

N. P. 1

Government of Madras

LAW (EDUCATION) DEPARTMENT

G.O. No. 672, 27th April 1921

Examination

Secondary School-leaving Certificate—Minimum age of fifteen required as a qualification for admission to the — Rule modified.

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Government of Madras

LAW (EDUCATION) DEPARTMENT

G.O. No. 672, 27th April 1921

Examination

Secondary School-leaving Certificate—Minimum age of fifteen required as a qualification for admission to the — Rule modified.

READ—the following papers:—

I

G.O. No. 427, Education, dated 21st July 1909.

ABSTRACT.—Approving a scheme for the award of Secondary School-leaving Certificates and directing its publication in the *Fort St. George Gazette*.

G.O. No. 894, Home (Education), dated 6th July 1917.

ABSTRACT.—Approving the changes proposed in the scheme for the award of the Secondary School-leaving Certificates and ordering the publication of the necessary notification in the *Fort St. George Gazette*.

II

Endorsement N. Ref. on C. No 1159, dated 4th February 1921.

Submitted.

2. No exemption has hitherto been given in the case of boys, but I am prepared to discuss the matter with the members of the Secondary School-leaving Certificate Board which meets this month and submit to Government any recommendation which they may make.

R. G. GRIEVE,
Acting Director of Public Instruction.

To the Secretary to Government, Home (Education) Department.
Copy to the Secretary, Secondary School-leaving Certificate Board.

ENCLOSURE

Letter—from M.R.Ry. Diwan Bahadur M. O. PARTHASARATHY AYYANGAR
Avargal, M.A., M.L., Secretary and Correspondent, Hindu High School.
To—the Minister of Education (through the Director of Public Instruction).
Dated—Triplicane, the 26th January 1921.
No.—R.C. 12-G1.

The headmaster of my school tells me that there are at present in the sixth form as many as seven boys who will not have completed their 15th year by the 1st March next and who will therefore not be allowed to sit for the Secondary School-leaving Certificate public examination in that month. He also tells me that all of them are bright boys, that their attainments are above the average, that they are physically strong too and that they are therefore fit to enter upon the University course of studies in July next. The best of these is a boy of only 13 years whose knowledge of English will do credit to a student in the Intermediate class. According to the existing age-rule, he will have to remain two years more in the sixth form before he can sit for the public examination.

I venture to point out that this is a great hardship. It may be stated that all the boys who get promoted to the sixth form before they reach their 15th year are very intelligent and it is solely on account of this circumstance that they come up so well. The practice of keeping such boys for one or two years in the same class conning the same lessons over and over has in many cases the disastrous effect of taking away from them all freshness and desire for knowledge and dulling the edge of their keen susceptibilities and mental alertness. I feel strongly that in the best interests of the rising generation of the province, this intellectual wastage should be stopped and no obstacle should be placed in the way of especially bright pupils coming up so soon as they can.

The members of the Calcutta University Commission have fully considered this aspect of the matter and recommend that a candidate who fails to satisfy the age-rule but is certified by the headmaster of his school as being competent to appear for the public examination may be permitted to do so. I strongly urge that Government be pleased to accept this recommendation and issue the necessary order. As the rule works at present, the poet who wrote the Ode on Solitude in his twelfth year and the Ode on Silence in his fourteenth year would, if he were alive to-day, not be allowed to sit for the Madras Secondary School-leaving Certificate public examination.

III

Letter—from R. G. GRIEVE, Esq., M.A., Acting Director of Public Instruction.

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

Dated—Madras, the 8th March 1921.

No.—R.C. 1159/21.

Government are aware that the question of abrogating or modifying the rule which requires a minimum age as a qualification for admission to the Secondary School-leaving Certificate public examination has been ventilated on more than one occasion. On the one hand there have been those who favoured the total rescinding of the rule, on the other those who desired the extension to boys of the concession granted to girls in G.O. No. 894, Home (Education), dated 6th July 1917, whereby it is competent to the Director to relax the rules in their case.

2. The question has recently been agitated again. It was raised at the recent meeting of the Senate and was placed before the meeting of the Secondary School-leaving Certificate Board held towards the close of last month. It is true that the debate in the Senate was technically confined to the Matriculation Examination, but necessarily the views of that body have a more general application. Numerically speaking, opinion both in the Board and in the Senate was about equally divided with an insignificant majority in the former case for modification and in the latter case for abrogation. It is worth mentioning, however, that on the whole medical and educational opinion in the Senate was opposed to abrogation.

3. My own view—and I believe it is that of Mr. Littlehales also—is that the rule should not be rescinded in toto. As it is, there is undesirable pressure on clever, but physically and mentally immature pupils and such pressure would be intensified, to their subsequent detriment, if the minimum age low as it is, were no longer required for appearance at the public examination. It is urged and this is the main contention of the advocates of change—that it is hard to keep back a boy whose intellectual attainments would otherwise justify his being sent up for the examination. It is alleged that such boys deteriorate and lose interest in their work, while poor parents have to pay an additional year's fee. It is also stated that it is hard to detain a boy who is a day or two under-age and that the present system puts a premium on imaginary horoscopes and false declarations of age. Arguments such as these do not convince me: the law takes no account of hard cases.

