

Home (1918) Department.
Education
Ordinary SERIES.

G.O. No. 367

DATED 19. 3-18

INDEXED

[Despatch Abstract.]

Conscience Clause.

Recording papers relating to the publication of an abstract
of the correspondence relating to the introduction of a ----- in
educational code.

PAPERS PUT UP WITH CURRENT No. _____

Papers of the department to which the current belongs.

Number.	Date.	Original (=O) or spare copy (=S.G.).	Remarks. (In this column such of the papers as have been removed for copying, printing, etc., should be marked with a cross.)	Initials of Referencer with date in token of return to Reference department

Papers of other departments.

Department.	Number	Date.	Original (=O) or spare copy (=S.G.).	Initials with date of (1) Referencer acknowledging returns of the paper concerned or (2) Despatcher to denote the return of the papers to the department concerned.

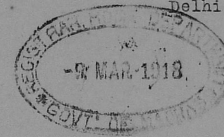


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No. 226-c 2

Government of India,
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION.
(Education)

Delhi, the 5th March 1918.



From

The Hon'ble Sir E.D. MacLagan, K.C.I.E., C.S.I.,
Secretary to the Government of India.

To

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

Sir,

x
No. 213-C, dated
the 25th Feby.
1918.

I am directed to forward a copy of a circular letter to other local Governments and Administrations together with two copies of an abstract of opinions on the question of a conscience clause in educational codes and to request that the Government of India may be informed by telegram immediately whether there is any objection to the abstract being laid on the table in this form.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

W. MacLagan

Secretary to the Government of India.

TR

No.

213-C.

Government of India.
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION.
(Education.)

Delhi, the 25th February 1917.

From

The Hon'ble Sir E.D. Maclagan, K.C.I.E., C.S.I.,
Secretary to the Government of India,

To

The Secretary to the Government of Bombay,
Educational Department,
The Secretary to the Government of Bengal,
General (Education) Department,
The Secretary to the Government of the U.P.,
Educational Department,
The Under Secretary to the Government of the Punjab,
Education Department,
The Secretary to the Government of Burma,
Education Department,
The Chief Secretary to the Government of B. & O.,
Education Department.
The Hon'ble the Chief Commissioner of the C.B.,
The Hon'ble the Chief Commissioner of Assam,
The Chief Commissioner of Coorg,
The Chief Commissioner of Delhi,
The Hon'ble the Chief Commissioner and Agent to the
Governor-General, North-West Frontier Province,

Sir,

A resolution was moved on the 21st February 1917 by the Hon'ble Mr. Srinivasa Gastri in the Imperial Legislative Council for the introduction of a Conscience Clause in Schools, but it was withdrawn on the receipt of information that the Government of India were in correspondence with the local Governments on the subject. The correspondence in question was that initiated by this Department's letter No. 40, dated the 17th January 1916 the replies to which have now been received by the Government of India.

2. Notice has been given of the following question to be asked in the Imperial Legislative Council by the Hon'ble Srinivasa Gastri :-

" Will

P. 217
82. 82
19.1.17 (H)

3 4
" Will Government be pleased to lay on the table
the opinions received from local Governments on the
question of a Conscience Clause in Educational Codes?"

3. In view of the fact that the correspondence in A
question was confidential the Government of India do not
propose to lay the replies on the table, but they are
anxious to meet the question as far as possible by
laying on the table a brief abstract of the replies received
I am accordingly to enclose two copies of an abstract
prepared in this office and to enquire whether there is
any objection to the abstract being laid on the table
in this form. As the question must be answered at an
early date a reply by telegram is requested.

I have the honour to be,

sir,

Your most obedient servant,

(Sd.) E.D. MacLagen,

Secretary to the Government of India.

ABSTRACT OF OPINIONS RECEIVED FROM LOCAL GOVERNMENTS ON THE QUESTION OF A CONSCIENCE CLAUSE IN EDUCATIONAL CODES.

1. The following questions were laid before local Governments for opinion:—

- (i) Is the absence of a conscience clause defensible on the principle of non-interference with the religious instruction imparted in aided schools and in view of the fact that the same treatment is accorded to all denominations; or would the inclusion of the clause be more congruous with a principle of strict religious neutrality?
- (ii) In cases where it is found that Government could with the grant it gives to an aided school which imparts compulsory religious instruction and with the fees* the school receives maintain as good an institution, might the conscience clause be insisted upon as an alternative to the establishment of a purely secular school?
* After paying due regard to the capital expenditure incurred and the staff of the school.
- (iii) In single school areas may a conscience clause be insisted upon or the opening of a new school encouraged as an alternative? Where schools of different religions exist in a single area is there any adequate reason for insistence on a conscience clause?

