Auditor—14-1-31.

Assistant Secretary.

(True Copy.)

KRISHNAGIRI  
22nd Jan. 1931.

## UNION NOTES.

### The XXIII Provincial Educational Conference

(Held under the auspices of the S. I. T. U.)

OFFICE OF THE RECEPTION COMMITTEE,  
Palghat, 8th February, 1931.

Dear Sir,

You are aware that it has been decided to hold the XXIII Provincial Educational Conference by the third week of May 1931 at Palghat and that the Malabar District Teachers' Guild has already constituted a Reception Committee for the Conference. I am to request you to send, as early as possible, the names of six persons whom your Association may consider suitable for the Presidentship of the Conference. Article 17-C of the S. I. T. U. Rules is given below for your information and guidance.

"The Reception Committee of the Educational Conference shall invite the affiliated associations at least three months before the date fixed for the Conference to suggest to them names of six persons who, in their opinion, are eligible for Presidentship of the Conference. It shall at an early date submit to all the affiliated associations the names of the first six candidates from amongst those nominated for the Presidentship and call upon every affiliated association to recommend only one of the six names in the voting paper. The Reception Committee shall meet two months before the date fixed for the Conference to consider such recommendations".

I am also to request you to send resolutions which your association may like to bring up at the Conference and papers on important topics to be read at the Conference.

Yours truly,

E. H. PARAMESWARAN,  
General Secretary.

Mr. S. K. Yegnanarayana Aiyar, President of the S. I. T. U., presided over the assembly of the all Cochin Teachers' Association early in November last, and spoke upon the need for an effective professional organisation of teachers. Mr. S. Natarajan attended the assembly as a fraternal delegate and spoke about the Benares Trip and the general activities of the S. I. T. U. Mr. M. S. Sabhesan, M.A., Secretary S.I.T.U., attended the Madura District Teachers' Guild held on the 7th Feb. 1931 and spoke about "Around Us and About Us. His address appears elsewhere.

Mr. S. Natarajan, attended the meeting of the North Arcot District Teachers' Guild on Saturday the 13th February when he spoke upon the All Asia Educational Conference. Mr. T. Ramanujachariar, former Asst. Secretary of the Union, spoke on the need for a strong central organisation of teachers and appealed for their co-operation in carrying on the work of the Union. He put in a powerful appeal for a greater measure of support from the teachers for the Protection Fund and the Journal.

Mr. S. K. Yegnanarayana Aiyar, President of the S.I.T.U. was requested by the authorities of the Alathur High School, Malabar to deliver a lecture on the occasion of the celebrations of the Silver Jubilee of the School on Saturday the 14th inst. He lectured on What is wrong with our Secondary Education? and Sir M. Krishnan Nair presided.

On Sunday the 15th inst. the President met some members of the Working Committee of the coming Educational Conference at Palghat and discussed details of procedure. He also was taken round and shown the College and the Hostel where the delegates will have to be lodged and meetings held. Arrangements are going ahead with a swing and Mr. E. H. P. the energetic secretary may be trusted to look to things connected with the Conference.

## OUR LETTER BOX

On the attempt to revive the Middle School Examination.

Sir,

It is an observed fact that examinations are by no means perfect educational tools. But they have been with us for a long time and will probably remain part of our technique for a

great while to come. The wisest course, therefore, is to use them so skilfully that their short comings will be least evident. In these days when examinations, especially external ones, are 'deplored, derated or even abused, it really sounds strange that there should be some

teachers to welcome the suggestion for a revival of the old Middle School Examination.

In this connection, a study of the steps that led to the introduction of the Middle School Examination may be useful.\* "So far back as the year 1869, Government contemplated the establishment of a public examination for Middle Schools. In G.O. No. 174 dated 17th May, 1869 Government called upon the Director of Public Instruction to report upon the expediency of establishing a system of scholarships for Middle Class Schools to be determined by means of an examination conducted by the Education Department. The establishment of such an examination, they considered, would not only be a means of testing and stimulating the progress of Middle Schools but would also enable the Government and the public to judge of the comparative merits of these schools. The scheme proposed was somehow not given effect to that year, nor was the question taken up till October 1875 when Col. MacDonald the then D. P. I. brought before the Syndicate of the Madras University a proposal to institute an examination for Middle Class Schools on the model of the Local Examinations of Oxford and Cambridge."

The following were some of the reasons which were adduced to show the need for establishing such an examination:—(1) The inadequacy of the inspecting staff and the consequent inefficiency of inspection. (2) The examination, if instituted, would be a fit substitute for a number of other examinations more or less of the same standard. (3) It would test adequately the fitness of a candidate to enter the preparatory Matriculation class of a Government or Aided school. (4) A scheme of scholarships might be established in connection with this examination.