4. The alternative to abrogation is modification. It might be made competent to the Director to grant exemption in special cases. I foresee practical difficulties even in such a procedure, but while I should prefer to leave the rule as it is I am prepared to agree to this should Government consider it desirable. The exemptions should be limited to boys who are only a few days under-age, but I would deprecate a definition of 'a few days'; the application should be submitted by the headmaster of the school and should be supported by two certificates, one of fitness from a qualified medical practitioner and the other of the exact date of birth. The application should also have the recommendation of the Inspector of Schools who would base his recommendation on his personal knowledge of the school from which the application proceeds, its accommodation, instruction and staff. Such application should normally be submitted to the Director by the 1st December preceding the examination.

5. I make these recommendations with some reluctance, and if they are accepted I propose to deal this year with the applications pending in my office on their merits.

6. Very early orders are requested.

IV

G.O. Mis. No. 342, dated 10th March 1921.

The Government authorize the Director of Public Instruction to sanction exemption from the rule regarding age limit in the case of candidates appearing for the ensuing Secondary School-leaving Certificate Examination whose applications for exemption are pending with him, subject to the conditions mentioned in paragraph 4 of his letter.

2. Separate orders will issue on the general question of abrogating or modifying the rules.

(By order of the Government, Ministry of Education)

R. RAMACHANDRA RAO,
Secretary to Government.

To the Director of Public Instruction.

Order—No. 672, Law (Education) dated 27th April 1921

The question of abrogating or modifying rule VI (2) of the scheme for the award of the Secondary School-leaving Certificates which requires that for purpose of admission to the Secondary School-leaving Certificate public examination a pupil should have completed 15 years of age on or before the 1st day of the month in which the examination is to be held, has been engaging public attention for some time and a similar question has recently been discussed by the Senate of the Madras University in respect of candidates for the Matriculation examination. After a careful consideration of the subject, the Government in the Ministry of Education have arrived at the decision that, while ordinarily the minimum age of a pupil for admission to the Secondary School-leaving Certificate public examination should continue to be 15, there should be a provision for the grant of exemption by the Director of Public Instruction for a period not exceeding one year in favour of pupils whose applications for exemption are supported by the headmasters of the respective institutions, provided they are invariably accompanied by certificates of physical fitness from registered medical practitioners.

2. The Director of Public Instruction is requested to submit a draft of the necessary alterations in the scheme for the award of Secondary School-leaving Certificates to give effect to the above modification.

(By order of the Government, Ministry of Education)

R. RAMACHANDRA RAO,
Secretary to Government.

To the Director of Public Instruction.
" Commissioner for Government Examinations.
" Publicity Officer.

4

LAW (EDUCATION) DEPARTMENT.

NOTES CONNECTED WITH G.O. No. 672, LAW (EDUCATION),
DATED 27TH APRIL 1921.

[SUBJECT.—*Age-restriction in the Secondary School Leaving-Certificate Examination.*]

Demi-official—from M.R.Ry. Diwan Bahadur M. O. PARTHASARATHY AYYANGAR
Avargal, M.A., M.L., Hindu High School, Triplicane.

To—M.R.Ry. Diwan Bahadur R. RAMACHANDRA RAO Avargal, Secretary to
Government, Home (Education) Department.

Dated—the 8th February 1921.

As Secretary to the Hindu High School Committee, I have addressed a letter to the Minister of Education asking that the age-restriction rule in respect of boys appearing for the Secondary School-Leaving Certificate public examination may be rescinded and am anxious that the benefit of the rescinding should be extended to boys sitting for the examination to be held next month. As the last day for sending in applications is the 28th instant, may I request you kindly to see to it that my letter is disposed of as early as possible?

The following demi-official is for approval :—

Demi-official—from M.R.Ry. Rao Bahadur C. RAMANUJA ACHARIYAR, Registrar,
Home (Education) Department.

To—M.R.Ry. Diwan Bahadur M. O. PARTHASARATHY AYYANGAR Avargal,
M.A., M.L., Hindu High School, Triplicane.

No.—486/B-1, dated the 12th February 1921.

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 8th instant, addressed to M.R.Ry. Diwan Bahadur R. Ramachandra Rao, regarding age-restriction rule in respect of boys appearing for the Secondary School-Leaving Certificate Examination and to inform you that the Director of Public Instruction has referred the matter to the Secondary School-Leaving Certificate Board.

2. After issue of the above demi-official, this may be forwarded u.o. to the Director who may be requested to treat the matter as *very urgent*.

T.K.—11-2-21.

C. RAMANUJA ACHARIYAR—11-2-21.

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION.

The Board meets on the 25th instant. Should it be decided to rescind or modify the rules regarding age-restriction in respect of boys appearing for the Secondary School-Leaving Certificate Examination, applications on behalf of pupils at present prevented from appearing would be received even if they come after the due date.

R. G. GRIEVE—14-2-21.

LAW (EDUCATION) DEPARTMENT.

The case may be submitted to Minister (1) for perusal.

C.V.V.—15-2-21.

T.K.—15-2-21.

C.R.—15-2-21.

May lie over.

R. RAMACHANDRA RAO—16-2-21.

From the Director of Public Instruction, No. 1159, dated 8th March 1921.

