

Government of Madras

HOME DEPARTMENT (EDUCATION)

- 88 -
G.O. No. 387/ 21st March 1918

Examination

Replying to the reference from the Government of India regarding — by compartments.

INDEXED

HOME DEPARTMENT (EDUCATION)

Examination

Replying to the reference from the Government of India regarding — by compartments.

READ—the following papers:—

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 December 1917.
No.—1043.

It is sometimes alleged that the present system of examination in schools and colleges leads to deterioration in the health of students, and it is suggested as a remedy for this that examination should be held by compartments, that is, that a student should not be examined in all his subjects at once but should be able to offer himself for examination in some, during the first year of the course and in others at the close of the second year. Suggestions have also been made that a student, who has failed in one subject at an examination, should not be required to appear in all the subjects again, should he attempt a second time to pass.

2. Examination by compartments is very largely the rule both in India and in other countries in the case of professional courses, such as Law, Medicines and Engineering. To some extent the suggestions to which allusion has been made in the preceding paragraph are actually applied in the case of Arts course also in certain Universities, though the general rule is that a student, at least upon the first occasion of his appearance, is examined in all subjects which are included in his course.

3. The question is one which has no doubt occupied the attention of the Universities. As, however, the matter has recently been brought to notice, the Government of India would be glad to learn whether in the opinion of His Excellency the Governor in Council there is any ground for the assertion that the system, whereby students are examined in all subjects of their course at once, is responsible for deterioration in the health, and to what extent such deterioration, if existent, may be traced, not only to this system of examination, but to inadequate tuition, faulty methods of work, unhealthy surroundings and other similar causes.

II

Endorsement No. 1700-B/1, Home (Education), dated 28th December 1917.

Referred to the Director of Public Instruction and the Syndicate of the University of Madras for favour of early remarks.

R. RAMACHANDRA RAO,
Secretary to Government.

To the Director of Public Instruction.
 „ Registrar, University of Madras.

III

Letter—from F. DEWSBURY, Esq., B.A., LL.B., Registrar, University of Madras.
To—the Secretary to Government, Home (Education) Department.
Dated—Senate House, the 22nd January 1918.
No.—488.

With reference to your Endorsement No. 1700-B/1, dated 28th December 1917, forwarding to the Syndicate for remarks letter from the Government of India, Department of Education (Education), No. 1043, dated 7th December 1917, on the subject of

compartmental examinations, I am directed by the Syndicate to state that, in the University of Madras, though the regulations provide for examination by compartments in some instances, each examination in which such provision is made has been separately considered and the Senate has not enunciated any general policy as to the expediency of examinations by compartments.

2. Until recent years though the examinations in Law, Medicine and Engineering were progressive and the full courses for the degrees were taken in stages, almost the only provision for examination by compartments was in the regulations for the examination for the Degree of Bachelor of Arts. This examination is divided into two parts—part I, English and part II, an optional group. A candidate for this examination may at his option present himself for the whole or for either part at any one time. In the Final Examination for degrees in Medicine candidates failing in separate subjects were excused re-examination in those subjects under certain conditions. No other provision for examination by compartments existed until a year ago.

3. The Senate, in January 1917, adopted regulations providing for the division of the Intermediate Examination into two parts and for permitting a candidate, who took the whole examination and failed only in one part, to present himself for re-examination in that part only in which he had failed. So far only one examination has been held under these regulations. A little later the Senate adopted regulations providing for the re-examination of candidates for Medical degrees under certain conditions in those subjects only in which they had failed and for their exemption from re-examination in subjects in which they had passed with credit. It was thereby intended to make it possible for medical students to complete their courses within a reasonable time: the minimum period possible under the regulations at present is five years.

4. The proposal for introducing the compartmental system in the Intermediate Examination was by no means unanimously adopted. It is in any case too soon to offer an opinion as to the effect of the adoption of this system upon either the physical or intellectual well-being of the students. The Syndicate, however, has no information as to whether the previous necessity for appearing for and passing the Intermediate Examination in Arts as a whole had any deteriorating effect upon the health of students, and the suggestion was made in the Syndicate that any inquiry on this matter could best be undertaken by the Medical Department. At the same time a decided opinion was expressed that inadequate tuition, faulty methods of work and unhealthy environment were in all probability more important factors in such deterioration of health as might be observed than any particular form of examination.

IV

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

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

Dated—Madras, the 18th February 1918.

No.—Ref. on Cur. 10599/17.

