

Law (1921) Department.
(Education)

Ordinary SERIES.

G.O. No. 836

DATED 2-6-1921

Indexed

[Despatch Abstract.]

Board of Scientific Advice.

Government of India letter stating that the ----- should be
consulted on schemes of scientific development and education.

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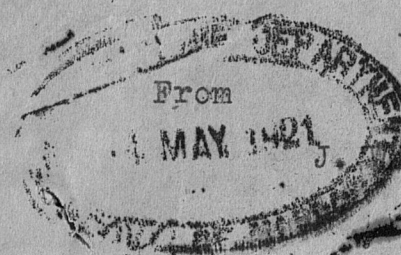
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GOVERNMENT OF INDIA.

DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE AND AGRICULTURE.

(General).

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14/5/21



Hearn, Esq., I. C. S.,

Under-Secretary to the Government of India,

To

The Secretary to the Government of Madras,

Revenue Department.

Simla, the 26th April 1921.

Sir,

I am directed to enclose a copy of a note by the Director-General of Observatories on the utility of the programmes of work and reports of the Board of Scientific Advice together with an extract paragraph 3 of Resolution No.3 from the Proceedings of the 39th meeting of the Board held at Delhi on the 20th December 1920 and to suggest that if there be no objection, the Board of Scientific Advice should be consulted by the Government of -----
M a d r a s regarding schemes of scientific development and education.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

Rev. sept.

Law (Edn) u.o

13.5.21.

W. Hearn

Under-Secretary.

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BOARD OF SCIENTIFIC ADVICE.

Thirty
Twenty-ninth Meeting.

A note by the Director-General of Observatories on the utility of the programmes of work and reports of the Board.

I desire to give notice of the following resolutions to be proposed at the next meeting of the Board of Scientific Advice:-

- (a) That in the opinion of the Board as programmes of departmental work are no longer submitted to the Royal Society for approval, their preparation is in some departments, such as those of the Survey of India and of Meteorology, unnecessary; and that even if in other departments, such as that of Agriculture, a programme is drawn up for administrative use inside the department, its submission to Government has lost its object.
- (b) That the publication and circulation of programmes serves no adequate end, the administration reports meeting the ordinary requirements, both official and public.
- (c) That in view of the existing departmental administration reports and scientific publications the preparation and publication of the Board's reports on work done is unnecessary and the trouble spent over them is wasted. Any compilations, such as the bibliographies, for which scientific usefulness may be claimed would naturally be looked for among the scientific publications and is out of place in the Reports of the Board.

2. With reference to (a) and (b) the Board was started merely to increase the administrative efficiency of the work of the scientific departments of Government in which overlapping was rife, and in its early days neither the Survey of India nor the Meteorological Department sent in programmes or reports. We agreed to do so merely for uniformity at Mr. Wilson's request. I do not think that overlapping need be feared now, but if it is, surely the departments between which it is possible might exchange typed programmes without the Board being obliged to consider the question.

3. Regarding (c) it is recognised that a scientific department publishes an administration report and memoirs or bulletins containing its scientific work; and it has from time to time been accepted by the Board in its deliberations that the Reports of the Board are not the proper place for the publication of research work. The printing of bibliographies gradually crept in without any agreement upon the principles involved. If an American wants a bibliography of Indian agricultural research work he would look for it in the scientific publications of the Department of Agriculture, and I think it is a great mistake for a department to contribute anything of value to a nondescript medium of publication where it is likely to remain hidden.

4. At present the Board meets twice a year, and it does very little except issue its Report. If the Report is abolished the Board need only meet once a year, and might strengthen itself by the addition of an educational and a commercial representative. I would suggest that it should then decide on a limited number of topics, in which it ought to take an interest; and should call for brief statements from time to time from sub-committees appointed for the purpose. Among such subjects might be included the organisation of scientific libraries, and the provision of technical education; the possibility of a united Indian science journal or journals might also be considered. My own view is that the Board cannot continue if its main function is to produce a report that nobody wants. Its name gives the public the right to expect guidance on scientific matters of general importance, and the sooner it recognises its responsibility the better for India.

4
Extract para. 3 of the Resolution No.3 from the Proceedings of the 39th meeting of the Board of Scientific Advice for India, held at Delhi, on the 20th December 1920.

3. Considered.- A note by the Director General of Observatories on the utility of the programmes of work and reports of the Board.

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As regards Para. 4 of Dr. Walker's note the Board consider that they could more usefully perform their functions as a Board of Scientific Advice if they were consulted by the local Governments on schemes of Scientific development or education and they suggest that local Governments be invited so to consult them. In this connection the Board would welcome the addition to their number of a representative of the Education Department with scientific qualifications and recommend that the Government of India be asked to nominate such a representative.

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