The Director of Public Instruction's letter deals with the question of abrogating the age-restriction in the case of pupils appearing for the Secondary School-Leaving Certificate Examination. At the recent meeting of the Senate, the question of

abrogating the similar restriction in the case of the *Matriculation* Examination was brought up and discussed and carried by a majority. The arguments urged in favour of *abrogating* are given in paragraph 3 of the Director of Public Instruction's letter; but the Director is not convinced of their strength and holds the view that the rule in question [paragraph VI (2) on page 40 of G.O. No. 427, Educational, dated 21st July 1909] should not be rescinded *in toto*. It is also pointed out that, on the whole, medical and educational opinion in the Senate was opposed to abrogation in the case of *Matriculation* Examination, even though the resolution for abrogation was carried by a majority in the Senate. It is for consideration whether, on the analogy of the *Matriculation* Examination, the restriction in the case of the Secondary School-Leaving Certificate Examination may not be abrogated, since the age limit was fixed for Secondary School-Leaving Certificate on the analogy of the limit fixed for the *Matriculation* Examination [vide notes to G.O. No. 894, Home (Education), dated 6th July 1917].

2. The Director is, however, prepared to agree to a modification of the rule whereby he might be made competent to grant exemption in special cases. The conditions under which such exemption may be granted are given in paragraph 4 of the Director of Public Instruction's letter. In case the Government are not for a total abrogation of the rule, it is for consideration whether the proposal to empower the Director to exempt in special cases on these conditions will be accepted. If the conditions were imposed, these boys are likely to be put to inconvenience in getting the certificates required. It may be stated that the Director has been given a similar power of exemption in the case of girls, but no such conditions as are now suggested by him in the case of boys have been imposed in the former case (G.O. No. 894, Educational, dated 6th July 1917).

3. Submitted for orders.

C.V.V.—9-3-21. T.K.—9-3-21.

The Secondary School-Leaving Certificate Board has agreed by a majority to a modification of the rule and not to its abrogation. The Director of Public Instruction is strongly opposed to abrogation. This view may, it is submitted, be for the present approved. If after some experience had been gained of its working, it is found necessary to remove the rule altogether, we may then reconsider the matter.

We may accept the modification of the rule giving power to the Director of Public Instruction to grant exemptions in special cases. With the large volume of opinion either for modification or abrogation, it may not be advisable to leave the rule in its present rigid state. No doubt the Director of Public Instruction in his present disposition may not be liberal in granting exemptions, but really hard cases will be exempted. There is no real comparison between the cases of girls and those of boys for exemption. The criterion in both the cases is not the same. The conditions proposed by the Director of Public Instruction may be agreed to. The most important object of the restriction is the physical condition of the boy and a medical certificate is therefore a necessity.

C. RAMANUJA ACHARIYAR—9-3-21.

The matter is very urgent in the case of the *pending* applications. The Director of Public Instruction may be authorized to exempt in such cases according to his discretion. After issue of orders, I shall note on the general question.

R. RAMACHANDRA RAO—9-3-21.

In the case of pending applications, the Director of Public Instruction may exempt under conditions mentioned by him.

A. S[UBBARAYALU REDDIYAR]—10-3-21.

A | Urgent. Issue orders accordingly transferring the letter received to-day from Minister (1).

R.R.—10-3-21.

Draft order submitted.

C.V.V.—10-3-21.

A above—please see linked file.

T.K.—10-3-21.

C. RAMANUJA ACHARIYAR—10-3-21.

[Issued as G.O. No. 342, dated 10th March 1921.]

It is instructive to trace the course of the age question in the Secondary School-Leaving Certificate scheme. In 1908 the Government appointed a committee to organize a school final examination to replace the *Matriculation* (G.O. No. 212, Educational, dated 20th March 1908). There was in the beginning no age limit for the *Matriculation* and this committee did not report in favour of any. Nevertheless the office noted that in Bombay and the United Provinces the age was limited to over 16 and the then Secretary, Mr. H. D. Taylor, wrote that it might be desirable to fix some age limit, say 16, on the 1st April of the examination year [paragraph 13 (3) on page 5 of notes to G.O. No. 510, Educational, dated 9th July 1908]. The then Government did not make any remarks whatsoever on the report or on the criticisms of the office and the Secretary thereupon but merely directed its publication for general criticism.

2. This was done. But as the report made no mention of the age, the public naturally did not refer to this point. The criticisms received were tabulated and sent to the Director of Public Instruction for remarks with an omnibus call for suggestions (pages 1-21 of notes to G.O. No. 427, dated 21st July 1909). Then for the first time, Dr. Bourne, Director of Public Instruction, suggested that the candidates for the public examination should have completed the age of fifteen years on or before the first day of the month in which they appear at the examination. No opportunity was given to the public to offer criticisms on this condition; and, so far as I can see, nor was it discussed in detail by members of Government even.

3. The rule has been in force since and has all along been resented and subjected to criticism.

4. As I have already stated above, there was no minimum age for the *Matriculation* Examination. The Government of India wanted 16 as the minimum for that examination and that limit was adopted in some Universities (about the year 1906) (vide paragraph 15 on pages 37-39 of notes to G.O. No. 841, dated 27th December 1906). There was a heated discussion in the University of Madras which ultimately accepted 15. One reason that chiefly led to this acceptance was to allay public feeling in the wholesale slaughter of the candidates for the *Matriculation* Examination; it was meant to limit the number.

