

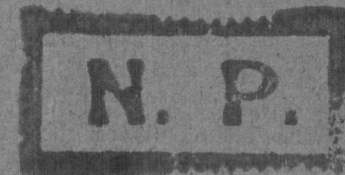
Government of Madras

HOME DEPARTMENT (EDUCATION).

G.O. No. 1175, 12th September 1917

Middle School Examination

Replying to a reference from the Government of India regarding the reconstitution of the —



INDEXED

N. P.

ORIGINAL

Government of Madras

HOME DEPARTMENT (EDUCATION).

G.O. No. 1175, 12th September 1917

Middle School Examination

Replying to a reference from the Government of India regarding the reconstitution of the —.

READ—the following papers:—

I

Letter—from the Hon'ble Sir E. D. MACLAGAN, K.C.I.E., C.S.I., Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Education (Education).

To—the Secretary to the Government of Madras, Home (Education) Department.

Dated—Simla, the 7th March 1917.

No.—217.

At the recent conference of Directors of Public Instruction which was held in Delhi in January last the question of the middle school examination was incidentally raised. Previous to 1904 the middle school course whether vernacular or English was closed by a departmental examination, but the question was considered at the conference of educationists held in September 1901 and in the resolution of the Government of India No. ¹⁹⁹ 377, dated the 14th March 1904, the recognised examinations in schools were reduced to two and the examination at the close of the middle English course was abolished. It is understood, however, that this middle English examination still persists in Burma and at the conference of Directors there appeared to be a feeling that the examination might be reconstituted in India.

2. The Government of India would be glad if the various local Governments would favour them with their opinions on the suggestion.

II

Endorsement No. 1424-1, Home (Education), dated 21st March 1917.

Referred to the Director of Public Instruction for favour of early remarks.

(By order)

E. A. HARVEY,

Under Secretary to Government.

To the Director of Public Instruction (with current in original to be returned with reply).

III

Letter—from the Hon'ble Mr. J. H. STONE, M.A., C.I.E., F.R.E.S., Director of Public Instruction.

To—the Secretary to Government, Home (Education) Department.

Dated—the 12th July 1917.

No.—Ref. on Cur. 2523.

With reference to Government endorsement No. 1424-1, dated the 21st March 1917, I have the honour to state that there are reasons for reconsidering the opinion expressed in the letter of the Government of India, Home Department (Education), No. 466, dated 6th November 1901, on examinations that there should be no public examinations other than those held by Universities except the School Final Examination at the end of the school course which led to the abolition of the lower secondary examination in this Presidency. The result of this has been that pupils who

are regularly promoted from year to year are subject to no other tests or progress during a course of eleven years than those imposed often perfunctorily by the schools themselves. This fact is, I think, *prima facie* a reason for reconsideration of the position particularly as the University thinks it necessary to examine its students every two years for a pass degree and at intervals of two and three years for Honours.

2. It is also the case that an examination at the end of the third form course would be useful for the following purposes, (1) directing and stimulating the work in the first three forms in secondary schools, (2) providing a certificate which would be useful for pupils whose formal education ends with the third form in obtaining employment or admission to training schools, and to headmasters in making admissions to fourth forms, (3) indicating to parents the capacities of their children and so helping them to decide their educational future, (4) affording evidence of sufficient general education for admission to elementary vocational courses, and (5) providing some check to the growing overcrowding of the three higher forms.

3. The view of the Simla conference of 1901 is given in paragraph 6 of the letter under reference and was that since public examinations lead to cram their number should be as far as possible limited and the final decision of the Government of India is found in paragraph 12 of their resolution of March 1904. It is further to be remembered that the middle school examination (later lower secondary examination) was also used to test the eligibility of pupils for results grants and that with the abolition of this system of grant-in-aid one reason for holding the examinations ceased to exist.

4. In recommending the abolition of the Madras lower secondary examination Dr. Bourne in 1905 advanced additional reasons for doing so in his Cur. No 5240, dated 13th June 1905. In his view all secondary schools ought to be "complete" i.e., should teach up to the sixth form and schools going up to the third form were merely preparatory and ought not to serve as 'end' schools, this function being performed for those unable to command a secondary education by higher elementary schools. Whatever theoretical value these views may have they were, when he wrote, contradicted by facts and still are so. We still have few higher elementary schools and many more incomplete than complete secondary schools and the number of pupils who do not go beyond the third form is considerable and shows no sign of diminution. There were in all secondary schools for boys 2,626 more pupils in the third than the fourth forms in 1914-15 and 2,875 in 1915-16, the percentage of pupils in the fourth form to those in the third being in both years 79. It is moreover certain that it would have been better from every point of view if many boys who joined the fourth form in these and previous years had not done so since of those who do join it only about three-fourths survive to the sixth.

