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INDIAN EDUCATION THROUGH THE AGES*

DR. V. N. SHARMA, Ph.D. (Heidelberg)

FOREST, THE CENTRE OF INDIAN EDUCATION

In India in all times, especially in the pre-Buddhist Period there was no material difference between the educational organisation provided for children between 7-14 years and 14-25 for their training. The educational organisation was of an unitary nature. The Forest School is an example in this connection; it is a primary school; it is a secondary school; it is a high school as well as a University in the Aryan scheme of Indian Education. There is in it provision for kindergarten as well as for high intellectual and technical studies. We see in all ancient books how children of seven years and in some cases below that age even go to the forest hermitage and spend their studentship without any break under one or more teachers, studying all the subjects one can get hold of in life. Hence it is very difficult to differentiate an old Indian School from a High School or a University as one can do in the modern educational system. Not only were there the higher schools and colleges in the modern sense but also academies and research institutes, (Parishads), where one could gain knowledge in sacred and secular subjects; or carry on intense medita-

tion and undergo spiritual training without any break for decades. Hence we see the forest hermitages of India alone have nurtured the great streams of Indian Culture and Civilisation in the two great ages of Indian life, the Vedic and Buddhist (Tagore : Essays on Creative Unity).

But as times passed there came some sort of change in the ancient organisation. This we find in actual practice in the later Buddhist Age; the Monastic Universities and Colleges took up the traditional Vedic and Post Vedic forest system of Education and left the education of the youth upto the age of 16 in the hands of the local schools or in the special schools opened in the monasteries and temples for this purpose.

The Forest :

"Trees, creepers and denizens of the forests are my companions. The birds also are pleasing through their sweet notes. The sky is the canopy, and the earth the seat, my mind revels there. The breezes make me feel the passing of time. Songs about Hari form my sustenances. This variety I enjoy with zest. On account of this felicity I appreciate residence in solitude. No blemish, no voice can touch me there. There is

* A Chapter from Dr. Sharma's Book on "Indian Education" written in German and published in Germany.

converse with my mind. And I hold discourse with my own Self" (Poems from Tukaram).

In such surroundings Indian sages and seers founded their homes of learning, their temples of spiritual life. Such were natural schools, universities and institutions of higher learning. Life there was communal in every aspect of its spirit. Preceptors and pupils lived their full life of harmony and freedom as every sphere of life—animate and inanimate—lived in the womb of Mother Nature. They gathered their fruit and fuel; they took their cattle to graze.

These surroundings were not only the centres of intellectual life of Ancient India but also centres of economic, social and religious life. They co-operated with the villages and towns round them, cultivated the land, bred cattle, spun clothes, pressed oil from oil-seeds. In other words they produced all the necessities of life in co-operation with the neighbourhood. They were India's heritage and they were the chief sources of inspiration to the Indian mind.

The forest school known to Indians—Asrama, Gurukula, Tapovan—is essentially Indian and Aryan in origin though it travelled from India to other lands in different forms and names. It embodies the Community (Asrama) spirit in its most complete available form, combining the older and younger stages of evolution. The precept of Manu is that the life of a student must have the following dominant characteristics; service, study, simplicity, self-control. So the forest school was the store house of these qualities for the glory of God and the endowment of mankind (Arundale: Asrama Ideal, pp. 1, 2).

The Upanishads, time after time, are not tired to give us a glimpse, a vivid picture of this forest school, its life, its spiritual atmosphere and its peace and serenity. Later classical literature as well contains many beautiful and impressive pictures, the simple life of the teacher, the taught and other inhabitants, their contact with animals, plants and

other kingdoms of Nature, their frequent touch with the cities and the royal courts and the visits of the princes and nobles approaching these homes of knowledge and wisdom in a spirit of holy pilgrimage.

Even after the forests were no longer used—as we see in the Buddhist Period in particular—Indian Temples of Learning were built in "lovely gardens, fragrant with blossoms and shady with trees." The site of an insignificant village some times was chosen, because of its beauty.

It was the desire of the teacher to gather round this home of peace, bands of students and form an academic atmosphere. We see in all ancient books and in the Upanishads in particular how the teacher prays the Lords of Wisdom for more and more students, how the students flock in large numbers to these teachers, guarding their teachers, their house and cattle, lest they should be taken away. (Sathapatha Brahmana XI. 2, 6, 15).

EDUCATION IN VEDIC PERIOD (— to 1500 B.C.)

The earliest school life, as far as we can trace from the ancient texts, was at the home of the father. The father was the teacher as well as the family priest. He imparted the highest knowledge through rituals and sacraments (Sathapatha Brahmana X. 6, 8, 9). The aim in this time was to prepare the young and old alike for service to the community through rituals and other ceremonies centred round the Vedic Sacrifices. The hymns and chants were taught by the father-priest-teacher to his sons, nephews or pupils: geometry was taught in connection with the design of the altar, agriculture and botany to sow the right sort of corn and seeds for the worship etc. This was no doubt the beginning of the Ancient Indian Education. Later on a systematic instruction in the Vedas was imparted, then auxiliary subjects (Angas and Upangas) that explain and interpret the intricacies of the Vedas. As times passed on, these branches of studies increased in large number and they found that a student could not acquire a mastery in all the Vedic sub-

jects and therefore we see the foundation of special schools for the study of individual subjects. Accurate knowledge was demanded in all these schools and we see the various methods adopted by the teacher to make the student understand the subject thoroughly and to see that he became a living library in his branch of studies. All the schools taught their subjects thoroughly and intelligently. In all studies whether undertaken by the ordinary schools or the special schools, there was no break either in the curriculum or in the teachers.

The preliminary or elementary school which introduced them to a young pupil merged automatically into a higher school or college in the modern sense, when the student was ready to go deeper into the mysteries of different subjects. This tendency which had its origin in this period, continued in the Post Vedic Period and later on was maintained both by the Buddhist Schools as well as the other Institutions.

India owes a great debt to these special schools which helped the growth of a vast body of literature bearing on the Vedic studies. According to Yaska, the first commentator on the Vedas, there were four different schools of Vedic interpretation in his time; the schools of Itihasa, Adhyatmika, Adhyajnika and Swabhavika. Many Vedic treatises were produced by the scholars of these schools and, as times passed on, students of these schools preserved the treatises produced by their respective schools and propagated them through their family members in different parts of the land. Even today, in India, many Brahman families trace their ancestry to the presiding heads of these schools and repeat their names and the names of sage-scholars who assisted them in their daily prayers and take them as their family heads (Gotra) or spiritual teachers of their clans.

EDUCATION IN POST VEDIC PERIOD

(Otherwise known as the Epic Age)
(1500 B.C. to 500 B.C.)

The Vedic System of Education as in the olden days went on with its activities

in the forest hermitages themselves; the scope of their work, unlike in the Vedic Age, was unlimited as we see now many subjects in the curricula of studies. Both the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, many Puranas and the later classical plays have preserved for us many interesting descriptions of the centres of Indian Learning. The Sutra writers who codified the manners and customs of the Aryan community in their Institutes of Law and Aphorisms (Smriti and Sutra) have also given us many instructive facts of the system of education of this time.