5. It is quite possible that the decision of the University in the case of the *Matriculation* led to its wholesale imitation in the case of the School Final. But there is no comparison between the two examinations. The *Matriculation* is a pure literary test. In the School Final, the public examination is only an incident and by no means the most important incident in a course of attendance. The Secondary School book records all events from the IV form. If a pupil is allowed to enter the IV form and is given due promotion, under the double sanction of the headmaster and the Inspector provided for by the rules, I fail to see how it can be held that, if he is below age after completion of two terms in the VI form, he ought to be marked as ineligible for the public examination. The mistake is in permitting him to enter the IV form below 12. I need hardly add to the discouragement that attends a boy if he has to study the same objects for two years running in the same form; this misfortune has befallen me and so I speak after personal experience. The boy gets stale and malingers; and the anticipated benefit by not rushing him though at an immature age fails. Let the headmaster apply any class test he chooses to permit him to appear for the examination. But my point is, if a pupil undergoes instruction in the VI form, and satisfies all reasonable tests, he ought not to be debarred to proceed further in the absence of clear reasons to the contrary.

6. Other factors have arisen since. The minimum age for the *Matriculation* (15) has been abrogated since. I invite a perusal of the Senate discussion in the copy of the Hindu below. Our only reason for prescribing a minimum age for the Secondary School-Leaving Certificate Examination was to follow suit with the *Matriculation*. It follows that we should similarly abrogate the rule. Even if the rule be observed for the *Matriculation*, I have shewn above that there is less ground to

apply it to the School Final; much more so when the rule for the Matriculation itself is abrogated. If we do not do this, what will happen is that all such boys will prefer the Matriculation which continues to be an entrance to the University courses. And only the less bright boys will appear for the School Final. Once the University has changed its front, the retention of the rule is meaningless and useless.

7. In the case of girls, we have allowed the Director of Public Instruction to relax the rule and the idea was to relax in all cases. The argument there was, not that girls would not suffer by the earlier preparation for the School Final, but a common sense one based on the impossibility of girls remaining at school till the age of 15. Does not this give away any educational basis for the prescription?

8. This question of age has been considered by the Sadler Committee. They deprecate the keeping back of a considerable number of promising boys wasting valuable months in repeating work. Their idea is that the normal age should be that at which an average pupil should be able to complete the secondary course (which they consider to be 16 in Bengal) and the Headmaster should have liberty to present promising pupils at a year less. Even at present Madras works at a year less; so if these figures are adopted, it should be open to the Headmaster to send up pupils at 14.

9. The Director of Public Instruction has consulted the Secondary School-Leaving Certificate Board. The Board is by a majority for modifying the rule. Against the Board and the Senate, the Director of Public Instruction is yet against modification but reluctantly offers a compromise that the rule should be relaxed when the following conditions are satisfied :—

- (a) The difference should be only a few days (not to be defined).
- (b) The Headmaster should support the application.
- (c) There should be a certificate of age.
- (d) There should be a certificate from a qualified medical practitioner.
- (e) The Inspector should recommend, basing his recommendation on the condition of the school.

10. (a) above will throw the boy into the Matriculation Examination. After all cases will be few and certainly to leave the period undefined will be impracticable. (c) is unnecessary as the date of birth is in the Secondary School books. I do not understand (e).

11. I consider conditions (b) and (d) salutary. The first certificate (b) will endure that mentally immature pupils are not sent up and the second (d) that physically ill-developed pupils are not sent up. And these conditions are adequate. In other words the admissible age may be reduced to 14. And if further reduction is asked for (an enabling provision is always necessary to meet hard cases) the condition (e) must be fulfilled.

R. RAMACHANDRA RAO—23-3-21.

I have read the Secretary's memorandum on the subject. I am inclined to think that 15 should ordinarily be the minimum age. But exemption not exceeding a period of one year may be allowed in favour of the candidate in cases where the Headmaster supports his application and where—this condition must be invariably insisted on—the candidate produces a certificate of physical fitness from a registered medical practitioner.

A. S[UBBARAYALU REDDIYAR]—12-4-21.

A draft order is submitted.

A.S.—18-4-21. T.K.—19-4-21. C. RAMANUJA АСНАБИЯВ—20-4-21.

R.R.—24-4-21.

[G.O. No. 672, Law (Education), 27th April 1921.]

S.S.D. (Examination) - Minimum age of fifteen required as a qualification for admission to the - rule modified -

READ AGAIN G.O. No. 427557, dated 21-7-1959

” ” ” ” 894 507 ” 6 7 1917 (9)

READ ALSO:—

C No. 4, From the _____, No. _____, dated _____ 192

192

" " " " " "

192

ORDER.

P. 5.

No. 672, dated 27 Sept 192

The question of abrogating or modifying rule VI (2) of the scheme for the award of the Secondary School leaving certificates which requires that for purpose of admission to the S.S.L.C public examination a pupil should have completed 15 years of age on or before the first day of the month in which the examination is to be held has been ^{engaging public} ~~the subject of~~ attention for some time. And

Senate of the Madras University
and that body has ~~proposed~~
~~to rescind the Regulation fixing~~
~~a similar age limit in respect~~
of candidates for ~~admission~~
to the Matriculation examination.

After a ~~very~~ careful consideration
of the ~~discussion and representation~~
~~made on the~~ subject, the Govt
in the Ministry of Education
have arrived at the decision
that ^{while} ordinarily the minimum
age of a pupil for admission
to the S.S.L.C public examination
should continue to be 15, ~~but~~
~~there should be a provision for the partial exemption to the D.P.I.~~
~~that exemption for a period not~~
exceeding one year ~~may be~~
~~granted by the D.P.I.~~ in favour
of a pupil whose applications
for exemption are supported by
the Headmasters of the ^{respective} institutions,
provided, ~~they~~ ^{are} accompanied,
invariably by a certificate of
physical fitness from a
registered medical practitioner
No. D.P.I. ~~in~~ submit
in the

To the D.P.I.
C. G. R.
Publicity Office

Call Brook

Noted
28/4/14

school leaving certificates
to give effect to the above
modification

La.
29.4.21

20/4/21
26/4/21

[C. 406 B.]