5. There are therefore about 4,000 boys a year who leave school after an educational course of from eight to ten or more years without a completed leaving certificate. Those of them who leave after the fourth or fifth form can take with them their incomplete certificates and these are no doubt of some use but they contain only their schools' opinion as to their progress. An official certificate given at the end of the third form course would be of great value to these boys as well as to those who left school on completion of the third form course.

6. It is of course argued that these conveniences would be secured at too great a cost that the schools by the reintroduction of a lower secondary examination would once more be given over to a mere system of cram. We have now had experience of 13 years' work in the lower forms untrammelled by a public examination or even any prescribed courses of study. The courses laid down for the old lower secondary examination have in the main continued to be followed and with a view to meeting local conditions and needs and to freedom and elasticity teachers have been encouraged to make out their own syllabuses for the various subjects. No doubt this system is not unsatisfactory where the teachers are able and well qualified and an effective supervision is exercised by the headmaster and senior assistants of a high school, but the reports of inspectors convince me that in the majority of cases one or both of these conditions are not found and that guidance is the pressing need in the schools rather than freedom.

7. This opinion is confirmed by what happens to those boys who passing from the third form eventually reach the sixth. Only about 70 per cent of them qualify for admission to a University course many of them after returning for one or two years' supplementary course. This even allowing for the comparatively small number of those who never aimed at such a course represents a serious waste of time and energy. This guidance would be afforded by the prescription of systematic courses of study followed by a public examination, and I believe that such could be so devised as to leave all desirable freedom to the schools. The measure of such freedom could be increased as the development of the training system improves the staffing of the schools. In this Presidency we have, I think, been too much inclined to overlook practical conditions in the pursuit of the ideal. The reintroduction of a lower secondary examination will be condemned as a retrograde step. I should call it *reculer pour mieux sauter*.

8. I do not deny that the old middle school and lower secondary examinations led to cram, in the sense that teachers' minds were too much concentrated on the task of getting boys through the examination. I do not know whether in the Simla Conference the actual requirements and mode of carrying on these and similar examinations were discussed and the obvious alternative to their abolition—their improvement. I remember that I was myself asked for an opinion on the subject, and if I remember rightly advocated improvement because the knowledge of the examination I had obtained as Chairman of the Board for conducting it convinced me that it could hardly have been worse managed. The Chairman was usually an officer who had, in addition to his own work, a University examination work and sometimes the upper secondary examination to manage too. The examiners were people who had not been selected as examiners or assistants by the University, the courses of study were mostly such as would now be condemned as pedagogically unsound, the papers set as might be expected tested largely memory of imperfectly correlated facts. It is to be remembered also that the examination was a Government test, not so much devised to mark the completion of a stage of education as to determine fitness for Government employment.

9. I do not think that the evils resulting from it, and even these I believe were exaggerated, at all conclusively prove that the disadvantages of providing some kind of public examination at the close of a middle school course outweigh its advantages. The system of examination I have in mind would of course seek to avoid the defects of the old system. It should be conducted by local committees for each Inspector's circle or for smaller areas homogeneous as regards language consisting of inspecting officers and teachers and each pupil should sit for it in his own school. Probably some of the papers would be set by an outside authority, e.g., the Secondary School Leaving Certificate Board, and distributed from Madras. The examinations should be in the vernacular of the pupil, English being treated as a 'second' and not as in the old system a 'first' language. The examination should follow courses of instruction laid down on pedagogic grounds and without any reference to what, from the point of view of Government service, it might be supposed a pupil ought to know. Minimum marks for separate subjects should be sparingly required. Pupils who obtained a reasonable percentage should usually pass. The only necessary exception that occurs to me is English in which pupils wishing to continue their high school education must show reasonable competence.

10. It would no doubt be well if some part of the examination were viva voce and conducted by the Inspector, but this would be subject to the obvious disadvantage that examinations of this kind would be going on throughout the year and anything like uniformity throughout even a circle would be secured with difficulty. Moreover schools examined in this way would be tempted to neglect viva voce work in English after the examination had been held. With a larger inspectorate the viva voce element might perhaps be introduced.