The Ramayana introduces us for the first time to some of the forest retreats where sages and pupils devoted their time to sacred sacrifices, studies and meditation—the Asramas of Valmiki, Bharadwaja, Gautama, Agastya and other sages renowned for their learning and austerities (Tapasya). Sri Rama in his exile pays visit to them and spends his time as their honoured guest. (The Ramayana: Aranya and Kishkinda Kandas). The writer of the Ramayana, Valmiki, gives us some scenes of his own Asrama.

The Hermitage of Valmiki:

Situated on the banks of the river Tamasa, it attracted students from all parts of the land. Bharadwaja, one of the scholars residing here was proficient in all sciences and arts. The twin-sons of Sri Rama were born here and brought up by the revered sage as his own sons. They were taught the Vedas, the art of Music and all complicated subjects of philosophy (Stahana and Murchanatatava). The world-renowned poem was taught to the children here and through them alone it was brought to the outer-world (Uttara Ramayana 4th Sarga).

A classical dramatist, Bhavabhuti, in his play Uttara Rama Charita, gives us a vivid and impressive description of this famous centre of Aryan Culture in the early days of the Epic Period. We hear that many guests—kings and sages—came there often for advice and consultation.

As we come to the Maha Bharata we have many detailed narratives of the

forest institutions renowned in the Post Vedic Age for their cosmopolitan schemes of studies. The ideal University was the famous hermitage in the Naimisharanya. The presiding personality was the aged Saunaka and many learned men were attracted to this place by the fame of this sage for his learning and pious life. Great sacrifices were performed here of which the most essential accompaniment was the discourses and disputations of learned men on religious, philosophical and scientific topics.

Among the professors presiding over different branches of learning here, we see mentioned specialists in each of the four Vedas, in sacrificial literature and art, in Kalpasutras, in the art of reciting the Sama Veda. Experts are also mentioned in Siksha, Chandas, Sabdha, Vyakarana (Grammar) and Nirukta (Lexicography). There were also philosophers delivering discourses on Atma Vidya, in Dharma. Different schools of Indian Philosophy, Nyaya and Visheshika among them, were represented. There were also Logicians and specialists in physical sciences and arts. There was also provision for the study of political and economical subjects as well. In other words the hermitage had opened its doors to every branch of learning known and developed in those days. (Mahabharata I. I. I.). Further, many sage students devoted their time to meditation. We find how they were not satisfied with their formal studies and how they invited famous sages of other hermitages to visit them and give discourses on all problems of life. In this connection we see how the renowned Suta visits them at their invitation and gives discourses on spiritual matters. We see also what methods he followed to bring home his discourses to this great gathering of revered sages that sought his learning. Many Vedic treatises bear the affix of the name of this famous hermitage.

Further we witness many scenes of discussions on politics and economics as well as moral sciences by the sages : how famous princes and nobles come to them with their complicated political and economical problems for solution and

advice. We also see how pupils enjoyed the free and fearless pursuit of truth and meditation all their life. (Maha Bharata. Adi Parva I. I. 1).

The Hermitage of Kanva :

Another famous hermitage of this age was the Ashram of the sage Kanva. There is an impressive picture of this retreat in the Maha Bharata (Adi Parva 70th. Ch.). The famous ashrama of Kanva was situated on the bank of Malini River. Many sages (Rishis) were reciting the hymns of the Rig Veda and many others passages from the Sama Veda and the Atharva Veda. In other parts of the hermitage, Rishis who had specialised various sciences and arts, the Vedas with their commentaries, and versed in the material sciences as well, and experts in the speech of birds and lower animals, were discussing with one another the subtle points of their respective branches of study. The sage teachers living here were not all lonely recluses or celibates cut off from the ordinary society of women and the family. Some of them formed family groups living with their wives and children but none of them spent their time in the amassing of wealth and fame or material advancement like ordinary householders. They had frequent touch with the outer world through frequent invitations to the domestic ceremonies of the princes and rich men. Their pupils included their own children and also boys and girls from the busy world.

An impressive scene of life in this Ashrama Kalidasa describes for us : "Here at hand is seen on the banks of the Malini river, the hermitage of Kanva, the head of the community. Please enter the hermitage and accept the hospitality due to a guest. Behold there the delightful pious hermit rites...one would know even without being told that this is the precinct of a pious sage. Here are wild grains underneath the trees fallen from the hollows of the trunks wherein parrots reside. In other places are observed the polished slabs which are oily and serve to beat the fruits of Ingudi (Almond) into paste. The deer have acquired confidence and listen to sounds

without being disturbed in their movements. And river paths are marked with wet lines by drippings from the ends of the bark garments of the hermits. Further the trees have their roots watered by water particles, wafted by breeze from the ponds. The flowers' red gleam is dimmed by pious smoke. These young deer move about leisurely and fearlessly on the neighbouring close-cropped forest lawns." (Kalidasa : Sakunthala I Act.)

Further Kalidasa tells us that Kanva was known as the Kulapati of the hermitage. Kulapati, in ancient times, meant a great sage who fed and taught 10,000 students. Students remained here as pupils of their revered sage, giving their time to meditation and profound philosophical study and also helping him with the younger pupils (A University in the Sakuntala by R. G. Kulkarni, *Modern Review*, August 1923).

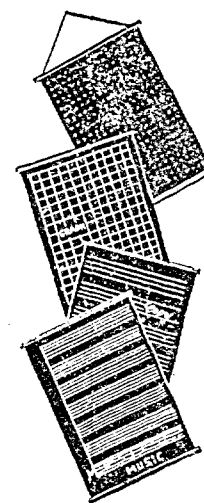
Takshasila :

Another centre of learning and scholarship was Takshasila, now known as Taxila. When the place began its work it is very difficult to say but it was well known in the days of the Maha Bharata as we see many references to the centre : the Bhagavatha Purana also refers to many sacrifices done here. King Janamejaya often visited this place and himself took part in a famous sacrifice (Satra Yaga). Its fame and glory was in the early centuries of the Buddhist culture and a detailed information of the place will be given, therefore, when we come to the progress and promotion of learning in the Buddhist Period.

Other places :

Benares was also known in this period as a famous centre of higher studies. So also Ayodhya and Mithila. All the ancient texts of this period refer to these places.

(To be continued)



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AFRO-ASIAN EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCE

By PAUL S. WELTY

The executive of the W.C.O.T.P. appointed a Preparatory Committee for taking steps to organise an Afro-Asian Teachers' Conference for the purpose of taking effective steps for promoting east-west understanding and for strengthening teachers' organisations. A preliminary meeting of the members present at Frankfurt had an informal discussion on the plans for the conference including such items as topics for discussion — associations to be invited as delegates and observers and about the tentative programme of the conference. The members of the Preparatory Committee are :

1. Mr. S. Natarajan (India)
Chairman
2. Mr. J. D. Aseervatham (Ceylon)
Secretary
3. Mr. Ricardo Castro (Philippines)
Member
4. Mr. U Myat Htun (Burma)
Member
5. Mrs. Ora M. Horton (Liberia)
Member
6. Dr. Paul S. Welty (W.C.O.T.P. Secretariat)
Member

It was decided at this informal meeting that the conference may be held at Ceylon some time in April. The Committee could not meet, but by correspondence it was decided to issue a questionnaire. The questionnaire was drafted and approved by the members of the Committee and the Secretary General of the W.C.O.T.P. Taking note of the suggestions received, the questionnaire was redrafted and sent to the National Association affiliated to the W.C.O.T.P. and other organisations having fraternal relations with the W.C.O.T.P. in the Afro-Asian Regions, as it was agreed that the former should send delegates and the latter should be invited to send

observers. The Committee of the Ceylon Teachers' Union was kind enough to study the replies received and prepare some working papers.