With reference to Government Endorsement No. 1700-B/1, dated 28th December 1917, I have the honour to state that I am not aware that the opinion prevails in this Presidency that the health of students has deteriorated or is deteriorating and that, in the absence of systematic records, even a complete medical examination of all students in colleges would do no more than give an idea of the present state of their health. I do not see therefore how the question of deterioration can be settled without systematic medical inspection extending over a series of years.

2. It is, however, the case that the flocking of students to educational centres has set up or intensified conditions inimical to healthy living and this has for some time been the subject of anxious consideration by Government who have adopted such remedial measures as the extension of hostels and play-grounds as their means allow.

3. The Government of India suggest as a remedy for the degeneration in health, which may or may not be a fact, a more general adoption of what it will be convenient to call the 'compartmental system.' We have had this system until

recently in connexion with the Secondary School-leaving Certificate scheme, but the Syndicate has lately ruled that in order to qualify for admission to a University course, a candidate who has been declared not eligible, should repeat all his courses. The compartmental system has just been extended to the Intermediate Examination also, candidates in which must, at a first attempt, appear for both parts, but not again in a part in which they have passed. Candidates for the B.A. (Pass) Degree Examination may appear at any time in one or both parts. The system is clearly inapplicable to examinations for Honours. A state of things has thus been reached in which the compartmental idea is progressively more largely realized as a candidate advances in his course, but this has not been because the educational authorities consciously adopted any theory about it. The Syndicate of the Madras University on the whole, dislikes it, and therefore the rules framed by the Syndicate for regulating the admission of Secondary School-leaving Certificate holders to a University examination, do not admit it. It was introduced into the Intermediate Examination by the Senate disgusted with the low percentage of passes. It is of long standing in the B.A. courses and was, I believe, introduced on the academic ground that students by taking one part at a time would pursue their studies in it to better purpose, it was in fact meant to enable the better students to distinguish themselves in the subjects for which they had a special aptitude. It has operated little in this way, students almost always preferring to use that ability to get a degree as early as possible. My own opinion is that we have gone far enough in applying the compartmental system to our examinations—at any rate in those subsequent to entrance. Whether it is necessary that a youth who has completed a school course should be required to repeat all his school subjects in the sixth form if he does not qualify for admission to a college after one year in that form, is perhaps open to doubt. It depends a good deal on the degree of specialisation that is advantageous in a school course.

4. My objection to the system is that courses and examinations should be so adjusted that a student would normally pass an examination in the whole work of his course and that is more than is now expected of him in Madras in the Pass B.A. course. Any compartmental arrangements are open to the objection that they encourage the idea that preparation—let the results be ever so evanescent—for an examination is education, that they leave students for parts of their college course with too little work to do and that they dislocate college systems of instruction. I consider, therefore, that any proposal to introduce into our system of examinations any further compartmental arrangements would need careful scrutiny and am by no means prepared to adopt examination by compartments as a governing principle to be applied on the ground of its intrinsic merits.

I am too little acquainted with the aims and methods of Medical education to venture an opinion as to why Medical examinations are so frequent, but I see no reason to think that in this respect we ought to be guided in Arts courses by Medical practice.

Examinations in Engineering are not in the Presidency taken by compartments.

Order—No. 387, Home (Education), dated 21st March 1918.

The Government of India will be addressed.

(True extract)

L. D. SWAMIKANNU,
Acting Secretary to Government.

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GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS

HOME (EDUCATION) DEPARTMENT

No. 388

From

THE HON'BLE DIWAN BAHADUR

L. D. SWAMIKANNU PILLAI AVARGAL, I.S.O.,

Acting Secretary to the Government of Madras,

Home (Education) Department,

To

THE SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA,

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION.

Dated Fort St. George, the 21st March 1918.

SIR,

I am directed to reply to your letter No. 1043, dated the 7th December 1917, on the subject of compartmental examinations. The Government of India refer to the allegation made in certain quarters that the present system of examinations in schools and colleges leads to deterioration in the health of students and enquire whether there is any ground for such an allegation so far as this Presidency is concerned and to what extent the deterioration of health, if any, can be traced to other causes, such as inadequate tuition, faulty methods of work, unhealthy surroundings, etc.

2. In the first place I am to state that His Excellency the Governor in Council is not aware that the opinion prevails in this Presidency that the health of students has deteriorated or is deteriorating. In the next place, in the absence of systematic records, even a complete medical examination of all students in colleges could do no more than give an idea of the present state of their health, and unless such medical inspection was repeated for a number of years and the results collated, it would be difficult to settle satisfactorily the question of physical deterioration of the school-going population.