Quint
in print

Law (Est) Dept

Discretion

Letter No. 406 B-1
Ref 10/2/21

DESPATCHED
11 FEB. 1921

To

M. R. Ry. Diwan Bahadur

M. O. Parthasarathi Ayngar

A. I. M. A. M. d.

Secy. + correspondent,

Hindu High School,

Triplicane.

Rai
10.2.21

Sir,

I am directed to
acknowledge the receipt of
your letter R. C. No. 12 of 11/21
of 26.1.21, regarding age
restriction of S. S. L. C. can-
didates and to say that the
matter will receive ^{due} consideration
I have etc.

pp. 2-3 of

Ch
8.2.21
Id
8.2.21

A
8/2/21
9/2/21

Ref.

After issue, etc.

Cur
8.2.21

M1 Request OP? to send his report.
ab 1/3

A circular ink stamp from the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India. The outer ring of the stamp contains the text "MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS" at the top and "GOVERNMENT OF INDIA" at the bottom. In the center of the stamp, the date "1 MAR 1951" is stamped diagonally. The stamp is slightly faded and shows some texture from the paper.

omit in pg 238

Law (Econ) Dept

Tel yphone

From

The Secy., ~~Home~~^{Law} (ER) Dept

T

The D. P. J.

Reference your no reply
N^o. 93 of 14.2.21 regarding
age-restriction for S.S.L.C
candidates. Please intimate
decision arrived at by the
Board.

cuu
28.2.21

28.2.2

Reminder

Reference my telephone
18th Instant
of the ~~28th February~~ last
regarding age-restriction
for SS & C Candidates.
Please intimate ^{every} ~~urgently~~
the decision arrived at ~~by~~
the Board.

I spoke with Mr. P
at the big (and Chamber) way.
He says he will draft the
newest thing

$\frac{200}{100} = 2$

53.21

Ca
5/3/2

76
u/14
125
10
15/2
Proof for approval
G.O. No. 672, 27th April 1921

Examination

Secondary School-leaving Certificate—Minimum age of fifteen required as a qualification for admission to the — Rule modified.

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ABSTRACT—

G.O. No. 894, Home (Education), dated 6th July 1917.

ABSTRACT—

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Letter from Endorsement N. Ref. on C. No. 1159, dated 6th February 1921. Submitted.

2. No exemption has hitherto been given in the case of boys, but I am prepared to discuss the matter with the members of the Secondary School-leaving Certificate Board which meets this month and submit to Government any recommendation which they may make.

R. G. GRIEVE,

Ag. Director of Public Instruction.

To the Secretary to Government, Home (Education) Department.
Copy to the Secretary, Secondary School-leaving Certificate.

ENCLOSURE

Letter—from M.R.Ry. Diwan Bahadur M. O. PARTHASARATHY AYYANGAR, Avargal, M.A., M.L., Secretary and Correspondent, Hindu High School.

To—the Minister of Education, (through the Director of Public Instruction, Madras).

Dated—Triplicane, the 26th January 1921.

No.—R.O. 12-Gl./Board.

The headmaster of my school tells me that there are at present in the sixth form as many as seven boys who will have not completed their 15th year by the 1st March next and who will therefore not be allowed to sit for the Secondary School-leaving Certificate public examination in that month. He also tells me that all of them are bright boys, that their attainments are above the average, that they are physically strong too and that they are therefore fit to enter upon the University course of studies in July next. The best of these is a boy of only 13 years whose knowledge of English will do credit to a student in the Intermediate class. According to the existing age-rule, he will have to remain two years more in the sixth form before he can sit for the public examination.

I venture to point out that this is a great hardship. It may be stated that all the boys who get promoted to the sixth form before they reach their 15th year are very intelligent and it is solely on account of this circumstance that they come up so well. The practice of keeping such boys for one or two years in the same class conning the same lessons over and over has in many cases the disastrous effect of taking away from them all freshness and desire for knowledge and dulling the edge of their keen susceptibilities and mental alertness. I feel strongly that in the best interests of the rising generation of the province, this intellectual wastage should be stopped and no obstacle should be placed in the way of especially bright pupils coming up so soon as they can.

The members of the Calcutta University Commission have fully considered this aspect of the matter and recommend that a candidate who fails to satisfy the age-rule but is certified by the headmaster of his school as being competent to appear for the public examination may be permitted to do so. I strongly urge that Government be pleased to accept this recommendation and issue the necessary order. As the rule works at present, the poet who wrote the Ode on Solitude in his twelfth year and the Ode on Silence in his fourteenth year would, if he were alive to-day, not be allowed to sit for the Madras Secondary School-leaving Certificate public examination.

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Letter—from R. G. GRIEVE, Esq., M.A., Acting Director of Public Instruction.
To—the Secretary to Government, Home (Education) Department.
Dated—Madras, the 8th March 1921.
No.—R.C. 1159/21.

Government are aware that the question of abrogating or modifying the rule which requires a minimum age as a qualification for admission to the Secondary School-leaving Certificate public examination has been ventilated on more than one occasion. On the one hand there have been those who favoured the total rescinding of the rule, on the other those who desired the extension to boys of the concession granted to girls in G.O. No. 894, Home (Education), dated 6th July 1917, whereby it is competent to the Director to relax the rules in their case.