On March 6th, the Chairman of the Committee visited Colombo and discussed with the Secretary of the Committee and Executive Officers of the All Ceylon Union of Teachers the plans and programmes of the Conference, the accommodation for the delegates and other matters relating to the conference. With the approval of the Secretary General of the W.C.O.T.P. it was decided to have the conference from 22-30 April, 1958.

A meeting of the Preparatory Committee was held on April 22, at Colombo at 9-30 a.m. when the detailed programme was finalised. The conference was inaugurated by the Hon. Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandarnaike, Prime Minister of Ceylon, who in the course of his address stressed the importance of the conference and paid tribute to the teachers of the world in having played a very important part in fashioning and shaping the youth. He stressed the fact that at this time throughout the world and particularly in the Afro-Asian Regions where many countries have recently re-emerged in freedom the teachers' role was very crucial. In a world with all kinds of conflicts, dividing man from man, there was great danger that these conflicts if permitted to go too far might result in an explosion that would probably spell the destruction of the human race. Mr. Bandarnaike said that the great task facing the people of the world today was to secure and achieve unity in diversity and called upon teachers to work for the realisation of the essential unity of a common humanity. He said that the teachers assembled there were in a very favourable position to adjust their minds to that task as they were dealing with the young, fashioning their minds, training them to think and developing their character. He then referred to many pressing problems in the

field of education in the Afro-Asian countries.

The Conference also had the privilege of an address from the Hon. Mr. W. Dahanayake, Minister of Education, Ceylon. He outlined the main difficulties that they had to encounter in Ceylon in the field of education. He said : "to put it briefly to you my main problem is how I can find the money to improve the schools. I know how they can be improved. I know in which direction they can be improved. But I really do not know how I could find so much of money to improve them". This is the problem which all countries and particularly the countries in this region were facing. This was followed by my outlining the programme of the conference and the task before the delegates. Mr. A. S. Kanagaratnam, President, All-Ceylon Union of Teachers welcomed the delegates.

On the 23rd., there was a plenary session which considered the theme of the role of African and Asian Teachers in the promotion of East-West understanding. Mr. Teerath Ram, President, Malayan Teacher National Congress (in the unavoidable absence of Prof. D. C. Sharma of India) spoke of the culture of Asia. The conference had the benefit of another address later from Dr. F. L. Bartels of Ghana. On the 24th Mr. E. E. Esua of Nigeria, addressed the conference on 'Promoting the economic and professional interests of teachers'.

Sir Ronald Gould, President of the W.C.O.T.P. was kind enough to halt in Colombo on his way to New Zealand and graciously addressed the conference. The conference then split up into two groups : 1. To consider the role of Afro-Asian Teachers in the promotion of East-West understanding and 2. in promoting the economic and professional interests of teachers. Mr. W. D. E. Perera of Ceylon and Mrs. Mary Antoinette Brown, Liberia acted as Chairman and Rapporteurs of the first group. Mr. Isabelo Tupas (Philippines) and Mr. E. E. Esua (Nigeria) acted as Chairman and Rapporteurs of the second group.

Saturday and Sunday were spent on excursions and the delegates were taken to Sigeria and to Kandy where the Kandy Teachers' Association were At Home to the delegates. On Monday the reports of these two groups were considered and adopted. Then the Plenary Session took up for consideration the topic "Public Support of Education" and later "Ways of strengthening and developing Teachers' Organisations". The conference then split up into four groups.

1. Public Support of Education ;
2. Ways of strengthening and developing Teachers' Organisations ;
3. Curriculum ;
4. Text-books and other Teaching Aids.
The names of the Rapporteurs and the Chairmen of these four groups are given below :

1. Public Support of Education —
Chairman : Mr. T. Ooshika (Japan), *Rapporteurs* : Mr. Jose V. Tuazon (Philippines).
2. Ways of Strengthening and Developing Teachers Organisations —
Chairman : Dr. Doo Hun Kim (Korea), *Rapporteurs* : Mr. Lum Kin Tuck (Malaya).
3. Curriculum — *Chairman* : Miss Christabelle Sein (Burma), *Rapporteurs* : Mr. G. W. Mulindwa (Uganda).
4. Test-Books and other Teaching Aids — *Chairman* : Mrs. Ora M. Horton (Liberia), *Rapporteurs* : Dr. (Miss) Y. Y. Ma (Hong Kong).

On the 30th at the Plenary Session, the reports of these four groups were received and the resolutions recommended by the Resolution Committee were adopted.

The All-Ceylon Union of Teachers had made excellent arrangements not only for the comfortable stay of the delegates in the Grand Oriental Hotel where the conference sessions too were held but provided ample opportunities to the delegates for understanding and appreciating Ceylon and its ways of life. The All Ceylon Union of Teachers was At Home

to the delegates on the 23rd April. Special dinner was provided in honour of the President, the Vice-President and Assistant Secretary General of the W.C.O.T.P. The Hon. Minister for Education of Ceylon was At Home to the delegates on Tuesday the 29th. April, where he endeared himself to all the delegates by the personal interest he took in everyone of the delegates and by the interest he played in understanding how several educational problems were being tackled in the several countries. A special film show depicting Ceylon Independence Day celebration was also a part of this At Home provided by the Hon. Minister of Education, Ceylon.

The United Nations Organisation UNA, UN, FAO, ILO and United Nations Educational, Scientific & Cultural Organisation were represented at the Conference.

Two recommendations of the conference may be specially mentioned :

1. The conference resolved to request the W.C.O.T.P. to set up a Consultative Committee for Asia and to request the executive to allow the Preparatory Committee to continue to work towards the implementation of the recommendations of the Conference until such time as the executive of the W.C.O.T.P. would make other arrangements.

2. A "Teachers' Charter" should be drawn-up by the World Confederation. Towards that end, the Teachers' Charter drawn-up by the All-India Federation of Educational Associations is commended.

Special mention should be made of the work of Shri Aseervatham, the Secretary of the Preparatory Committee on whom fell the whole burden of organising this conference. I must also express my thanks to the members of the All-Ceylon Union of Teachers and the Colombo Teachers' Association for the very able and valuable assistance and support they gave to Mr. Aseervatham in this task. I would like to record my debt of gratitude to Mr. Ricardo Castro a member of the Preparatory Committee for his valuable help. For several sessions of the conference, he had to take the chair and conduct the proceedings which he did with remarkable ability and good humour. I should also like to record my appreciation of his work as Chairman of the Resolution Committee. The members of the Resolution Committee had a difficult task as they had to get all the report of the groups before they could finalise their resolutions. They worked till late on the night of April 29, and did a magnificent job. The resolutions were adopted without any division at the conference. I must also be permitted to express my grateful thanks to the Chairman and Rapporteurs of the various groups, to the members of the Preparatory Committee and to the President, Secretary General and Assistant Secretary General and the staff of the W.C.O.T.P. for valuable assistance rendered.

[The presidential address by Sri S. Natarajan appeared in our previous issue.—Ed.]

OUR UNIVERSITY EDUCATION

SHAMSUDDIN, M.A., B.T., M.Ed., Raipur, M.P.

