

Government of Madras

HOME (EDUCATION) DEPARTMENT

G.O. No. 610, 14th May 1919

Telegraph signalling establishment

Recording copy of correspondence between the Director-General of Posts and Telegraphs and the Government of India on the subject of the revision of the present system of training recruits to the general service of the Indian —.

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READ—the following paper :—

Letter—from D. N. STRATHIE, Esq., I.C.S., Under Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Commerce and Industry.
To—the Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras.
Dated—Simla, the 21st April 1919.
No.—2190.

I am directed to forward a copy of the correspondence cited on the margin on the subject of the revision of the present system of training recruits for appointment to the general service of the Indian Telegraph signalling establishment and to request that, with the approval of His Excellency the Governor in Council, the new scheme may be introduced in any school in the Presidency of Madras which the Director-General of Posts and Telegraphs, after consultation with the Director of Public Instruction, may consider suitable.

No. 2191.

A copy is forwarded to the Department of Education and to the Director-General of Posts and Telegraphs.

ENCLOSURES.

(1)

Letter—from the Hon'ble Mr. G. R. CLARKE, O.B.E., I.C.S., Director-General of Posts and Telegraphs.
To—the Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Commerce and Industry.
Dated—Calcutta, the 11th January 1919.
No.—10-T.

I have the honour to submit, for the consideration and orders of the Government of India, the following proposals for the improvement of the system of recruitment for the general service of the signalling establishment of this department.

2. The Telegraph Committee of 1906-07, in paragraph 87 of their report, recommended the adoption of a system of recruitment by opening telegraph training classes in selected European schools similar to the system in force at the Lawrence Military Asylums at Ootacamund and Sanawar. The Government of India accordingly asked the Director-General of Telegraphs to draw up a scheme, but after discussion with the heads of educational institutions it was found that the initial pay of telegraphists and the prospects in the department were not sufficiently attractive to the better class of schools. In the meantime the question of improving the pay of the signalling establishment and of revising the method of training and the qualifying standards of departmental probationers came under consideration and the question of recruitment from selected educational institutions was postponed.

3. It was expected that the improved pay for the signalling establishment on the reorganization of 1st July 1908 would attract a better class of lads to serve in the department, but this expectation had not been realized owing chiefly to the defect in the present system of recruitment under which half-educated boys of 16 years of age are selected for a departmental training which excludes any extension of their general education. The disadvantages of this system are especially apparent now when the signalling establishment is expected to furnish men able to fill positions in the superior establishment in the engineering and traffic branches for which a good general education is a necessary qualification, and I am strongly of opinion that a system should now be adopted under which candidates for the general service shall continue their general education during their period of training in telegraphy. This may be assured by opening telegraph training classes in selected schools where boys of an approved educational standard will be trained for two years or more in a course of telegraphy along with ordinary subjects.

4. The Telegraph Committee recommended the system then in force in the Lawrence Asylums, where the telegraph course covered more than two years and was divided into two sections. The first section comprised the junior class whose training extended over a period of 18 months, and consisted of a course in telegraphy combined with subjects of general education prescribed by the Asylum. The second section comprised the senior class which underwent a purely technical training in telegraphy during a period extending over six months. Subsequently with a view to securing uniformity in the standard of education of the boys before the telegraph course was entered upon, a single class for instruction in telegraphy exclusively, and extending over one year, was introduced with the approval of the Government of India communicated in Mr. Ley's letter No. 3197-89, dated the 28th April 1910. This modified system aimed at an improvement in the general standard of education required of men entering the signalling branch, but in my opinion our requirements for men able to fill more important appointments later in their service necessitates a continuance of their general education up to the completion of their telegraph training and, with a view to ensure this, it becomes necessary to offer better terms to the authorities of the Asylum as well as to those of other institutions which may undertake to train our probationers. The present arrangement is for Government to contribute Rs. 70 to the Asylum funds for the training of each recruit passed into the department and on their part the Asylum pay Rs. 100 towards the salary of the telegraphy instructor and Rs. 15 as a premium to the instructor for each boy admitted as a telegraphist. The Asylum also provide free quarters for the instructor. I have been authorized, under Mr. Tallents' letter No. 7785, dated the 8th August 1918, to pay a contribution of Rs. 70 to any educational institution for the training of each recruit who joins the department. I should now like to recruit from recognized educational establishments in India all men required for vacancies in the general service with the exception of the appointments that will be filled by the transfer of six military telegraphists annually to the civil establishment and the appointments to be reserved for transfers from the local to the general service. If this system of recruitment is found practicable, a number of departmental training classes could with advantage either be closed or reduced in staff in the course of two or three years. I have accordingly already asked Postmasters-General to enquire from the heads of the principal local educational establishments whether they would agree to the establishment of telegraph training classes supplied by Government with free instructors, instruments and fittings on condition that certain number of appointments in the general service were offered every year.