2. The question has recently been agitated again. It was raised at the recent meeting of the Senate and was placad before the meeting of the Secondary School-leaving Certificate Board held towards the close of last month. It is true that the debate in the Senate was technically confined to the Matriculation Examination, but necessarily the views of that body have a more general application. Numerically speaking, opinion both in the Board and in the Senate was about equally divided with an insignificant majority in the former case for modification and in the latter case for abrogation. It is worth mentioning, however, that on the whole medical and educational opinion in the Senate was opposed to abrogation.

3. My own view—and I believe it is that of Mr. Littlehailes also—is that the rule should not be rescinded in toto. As it is, there is undesirable pressure on clever, but physically and mentally immature pupils and such pressure would be intensified, to their subsequent detriment, if the minimum age low as it is, were no longer required for appearance at the public examination. It is urged and this is the main contention of the advocates of change—that it is hard to keep back a boy whose intellectual attainments would otherwise justify his being sent up for the examination. It is alleged that such boys deteriorate and lose interest in their work, while poor parents have to pay an additional year's fee. It is also stated that it is hard to detain a boy who is a day or two under-age and that the present system puts a premium on imaginary horoscopes and false declarations of age. Arguments such as these do not convince me: the law takes no account of hard cases.

4. The alternative to abrogation is modification. It might be made competent to the Director to grant exemption in special cases. I foresee practical difficulties even in such a procedure, but while I should prefer to leave the rule as it is I am prepared to agree to this should Government consider it desirable. The exemptions should be limited to boys who are only a few days under-age, but I would deprecate a definition of 'a few days'; the application should be submitted by the headmaster of the school and should be supported by two certificates, one of fitness from a qualified medical practitioner and the other of the exact date of birth. The application should also have the recommendation of the Inspector of Schools who would base his recommendation on his personal knowledge of the school from which the application proceeds, its accommodation, instruction and staff. Such application should normally be submitted to the Director by the 1st December preceding the examination.

5. I make these recommendations with some reluctance, and if they are accepted I propose to deal this year with the applications pending in my office on their merits.

6. Very early orders are requested.

IV

G.O. Mis. No. 342, dated 10th March 1921.

The Government authorize the Director of Public Instruction to sanction exemption from the rule regarding age limit in the case of candidates appearing for the ensuing Secondary School leaving Certificate Examination whose applications for exemption are pending with him, subject to the conditions mentioned in paragraph 4 of his letter.

2. Separate orders will issue on the General question of abrogating or modifying the rules.

(By order of the Government, Ministry of Education.)

R. RAMACHANDRA RAO,
Secretary to Government.

To the Director of Public Instruction.

Order—No. 672, Law (Education) dated 27th April 1921

The question of abrogating or modifying rule VI (2) of the scheme for the award of the Secondary School-leaving Certificate which requires that for purpose of admission to the Secondary School-leaving Certificate public examination a pupil should have completed 15 years of age on or before the 1st day of the month in which the examination is to be held, has been engaging public attention for some time and a similar question has recently been discussed by the Senate of the Madras University in respect of candidates for the Matriculation examination. After a careful consideration of the subject, the Government in the Ministry of Education have arrived at the decision that, while ordinarily the minimum age of a pupil for admission to the Secondary School-leaving Certificate public examination should continue to be 15, there should be a provision for the grant of exemption by the Director of Public Instruction for a period not exceeding one year in favour of pupils whose applications for exemption are supported by the headmasters of the respective institutions, provided they are invariably accompanied by certificates of physical fitness from registered medical practitioners.

2. The Director of Public Instruction is requested to submit a draft of the necessary alterations in the scheme for the award of Secondary School-leaving Certificates to give effect to the above modification.

(By order of the Government, Ministry of Education.)

R. RAMACHANDRA RAO,
Secretary to Government.

To the Director of Public Instruction.
" Commissioner for Government Examinations.
" Publicity Officer.

98
7/5/21
Pwz for approval
54
[LAW (EDUCATION) DEPARTMENT.]
NOTES CONNECTED WITH G.O. No. 672, LAW (EDUCATION),
DATED 27TH APRIL 1921.

[SUBJECT.—]

Age restriction in
the S.D.L.C. Exam.

Demi-official—from M.R.Ry. Diwan Bahadur M. O. PARTHASARATHY AYYANGAR
Avargal, M.A., M.L., Hindu High School, Triplicane.

To—M.R.Ry. Diwan Bahadur R. RAMACHANDRA RAO Avargal, Secretary to
Government, Home (Education) Department.

Dated—the 8th February 1921.

As Secretary to the Hindu High School Committee, I have addressed a letter to the
Minister of Education asking that the age-restriction rule in respect of boys appearing for the
Secondary School-Leaving Certificate public examination may be rescinded and am anxious that
the benefit of the rescinding should be extended to boys sitting for the examination to be held
next month. As the last day for sending in applications is the 28th instant, may I request you
kindly to see to it that my letter is disposed of as early as possible?

The following demi-official is for approval:—

Demi-official—from M.R.Ry. Diwan Bahadur R. RAMACHANDRA RAO Avargal,
Secretary to Government, Home (Education) Department.

To—M.R.Ry. Diwan Bahadur M. O. PARTHASARATHY AYYANGAR, M.A., M.L.,
Hindu High School, Triplicane.

No.—486/B-1. Dated—the 21st February 1921.

