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[Despatch Abstract.]

Leg: Council --Recording notes connected with a resolution moved by the Hon'ble Mr. Suryanarayana Rao Pantulu in the -- meeting held on the 20th November 1917 regarding the recognition in the Secondary School-leaving certificate scheme of the principle that instruction in all the subjects except the language subjects should be in the vernaculars.

BACK PAPERS.

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NOTES CONNECTED WITH A RESOLUTION ON MATTERS OF GENERAL PUBLIC INTEREST.

[For the meeting of 20th November 1917].

[SUBJECT.—*Teaching of B group subjects in vernacular in the school final course.*]

The Hon'ble Mr. A. SURYANARAYANA RAO PANTULU:—

XXXV. This Council recommends to His Excellency the Governor in Council that the principle of instruction in the vernaculars in all subjects except the language subjects be recognized in the secondary school final course and as a first instalment of the reform subjects in B group be taught in the vernacular.

HOME (EDUCATION) DEPARTMENT.

The question raised in the resolution is not a new one. It was discussed on previous occasions both in the Local and in the Imperial Legislative Councils. At the meeting of the Madras Legislative Council held on the 4th April 1914 the Hon'ble Mr. Narasimheswara Sarma moved a resolution urging that non-language subjects be taught through the medium of the vernaculars throughout the school final course in all Government and aided schools in the Presidency unless the Director of Public Instruction permitted a different course to be followed in any schools for special reasons to be recorded by him in writing. The resolution was then opposed mainly on the following grounds:—

- (1) that there was no strong public opinion in favour of the proposal,
- (2) that there were no suitable text-books in the vernaculars in such subjects as physics and chemistry, geography, etc.,
- (3) that the vernaculars did not have proper scientific terminology,
- (4) that many schools had an admixture of pupils speaking different languages,
- (5) that teachers fitted to give practical teaching in the vernaculars were not available, and
- (6) that if the course suggested were adopted students in upper secondary forms learning such subjects as history and science in the vernacular languages would be at a great disadvantage when they entered the University classes where those subjects are taught in English.

The resolution was withdrawn as it did not find support even from non-official members.

2 At the meeting of the Imperial Legislative Council held on the 17th March 1915, the Hon'ble Mr. Rama Rayaningar moved a resolution urging that the Government of India should in consultation with the Local Governments take steps for making the Indian vernaculars media of instruction and for teaching English as a compulsory second language in all secondary schools. There was considerable difference of opinion on the subject among the non-official members themselves. Only two supported the resolution and the rest opposed it on the ground that the proposal was retrograde and that the progress of the country would be affected if English were assigned a secondary place in the scheme of education. The Hon'ble Sir Harcourt Butler then made the following observations:—

The debate has been very interesting, but it has travelled far beyond the terms of the resolution and has included a discussion of the advantages of Western culture and of English education. Now I may say at once that no proposal to dethrone Western culture or to restrict English education would commend itself either to the Government or to this Council. Upon that I think we are all unanimous. And I think also that there has been some misunderstanding on matters of fact. It is the accepted policy—the policy accepted for many years and last expressed in the resolution on educational policy in 1904—that vernacular should be the medium of instruction for boys up to thirteen years of age, and that vernacular should be a compulsory subject after that age during the whole of the school course. The present position is shown as accurately as it can be in the diagram which I have in my hand and which will be found opposite page 71 of Mr. Sharp's Quinquennial Review.