In respect of the above questions:—

Bombay say that the introduction of a conscience clause would be a definite abandonment of the principle of religious neutrality laid down in the despatch of 1854 and consistently adhered to since then, and deprecate the substitution for it of the principle that a conscience clause is more congruous with the principle of strict religious neutrality. The United Provinces and Central Provinces consider that the absence of the clause is defensible on the principle of non-interference with the religious instruction imparted in schools. Punjab, Bihar and Orissa and Assam, to a certain extent, think its absence a departure from strict religious neutrality. The last-named province puts forward the proposal that neither aid nor recognition can be consistently afforded to any institution which Government would be debarred by their principle of strict religious neutrality from maintaining as a State institution.

Bombay say that they could not meet the expenditure involved in the replacement of Mission schools. Under certain circumstances which do not apply in that province, Punjab agree with the Government of India. Burma doubt whether institutions of the same size as the Mission schools could be managed by public or secular agency with as little cost to public revenues as they are at present managed by the Missions. Bihar and Orissa and Central Provinces agree with the Government of India's observation, but point out that its application will be limited. The conditions which this consideration pre-supposes do not exist in Assam, and the local Administration say that even when a Mission institution is maintained entirely by fees and grants-in-aid Government could not maintain the same institution on a similar measure of efficiency at anything like the same cost.

Bombay do not appear to accept the first part of consideration (iii). In the United Provinces there is no district in which a Christian Mission holds the monopoly of education. No difficulties have arisen in respect of single school areas in the Punjab. In Burma the difficulties which occur in such areas frequently yield to the exercise of a certain amount of tact, but at times the locality is either compelled to maintain two schools, when one would be sufficient, or to attend religious instruction. In Bihar and Orissa the principle of a conscience clause in single school areas is applied in primary schools with the consent of the missionaries, and if the principle were enforced further it would apply only to one college and a few middle schools. In the Central Provinces there are practically no areas in which primary education is given only by Mission schools. So far as secondary education is concerned, the Chief Commissioner deprecates the introduction of a conscience clause in single school areas unless it is introduced in all aided schools. Assam agree with the Government of India.

2. The Government of India further asked for information on the following points:—

- (a) How far is there a genuine demand for a conscience clause on the part of—
 - (i) Parents who object to their children being taught an alien faith?
 - (ii) Indians who look upon its absence as a loss of national self-respect?

In Madras the demand is only by those who engage in politics and in the United Provinces by the Indian press and by publicists who upbraid parents for what they term their slavish submission. In the other provinces there is no genuine demand and Bihar and Orissa and Assam go further and say that there is no indication to show that the absence of the clause is considered a loss of national self-respect.

- (b) What is the nature, generally speaking, of the religious instruction imparted?
- (c) To what extent is there a system of universal prayer?

Generally speaking, prayer forms a part of the day's proceedings in Mission schools throughout the country.

- (ii) How far do the authorities insist on a compulsory attendance of pupils at religious instruction?

In Madras, the United Provinces, Punjab, Bihar and Orissa, the Central Provinces, the North-West Frontier Province and Delhi attendance is compulsory. In Bombay those who miss the period of religious instruction are not placed under any special disabilities, but at the Wilson College the roll is called during this period so that those who absent themselves run the risk of failing to make up their attendance for the University term. In Burma pupils are not usually compelled to receive religious instruction. In Assam instruction is accepted as a part of the ordinary school curriculum and students attend as a matter of course.

- (iii) What is the nature of the religious instruction given, other than prayer? Could the instruction imparted be termed definitely religious, or is it a system of moral instruction based on the Bible?

In all provinces except Bengal, which furnishes no information, and Coorg where no such instruction is given except in one orphanage where the pupils are all Christians, the instruction is more or less definitely religious.

- (iv) To what extent do parents value a system of religious training, even if imparted in the light of an alien faith?

In Madras, Bombay and the Central Provinces the attitude of the majority of parents is one of indifference. In the United Provinces it does not appear to be considered objectionable. In the Punjab it is appreciated even if imparted in the light of an alien faith. In Bihar and Orissa it is valued but Muhammadans attach little value to it if imparted on Christian lines. Hindus admit that some knowledge of the tenets of the Christian faith is desirable, but value is mainly attached to the moral atmosphere of mission schools. In Burma religious training is highly appreciated, but it loses all its value if imparted in the light of an alien faith. In Assam the general feeling is that the smattering of religious instruction given by mission schools in Christian guise is better than no religious instruction at all. In the North-West Frontier Province Muhammadans disapprove of a purely secular form of instruction and missionaries say that parents value religious instruction even if imparted in the light of an alien faith. But the number of aided Islamia schools providing facilities for Muhammadan parents to have their children educated in the tenets of their own faith is rapidly increasing. In Delhi apparently some value is attached to religious instruction, but the Chief Commissioner thinks that what is really valued in mission schools is their insistence on discipline, attention to regularity of conduct and their impartiality.