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 8th instant, addressed to
M.R.Ry. Diwan Bahadur R. Ramachandra Rao, regarding age-restriction rule in respect of
boys appearing for the Secondary School-Leaving Certificate Examination and to inform you
that the Director of Public Instruction has referred the matter to the Secondary School-Leaving
Certificate Board.

2. After issue of the above demi-official, this may be forwarded u.o. to the
Director who may be requested to treat the matter as *very urgent*.

T.K.—11-2-21.

C. RAMANUJA ACHARIYAR—11-2-21.

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION.

The Board meets on the 25th instant. Should it be decided to rescind or modify
the rules regarding age-restriction in respect of boys appearing for the Secondary
School-Leaving Certificate Examination, applications on behalf of pupils at present
prevented from appearing would be received even if they come after the due date.

R. G. GRIEVE—14-2-21.

LAW (EDUCATION) DEPARTMENT.

The case may be submitted to Minister (1) for perusal.

C.V.V.—15-2-21.

C.R.—15-2-21.

T.K.—15-2-21.

May lie over.

R. RAMACHANDRA RAO—16-2-21.

From the Director of Public Instruction, No. 1159, dated 8th March 1921.

The Director of Public Instruction's letter on pages 3-5, current file, deals with the question of abrogating the age-restriction in the case of pupils appearing for the Secondary School-Leaving Certificate examination. At the recent meeting of the Senate, the question of abrogating the similar restriction in the case of the Matriculation Examination was brought up and discussed and carried by a majority. The arguments urged in favour of *abrogating* are given in paragraph 3 of the Director of Public Instruction's letter; but the Director is not convinced of their strength and holds the view that the rule in question [Paragraph VI (2) on page 40 of G.O. No. 427, Educational, dated 21st July 1909] should not be rescinded *in toto*. It is also pointed out that, on the whole, medical and educational opinion in the Senate was opposed to abrogation in the case of Matriculation Examination, even though the resolution for abrogation was carried by a majority in the Senate. It is for consideration whether, on the analogy of the Matriculation Examination, the restriction in the case of the Secondary School-Leaving Certificate Examination may not be abrogated, since the age limit was fixed for Secondary School-Leaving Certificate on the analogy of the limit fixed for the Matriculation Examination [vide notes to G.O. No. 894, Home (Education), dated 6th July 1917.]

2. The Director is, however, prepared to agree to a modification of the rule whereby he might be made competent to grant exemption in special cases. The conditions under which such exemption may be granted are given in paragraph 4 of the Director of Public Instruction's letter on pages 4-5, current file. In case the Government are not for a total abrogation of the rule, it is for consideration whether the proposal to empower the Director to exempt in special cases on these conditions will be accepted. If the conditions were imposed, these boys are likely to be put to inconvenience in getting the certificates required. It may be stated that the Director has been given a similar power of exemption in the case of girls, but no such conditions as are now suggested by him in the case of boys have been imposed in the former case (G.O. No. 894, Educational, dated 6th July 1917).

3. Submitted for orders.

C.V.V.—9-3-21. T.K.—9-3-21.

The Secondary School-Leaving Certificate Board has agreed by a majority to a modification of the rule and not to its abrogation. The Director of Public Instruction is strongly opposed to abrogation. This view may, it is submitted, be for the present approved. If after some experience had been gained of its working, it is found necessary to remove the rule altogether, we may then reconsider the matter.

We may accept the modification of the rule giving power to the Director of Public Instruction to grant exemptions in special cases. With the large volume of opinion either for modification or abrogation, it may not be advisable to leave the rule in its present rigid state. No doubt the Director of Public Instruction in his present disposition may not be liberal in granting exemptions, but really hard cases will be exempted. There is no real comparison between the cases of girls and those of boys for exemption. The criterion in both the cases is not the same. The conditions proposed by the Director of Public Instruction may be agreed to. The most important object of the restriction is the physical condition of the boy and a medical certificate is therefore a necessity.

C. RAMANUJA ACHARIYAR—9-3-21.

The matter is very urgent in the case of the *pending* applications. The Director of Public Instruction may be authorized to exempt in such cases according to his discretion. After issue of orders, I shall note on the general question.

R. RAMACHANDRA RAO—9-3-21.

In the case of pending applications, the Director of Public Instruction may exempt under conditions mentioned by him.

A. S[UBBARAYALU REDDIYAR]—10-3-21.

A | Urgent. Issue orders accordingly transferring the letter received today from minister (I).

R. RAMACHANDRA RAO—10-23-21.

Draft order submitted.

C.V.V.—10-3-21.

A above—please see linked file.

T.K.—10-3-21.

C. RAMANUJA ACHARIYAR—10-3-21.

[Issued as G.O. No. 342, dated 10th March 1921.]

It is instructive to trace the course of the age question in the Secondary School-Leaving Certificate scheme. In 1908 the Government appointed a committee to organize a school final examination to replace the Matriculation (G.O. No. 212, Educational, dated 20th March 1908). There was in the beginning no age limit for the Matriculation and this committee did not report in favour of any. Nevertheless the office noted that in Bombay and the United Provinces the age was limited to over 16 and the then Secretary, Mr. H. D. Taylor, wrote that it might be desirable to fix some age limit, say 16, on the 1st April of the examination year [paragraph 13 (3) on page 5 of notes to G.O. No. 510, Educational, dated 9th July 1908]. The then Government did not make any remarks whatsoever on the report or on the criticisms of the office and the Secretary thereupon but merely directed its publication for general criticism.

