

Law (1926) Department.
(Education)

Ordinary SERIES.

G.O. No. 934

DATED 20-5-1926

[Despatch Abstract.]

Legislative Council.

Motion---half fee concession to girls--irrespective of poverty--
notes recorded.

BACK PAPERS.

G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.	G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.

FURTHER PAPERS.

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DEMAND XIX - EDUCATION (TRANSFERRED).

Mr. M. Krishnan Nayar.

To reduce the allotment of Rs. 1,15,700 for Government Secondary Schools for Girls by Rs. 100 (To urge the need for reducing the school fees for girls by half i.e. to the former amount)

Law (Education) Department.

p 12 of G.O. No. 1212LE
24-7-24

Under Rule 92 of the Madras Educational Rules

only half the standard rates of fees is levied from girls whose parents or guardians are so poor that the grant of the concession is necessary to enable them to continue their studies. The Headmaster is to determine the question about the poverty of the pupil, and he is to call for poverty certificates from certain specified authorities in cases of doubt. The rule regarding the production of poverty certificate was introduced in 1920. It was not, however, observed till 1924; and pupils belonging to the classes mentioned in the rule were admitted to the concession irrespective of the ability of their parents to pay fees and the grants-in-aid were assessed on this calculation. In 1924 the Educational rules were brought up to date and published. In July and October 1924 the D.P.I. issued circulars to the effect that the rules regarding the poverty certificate should be strictly observed and that fees on behalf of rich pupils should be taken at the full standard rates in estimating the grants-in-aid for aided schools. With reference to the objection was raised in certain quarters to the levy of full fees from girls, and the Government explained a Press Communique that the rule was not new but had been in force since 1920. Since the issue of the communique protests have again appeared in the Press and it is under consideration whether the old rule of levying fees at half rates in all cases so far as girls are concerned may not be reverted to.

G.O. No. 759 LE
1-7-20

G.O. No. 1212LE
24-7-24

para 3 of the note for the F.C. at U

G.O. No. 1829 LE
24-11-24

para 3, p 3 of the note for F.C. at U

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The proposal was placed before the Finance Committee at its meeting held on 5-2-1926 and the Committee recommended as follows: --

"The Committee were of opinion that the present rules place an unfair burden on the parents and on the authorities who are under the existing rules empowered to grant certificates. Before any retrograde measure is adopted the question should be considered whether the responsibility for giving certificates should not be transferred to the headmasters or the management of the schools concerned".

This recommendation of the Committee has been sent to the D.P.I. for remarks.

The Finance Committee's resolution does not directly touch the main issue whether all girls irrespective of the financial condition of their parents should be given the half fee concession. They have dealt with only the side issue as to the authority who should grant the poverty certificate. From the form of their resolution it looks as if they are in favour of retaining the rule that the concession should be given only to those who are in need of it on account of their poverty.

yes
V.R.
9.3

DEMAND XIX - EDUCATION (TRANSFERRED)

Rao Bahadur M.C. Raja:

p.225. 412. To reduce the allotment of Rs.1,15,700 for

Government Secondary Schools for Girls by Rs.100.

(To raise the question of lowering the standard rate of fees for girls).

After Lunch (2-30 p.m.).

* Diwan Bahadur M. KRISHNAN NAYAR :—"Mr. President, Sir, I move the motion that stands in my name. It is this:

'that the allotment of Rs. 1,15,700 for Government Secondary Schools for Girls be reduced by Rs. 100.'

"My object in moving this motion is this: Till very recently the fees from girls studying in girls' schools were being collected at a particular rate. For instance, the rates that were being collected from girls studying in Forms IV, V and VI were, I think, Rs. 2-10-0 per month. Recently this amount has been doubled. The girls in these forms who were paying Rs. 2-10-0 are now compelled to pay twice the amount, i.e., at the rate of Rs. 5-4-0 per mensem. This acts as a real hardship on the girls. Female education in our country has not advanced to such an extent as to make all the parents and guardians sending their children and wards to schools, pay whatever fees levied. Female education—especially English education—is still in an infant stage and it is necessary that the full rates which are being levied on boys should not be levied on girls. This was brought to my notice very recently about a month ago in Palghat; parents of several girls who are studying in the high school there, came to me and complained that they were compelled to pay this higher rate from December. That, I submit, is a real hardship. My hon. Friend may tell me that the rule has been in existence for some time. If so, that rule has not been enforced. Then I find from the rules in the Grant-in-Aid Code—Rule 92—that fees in all instances shall be levied on half the standard rates from Muhammadans, Oriyas and members of backward classes whose parents or guardians are so poor that the grant of this concession is necessary to enable them to continue their studies. That is to say, a parent or guardian who wants to pay only half the rate should declare himself to be so poor as to be unable to pay the double rate or the usual rate by whatever name it may be called. Respectable