It would not be unjustifiable if an educated Indian is called a "foreign product." This remark is on the basis that the foreign education has been transplanted into Indian soil through our Universities and as such they are not able to mirror the slightest tinge of the native culture of the country. By the manipu-

lation of the strange Governmental hydroponics the foreigners produced only large armies of informed and westernized individuals who are mere tools and cogs of the machinery of administration. This was the aim of the founders (all foreigners) of our Universities which was successfully carried out. In the eyes of our

leaders and benefactors it (system of universities) was a corroding thing for the very soul of India, yet it is being maintained inspite of the fact that India is now a free country. Even today our Universities are producing armies of graduates who are mentally no better than those produced hundred years ago. If a handful of Indians could win laurels in the fields of science, philosophy or literature, it has not at all solved the great problem and has not brought about the necessary changes in our University education. The present average Indian graduate can in no sense be called really a true Indian because the tradition and the atmosphere in which he has been brought up is not Indian. He cannot be termed as a westernised man either. In fact he belongs to a class of people who have lost their moorings in a stormy sea. And all this is due to our University education which on the one hand broadens the mental outlook of students and multiplies their material wants and on the other hand, undermines their faith in tradition and culture.

It is a bitter fact that our University education has simply imitated the western traditions, and has been totally unsuccessful to integrate the western ideals with Indian ideals. In western countries, at least, they follow one principle of university traditions right from Abelard to Einstein but in India there has been a yawning abyss between the ancient Universities of Taxila and Nalanda and their modern counterparts in Bombay, Madras and Calcutta. This abyss needs be bridged over if we really and earnestly desire that our universities

should play their proper role in free India. The burning problem of the day is to create ferment which may direct rehabilitation of Indian moral values in University education. Those who are holding the reins of University education should realise the spiritual needs of the nation by analysing the national characteristics and reorientate the present system of education in such a way that the pupils may become perfect in Indian values of morality, catholicity and spirituality along with the acquisition of scientific knowledge of the western countries.

Our Universities must provide true education in order to make our pupils true Indians irrespective of caste, creed, sex, race, or religion. It should provide university of spirit which defies sectarianism and exclusiveness in all spheres of life. In fact, true Indian spirit is meant for synthesis and not for analysis. It should be complementary and not competitive. Thus in brief our University education should follow the real Indian spirit and its traditions.

So, to conclude, I would request the Indian Educationists to give a serious thought to the genuine need of the hour and to find out a proper solution at this juncture when the three oldest Universities of India have already celebrated their centenaries. The Indian educationists should now reinterpret the self-perpetuating spirit of India. They should move heaven and earth to find out a new but proper system of University education so as to provide knowledge in its real sense and produce worthy citizens of the soil.

VALUE OF MUSEUMS IN SECONDARY EDUCATION

M. S. CHANDRASEKHAR, B.Sc., F.B.S.

*Curator, Botany and Geology Section,
Govt. Museum, Madras*

In Greek the word Museum means the Muses' realm (a sacred temple). The ancient Greeks viewed that the study of philosophy was service rendered to the Muses, and considered all fields of study as philosophy. Any place of study therefore came to be referred to as a Museum. But later on, some degeneration set in and the museums were considered merely as repositories of antiquities. In the modern world the original meaning of the word Museum, stands revived. There are several types of museums : commercial, advertising, propaganda, recreational, educational, etc., based on the purposes served. The educational museums with which we are concerned, can be further classified into several kinds in accordance with the groups of persons intended for, or the subjects dealt with. Thus we have the children's museums, school museums, college museums, science museums, art galleries, etc. There may also be large all-in-one museums dealing collectively with all the subjects of study, and generally referred to as the multi-purpose museums. The subject in these pages confines itself to the school museums only, or to that part of a multi-purpose museum, which caters for the schools. The school museum is principally intended for the school children, and should illustrate the school studies in all their aspects. Its value does not consist so much in the number as in the order and arrangement of its exhibits.

Secondary education interconnects basic (and/or primary) education on one hand and university education on the other ; and it is also complete in itself with aims and ideals of general culture, so that the pupils passing out may take up university courses or some career in life.

It is therefore of the utmost importance, both for pursuing higher studies and for becoming useful citizens, that a proper understanding of the lessons is ensured in the secondary education. To achieve this objective, what can assist the teacher better than the teaching aids ? There are so many such aids by utilising which the teacher can render his own task easy for himself. Of them all, the visual aids seem to rank foremost in importance. Time and again much emphasis has been laid on the visual aids, and any mention of them here will only be superfluous. If the aid materials could be kept neatly arranged in some definite order, and rendered attractive, will it not stimulate the latent interest in the students to study and understand the objects better ? Herein comes the value of a school museum. Even a worthless object, when carefully mounted and clearly labelled so as to bring out some definite relation to the other equally common objects, becomes interesting and thus teaches a lesson.

A museum is as much a place of learning as any library. In a library we find numerous books classified, indexed, and arranged in an easily accessible order, so that those who run may read. In a museum too, we find the same service, but with the difference that the books are replaced with the actual specimens studied.

The exhibits of a school museum can be used as teaching aids by a teacher when teaching a lesson. They (the exhibits) do not therefore add to his burden, but assist him in his work. The students can also use the same exhibits as understanding or learning aids (!). The museum enables the students to familia-

rise themselves with the different, practical applications of scientific principles, or with their own cultural history. It facilitates also easy and comparative study of even the widely-different and widely-distributed specimens of natural science.

Small, attractively-presented, school-museum exhibits will also inspire the students to collect and preserve similar materials as hobbies. Objects easy to handle such as for instance, feathers, insects, shells, flowers, dry fruits, seeds, minerals, rock samples, postage stamps, etc., can be collected and preserved as hobbies. They will throw open easy roads to unlimited comparative studies of the objects concerned.

The exhibits keep the students' interest in them sustained, if they are allowed to

be freely handled and examined. This will also enable the students to perceive the objects through the sense of touch in addition to the senses of vision and audition. The exhibits thus rendered familiar to the students, will be remembered indefinitely by them, especially if the study in the museum is closely followed by group-discussions which, in their turn, will also develop ability to judge correctly and quickly.

It will thus be seen that the museums in secondary education have a very important role to play, although their value cannot be gauged in precise terms of any unit of measure. A secondary education without the aid of museum exhibits, will produce such men as those who can boast of all (theoretical) knowledge of swimming, without ever having entered water at any time of their life !

OUR PARLIAMENT

By

M. ANANTHASAYANAM AYYANGAR

Speaker, Lok Sabha.

Tamil Edition

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HARNESSING COMMUNITY SERVICE FOR EDUCATION

Pilot Project in Tirunelveli

N. D. SUNDARAVADIVELU,

Director of Public Instruction, Madras

Today one notices in every nook and corner of this State great awakening in every field. The National Movement for Freedom has not only helped the masses to awaken from political slumber but also to realise the intense and urgent need for social and economic emancipation. There is not a single village, where an officer or a representative of the Government is not presented with a request for a new school or for upgrading an existing school, or for some other educational facility. This augurs well for our new born Republic. Any one interested in the welfare of this nation would capitalise it to the utmost.

NEW BUILDINGS

When we travel through country tracts, the only bright, good-looking building that attracts one's attention, in nine out of ten cases, is the elementary school building. One is filled with joy at this spectacle of a decent school building for our little children. This is a great contrast to the sad spectacle that officers of the department had to witness some 20 years back, when the only building they could point out for an elementary school to be started, would be something like a cow-shed. These new buildings are the symbols of the people's interest in education and their determination to contribute their mite to the cause of education.