- (c) Should a conscience clause be introduced, what would probably be the attitude of the missionaries?

- (i) Would any of them close their institutions?

- (ii) Would any of them relinquish their grants and continue to maintain their institutions on a purely private basis?

Practically all provinces (Bengal have not replied on this point) anticipate considerable opposition from missionary bodies. Madras, Burma and the Central Provinces do not think that many missions would stop their general educational work as a result of a conscience clause. Madras say that some may relinquish their grants but explain that no college or secondary school in that Presidency can be maintained on a purely private basis. The Bombay Government fear that a large majority of mission schools, other than Roman Catholic schools, would be closed down or reduced to a very great extent. The late Mr. Sharp doubted whether there were any missionary bodies able to continue independently of Government. The United Provinces and Bihar and Orissa think that the missionaries would abandon a number of flourishing institutions and concentrate all their resources on a few schools or colleges which they could finance without Government assistance. Punjab say that many mission schools would be closed and the remainder would lose in efficiency. Assam think that there would be no rapid closing down of schools, but that mission assistance on its present liberal lines would not continue for long. The Chief Commissioner, North-West Frontier Province, thinks it unlikely that the Church Missionary Society would continue to maintain its schools. The Chief Commissioner, Delhi, is of opinion that financial support from England and America would be largely withdrawn if a conscience clause is introduced and would be devoted either to missionary enterprise, pure and simple or to hospital work. Such Governments as have referred to the question whether schools maintained by missions on a purely private basis would constitute an undesirable element, have replied in the negative.

* Bombay explain that the Roman Catholic schools are maintained mainly for Roman Catholics, and that the managers of such schools would accept a conscience clause provided it does not apply to Christians.

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3. On the general question it may be noted that all provincial Governments, except Assam and the Central Provinces who are by no means entirely in favour of it, deprecate the proposal being accepted, at the present time at any rate. Bombay express the hope that if it is decided to introduce a conscience clause they will be given an opportunity to express their views as to the procedure to be followed in bringing the matter forward for public discussion. The Lieutenant-Governor of Bihar and Orissa deprecates any definite policy either in favour of or against a conscience clause being laid down for the whole of India and suggests that if it is considered necessary to issue any orders they should merely give a general permission to make the proposed change and leave it to each local Government and Administration to take action if and when it is considered expedient to do so.

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- (a) How far is there a genuine demand for a conscience clause on the part of—

- (i) Parents who object to their children being taught an alien faith?

- (ii) All provinces, including Madras, say that there is no genuine demand at present.

- (iii) Indians who look upon its absence as a loss of national self-respect?

In Madras the demand is only by those who engage in politics and in the United Provinces by the Indian press and by publicists who upbraid parents for what they term their slavish submission. In the other provinces there is no genuine demand and Bihar and Orissa and Assam go further and say that there is no indication to show that the absence of the clause is considered a loss of national self-respect.

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- (i) To what extent is there a system of universal prayer?

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NOTES.

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Home (Edⁿ) Deptt.CN 713. From the Govt of India, N^o 226C
dated the 5th March 1918.Subject. Publication of an
abstract of the correspondence
relating to the question of a
conscience clause in edⁿ codes.

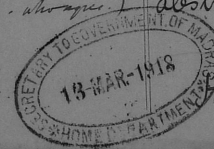
Submitted for orders whether
the Govt of India may be in-
formed that there is no objection
to the publication of the
abstract prepared by them.
The abstract has been checked and is ^{substantially} correct so far
as this Govt is concerned, though it does not
8K attempt to set out the definite
11.3.18. opinions to which this Govt. Committee
themselves in their letter No. 1002.
8 13.9.15. There seems to be no objection
to the publⁿg of the abstract. ^R 12/3/18

The line marked A may be edited
by substituting the words
"a few" for "those who engage in
politics".

Otherwise I see no objection to the
abstract being published. ^M 12/3/18

I have taken an opportunity of
showing this at deptⁿ (o. to
Mr. A. Carter and Mr.
Rajapalechani - also signed)

13.
12.3.18.



I agree - as proposed by Mr. Secretary.

13.12.3.18.

in given for copying
 in copied
 in examined
 in signed

191

AN AGAIN G.O. No.
 101

DATED

CURRENT No.

ENCLOSURES TO C. No.

ORDER OF GOVERNMENT

LETTER OF GOVERNMENT

STATEMENT WITH DITTO.

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