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people though they are poor, are usually unwilling to go to the various persons who are authorised to give poverty certificates. Even if they go to them, where is the guarantee that they will get the certificates. It should be the rule that the double rate should not be collected from girls. Till now, as I submitted, only half the rate levied from boys was levied from girls. That should be the practice hereafter also. Otherwise, I am afraid that female education will suffer very much. I would ask my hon. Friend—apart from the condition of producing poverty certificates and apart from other hindrances—to make this the ordinary rule that the rate to be collected from girls should be only half the rate for boys."

* Mr. J. A. SALDANHA :—"I associate myself with my hon. Friend from Malabar in the appeal he has made to the hon. the Minister on this point. I have received protests from different quarters not only from South Kanara and Malabar but also from Ootacamund and from other districts which are outside my own electorate, such as Tinnevely and Tuticorin. They have appealed to me as they have appealed to their own representatives to remove the hardship which entails upon all classes of people and especially Indian Christians by enforcing this new rule. Really I do not know what occurred to the mind of the hon. the Minister for Education suddenly as to make this plunge from a highly generous treatment of female education and to say that the fees that will be collected hereafter will be double the original rate and only in cases where poverty certificates are produced, they will be exempted. Whenever there is a doubt or when a headmistress newly joins a school, certificates of poverty are required to be produced by every girl. What is the definition of poverty? That is another difficulty. I wish the hon. the Minister or any other hon. Member to tell us what constitutes poverty. Inspectors come and want to know why so many girls are admitted on poverty certificates. I remember that a large number of applicants came rushing to me the other day before I came here. I asked them what was the matter. They said that the Inspector of the girls' schools wanted them to produce poverty certificates. Even in the case of aided institutions, the girls have to go and get certificates from different persons. The number of persons from whom they can get such certificates is very limited. The names of M.L.Cs. are excluded from the list of such persons. M.L.Cs.' certificates would be treated with contempt."

* The hon. the PRESIDENT :—"Why does the hon. Member assume that names M.L.Cs.' certificates will be treated with contempt?"

* Mr. A. RANGANATHA MUDALIYAR :—"I do not know whether their names are included in the list of persons who can give poverty certificates."

The hon. the PRESIDENT :—"That is a different matter."

* Mr. J. A. SALDANHA :—"We must also bear in mind the unwillingness of many parents to go and ask for certificates. They feel it inconvenient to go to the Magistrate especially in the case of those whose position is considered to be high in the eyes of the public. If the people in India increase in anything at all, it is in having a large number of children. If a parent has two or three girls or half a dozen girls it will be so difficult for him to go and approach a Magistrate for certificates. Look at humiliation he is put to to get certificates. Would it not be humiliating, Sir, unless there is a near relation? Even if there is a near relation, would he like to give a poverty certificate? A man of his position may not be willing to do so. I think

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p.m.

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[Mr. J. A. Saldanha]

that every hon. Member will agree with me when I say that this method is not fair and that the rule works a great hardship on people who hold a somewhat high position in society. Yet, the hon. the Minister himself knows how people suffer on account of the enforcement of this rule and my hon. Friend from Trichinopoly will endorse this opinion. I have got a bundle of papers with me and my friends will ask me 'what is all this'. They all relate to this matter. This is a very important question and I hope the hon. the Minister will revert to the old generous policy and that the somersault that he has performed will be followed by another somersault very soon."