The people's voluntary movement for free school meals was inaugurated in this State in July, 1956, and by now it has spread about to 10,000 elementary schools, providing meals for about 2,80,000 elementary school children. This does not include the 1,500 elemen-

tary schools, which provide mid-day meals entirely at the expense of the taxpayer. In addition, the scheme is functioning in about 500 Secondary schools, providing meals for about 25,000 students entirely out of public subscription. One area in which all the Elementary schools have this provision is the National Extension Block of Kadambattur in Chingleput District. Kadambattur is a small village, the headquarters of the Kadambattur N.E.S. Block, with a Railway station, on the Arkonam-Madras line. Though small, it happens to be the headquarters of the National Extension Service Block. Some months back it came to my notice that all the 76 schools in that block were providing free mid-day meals continuously for over six months. Such a state of affairs could have been possible only if two factors were present. They are: that the public as a whole were willing to sacrifice and the teachers as a lot were co-operating with the villagers and enjoyed their full confidence for that long period.

LACK OF FACILITIES

A comprehensive and detailed survey of the conditions and requirements of every school in that block was made and this was a revelation. It not only revealed that, here and there, fine buildings were coming up but also revealed something which is true in many spheres of our activities, viz., that the old institutions were languishing. The school buildings, put up by our equally well-intentioned forefathers, were getting dilapidated, the doors were broken, the windows were not there and the roofs were blown off month after month. I came

across buildings that were completely inadequate, if not unsuitable as in the above case. To quote one instance, a fairly big Board lower elementary school with an average attendance of 115 and a staff of five teachers had to its credit only 45 school places. Five teachers and 115 children had to carry on their work in that cramped "big room" and still results had to be produced!

A good number of schools in this block had been converted into Basic Schools. One of the basic activities of any good basic school is education in cleanliness, both individual and environmental. Truth is stranger than fiction. In this block it was found that most of these Basic Schools did not have even a urinal for either the teachers or the students.

INADEQUATE

This is true even of girls' schools. One sadly wonders if we are not caricaturing Basic Education! Looking into the inside of these buildings—both unsuitable and inadequate—one found an equally unsatisfactory state of affairs. Schools which had not been white-washed for years were in large numbers. Equally inadequate was the supply of teaching aids and other equipment. In many schools the blackboard was as white as good bleached satin cloth. Garden was a thing that was more talked of than seen in most of the schools. This, in short, was the actual picture of Elementary schools in the block.

One can say with certainty that this is not an unusual picture but a typical picture of things at the elementary school stage. Continued concentration of attention, however urgent and deserving, at other levels of Education, has affected Elementary schools grievously.

AN EYE-OPENER

In one case when the headmaster of an elementary school was questioned as to what he had done for getting the school building white-washed the reply, that came out of him, was indeed an eye-opener, and was the provocation for a new approach to the problem of keeping

the elementary schools in proper condition. The headmaster produced a big file—a heap of correspondence from him to the District Board and from the District Board to the headmaster. The correspondence related to a request of the headmaster for the sanction of a small sum for white-washing the building. The correspondence had ranged over four years, but still the schoolhouse was not white-washed. On further questioning, the headmaster said that white-washing that school building would not cost more than Rs.4 or 5. Actually the cost of postage on the correspondence from both ends alone would have exceeded Rs. 10. It is worthwhile pondering over the question whether, after all, the best form of economy is to look to an outside agency, statutory or otherwise, for a petty little expenditure on things like whitewashing and blackening the "black-boards" that were no longer black.

PUBLIC CO-OPERATION

Even if the District Board had sanctioned that amount promptly, wherefrom would that money have come? It certainly should come from the tax-payer either in the form of taxes or rates. Is it not possible to decentralise the maintenance of the village school and set the local public to take the initiative to do it at their own cost locally, without writing to others and getting it from them even though they might be willing to pay for it, rather heavily? These questions came up to my mind. So a suggestion was made to the teachers in every school to contact the local public, not in a formal gathering but informally, apprise them of the requirements of each school, and suggest to them that they might, in the interest of their own children, supply locally, as many of these requirements as possible. Care was taken to see that nobody was compelled to do anything nor was any priority suggested to the public. The choice and responsibility was left entirely to the pleasure of the individual.

PRIORITIES

Having listed out the requirements, the teachers and the public, in consulta-

tion with the officers, applied their minds to the fixation of priorities. The priorities depended, not always on the urgency of a particular requirement but was decided by the capacity and the desire of the local public to come into the picture and play their part. For instance, a school may require white-washing, a time-piece and additional accommodation. Additional accommodation may be the most urgent need as in the case of the school cited above. But whether that project was to be taken up first or not, will depend on the capacity and preparedness of the villagers to contribute adequately. When it was found that the villagers could make only a small contribution, the projects that could be taken up were limited to white-washing or/and the supply of a time-piece, according to the resources available. This helped the village community, as a whole to gain self-confidence. A small job, done successfully, as planned, will infuse greater confidence and a better sense of achievement than a substantial job, beyond their means attempted successfully. The result was that everywhere people came forward to provide, if not all the requirements, at least a good number of them and have promised the necessary material and monetary contribution.

KADAMBATTUR CONFERENCE

Having harnessed public co-operation, support and aid in this manner, a conference of all the teachers of the 76 schools and the village leaders was called at Kadambattur, on Feb. 20. In that conference headmasters of all the schools came up to the dais one after another and announced the name of his school, the various things that he required and the names of the donors that were undertaking to provide some or all of the requirements in kind and cash. For all small items, the donations were actually handed over at the conference in the presence of the gathering, either in kind or cash. For big schemes like construction of school buildings, only a token donation was given at the conference with the promise that the full amount would be provided as and when the work progressed.

TEACHERS' GESTURE

The enthusiasm and the spirit of co-operation was so infectious that at the conference some of the elementary school teachers, who after all are not too well-paid, came up spontaneously to the dais and donated a few small sums for one thing or another. The result of this effort to gather financial help from every village was that schemes to the value of Rs. 15,000 were undertaken and cash-and-kind donations of the value of Rs. 1,300 were handed over at the conference to the persons concerned.

To summarise, 16 schools proposed to put up additional buildings or effect repairs to buildings. 18 schools proposed to supply additional furniture or equipment or maps and charts or other teaching aids. 8 schools proposed to put up latrines and urinals. 6 schools have taken up the supply of clothing to the poor pupils. 33 schools have taken up the supply of books and slates, including library books. 21 schools proposed to improve their gardens. 6 schools undertook to supply time-pieces. 5 schools proposed to white-wash school buildings. 4 schemes related to the introduction of bee-keeping in schools. One school proposed to start a Poultry Farm. 22 schools have taken up supply of cooking vessels and drinking water tubs. 61 schools undertook additional enrolment of children and 24 schools to acquire poramboke lands for playground and/or gardening.

These schemes were expected to be put through in the course of three or four months. A tour of this Block early in July, 1958, revealed that all small schemes have been completed, bigger ones are being implemented as per the plan, and the question of acquisition of poramboke lands, is under active consideration.

"CONTAGION" SPREADS

This "contagion" of public co-operation and contribution for the improvement of schools spread to the neighbouring Block of Tiruvellore in the same district. There, schemes to the value of

Rs. 25,000 were undertaken and donations of Rs. 13,000 in cash and kind were actually presented at the conference. It has now been found that this was not a momentary enthusiasm, but a sustained effort.