I wish the Council clearly to understand that vernacular is already the basis of instruction in secondary English schools until the three or four higher classes are reached. Now the only question, as I understand, which is before this Council is—should it be adopted as a medium of instruction in those higher classes or in some of them? I would ask that, in considering this question, we should remember that only about one-tenth of those who enter secondary schools enter a University. That is a fact which is frequently ignored in discussing questions about schools. It is not the fact, as stated by one Honourable Member, that every boy who goes to an English secondary school is destined for the University. I think we are all agreed that there should be more and better English education rather than less English education. My friend, the mover of this resolution, is, I believe, not less anxious than any other member of Council to see an extension and improvement of English education. The point is this. There are many criticisms of the existing system—that the boys are overstrained, that they do not understand English sufficiently to follow their instruction in history, science, geography, and the like, that it is a constant strain on their minds and that they lose to a large extent the faculty of what I might call biting ideas and connecting words with facts. And the alternative proposed is not, as I understand, to reduce English education but to teach English by the modern method, the direct method as it is called, as a language, while at the same time lightening the strain on the mind by introducing the vernacular, the language of the people, as a medium of instruction. This is a question not of educational policy but of educational economy, and is a question which would require many minds to solve. I can only tell you that in my own experience and in the experience of many competent educationists with whom I have discussed the question there is a markedly greater intelligence in the boy whose education has been conducted through the medium of the vernacular until the highest classes of the school are reached than the boy who has had his education conducted in English in what used to be called in some provinces the Upper Middle School. That also was the conclusion which the Education Commission of 1882 came to in regard to Bengal. But I am far from thinking that my own experience in the matter is at all conclusive. It is a matter which requires a large amount of experience before we can come to any conclusion. We must also remember that the supply of education is to a large extent governed by the demand for it. Every educational system in the world is beating itself against this bed-rock fact that *A* is not willing to learn what *B* is eager to teach. Many modern theories on education have come to grief from ignoring this bed-rock fact. My own idea is that it is essentially a case for experiment, and that it is a condition of the experiment being successful that the teaching of English as a compulsory second language should be of the very highest order in the hands of very good teachers and the number of these is limited in India at present. The Hon'ble Pandit suggests a committee. I think that a committee for all India would be out of the question. The subject is one in which different views may very well be taken in different provinces and even in different parts of a province with reference to local conditions. I think myself that there is sufficient demand in this Council for inquiry to refer the matter as an open question to Local Governments drawing attention to this debate, and suggesting for their consideration whether the time has come to appoint provincial committees to enquire into the subject. But, in view of the opposition which the resolution has excited in this Council, I think it better to say that this reference to Local Governments will not be made until after the war. I wish to emphasise again the fact that Government has absolutely no idea in its educational policy except to improve and extend education. I think that we are all agreed that the best that can be given for the money available at any time should be given and that no difference in aim really separates us.

On the assurance given by the Honourable Member the resolution was withdrawn.

3. In August last a conference of the Directors of Public Instruction and of other representatives of educational interests was held at Simla to consider certain preliminary matters connected with the question of the study of English in secondary schools and the adoption of vernaculars as media of instruction in them. His Excellency the Viceroy then reviewed the situation in the following speech:—

While however you will be forming your conclusion on the working of the present arrangements prevailing in the schools it may not be amiss if I remind you briefly of the past history of this question in its broader aspects. As you are all aware we go back for our beginnings to Macaulay's famous minute of 2nd February 1835. In that minute Macaulay gave as has been said a decisive bias to the course of education in India and decided unhesitatingly in favour of English, but Macaulay was not oblivious of the claims of the vernaculars and looked forward to the formation of a class which should refine the vernacular dialects of the country, enrich these dialects with the terms of science borrowed from the western nomenclature and render them by degrees fit vehicles for conveying knowledge to the great mass of the population. From 1835 we pass on chronologically to 1854 when a despatch was written by the Court of Directors of the East India Company to the Governor-General of India in Council on the subject of the education of the people of India and from this despatch let me quote certain striking passages: "It is neither our aim nor our desire," the Directors say "to substitute the English language for the vernacular dialects of the country. We have always been most sensible of the importance of the use of the languages which alone are understood by the great mass of the population. In any general system of education the English language should be taught when there is a demand

for it but such instruction should always be combined with a careful attention to the study of the vernacular language of the district and with such general instruction as can be conveyed through that language, and while the English language continues to be made use of as by far the most perfect medium for the education of those persons who have acquired sufficient knowledge of it to receive general instruction through it the vernacular language must be employed to teach the far larger classes who are ignorant of or imperfectly acquainted with English. We look, therefore, to the English language and to the vernacular language of India together as the media for the diffusion of European knowledge". The Education Commission of 1882 did not put forward any definite recommendations on the subject but came to the conclusion that a boy was more intelligent if he had studied through the medium of the vernaculars till the highest classes were reached. The Indian Universities Commission of 1902 was strongly in favour of the inclusion of vernaculars as a subject in the higher course even up to the M.A. The Government resolution of 1904 laid down that English should not become the medium of instruction earlier than the age of 13, and that no scholar in a secondary school should even then be allowed to abandon the study of the vernacular.