The question of establishing such an examination was discussed at two meetings of the Senate, but the proposal was rejected by 11 to 8. Col. MacDonald, however, came to the conclusion that it might be worked without the aid of the university. In the meantime, the Committee assembled at Simla under the order of the Government of India dated 3rd July, 1875, also strongly recommended the establishment of such an examination. Commenting on the resolution of the said committee, Mr. Satthianadha observes: "The object of the Committee was clear. They aimed at introducing into the

educational system throughout the country somewhat uniform standards, which they considered impossible to reach, unless there was a uniform system of examinations for testing pupils at each definite stage of instruction."

It was in 1877 that the proposal for a Middle School examination came up definitely before the Government. The Government then thought that the system "would conduce to public convenience" and sought the co-operation of the university, remarking, "It would be a matter of regret to the Government, if the university should not take as in England the most prominent part in the conduct of such an examination." The question, therefore, came up again for the third time before the senate but the proposal was turned down this time also. The Senate remarked that they had "to deal only with examinations which are avowedly part of or preliminary (as Matriculation) to a university course but cannot undertake examinations to test the progress of teaching at a more immature stage of study." How strong the opposition of the senate was to the introduction of that examination is clear from the words of the Vice Chancellor, the Hon'ble Mr. Justice Innes, who, writing to the Government, said, "Many members of the Senate of considerable experience in Education, objected to it, on the ground that its probable effect upon real sound teaching would be injurious."

But Col. MacDonald would not leave the matter at that. In the same year (1877) he brought the subject again before the Government, and asked for sanction to introduce the examination in the form originally proposed by him. But the Government declined to move in the matter then. At the beginning of 1879 he once more brought up the scheme before the Government. This time he suggested that the Middle School examination might take the place of the General Test for service and recommended that it should be considered a service test for appointments of Rs. 15 and upwards but not exceeding Rs. 30. The Government were now disposed to allow this examination to supersede the General Test and final orders were passed in 1879 to that effect. The first Middle School Examination was held in January, 1880. It may be an interesting contrast to the present morbid conditions of service to state that Col. MacDonald suggested that the Middle School Examination should be a test for appointments between Rs. 15 and Rs. 30; the Matriculation for appointments between Rs. 30 and 100, the F. A. for appointments between Rs. 100 and Rs. 250 and that lastly the B.A. examination

should be the test all for appointments above Rs. 250.

It is needless to trace the history of the Middle School Examination in any further detail till its abolition in the year 1905. The reasons for its abolition appear to be firstly, that it served no useful purpose under the changed conditions of service and secondly there was a feeling that there were too many examinations. The points that need emphasis for our present purpose are:—(1) The Government introduced at first the Middle School Examination not as a sound educational measure but merely as a substitute for the General Test. (2) Even at the time of its introduction it was strongly opposed by experienced educationists. (3) The examination was purely voluntary but not compulsory. Promotions to the higher class were not dependent on the results of the examination.

We are not fully aware of the circumstances that led to the recent circular of the Director of Public Instruction calling upon the Headmasters of Secondary Schools to express their opinion regarding the desirability of reviving the Middle School Examination and making promotions dependent on the results of the examination. Presumably, the influx of pupils in the High Schools which are ante-chambers to the university and the large percentage of ineligible at the S.S.L.C. Public examination have brought about an attitude of mind which desires a public examination at the Middle School stage for the purpose of weeding out 'unfits' and blocking their entry into High Schools. For our purpose this proposal for public examination may be considered from the following standpoints:—(1) as a test for service. (2) as an entrance examination for vocational and training schools (3) as a basis for the award of scholarships and (4) as an attainment test qualifying the pupil for promotion to the higher class. Let us now apply the above considerations to the question, whether it is desirable and expedient to revive the middle school examination.

(1) As a test for public service, all examinations including the B. A. and M.A. have long ceased to be regarded as standards. It appears that this year there are about 200 vacancies in the subordinate service in Madras. The public service Commission is holding an examination to select candidates for vacant posts. It is said that about 9,000 candidates have offered to sit for the examination in Madras centre. The total number of candidates in the other centres is estimated at 10,000. The qualifications of these candidates range from the holding of an S.S.L.C.

to that of an M.A. degree and yet all of them are required to answer the same question papers. Under such conditions what chance can a Middle School certificate holder have? The days of Col. MacDonald are gone, perhaps never to return.