An Officer of the Ministry of Community Projects, Government of India, came to the conference by an accident. By this the Ministry of Community Projects, Government of India, were apprised of this Pilot Project in our State. It caught their imagination and the Ministry realised the potentialities of this new endeavour in community service for education.

We can be proud of the fact that this project has been commended by them to all the other States in India.

MOVEMENT GATHERS MOMENTUM

Till then, this new Pilot Project was like a lonely path in the wilderness. It was not yet the high way to progress. But when the Government of India considered it fit to commend it to other States, it made us, the Officers of the Education Department of Madras State, feel more responsible, and it called for more widespread and sustained efforts on our part so that, we, the pioneers, may not be found ultimately lagging behind. To this end, this experiment which started as a Pilot Project was taken up on a systematic manner throughout the State.

As usual, the silent school master has taken to it quietly, though enthusiastically, and is doing his best in national reconstruction. It is gratifying to note that the public have also realised not only the need for more and more education for every one but also have realised that, if not the pleasure and proud privilege of fighting for the freedom of this country, at least the equally intense pleasure and proud privilege of working for freedom from ignorance could be theirs. So, most of the Development Blocks in every district are vying with each other, because the public do not want to feel that they have missed one more golden opportunity of serving our Motherland. The Officers

of the department, with the co-operation of Officers of other departments, especially of the Development Department, and the support, both moral and material of the public at large, are organising such comprehensive educational development projects.

AT VALLIYUR

It was only the other day, viz., on July 25, that Mr. C. Subramaniam, Minister for Education and Finance, inaugurated a well-attended and successful Co-ordination Conference for this purpose at Valliyur N.E.S. Block of Tirunelveli District. To the pleasant surprise of the Minister and even the organisers of the project, cash to the value of Rs. 28,000 was actually handed over to him for various schemes for the improvement of schools. Each one of the 102 Elementary Schools in the Block area was provided at that conference with a nucleus of a library consisting of about 46 books. The usual schemes for improvement like provision of additional accommodation, white-washing the school buildings, supply of furniture, laying out gardens, supply of books and slates, charkas, beehives and seedlings have also been undertaken. The total cost of all the schemes undertaken in this Valliyur Block comes to Rs. 1.27 lakhs. The plan is that petty little items like minor repairs, maintenance etc., of schools should be looked after by the local community itself, without depending on any outside agency, statutory or otherwise.

STUDY CLASSES

One special feature of the schemes undertaken for improvement of education in this Block is the organisation of Supervised Study Classes in the nights for day scholars who are slow learners and who have no facilities at home for study. This has been undertaken in as many as 21 Higher Elementary Schools.

A similar conference has been inaugurated at Tisayanvilai of Radhapuram N.E.S. Block of Tirunelveli District on July 28, by Mr. K. Kamaraj. As expected it has proved a great success. A total of 666 schemes have been undertaken for

the improvement of the 103 schools in the N.E.S. Block area, at a cost of Rs. 1.33 lakhs. Towards this a sum of Rs. 41,000 was actually handed over to the Chief Minister at the conference. Both from the point of view of the number of schemes undertaken and the amount contributed, the Tisayanvilai Conference has proved to be the most fruitful of the projects so far undertaken.

NEW PATH

This new path has given us the opportunity of canalising the enthusiasm and the spirit of sacrifice of the public for a crying social need. It is expected, that by sustained effort, it will be possible to ensure that in future the school will be

really the school of the village community, both with regard to its utility and with regard to the responsibility for its maintenance. Corporate authorities need, then, come into the picture only for big schemes which will not be within the capacity of the small village community.

This new approach is so novel and untried that it is natural to be sceptical. The enthusiasm is so remarkable that it could be believed only by actually witnessing it. So let every one, whether an officer or a teacher or a citizen, dedicate himself to this new and noble endeavour of Coordinated Community Development with a real understanding of the value of this scheme and full Faith in the Fundamental Goodness of our people.

THE S. I. T. U. BENEVOLENT FUND

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6 Sri C. Ranganatha Aiyengar (1958-59).

5 Sri K. S. Chengalroya Iyer (1958-60).

143 Sri T. V. Ramanujachari (1955-59).

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3437 Sri S. Melcureraj.

Second reminder has been sent to all the subscribers. Concerned Teachers' Associations are kindly requested to collect and remit the amount at a very early date.

12-7-1958

Administrator.

LIBRARY SERVICE IN MADRAS STATE

(A Critical Study)

T. PURUSHOTHAM, M.L.C., Madras.

Madras has led the way in almost all progressive reforms in our country. A comprehensive legislation of library service is one such forward move. It was hailed on all hands as a Magna Carta of cultural renaissance in urban and rural areas. The Madras Public Libraries Act contemplates not merely the opening of a few libraries here and there, but it is specifically provided in the Act that the libraries should function as nerve centres of literary activity and social progress. How far such ideals have been realised is indeed an interesting study.

Local Library Authorities have been established in all the districts as laid down in the Act. Schemes of library development have been drawn up and district, central and branch libraries have been opened in accordance with the schemes. These libraries are run on routine lines and very little evidence is there of other activities aimed at literary propaganda and social education. A re-orientation of the ethics of library service with emphasis on such activities is the need of a welfare state and the sooner it is done the better, to stop the rot of the present trends in library administration.

Loud critics are there whose pet theme is that the present organisational set up is all to blame for the inefficient state of library service and that the remedy is the creation of a separate Directorate of Public Libraries. All that is quite good but library service is part of our educational system and the present unified control of the two departments should not be disturbed. Certainly the Director of Public Education should have on the library wing an expert in library service to guide and control the library activities in the State. That is lacking at present and the lacuna should be redressed.

More than reform at the top, the crux of the whole problem is the sort of personnel drafted for library work. Trained librarian is a rare commodity. Raw men from the school are appointed to run these institutions and the result is colossal bungling from start to finish. Nor do they stick on for any length of time. No sooner do some of them get a little experience, than they take to their wings. This is the real state in which our libraries under the Local Library Authorities are functioning with a few exceptions here and there. If you want to make these libraries serve their purpose, effective steps should be taken to arrange for a course of library training to be given to all these librarians at State cost with a guarantee from the trainees that they would serve the Library Authority for a minimum period.

The successful functioning of the Local Library Authority depends on many factors and none the least on the satisfactory discharge of

the executive duties. The executive functions of the Library Authority are vested in the District Educational Officer who is the Secretary of the Local Library Authority. The District Educational Officer has varied duties to perform and the library work is one of them. He is not hence able to devote much attention to this work. The result is delay and neglect. A full time assistant for library work, one experienced in that branch of work, should be appointed and then the District Educational Officer would be able to discharge his duty efficiently and well.

By far, finance is the major problem facing the expansion of the library movement. Municipalities and Panchayats are required to levy, collect and remit the library cess to the Local Library Fund. The local bodies are proverbially slack in their work. The better arrangement would be to include the library cess in the education tax and have it collected as such and the proportionate amount adjusted to the Local Library Authority. Unless the finances of the Local Library Authority are improved and placed on a sound footing, no progress of library service is ever possible.