5. It appears from the replies received by the heads of circles that there will be plenty of schools ready to open classes on these conditions, and the St. Andrew's Colonial Homes' School at Kalimpong is willing to start the special telegraph course from the commencement of its next session in February 1919. I think it very desirable to proceed at once with the scheme at Kalimpong without waiting for the submission of a detailed scheme for the opening of classes at other places. I therefore beg that Government may be pleased to authorize me to supply free of charge an instructor, the instruments and technical fittings, the furniture and the departmental forms and books required for the use of a training class at the St. Andrew's Colonial Homes' School, Kalimpong, and also to sanction a charge allowance of Rs. 20 a month to the instructor in addition to his grade pay. Under the existing scheme of training in departmental training classes an allowance of Rs. 20 a month is paid to each probationer during a course which may extend to twelve months. The cost of each candidate appointed is Rs. 240 or a little more since some do not complete the training and others fail to pass the final tests. As I propose to allot an average of twelve appointments annually to the Kalimpong school the saving in training allowances comes to Rs. 2,880 a year. The average pay of an instructor is about Rs. 2,160 a year and with a charge allowance of Rs. 240, the total cost is Rs. 2,400 a year which is more than covered by the saving in training allowances. When the system is extended to other schools it will be possible to reduce the staff of instructors in departmental training classes and thus effect a further saving. I am so convinced of the advantages of this system that I have already arranged with Mr. Graham, the Superintendent of the Kalimpong Schools, to open a training class next session and I would beg that Government may confirm my action in this respect and that very early sanction may be given to the general scheme of opening telegraph training classes, on the conditions named, in any other schools in India which I may consider really suitable.

(2)

Letter—from D. N. STRATHIE, Esq., I.C.S., Under Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Commerce and Industry.

To—the Director-General of Posts and Telegraphs.

Dated—Simla, the 21st April 1919.

No.—2188.

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No. 10-T., dated the 10th January 1919, in which you submit proposals for the revision of the present system of training recruits for appointment to the General Service of the Indian Telegraph signalling establishment. You propose to open telegraph training classes in such schools as you may consider suitable. The course will last for two years, and the schools selected will be supplied with an instructor, and with the necessary instruments, technical fittings, furniture, and departmental forms and books, free of charge. The instructor will be granted a charge allowance of Rs. 20 a month in addition to his grade pay, and the school will, as at present, be paid a contribution of Rs. 70 for each boy recruited into the Telegraph Department.

2. In reply I am to say that the Government of India sanction your proposals. They also confirm your action in having already arranged for the opening of a class on the terms proposed at the St. Andrew's Colonial Homes' School, Kalimpong.

3. A copy of this correspondence is being sent to all Local Governments, with whom future arrangements should be made direct.

No. 2189.

A copy is forwarded to the Department of Education.

(By order, etc.)

A. K. SARKAR,
for Under Secretary to the Government of India.

Order—No. 610, Home (Education), dated 14th May 1919.

Recorded.

(True extract)

R. RAMACHANDRA RAO,
Secretary to Government.

Copy to the Director of Public Instruction.

Secretary to the Committee of the Lawrence Memorial School, Ootacamund.

to print up the Correspondence
since the S. P. S. might require
copies for consulting and
European schools as to whether

They desire to open telegraph
training classes in their schools
on the conditions mentioned in
para 1 of Mr. Strathie's letter
at p. 6, c. 4. It is therefore
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the 'press service'

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S. R.

[P.T O

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