(2) With regard to its suitability as an entrance for technical, vocational or industrial schools, practice shows that a higher general qualification is insisted upon than that contemplated by the Middle School certificate. For example the minimum general qualification for admission into the Trades School is the V Form. For admission into the Elementary Higher Grade training class the minimum general qualification is the passing of the III Form or the VIII Standard. But the tendency is to replace the Higher Grade elementary teacher by a secondary grade teacher.

3. It would therefore be superfluous to introduce a public examination at the middle stage. The Govt. award scholarships to pupils on the basis of the Headmaster's recommendation. The age at which the pupil begins to receive the scholarship corresponds to the time when the pupil gets admitted into the first form of a High School. It has not been possible to award scholarships solely on the criterion of merit. The community to which the pupil belongs and the earning capacity of his parents are also taken into consideration. Therefore, no one has, so far, thought it expedient to hold a competitive examination for the award of scholarships at any definite stage of Secondary School Course.

(4) It now remains for us to consider if it is desirable and expedient to revive the Middle School Examination as a uniform standard throughout the Province for promotion from the III Form to the IV Form. A formal examination as a test of attainment at such an immature stage has always been seriously questioned. As early as 1882 the Hunter Commission recommended "that promotion from class be not necessarily made to depend on the results of one fixed standard of examinations throughout the Province." The Commission was definitely against any attempt to secure general uniformity throughout India. The Commission further recommended that promotions from class to class be entirely left to the discretion of school authorities. "A prominent feature of Indian High Schools is their striking uniformity. In the eyes of the Inspectors who are mostly responsible for them, this is an advantage as it facilitates inspection but it is, in fact, a grave defect. The organization, the method of instruction and the daily routine differ very little

\* History of Education in the Madras Presidency by Mr. S. Satthianatham, M. A., LL. B., (Cantab) P. P. (123—128).

whether the institution is an Islamia School on the Frontier or a Government High School in Madras. (Ziauddin Ahmad, Systems of Education, page 248). A uniform system of examination at the Middle School stage would make matters worse. 'Its effect upon real sound teaching would be injurious'. It would interfere with the freedom of the Headmaster and the staff in the choice of text books, the framing of syllabuses and courses of studies to suit varying local needs and would tend to kill what little initiative Headmasters and teachers might have. Its revival even on a voluntary basis ought to be opposed on the ground that the evil effects of such an examination would still be there in a worse form.

The introduction of the Middle School examination cannot solve the problem of over crowding in Secondary Schools. Various solutions have from time to time been given.

The most important of them is to combine practical and technical instruction with the General Instruction. 'Other nations have produced several generations of educated workmen'. India in this respect is far behind other countries. "I would suggest that the Director of Public Instruction of each Province may be asked in consultation with the Director of Industries to recommend changes in the curricula of the Schools—Primary, Secondary and High—With a view to make them practical, so that they may own a part of the system of technical educations, (Pandit Madan Mohan Malavia).

G. SRINIVASACHARI.

P. S. High School Mylapore.

Extracts from a letter of M. R. Ry., C. K. Govindarau Garu, B. A. L. T., Head Master-Board High School, Ramachendrapuram, Godavari East, to the District Educational office, Godavery. On the proposed Middle School Examination.

I beg to submit for favour of consideration just a few points, as *obiter dicta* more or less, as time and space forbid my elaborating them. I am also aware of the fact that the authorities invariably call for opinions *primarily* to put on an air of sweet reasonableness, as amply demonstrated by the throwing into the waste-paper basket thousands of suggestions made by the hundreds of Teachers' Associations and Conferences every year; but, though repressed highly by this chilling reflection, I venture to make as brief a statement as possible in the service of duty for its own sake.

2. For several very important reasons, a few of which have been so admirably and convincingly set forth by Mr. Parameswara Aiyer of Palghat in the printed circular letter that he addressed a few months ago to all concerned, I strongly support the institution of the common public examination at the end of the fourth form course, but not a year earlier. From this it follows as a corollary that either the third form should be abolished in the Incomplete Secondary Schools, or the Managements of such institutions should be called upon to open the fourth form as well in such institutions.

### 3. But.

The malady affecting the body Pedagogic has grown so virulent and complicated that the touching faith of curing it by the simple application of the single herb cure of an earlier public examination amounts to a pedagogic quackery which would be highly amusing but for the tragic situation in which the real and crying tortures inflicted on the tender school children are overlooked just to give some comfort to the teachers of the higher forms, and the lecturers in the college classes. To rest content after merely instituting a Public Examination at a stage earlier than the S.S.L.C. will be merely to shift the present appalling situation of the S.S.L.C. *impasse* to an earlier stage, and the consequent annual popular mourning may turn out even more sensational than at present. What really matters is to remove the existing appalling obstacles to good work, and to concert preventive measures to safeguard against bad school work.