11. It remains to notice a statement often made in the discussions on the old lower secondary examination—that it subjected children to the strain of a public examination. The average age for entering the University course is now about 18. This would give the average age for completing the third form as 15. I think that

making allowance for boys taking more than three years to complete the three higher forms the majority of boys completing the third form are probably about 14, certainly over 13, and this view is confirmed by the figures compiled for Mr. Sharp's last quinquennial report.

12. I am bound to add that so far as I have had opportunities of gauging educational opinion my views meet with only partial approval. A bare majority of the Secondary School Leaving Certificate Board were in agreement with them, but when recently certain representative headmasters were invited to meet the Board and I informally discussed the question with them a decided majority were opposed to the idea.

Order—No. 1175, Home (Education), dated the 12th September 1917.

The Government of India will be addressed.

(True extract)

R. RAMACHANDRA RAO,
Secretary to Government.

To the Director of Public Instruction.

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS

HOME DEPARTMENT

(Education)

No. 1176.

From

THE HON'BLE DIWAN BAHADUR

R. RAMACHANDRA RAO AVARGAL,

Secretary to the Government of Madras,

Home (Education) Department,

To

THE SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA,

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION.

Dated Ootacamund, the 12th September 1917.

SIR,

In reply to Sir Edward Maclagan's letter No. 217, dated the 7th March 1917, regarding the reconstitution of the middle school examination, I am directed to state that, in the opinion of His Excellency the Governor in Council, the present time is inopportune for the consideration of the subject.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

R. RAMACHANDRA RAO,

Secretary to Government.

HOME (EDUCATION) DEPARTMENT.

NOTES CONNECTED WITH G.O. Nos. 1175-76, HOME (EDUCATION),
DATED THE 12TH SEPTEMBER 1917

[SUBJECT.— *Reconstitution of the Middle School Examination.*]

Previous papers :

G.O.	678,	Educational,	21st Nov. 1901	G.O.	44,	Educational,	30th Jan. 1905
"	709	"	4th Dec. "	"	373	"	3rd June "
"	764	"	15th "	"	409	"	15th "
"	319-20	"	28th May 1902	"	443	"	29th "
"	428	"	24th July "	"	510	"	9th July 1908
"	492-93	"	20th Aug. "	"	427	"	21st " 1909
"	144-45	"	30th Mar. 1903	"	394	"	1st May 1913
"	215-16	"	6th Apr. 1904	"	178	"	17th Feb. 1916
"	520	"	22nd Aug. "				

From the Government of India, dated 7th March 1917, No. 217.

From the Director of Public Instruction, dated 12th July 1917, No. 2525.

The Educational Conference held at Simla in 1901 recognized that the deterioration which was then found to have taken place in the system of education in India and the cramming which was one of its worst features were in a great measure due to the frequent public examinations which had to be passed by boys in the various courses of Indian schools (paragraph 6 on page 3 of G.O. No. 678, dated 21st November 1901). The Conference was of opinion that the teacher's mind was constantly directed towards preparing a boy for his next examination instead of giving him a solid and well-grounded education which would be of use in after life. It therefore resolved that some reduction in the number of examinations then held was eminently desirable. The Government of India were accordingly of opinion that no public examination was, as a general rule, required at the end of the primary or vernacular course and that at the end of the secondary course a public examination was required to meet the case of boys who had carried on their education beyond the primary stage but who might not wish to enter a University.

2. The Government of India again in their educational policy of 1904 decided that in future there should be only two examinations preceding the University course ; (1) the primary examination which would mark the completion of the lowest stage of instruction but which would no longer be a public examination, but conducted by the inspecting officer in the school itself, and (2) the secondary examination which would record the educational attainments of all boys who had completed the course (paragraph 12 on page 6 of G.O. No. 215, dated 6th April 1904). In their order No. 443, Educational, dated the 29th June 1905, the Government approved the proposals of the Director of Public Instruction for the abolition of the Lower Secondary examination (which in 1890-91 took the place of the old Middle School examination) paragraph 14 on page 9 of Calendar of the Commission for Government Examinations, 1916-17). It would appear that the examination formed the test for the eligibility of pupils of the seventh standard or third form for results grants and that with the abolition of this system of grant-in-aid one of the reasons for holding the examination ceased to exist (paragraph 4 on page 2 of G.O. No. 443, Educational, dated 29th June 1905).

3. At the recent Conference of Directors at Delhi there appeared to be a feeling that the Middle English examination which still persists in Burma might be reconstituted in India. The Government of India desire to be favoured with this Government's opinion on the suggestion.