No reversal of policy—Now these extracts raise some important points. Macaulay decided in favour of the highest education being in English but clearly contemplated an improvement of the vernaculars so as to make them the vehicle of western thought. The despatch of 1854 went further. It distinctly contemplated the encouragement and enriching of the vernaculars, translation from English, the limitation of English education to very few and the propagation of western knowledge through translations. Sixty-three years have elapsed since the date of Sir Charles Wood's despatch and English education has taken a firm hold upon the country. It is surely out of the question now to talk of going back on the established lines of our educational system. The interest of the educated classes is centred in English, English is on the high road to become, if it has not already become, among the educated classes the 'lingua franca' all over India. English is required in all the public administration of the country. While I have much sympathy with those who deplore the neglect of the vernaculars is it not obvious that the substitution, at this time of day, of the vernaculars for English is beyond the bounds of practical politics even if the Government were willing to consider such a policy? I would further ask them to remember the great divergence of opinion among the Indian members on this subject which was manifested in the debate in 1915 on the resolution to which I have already alluded. I think that the discussion which then took place affords strong confirmation of what I have just said. Again the very multitude of the vernaculars presents a practical difficulty for which I have never seen a satisfactory solution proposed. Moreover with each generation English will come more and more to be learnt not in the schools but in the every-day intercourse of the home. This larger question is not now before you, but in view of what has been urged elsewhere I have briefly enumerated some of the patent objections to a reversal of the present policy. Accepting then, this position, what is there that we can do? I believe that a very real advance can be made in the encouragement of the vernaculars both outside and independently of their place in our educational system and within our educational system. We should carefully consider the present teaching of English. It may be, for instance, that we are concentrating our attention too largely on the teaching of English literature and too little on the acquisition of English as a living language. Whatever the cause I think it is common ground that the teaching of English in our schools is not as satisfactory as we could wish. It will be for you, gentlemen, to help us with your advice in this matter.

4. The following extracts from the proceedings of the Conference will be of interest in this connexion:—

The Conference then proceeded to consider the next group of questions, viz., (a) to what extent does instruction through the medium of a foreign language hamper the pupils in the acquisition of knowledge crushing their independence and originality of thought and instilling in them the necessity of cram as the only means of learning, impose a burden on the teachers and tend to the impoverishment of the vernaculars; (b) are the comparative paucity of suitable text-books in the vernaculars, the deficiency of the vernaculars in technical nomenclature and the multiplicity of the vernaculars insuperable objections to extending the use of vernaculars as a medium of instruction; (c) should English be introduced as medium of instruction gradually or not; if so, at what period and in what degree should it be introduced; (d) to what extent is it advisable to examine students in certain subjects at the time of their school career in the vernaculars; have any experiments been made in this direction and if so, to what extent have they been successful.

Mr. Sivakumara Sastri said:—"It was a mistake to suppose that a foreign medium hampered individual development. A great deal depended on the mental background of the pupil, which the teacher should try to secure. The inward light could easily break through a foreign medium. (2) There were numerous enthusiasts for Indian vernaculars and vernaculars could not be said to have suffered. (b) There were enough text-books and the potentiality was yet greater, but multiplicity of languages was a real obstacle. (c) Yes. Gradually. (d) Option might be granted to boys not intending to go up for a University course."

Mr. Stone said he agreed with all that had been expressed so ably by Mr. Sivakumara Sastri and added that in education acquisition of knowledge was not the only aim. Indeed the chief aim should be to discipline the mind. He thought that science and history and geography being rather foreign to the Indian as organized branches of knowledge, English and not vernacular was best fitted to be the medium of instruction.

5. The Hon'ble Mr. A. Suryanarayana Rao Pantulu desires that the principle of giving instruction in non-language subjects through the vernacular in the secondary school final course (i.e., the IV, V and VI forms), should be recognized and that, as a first instalment of reform, subjects in B group should be taught in the vernacular. The suggestion is practically the same as that made on the former occasion and the considerations which weighed with Government in opposing the previous resolution must also operate now. The subjects included in the B group in the Secondary School-leaving Certificate scheme are—

- (1) Science,
- (2) Geography,
- (3) History of India for form IV and History of the British Empire with connected Geography for forms V and VI,
- (4) Drawing,
- (5) Physical training, and
- (6) Domestic economy and sewing (for girls).

The Additional Member apparently wishes to see the first three subjects taught in the vernacular in the three higher forms of secondary schools. There is no public examination in the subjects included in the B group. But the objections against the main proposal, viz., the want of suitable text-books and teachers and the fact that in the University courses all subjects are taught in English hold good in regard to the restricted scheme of teaching B group subjects in the vernaculars. The Conference of headmasters of secondary schools held in October last at Madras has, however, passed a resolution recommending the giving of instruction in the subjects included under B group through the medium of the vernacular. It may be noted here that under rule 68 of the Madras Educational Rules "Managers of schools should, unless they have obtained the permission of the Inspector to do otherwise, adopt the vernacular of the pupils as the medium of instruction up to and including the Third form."