It is, however, the case in the opinion of the Director of Public Instruction as well as of the Governor in Council that the flocking of students to educational centres has set up, or has intensified, conditions inimical to healthy living and this has for some time past been the subject of anxious consideration by the Government who have adopted such remedial measures as the extension of hostels and play-grounds. As regards the other causes suggested by the Government of India for a possible deterioration of health among students, viz., inadequate tuition and faulty methods of

teaching, although the Syndicate of the Madras University inclines to the opinion that these causes may contribute to deterioration of health, the Government see no reason on the meagre information before them, to commit themselves to such a view.

3. As observed by the Government of India, examination by parts is the rule in many countries in the case of Professional examinations in Law and Medicine and the Madras University is no exception to the rule. But in arts courses also the compartmental system has been gradually introduced into all the important examinations in the Madras Presidency. The Secondary school-leaving certificate scheme of this Presidency provides that if a pupil wishes to improve his certificate either in regard to its quality in one or more subjects already brought up, or by bringing up additional subjects under the optional group, he may appear at a subsequent examination in such subject or subjects. In January 1917, the Senate of the local University adopted regulations, providing for the division of the Intermediate examination into two parts and permitting a candidate who took the whole examination at first and failed only in one part to present himself for re-examination in that part only. Examination by parts has also been for a long time past a feature of the B.A. (pass) courses of the Madras University. Nevertheless, the Syndicate of the local University and the educational authorities have little faith in the intrinsic merits of examination by compartments. It is their opinion that any compartmental arrangement tends to encourage the idea that preparation for an examination is education, that it leaves students for parts of their course with too little work to do and that it dislocates college systems of instruction. Consistently with this view, the Syndicate which controls the admission of holders of Secondary school-leaving certificates to colleges for the University courses has lately ruled that a candidate who has been once declared ineligible for admission should, before presenting himself a second time for matriculation, repeat the course in *all* the subjects. It is also represented that the original object of the introduction of the compartmental system into the B.A. course, viz., that it might enable the better students to distinguish themselves in the subjects for which they had special aptitude, has hardly been realised, as students prefer to use their ability in getting a degree as quickly as possible rather than in getting a good degree.

4. On the whole it appears to His Excellency the Governor in Council that the compartmental arrangement of examinations is practically in full operation in this Presidency and that there is hardly room for its further extension in this Province.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

L. D. SWAMIKANNU,
Acting Secretary to Government.

NOTES CONNECTED WITH G.O. Nos. 387-88, HOME (EDUCATION),
DATED 21ST MARCH 1918

[SUBJECT.—*Examination by compartments.*]

From the Government of India, No. 1043, dated 7th December 1917.

From the University of Madras, No. 488, dated 22nd January 1918.

*From the Director of Public Instruction, R.O.C. No. 10599/17,
dated 18th February 1918.*

A draft order and a draft letter based on the Director's reply are submitted. The Syndicate appears to have expressed the opinion that inadequate tuition and faulty methods of work may be among the possible causes for such deterioration in the general physique of students as may be noticeable. The Director of Public Instruction is silent on this point. Apparently he does not reckon these as appreciable factors and in any case these cannot have any special application to this Presidency. The Government need not therefore commit themselves to this opinion.

E.A.V.—15-3-18.

C.R.—15-3-18.

C. RAMANUJA ACHARIYAR—16-3-18.

L. D. SWAMIKANNU—18-3-18.

P[RENTLAND]—20-3-18.

Issue.

L.D.S.—21-3-18.

[G.O. Nos. 387-88, Home (Education), dated 21st March 1918.]

Examination.-

Replying to the reference from the Govt. of India regarding
----- by compartments.

Read:-

- G.No. 1700/B-17. From the Govt. of India, Dept. of Education,
No. 1043, dated the 7th December 1917.
,, 155 B. From the Registrar, University of Madras, No.
488, dated the 22nd January 1918.
,, 378 B. From the D.P.I., R.O.C. No. 10599/17, dated the
18th February 1918.

ORDER:- No. 387 dated 21.3.1918.
P.S.

The Government of India will be
addressed.

C.R.
15-3-18.

LETTER:- No. 388, d/ 21.3.18.

To

The Secy. to the Govt. of India,
Dept. of Education.