4. *Wanted emancipation from the tyranny of the experts*:—The very first thing to be done is to do away with the impossible curricula and syllabuses drawn up by highly pretentious *Pandits* in high places and to allow the actual labourers in the field to draw up rational schemes of work. The pedagogic mountebanks, with their crude and ill-digested mass of learning have disastrously domineered over school work. Intensive and comprehensive visions of work, in every subject, have, by their dazzling brightness, blinded these megalomaniacs and the schemes of work laid down, at every stage, are cumulatively impossible of performance. Every subject has to be taught at every stage, at break-neck speed, and attempting to do too much ends in doing nothing, and, the schools are simply frauds on the public. The expert who draws up the syllabus innocently thinks that he adds to the work only a little here, and that is nothing; only a little there, and that is nothing; only a little elsewhere, and that is nothing; and only a

little everywhere, and a little is nothing, and nothing is nothing. What the expert cannot comprehend is the truth that, in the Arithmetic of Life, Nothing+Nothing+Nothing=Something, and that Something+Something+Something=Everything. In one word, schemes of work should be lightened to suit possibility of good work.

5. The school year should be longer than 15 weeks:—The fateful era of the domination of the experts commenced with the disastrous reduction of the time available for teaching work to barely 15 weeks by the shifting of the annual examinations from December to March with the result that all teaching of new lessons has to stop by the end of February in the case of the VI Form. In the best managed institutions earnest work does not commence earlier than the third week of July. In other words, March, April, May, June, and the first fortnight in July are lost to teaching. Out of the 52 weeks of the year subtract these 18 weeks; of the remaining 34 weeks, make the following deductions:—

|                                                                                |      |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| 27th (Sundays & Saturdays ... 10 weeks.                                        |      |
| Special holidays ... .. 4 "                                                    |      |
| First Quarterly Examinations ... 1 "                                           |      |
| Half yearly examinations in December ... .. 1 "                                |      |
| Cessation of teaching before the half yearly examinations at least ... .. 11 " |      |
| Casual leave enjoyed by the teachers or the Christmas vacation ... .. 2 "      |      |
|                                                                                | 19 " |

Thus the maximum time available for teaching comes to 34—19—15 weeks. Most of the VI Form teachers hold any number of special classes on holidays just to finish their work. In the case of the lower forms, you may add another fortnight of teaching work. The heavy curriculum hurriedly taught, in the very short school year, is leisurely forgotten by the boys during the long interval between the cessation of teaching in March and its commencement virtually only in August.

As of old, hold the annual examination in December, and start School work after the Pongal holidays in the 3rd week of January.

6. Absence of effective supervision of school work:—

I have now to tread on very dangerous ground, and shall do my best to exercise as much restraint and brevity as conscience may permit.

(a) The inspection and guidance of the Department is inadequate, and impossible of improvement. For obvious reasons, I cannot elaborate this point.

(b) The Head-Masters are incapable of exacting satisfactory work from their assistants, for several reasons. It is only in very rare cases, where Head-Masters of undoubted capacity enjoy a full measure of confidence and support from the management, good work is turned out. The number of such institutions thus working satisfactorily may not be even a dozen in the whole province. In most cases Head-Master-ship, like marriage, goes by luck. Capable Head-Masters working with zeal and earnestness soon get into hot waters, and they have to eat the humble pie. The extraneous influences that seriously impair good work in schools are even unmentionable. I may not, and I hope, I need not, dwell on this point any further.

7. Wanted an agency of Superintendence of Secondary Schools to serve as the confidential and technical advisors of the Managing bodies:—

The most neglected part of the school work is virtual absence of tutorial work to compel the boys to work steadily from day to day. This sceptic and festering sore kills all good work. In every district, two or three superintendents of Secondary Schools should be appointed to effectively advise the managements concerned on the actual performances of the teachers especially of those classes which are not presented to a Public Examination. These superintendents will strengthen the hands of the Head-Masters, and will, without exposing any damaging information to the Government Officers give the much needed advice to the managements by sternly exposing the shortcomings of individual teachers. Only Head-Masters of not less than 25 years of service should be chosen for these posts which should not extend beyond a triennium, so that they may work without fear or favour of the management.