4. The Director of Public Instruction is in favour of the reintroduction of the examination for the reasons mentioned in paragraphs 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 11 of his letter. But only a bare majority of the Secondary School-leaving certificate Board were in agreement with him. Moreover when certain representative headmasters were invited to meet the Board and the Director informally discussed the question with them—a decided majority were opposed to the idea.

5. The Director of Public Instruction admits that the old Middle School and Lower Secondary examinations led to cram, but he believes that the evils resulting from it do not outweigh its advantages. In paragraphs 9 and 10 he therefore advocates the introduction of an improved system of examination which seeks to avoid the defects of the old system.

6. It is for consideration whether the Director of Public Instruction's views may be agreed to and the Government of India replied to on the lines of his letter.

A.S.—28-7-17.

T.K.—28-7-17.

The Director of Public Instruction has exhaustively dealt with the question. He seems to have made out a case for the reintroduction of the examination. No doubt the old examination should be modified and improved before it is reintroduced. An examination is needed to serve as a uniform *guide* in the middle course of studies. The secondary school-leaving certificate scheme serves this purpose to a large extent. The real test in it coming at the very end of a course of eleven years does not appreciably affect, as it should, the whole course. A guidance at the intermediate stage seems a necessity; and the third form furnishes a convenient stage. The introduction of this examination may have the desirable effect of improving the materials for the upper secondary course and latterly for the University course also.

C. RAMANUJA ACHARIYAR—4-8-17.

The Director has dealt exhaustively with the reasons for introducing an examination between the primary and the school final from an educational point of view.

2. Some other arguments may be urged from other aspects.

3. *I. From the view of managing bodies.*—There is considerable demand for education higher than primary but the locality may not afford to support a complete secondary school. Witness the number of the so-called incomplete secondary schools. Pupils in such schools anxious to continue are not now judged by any uniform standard. If the examination be introduced, high schoolmasters will find it easy to stock their IV form with homogeneous material.

4. *II. From the view of the public.*—The Indian public is poor and cannot afford to educate their children up to the school final. Nor is it necessary to attain to that standard in most of the ordinary pursuits of life. But no hallmark of qualification is impressed in the interval. A boy can only say he has studied up to the III form. In a school where the headmaster is easy in his promotions this statement means nothing. There are numbers of pupils who drop off before they reach the school final; and an intermediate examination will serve to distinguish the failures from successes amongst them.

5. The reason for the abolition of the examination on the ground of multiplicity and tendency to cram however holds good. We have to rely on departmental rules to reduce the weight of this objection as much as possible.

6. It cannot be denied that the acceptance of the proposal virtually amounts to the creation of an additional grade of schools—the middle school. And in the long run it will lead to more diffusion of education.

On the whole I think the Director's proposal may be accepted. If approved, a draft to India will be prepared.

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The case for this proposal does not seem to me convincing as here presented. Please ask Director of Public Instruction to discuss with me.

P[ENTLAND]—7-8-17.

Submitted that the file may be forwarded to the Director of Public Instruction with reference to His Excellency's orders above.

P.R.—8-8-17.

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R.R.—13-8-17.

The reply to the Government of India may be that in our view the present time is inopportune for the consideration of this subject;—it is unnecessary to enter into the merits of the matter. I have discussed this with the Director of Public Instruction who agrees.

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R.R.—12-9-17.

[G.O. Nos. 1175-76, Home (Education), dated the 12th September 1917.]

Home (Eda) DEPARTMENT.

” ” ” ” ” 191

READ ALSO:—

" " 609 B " " 2-09 252577 " " 12-7-1917.

ORDER.

No. 1175, dated 12-9- 1917.

the Govt. of India will be addressed

10-7-17

Ca
11.9.17

Letter to, No. 1176 on the 12.9.17.

The Secretary to the Govt of India
Department of Edu.

See

2. reply to Sir Edward MacLagan's
letter No. 214 of the 7.3.17 regarding the
recognition of his ^(the) name

For affl.
26-9-17
28917
HOME (EDUCATION) DEPARTMENT.
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DATED 12th SEPTEMBER 1917

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NOTES TO G.O. Nos. 1175-76, HOME (EDUCATION), 12TH SEPTEMBER 1917 3

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OFFICE OF DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION.

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[G.O. Nos. 1175-76, Home (Education), dated 12th September 1917.]

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Home DEPARTMENT.

Current No dated 1917.

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