The chief purpose of the Madras Public Libraries Act is to take the torch of library service to the villages. With that end in view, it is laid down in the Act that delivery stations should be started and spread out in rural areas. The scheme envisages the utilisation of the services of the village schoolmaster with a small remuneration to get books from the branch libraries and run the village libraries known as delivery stations, in the school premises out of school hours. Not all Local Library Authorities have started this experiment and those that started have not met with any success. The delivery stations run by our village schoolmaster met the same fate as the adult education centres run by them. The rural library scheme on the above lines was entrusted in some districts to village guides under the community project and N.E.S. schemes with no better result. The social education organisers are given rural training on several subjects. They should be given some library training as well and they should be entrusted with the organisation of an efficient system of library service in rural areas.

These and other problems connected with library administration were repeatedly brought to the notice of the Government in the discussion in our Legislative Council and the Minister for Education assured us that speedy measures would be taken to improve matters. It is a decade now the Madras Public Libraries Act has been functioning and it is time the Act is amended in the light of the achievements so far to make it a more potent vehicle for institution of an up to date library service in urban and rural areas. The above facts have also been placed before the Advisory Committee for Libraries appointed by the Central Ministry of Education and Scientific Research. It has been stated that in the Second Five Year Plan, India would launch a big library movement so that every village in this country might have a library. I sincerely hope that the dream would be realised soon.

EXECUTIVE BOARD

A meeting of the Executive Board of the South India Teachers' Union was held at 2 p.m. on Saturday the 19th July 1958 in the office of the Union, with Sri T. P. Srinivasavaradan, President of the Union in the chair.

The following members were present :

Messrs. N. Venkatachalam Iyengar (Vice-president), C. Ranganatha Aiyengar (Journal Secretary), B. Srinivasa Iyengar (Tiruchirapalli), P. S. Subramanian (Madurai), S. Ramiah (Tanjore), S. Subba Rao (Salem), E. Venkatesalu (Coimbatore), S. Krishnamurthi (North Arcot), V. B. Murthi (Assistant Journal Secretary), S. Y. Raj (North Arcot), T. S. Rajagopala Iyengar (Assistant Journal Secretary), P. V. Ramaswami (Treasurer), A. M. Kannappa Mudaliar (Administrator, S.I.T.U. Benevolent Fund), A. S. B. Philip (Tirunelveli), S. Natarajan (Chingleput), D. Sebastian (Ramnad), and V. Arunajatai (Secretary).

Letters expressing inability to attend the meeting were received from Sri K. M. Sundaram (Tanjore), Sri M. Rajah Iyer (Ramnad) and Mrs. Saraswathi Srinivasan (Vice-president).

The minutes of the last meeting were read and approved.

The President stated that the resolutions of the Conference had been communicated to the authorities with a memorandum. He further stated :

1. The Government have appointed a committee for the revision of the Grant-in-Aid Code.

2. The Government have appointed another committee for upgrading secondary schools into higher secondary schools.

3. The rules regarding grant of pension have been received and the reaction of the members of the teaching profession is awaited.

He reported that the South Arcot and Salem District Teachers' Guilds were not functioning properly. He suggested that

the Teachers' Associations in those two districts should be addressed to affiliate themselves directly with the Union and when a sufficient number of Associations had been affiliated the Guild could be revived. The Board approved of the suggestion.

The following members were elected to the Working Committee :—

1. Sri E. Venkatesalu (Coimbatore).
2. Sri R. Bhuvarahan (Tiruchirapalli).
3. Sri S. Krishnamurthi (North Arcot).
4. Sri P. S. Subramanian (Madurai).
5. Sri D. Sebastian (Ramnad).

The President nominated Sri S. Subba Rao (Salem) and Sri S. Ramiah (Tanjore) to the Working Committee.

Messrs. V. Soundararajan & Co., were elected for auditing the accounts of 1958-59.

Mr. S. Natarajan, Headmaster, Board High School, Walajabad, was elected Internal Auditor, for 1958-59.

The Board resolved to observe the 28th South Indian Education Week from 27th October to 1st November 1958.

The following members were nominated to the S.I.T.U. Council of Educational Research :—

1. Sri A. S. B. Philip.
2. Sri S. Krishnamurthi.
3. Sri E. Venkatesalu.

The Board suggested that the South India Teachers' Union might arrange to conduct Seminars this year. One in Mathematics at Coimbatore and the other in Tamil at Tirunelveli for 10 to 12 days during the Christmas holidays were suggested.

The Board authorised the President to represent to the authorities the difficulties experienced in elementary schools in the matter of appointing substitutes when teachers go on leave or retire in the normal course. It was suggested that other difficulties of elementary school

teachers should also be brought to the attention of the authorities by the President.

The Board passed the following resolutions :—

1. The Executive Board of the South India Teachers' Union is happy that the Madras State is the first to introduce pension scheme to the teachers and it thanks the Government for granting pension to all categories of teachers.

2. In the case of certain categories of teachers to whom pension has been granted from 1st April 1955, 25 per cent of the salary has been accepted as the principle for the grant of pension, whereas in the case of others to whom pension scheme has been extended, it has been arbitrarily fixed as Rs. 30 to L.T.'s and Rs. 35 as the maximum for headmasters. The Executive Board requests the Government to apply the same principle of 25 per cent of the salary for purposes of pension to all categories of teachers.

3. The Executive Board reiterates the resolution passed at the recent State Edu-

cational Conference that the extended pension scheme to L.T.'s, Physical Directors and First Grade Pandits should be given effect to from 1st April 1955.

4. The Executive Board welcomes the statement made by the Education Minister regarding proposals for educational concession being granted purely on consideration of economic backwardness, other considerations not being taken into account.

5. The Executive Board welcomes in general the changes contemplated in the types of questions for the S.S.L.C. Public examination, but expresses the opinion that the questions should be simple and direct covering the syllabus. It requests the Government to see that the model question papers are sent to schools before the 15th August 1958.

With a vote of thanks by the Secretary, the meeting terminated.

V. ARUNAJATAI,
Secretary

26th July 1958.

WORKING COMMITTEE

The newly formed Working Committee met soon after the meeting of the Executive Board and transacted the following business :—

1. It elected Sri C. Ranganatha Aiyengar as Journal Secretary and Messrs. V. B. Murthi, T. S. Rajagopala Iyengar and T. V. Krishnamurthi as Assistant Journal Secretaries.

2. It passed the Budget for the year 1958-59, as presented by the Secretary.

3. The Working Committee authorised the Journal Secretary and the Treasurer to close the *Balar Kalvi* account with the Indo-Commercial Bank, Mysore.

4. The Working Committee resolved to merge the *Balar Kalvi* account with the *South Indian Teacher* account.

5. The Working Committee resolved that the current and savings bank accounts of the South India Teachers' Union should be operated upon by the Secretary and the Treasurer jointly; and

The current and savings bank accounts of the *South Indian Teacher* should be operated upon by the Journal Secretary and the Treasurer jointly.

6. The Committee authorised the Treasurer to have Rs. 20/- as imprest cash.

7. The Working Committee resolved to request Sri V. B. Murthi to be Honorary Executive Secretary of the office of the South India Teachers' Union.

V. ARUNAJATAI
Secretary

26th July 1958.