8. The financial aspect of the proposal should not scare away the responsible authorities, if they are earnest enough to understand the needs of the situation. I shall suggest for consideration a practical way of meeting the call. The strength of the Secondary Schools under the Management of the East Godavari District Board on 31—3—1929 was Rs. 2,663/. If the fee instalment be raised by as. 4/- a sum of Rs. 5,326/- per annum can be raised. Less than Rs. 4,500/- per annum will suffice to meet my proposal. If the District Board and the Government will generously bear a portion of the expenditure, the

levy from the boys may be correspondingly reduced. I shall make detailed proposals, if called upon to do so.

Similarly the other managements may individually, or in concert, make suitable arrangements to appoint their own superintendents. The essence of the scheme is that the

inspection and guidance of school work should be done by a person who is in the confidence of the management, and who is not himself a member of the teaching staff.

All these superintendents may be placed under the guidance of the District Educational Officer who may co-ordinate their work.

## OUR BOOK SHELF

**ANCIENT INDIAN FASTS AND FEASTS:—**By Rao, B. S. Mukerjee, M. A., I. E. S., Professor, Mithi College and Fellow of the University of Allahabad. Revised Edition Mac Millan and Co., Ltd., 1930, pp: 251. Price not stated.

This book was first published by Messrs. Mac-Millan & Co. Ltd., in 1921 and the volume before us is the IVth edition. That speaks for its popularity. To the Hindu, 'Religion is the very alpha and omega of his whole earthly career. He is born religious and dies religious' and as such Hindu boys and girls will always have a fascination for this book. It would have been more appropriate, if it is styled Hindu Fasts and Feasts. For India is not merely Hindu India.

The author has tried his best to be fair possibly owing to the peculiarly difficult nature of the task, his account of some of the fasts do not breathe that religious fervour which a devout Hindu would exhibit in narrating the story; and the accounts given too in some cases are not those popular in the south.

It is written in an easy style and can well be read by the students of the upper forms of our High School.

**PEOPLE OF THE WORLD—Book I—**by C. Midgley, (W. A. K. Johnston Ltd., Edinburgh, London).

This is the first of a series of New Picture geographies. The book is planned with a view to creating an interest in geography. It begins with the home land, giving studies in Town life and Village life, Scottish glens, the coal fields, and the pasture lands of England. The reader is then given an account of the people of different lands—Eskimo—Desert and Forest. India, Australia, New Zealand, Egypt and the Nile, and Canada, are then treated. The subject matter pictures the countries from the points of view of their climate, and vegetation, and deals with the occupations, homes, clothes and foods of their peoples.

The vocabulary and style is simple. The book is intended for use in the primary schools of England.

**EASY LESSONS IN CHEMISTRY (FOR THE REVISED S. S. L. C. EXAMINATION)** by Mr. P. A. Narayana Aiyar—Published by Srinivasa Varadachary, Mount Road, Madras. Price 0-8-0.

The book covers the chemistry part of the revised S. S. L. C. Syllabus. It is neatly written and illustrated with clear sketches. The language is simple and can be well understood by our IV Form pupils where chemistry is generally taught. It is regrettable the language in places, is loose, not having that precision which science demands. Such expression "chlorine has a love for hydrogen," we believe the author will not permit from his chemistry students.

**MATHEMATICAL PROBLEMS IN PHYSICS** by Mr. A. S. Ramachandra Panth, B. A., L. T., Science Asst., Muslim High School, Madras. Price 0-12-0. This is a useful book for physics students in secondary schools. It contains over a thousand problems. Model problems are worked. The exercises are carefully selected and graded. Some of the exercises given in the question papers of the School Leaving Certificate examination are also included. We believe the author will be encouraged in his venture.

**PLANT LIFE (5 As.) and ANIMAL LIFE (5 As.)** by Messrs. R. Sankara Aiyar and V. Srinivas Aiyar, Assistants, Muthialpet High School, Madras.

These two booklets cover the syllabus in plant & animal life respectively of the 'A' Group Elementary science. The authors, well-known for their earlier volumes (First book in Physics Chemistry, etc.) have kept up the standard. It is gratifying to remark that the authors have not rigorously confined themselves to the Syllabus only. The aim of the authors seems to be stimulating interest in the study of these subjects. These books therefore serve as a valuable introduction to a study of biology. The unit of life is stressed upon in every lesson.

The illustrations are neatly drawn. The small size, the low price, and the good treatment should induce every teacher of these subjects to prescribe them as texts.

# THE SOUTH INDIAN TEACHER

(The official Journal of the S. I. T. U.)

The magazine is edited and published for the South India Teachers' Union and it is supplied at Rs. 3 per annum. It is published twelve times in the year, the 15th of every month being the date of publication.

Contributions on all matters pertaining to education in general and the teacher in particular, will be thankfully received and should be addressed to the Editor, 41, Singarachari Street, Triplicane, Madras.

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