6. The Hon'ble Mr. Narasimheswara Sarma moved a resolution at the meeting of the Legislative Council held on the 7th April 1916 recommending that the Government should undertake wherever necessary the preparation and early publication of suitable text-books in the principal vernaculars of the Presidency for use in elementary and secondary schools in all non-language subjects taught therein. The Hon'ble Mr. Stone pointed out that it was for private enterprise to undertake the publication of text-books. He, however, added that he would give consideration to the whole question of the provision and supply of text-books and see what co-operation could be given by the department to the publishers. Progress in this direction must necessarily be slow.

7. The file may be sent to the Director of Public Instruction for remarks.

8. Orders are requested whether the resolution should be discussed in the Council, whether further particulars should be called for, and as to who should be in charge of it.

S.K.—12-11-17.

N.K.—12-11-17.

C. RAMANUJA ACHARIYAR—12-11-17.

R. RAMACHANDRA RAO—12-11-17.

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION.

There is nothing in the Secondary School-leaving Certificate scheme to prevent subjects being taught in the vernacular, in fact the possibility of this being done, for example, in girls' schools, was held to be one of the advantages of the scheme.

At the same time I think that Government should resist the notion that the 'principle' should be 'recognised' and that any compulsion should be applied to schools to teach even 'B' subjects in vernacular.

J. H. STONE—15-11-17.

Extract from the Proceedings of an Adjourned Meeting of the Council of the Governor of Fort St. George assembled for the purpose of making Laws and Regulations under the provisions of the Act of Parliament, 5 & 6 Geo. V, Ch. 61.

The Council re-assembled at the Council Chamber, Fort St. George, at 11 a.m. on Wednesday, the 21st day of November 1917.

RESOLUTION RE TEACHING OF B GROUP SUBJECTS IN VERNACULAR IN THE SCHOOL-FINAL COURSE.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. SURYANARAYANA RAO :—"Your Excellency, I beg to move this resolution which runs thus :—

'XX. This Council recommends to His Excellency the Governor in Council that the principle of instruction in the vernaculars in all subjects except the language subjects be recognized in the secondary school-final course and as a first instalment of the reform, subjects in B group be taught in the vernacular.'

"Now the principle of this resolution is recognized throughout and there are several pronouncements on the subject. His Excellency Lord Chelmsford, Lord Hardinge, and Sir Alexander Cardew have all pronounced in favour of teaching in the vernaculars. It is a recognized fact throughout the whole of India that instruction in vernacular is absolutely necessary for the students to grasp the subjects very well. The only question is, how you are to make a beginning? There are two groups, ignoring the A group or the compulsory group—two groups B and C. Group B comprises history, geography and the vernaculars. Group C comprises the sciences. Now my proposal is that up to the secondary school-leaving course, subjects might be taught in vernaculars. With regard to text-books I think there are some text-books already which have come into existence and I have no doubt that with sufficient encouragement other text-books also will come in. In my resolution I have confined myself only to the B group for the present. But if your Excellency will permit me, I will include the C group also. Otherwise, I have no objection to confine myself to the B group. No doubt some objections will be taken that more teachers will be wanted and there will be also some difficulty with regard to the examinations as different examiners will have to be appointed. But I think all these difficulties can be got over if we observe economy in other directions. I think it is absolutely necessary that vernacular teaching must be imparted up to the secondary school-leaving course. I am not now talking of those boys who want to study for the college course. They must be taught in English only and in no other language because they must acquire efficiency in the subject and they must be taught in the English language so that they may acquire sufficient knowledge of English to be able to study the subjects in the collegiate course. But so far as those boys, whose course is only up to the secondary school-leaving course, are concerned, there is no reason why they should not be taught in the vernaculars. I think that boys find it difficult to master the subject in a foreign language, and they are practically cramming the subjects because they are not able to understand them in English. That means a lot of waste of energy. I think they might be taught these subjects in their own vernaculars and then they can understand the subjects much more easily and much more quickly. I, therefore, beg to suggest that this resolution may be accepted and that the Hon'ble Mr. Stone might find it possible to compel teachers to teach these subjects in the vernacular up to the secondary school-leaving course."