OUR LETTER BOX

SCHOOL MANAGERMENTS

The Government of Madras have appointed an *ad hoc* committee to consider the necessary changes that should be brought into effect concurrently with the changes in the curricula of secondary education. They have also announced their decision to abandon their earlier proposal to hand over the secondary schools under the management of the district boards to the Unions of Village Panchayats and to place these secondary schools under committees to be statutorily constituted for groups of schools. In the issue of January, 1958, I had stressed that educational institutions should not be dragged into the mire of village faction and intrigue, and should be kept as sacred as possible. The Government's decision is welcome to all interested in the future of secondary education in our State, and is a great relief to the large body of teachers in the employ of the existing district boards.

The *ad hoc* committee has been asked to consider the view of the Legislature Committee that steps should be taken to ensure that "private managements of aided secondary schools are not hampered by restrictions which limit their power to take decision for day-to-day management of school affairs." "This view reads ominous and has raised apprehensions in the minds of headmasters and teachers that managements should not be vested with more powers so as to encroach upon the sphere of the "internal management" of schools. The proposals in this matter should be published for discussion by teachers and the public.

The proper constitution of the managing committees of aided secondary schools is another important matter for the consideration of the *ad hoc* committee. This is already a condition of recognition; and aided schools are to be run

by managing committees. But in practice, most managing committees leave the entire administration in the hands of the correspondent; they do not bother themselves even about vital matters affecting the school and the interests of teachers. The managing bodies, either by themselves as a body or by sub-committees with delegated functions, should look after the appointment of the requisite staff, termination of their services, sanction or withholding of annual increments, grant of gratuity to teachers with long service, provision of new curricula of studies, accommodation for increased strength and other problems. The decisions of the Correspondent, in many schools, are not even communicated to the other members of the committees; and vital matters are being decided by the arbitrary will of the Correspondent, without the knowledge and authorisation of the managing committees. The dictatorship or the one-man governance of an educational institution for an indefinite period causes injustice to individual teachers who, though efficient and hard working, may not know how to win favours; this system is not in accord with the democratic set-up in our national life. The *ad hoc* should suggest measures for the efficient functioning of the managing committees of aided secondary schools.

Another important matter entrusted to the *ad hoc* committee is the revision of the Grant-in-Aid Code. After a long period of years, the Code underwent revision in 1946. Section 32 of the Code which was considered an enigma defying elucidation was so modified as to enable managements to make profits and retain the profits for being spent on the improvements to the school to be made later. There is provision for making profits; for, whatever be the number of instalment of fees collected from pupils, the income from tuition fees is reckoned at standard rates, viz., eight instalments. The grant will be, according to this cal-

culuation, two-thirds of the full net cost plus 13-1/3% of the actual fees levied. The earning of profits is contemplated under rule 32 (iii) of the code. The profit is bound to be greater in the case of schools which levy fees higher than the rates fixed. The revised Company Law requires companies to deposit excess profits with the Government; the Govern-

ment is obliged to cut down projects in power and irrigation. Equity to the taxpayer cannot permit private managements to make and retain profits with Government-aid. Section 32 needs revision from this standpoint.

Coimbatore,

17-7-'58.

R. SRINIVASA IYENGAR

OUR BOOKSHELF

Report on the Seminar on Education and Community Development :

The report issued by the Department of Extension Services, Faculty of Education, Annamalai University, on the Seminar conducted by it from 29-3-1958 to 4-4-1958 contains paper, speeches and discussions relating to the subject and throws much light on the topic of the relation between the school and the community around.

Buniyadi Talim :

A quarterly journal of Education, Vol. I, No. 2 (April 1958) published by the Ministry of Education, Government of India, is devoted to various interesting aspects of basic education and seeks to clarify the features of basic education to the doubting Thomases. The articles both in English and Hindi are by eminent workers in the field of Basic Education.

Everyman's Encyclopaedia, Vol. I, A to BAP : By Dent. (C/o. Messrs. Macmillan & Co., Ltd., St. Martin's Street, London W.C.-2. Price 21 sh. before completion of the set and 24 sh. after completion).

This 1958 revised edition is the fourth one and is said to have undergone a thorough and careful revision. The revision has been effected in the light of the new knowledge and ideas of the last few years. We dare say that this edition will give a satisfactory answer to any question raised by the intelligent reader and will prove of great use in any library of reference.

The book is beautifully got up in size 7 3/4" x 5-1/8" (Large crown octavo). The publication of all the twelve volumes is expected to be completed by November 1958.

Education, Culture and Social Order :

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A Sociology of Education : By W. B. Brookover. (American Book Company, 55, Fifth Avenue, New York-3.)

In this excellently got up book the author makes a dynamic new study of the school as a social institution in four parts — 1. Introduction; 2. Human relations; 3. The school and personality; and 4. The school and the community.

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EDITORIAL

ADMISSION TO EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS :

The Vice-chancellor of the Madras University a few days back when the Mahajana College, Erode, was opened, warned against the practice of giving seats to sons of donors in colleges. This unhealthy practice ignores altogether merit, and poor deserving candidates have no chance of getting admission. It is not only in Arts and Science colleges that this most unwelcome practice exists, but we were told it exists even in some of the professional colleges. By shutting out students of talent, we are deliberately recruiting men of low calibre whom we all expect to run the administration of our country efficiently. The very atmosphere of such institutions will become uncongenial for sound education. Public institutions should always aim at high standards and try to serve the interests of the country. It is hoped that the managements of colleges will pay heed to the warning that has been given by the revered Vice-chancellor of the University.

SPREAD OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION :

We are glad to note that the Madras Government are taking active steps to start Elementary Schools in school-less areas. We further note with pleasure that in some of the rural parts, villagers have come forward with money and materials to build schools. Fountains of charity in our State have not yet dried up. We would like to bring to the notice of the Government one important factor which, though they all know, requires to be reiterated. Along with the construction of school buildings and giving mid-day meals, qualified teachers must be appointed. We have been urging that the salaries of teachers should be raised. There is no immediate prospect of this being done. But it is not a difficult thing for the villagers for whom the school is built to build houses for the teachers also. We do not ask for costly buildings but buildings just enough to live comfortably. If this is done this will go a long way to induce teachers who now think of urban life to go to rural areas and serve the community. The Government deserves to be congratulated on the

novel way of getting people interested in the spread of elementary education. Within the last five years many colleges, high schools and elementary schools have sprung up, mainly due to private benefactions. There is still one problem that remains yet to be tackled. There is dearth of qualified teachers. Unless steps are immediately taken to solve this, in a few years schools will be faced with inadequate staff. All the present efforts of starting new schools, both elementary and secondary, will go in vain if schools are either without adequate staff or with unqualified people as teachers.

STUDENTS' STRIKES :

Dr. Rajendra Prasad, President of the Indian Union, while he was in the city of Madras, addressed a students' rally at the Presidency College grounds. He welcomed as a wise decision the understanding among the leaders of the political parties in the Madras State that students should not take part in politics. He expressed the hope that the other States would adopt this decision. Unfortunately our political parties use students as their tools for their propaganda. In some places on flimsy grounds students go on strike. We have witnessed the tragic happenings of the students' strike at Lucknow, in the Kerala State and the havoc that has been done. We have also read in the papers that all is not well with the Benares University and politics has entered the sacred precincts of the University. The students of today have to run the administration of our country in the near future and unless they properly equip themselves the independence which we have won after a hard struggle will be very difficult to be maintained. We are unable to understand why students who are immature are made use of by the various political parties. If really they have any interest in the welfare of our State the politicians will keep their hands off. Let the politicians remember that a time will come when people will not tolerate any longer their unwanted interference in University affairs and students in educational institutions.

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