Sir,

I am directed to reply to your
letter No. 1043, dated the 7th December
1917. on the subject of compartmental
examinations. The Govt. of India refer
to the allegation made in certain
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leads to deterioration in the health of
students and enquire whether there is
any ground for such an allegation so far
as

Recd by Mr. P. C. F. 21.3.18
21/3

as this Presidency is concerned and to what extent the deterioration of health, if any, can be traced to other causes, such as inadequate tuition, faulty methods of work, unhealthy surroundings, etc.

2. In the first place I am to state that H.E. the Governor in Council is not aware that the opinion prevails in this Presidency that the health of students has deteriorated or is deteriorating. In the next place, in the absence of systematic records, even a complete medical examination of all students in colleges could do no more than give an idea of the present state of their health, and unless such medical inspection was repeated for a number of years and the results collated, it would be difficult to settle satisfactorily the question of physical deterioration of the school-going population.

It is, however, the case in the opinion of the D.P.I. as well as of the Governor in Council that the flocking of students to educational centres has set up, or has intensified, conditions inimical to healthy living and this has for some time past been the subject of anxious consideration by the Govt. who have adopted such remedial measures as the extension of hostels and play-grounds. As regards the other causes suggested by the Govt. of India for possible deterioration of health among students, viz., inadequate tuition and faulty methods of teaching,

although

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although the Syndicate of the Madras University inclines to the opinion that these causes may contribute to deterioration of health, the Govt. see no ^{on the whole} reason to commit themselves to such a view.

3. As observed by the Govt. of India, examination by parts is the rule in many countries in the case of Professional examinations in Law and Medicine and the Madras University is no exception to the rule. But in arts courses also the compartmental system has been gradually introduced into all the important examinations in the Madras Presidency. The S.S.L.C. scheme of this Presidency provides that if a pupil wishes to improve his certificate either in regard to its quality in one or more subjects already brought up, or by bringing up additional subjects under the optional group, he may appear at a subsequent examination in such subject or subjects. In January 1917, the Senate of the local University adopted regulations, providing for the division of the Intermediate examination into two parts and permitting a candidate who took the whole examination at first and failed only in one part to present himself for re-examination in that part only. Examination by parts has also been for a long time past a feature of the B.A. (pass) courses of the Madras University. Nevertheless, the Syndicate of the local University and the

Educational

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Educational authorities have little faith in the ^{the intrinsic merits of} adoption of examination by compartments as a governing principle to be applied on the ground of its intrinsic merits. It is their opinion that any compartmental arrangement tends to encourage the idea that preparation for an examination is education, that it leaves students for parts of their course with too little work to do and that it dislocates college systems of instruction. Consistently with this view, the Syndicate which controls the admission of holders of Secondary School-leaving Certificates to colleges for the University courses has lately ruled that a candidate who has been once declared ineligible for admission should, before presenting himself a second time for Matriculation, repeat the course in all the subjects. It is also represented that the original object of the introduction of the compartmental system into the B.A. course, viz., that it might enable the better students to distinguish themselves in the subjects for which they had special aptitude, has hardly been realised, as students prefer to use their ability in getting a degree as quickly as possible rather than in getting a good degree. On the whole it appears to H.E. the Governor in Council that the compartmental arrangement of examinations is practically in full operation in this Presidency and that there is hardly room for its further extension in this Province.

I have, etc.

LDS
19.3.18



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NOTES CONNECTED WITH G.O. Nos. 387-88, HOME (EDUCATION),
DATED 21st MARCH 1918

[SUBJECT.—Examination by compartments.]

From the Government of India, No. 1043, dated 7th December 1917.

From the University of Madras, No. 438, dated 22nd January 1918.

From the Director of Public Instruction, R.O.C. No. 10599/17,
dated 18th February 1918.

A draft order and a draft letter based on the Director's reply ^{are} are submitted. The Syndicate appears to have expressed the opinion that inadequate tuition and faulty methods of work may be among the possible causes for such deterioration in the general physique of students as may be noticeable. The Director of Public Instruction is silent on this point. Apparently he does not reckon these as appreciable factors and in any case these cannot have any special application to this Presidency. The Government need not therefore commit themselves to this opinion.

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P[ENTLAND]—20-3-18.

Issue.

L.D.S.—21-3-18.

[G.O. Nos. 387-88, Home (Education), dated 21st March 1918.]

G.A.V.

G.O. No. 387-8, dated... 21. 3. 191 8.

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