The Hon'ble Mr. A. S. KRISHNA RAO :—"Your Excellency, I beg to second this resolution. So far as this question of the imparting of instruction in the vernaculars is concerned, there has been a considerable volume of opinion from the year 1858 downwards. I need not detain this Council by referring to the various opinions of educationists when we have got the latest pronouncement of His Excellency Lord Chelmsford when he opened the proceedings of the Directors' Conference the other day. Even there he expressed that the system of education in this country whereby youths were compelled to learn and master subjects in a foreign language was fraught with various evils; and he hoped that some improvement would be effected in this direction. I am aware that so far as the solution of this question is concerned, it does not merely lie with the Government or with the educational authorities. The first objection that is likely

2 RESOLUTION RE TEACHING OF B GROUP SUBJECTS IN VERNACULAR
IN THE SCHOOL-FINAL COURSE.

(Mr. A. S. Krishna Rao; Mr. Stone; Mr. Suryanarayana [21st NOVEMBER 1917.
Rao; the President.]

to be urged on this occasion is: is there sufficient demand in this country for education being imparted in vernacular in various subjects? The second question will be, have there been proper text-books produced for imparting instruction suitable to the various classes. These are the two objections which are likely to be urged. It is better that we take note of these difficulties, but we should also realize the importance of this problem to enable us to make a start in this direction as early as possible. Can any one doubt that within the last five years at least vigorous attempts have been made in various vernacular languages, in Telugu and Tamil, to produce scientific primers and various useful books for imparting instruction to pupils? If due encouragement is given for the publication of these books, I have no doubt whatever that in course of time satisfactory books will be produced and it will be possible to impart instruction through the medium of vernacular. I think the time has come when a satisfactory beginning should be made in this direction, especially because there is a strong public feeling in this country and I hope no time will be lost in initiating experiments in that direction."

The Hon'ble Mr. J. H. STONE:—"Your Excellency, the resolution recommends that the principle of instruction in the vernaculars in all subjects except language subjects be recognized. I do not know clearly if I appreciate the meaning of the word 'principle.' It seems to me that an idea can be said to rise into the sphere of principle only when its truth is capable of demonstration and when it is commonly accepted. Now the idea that the vernaculars ought to be used very much more largely than they are in the three higher forms is what is really what is in the Honourable Member's mind. I do not think it can be said to have reached the status of a principle. It is not capable of absolute demonstration that what the Honourable Member wishes will be an improvement on the present system, and certainly it is not an idea which has attained anything like general acceptance. In the debates that have taken place in this Council and in the Imperial Council, very divergent views have been expressed and the same was the case in the Conference that took place in Simla in August last. I do not think it can be said that there is any principle that instruction should be in vernaculars rather than in English in these higher classes and therefore I cannot recommend His Excellency the Governor in Council to accept any such principle.

"Well, then, as regards the more practical aspect of the matter, I would like to point out to this Council that, as a matter of fact, the Secondary School Leaving Certificate scheme does not lay any obstacle in the way of subjects being taught in the vernaculars in these three higher forms. That scheme was drawn up, as Honourable Members are aware, with the object of giving more liberty to schools, to emancipate schools from the tyranny of the Matriculation examination; and this particular form of emancipation was certainly in the minds of many of us when we drew up that scheme. We had particularly in view in regard to this use of the vernacular the case of girls' schools, which we thought would be glad to teach the higher forms in the vernaculars. But curiously enough the girls' schools are the very last to have any such desire. There is liberty under the scheme for what the Honourable Member desires. If any school chooses to teach in the vernacular and asks me to examine that school in the vernacular, I am bound under the scheme to examine that school in it. There is no rule of any sort obliging schools to teach in the English language. Therefore, it is open to the schools to take the first move. It is for them to experiment to see what can be done in this direction. They have absolute liberty to do so. But the Honourable Member wants Government to go further. He wants that schools should be compelled to adopt this line. That is, he wants me to introduce a new tyranny apart from the tyranny of the Matriculation. He wishes me to compel schools to take this line whether they like it or not. I know there are schools which strongly dislike being forced and which say that their educational conscience would not allow them to take that line. I am not prepared at this stage of things to bring compulsion on these schools in the direction that the Honourable Member desires. That is all I need say about this resolution."

The Hon'ble Mr. A. SURYANARAYANA RAO:—"If the Honourable the Director says that there is no objection to the teaching of the vernacular by the heads of schools and that it is left to the heads of schools to see whether they can adopt this or not, I have no quarrel with him. I hope this discussion will be read by schools throughout the Presidency and I hope they will teach in the vernaculars."

His Excellency the PRESIDENT:—"Does the Honourable Gentleman wish to divide the Council?"

The Hon'ble Mr. A. SURYANARAYANA RAO:—"No."

With the permission of His Excellency the President the resolution was then withdrawn.

R. A. GRAHAM,
Acting Secretary to Govt., L. & M. (Legislative) Dept.

Hon'ble Ed. Dept.

Please see the S.P.D.'s remarks on page 6 ante. The resolution was after some discussion withdrawn. No further action is necessary. The papers may now be

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