2. This was done. But as the report made no mention of the age, the public naturally did not refer to this point. The criticisms received were tabulated and sent to the Director of Public Instruction for remarks with an omnibus call for suggestions (pages 1-21 of notes to G.O. No. 427, dated 21st July 1909). Then for the first time, Dr. Bourne, Director of Public Instruction, suggested that the candidates for the public examination should have completed the age of fifteen years on or before the first day of the month in which they appear at the examination. No opportunity was given to the public to offer criticisms on this condition; and, so far as I can see, nor was it discussed in detail by members of Government even.

3. The rule has been in force since and has all along been resented and subjected to criticism.

4. As I have already stated above, there was no minimum age for the Matriculation Examination. The Government of India wanted 16 as the minimum for that examination and that limit was adopted in some Universities (about the year 1906) (vide paragraph 15 on pages 37-39 of notes to G.O. No. 841, dated 27th December 1906). There was a heated discussion in the University of Madras which ultimately accepted 15. One reason that chiefly led to this acceptance was to allay public feeling in the wholesale slaughter of the candidates for the Matriculation Examination; it was meant to limit the number.

5. It is quite possible that the decision of the University in the case of the Matriculation led to its wholesale imitation in the case of the School Final. But there is no comparison between the two examinations. The Matriculation is a pure literary test. In the School Final, the public examination is only an incident and by no means the most important incident in a course of attendance. The Secondary School book records all events from the IV form. If a pupil is allowed to enter the IV form and is given due promotion, under the double sanction of the headmaster and the Inspector provided for by the rules, I fail to see how it can be held that, if he is below age after completion of two terms in the VI form, he ought to be marked as ineligible for the public examination. The mistake is in permitting him to enter the IV form below 12. I need hardly add to the discouragement that attends a boy if he has to study the same objects for two years running in the same form; this

N.T.

misfortune has befallen me and so I speak after personal experience. The boy gets stale and malingers; and the anticipated benefit by not rushing him though at an immature age fails. Let the headmaster apply any class test he chooses to permit him to appear for the examination. But my point is, if a pupil undergoes instruction in the VI form, and satisfies all reasonable tests, he ought not to be debarred to proceed further in the absence of clear reasons to the contrary.

6. Other factors have arisen since. The minimum age for the Matriculation (15) has been abrogated since. I invite a perusal of the Senate discussion in the copy of the Hindu below. Our only reason for prescribing a minimum age for the Secondary School Leaving Certificate examination was to follow suit with the Matriculation. It follows that we should similarly abrogate the rule. Even if the rule be observed for the Matriculation, I have shewn above that there is less ground to apply it to the School Final; much more so when the rule for the Matriculation itself is abrogated. If we do not do this, what will happen is that all such boys will prefer the Matriculation which continues to be an entrance to the University courses. and only the less bright boys will appear for the School Final. Once the University has changed its front, the retention of the rule is meaningless and useless.

7. In the case of girls, we have allowed the Director of Public Instruction to relax the rule and the idea was to relax in all cases. The argument there was, not that girls would not suffer by the earlier preparation for the School Final, but a common sense one based on the impossibility of girls remaining at school till the age of 15. Does not this give away any educational basis for the prescription?

8. This question of age has been considered by the Sadler Committee. They deprecate the keeping back of a considerable number of promising boys wasting valuable months in repeating work. Their idea is that the normal age should be that at which an average pupil should be able to complete the secondary course (which they consider to be 16 in Bengal) and the Headmaster should have liberty to present promising pupils at a year less. Even at present Madras works at a year less; so if these figures are adopted, it should be open to the Headmaster to send up pupils at 14.

9. The Director of Public Instruction has consulted the Secondary School Leaving Certificate Board. The Board is by a majority for modifying the rule. Against the Board and the Senate, the Director of Public Instruction is yet against modification but reluctantly offers a compromise that the rule should be relaxed when the following conditions are satisfied:—

- (a) The difference should be only a few days (not to be defined).
- (b) The Headmaster should support the application.
- (c) There should be a certificate of age.
- (d) There should be a certificate from a qualified medical practitioner.
- (e) The Inspector should recommend, basing his recommendation on the condition of the school.

10. (a) above will throw the boy into the Matriculation Examination. After all cases will be few and certainly to leave the period undefined will be impracticable. (c) is unnecessary as the date of birth is in the Secondary School books. I do not understand (e).

11. I consider conditions (b) and (d) salutary. The first certificate (b) will ensure that mentally immature pupils are not sent up and the second (d) that physically ill-developed pupils are not sent up. And these conditions are adequate. In other words the admissible age may be reduced to 14. And if further reduction is asked for (an enabling provision is always necessary to meet hard cases) the condition (e) must be fulfilled.

R. RAMACHANDRA RAO—23-3-21.

I have read the Secretary's memorandum on the subject. I am inclined to think that 15 should ordinarily be the minimum age. But exemption not exceeding a period of one year may be allowed in favour of the candidate in cases where the Headmaster supports his application and where—this condition must be invariably insisted on—the candidate produces a certificate of physical fitness from a registered medical practitioner.

A. S[UBBARAYALU REDDIYAR]—12-4-21.

A draft order is submitted.

A.S.—18-4-21.

T.K.—19-4-21.

C. RAMANUJA ACHARIYAR—20-4-21.

R. RAMACHANDRA RAO—24-4-21.

[G.O. No. 672, Law (Education), 27th April 1921.]

M. S.

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