* The hon. Rao Bahadur Sir A. P. PATRO :—"Sir, the somersault, I am afraid, is more on the part of the hon. Member from South Kanara representing the Christian Constituency of South Kanara; because if he had taken care to observe steadily without making a somersault, he would have seen that the rule has been in existence since 1920. It is no new rule framed by the Ministry. The practice was a little different in different places, but the rule was the same and it was in existence before. Therefore it is not a new creation, nor is it a somersault as the hon. Member would like to make it appear. It is true, as stated by the hon. Members from Malabar and South Kanara, looking at it from the point of view of the girls, that it is a little hard that parents in order to obtain a concession for their girls, have to get a certificate from one of those officers mentioned in the list. But on the other hand we have to take this in its practical aspect, in its businesslike aspect. Is it wise on the part of an administration to allow free licence to everyone to say that he is poor and thereby obtain the concession? In order to obtain such concession, the tendency will be to say 'we are poor' and when it is represented to the management that the parents are not able to meet the fees of the girl, the management is bound to give them the concession unless there is a reasonable doubt as to the particular individual. The rule is very clear and it must be understood properly. If there was any misunderstanding or misinterpretation of it, we would set it right, and we have done so by a fresh memorandum in connexion with this matter. The rule reads:

"In institutions of a professional or special character fees shall be levied at such rates as may from time to time be sanctioned by the Director or may be prescribed by any rules sanctioned by Government. Fees in all institutions shall be levied at half the standard rates for girls and members of the backward communities, etc. . . and an officer of the Revenue Department, not less than a Deputy Tahsildar shall certify in cases of doubt."

"The poverty certificate is required only in cases where there is a doubt in the mind of the headmaster or the manager. Otherwise, in all cases, it is obligatory on the part of the correspondent or the manager to give half-fees to girls. If the rule has been wrongly understood and if it has not been properly interpreted by any management or correspondent, certainly it is not the fault of the rule, but it is the fault of the management. If the management is at fault and its attention is drawn to it, certainly the manager will be asked to see that it is set right. So, I am sure, hon. Members will realize that there is no hardship in the rule itself but in putting the rule into practice some managements may not be able to interpret it correctly; and that can be easily rectified. We felt this difficulty soon after the publication of the rules in a consolidated form recently when representations were made in the press and protests were received; and we have issued a press communiqué explaining the situation. The proposal was also placed before the Finance Committee at its meeting held on the 5th February 1926

[Sir A. P. Patro]

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in order to place the matter beyond all doubt, and the Committee recommended as follows:—"The Committee were of opinion that the present rules place an unfair burden both on the parents and on the authorities who are, under the existing rules, empowered to grant certificates. Before any retrograde measure is adopted, the question should be considered whether the responsibility for giving the certificates could not be transferred to the headmasters or the management of the schools concerned." The Finance Committee's resolution, it will thus be seen, misses the main issue whether all girls irrespective of the financial condition of their parents should be given the half-fee concession. That is not directly dealt with by the Finance Committee, and therefore the matter will again be placed before the Finance Committee in order to get its advice on the direct issue in question. It is due more to the misunderstanding of the rule; but after we saw the opinion that has been repeatedly expressed in the press and the representations made to us through memorials, we referred it to the Finance Committee and asked them whether irrespective of the poverty of the pupils the half-fee concession might generally be adopted. That matter is therefore under consideration, and the advice of the Finance Committee will be taken."

* Mr. K. PRABHAKARAN TAMPAN :—"Sir, as a Member of the Finance Committee, I may say here that the chief question raised before the Committee was not whether girls irrespective of their poverty or otherwise ought to be given any concession. We thought that asking the parents to go to a Sub-Magistrate or any other officer like that was putting an undue burden on them. The other question, if my memory is right, was never raised at all."

* Diwan Bahadur M. KRISHNAN NAYAR :—"My Friend, the hon. A. P. Patro, stated that the rule that is now in existence is not a new one and that it has been in existence for the past five years or so, since 1920 or 1921. It may be so, Sir, I do not contradict it, but my point is this: Whatever the rule was, personally I know that till December 1925, i.e., till two months ago, the fee that was being collected in the girls' school in Palghat was only half the rate for boys; and for the first time in the history of that institution, the headmistress who is a graduate and an L.T. was compelled, by the authorities, i.e., the District Board who have the control of the school, to collect the same rate from these girls as that which is being levied from boys, that is, double the rate. As I stated, the fee that was being collected in Forms IV, V and VI was only Rs. 2-10-0 and that was raised to Rs. 5-4-0 per mensem. I do not contradict my friend by saying that the rule has not been in existence already but I only say that the collection was at half the rates. Then my friend referred to the resolution recently passed by the Finance Committee and said that it does not touch the point. I fully agree with my friend there and also with my Friend Mr. Prabhakaran Tampam. I do not know, whether the resolution passed by the Finance Committee was due to any misunderstanding on the part of the Finance Committee or due to any mistake in the reference made to the Finance Committee. That resolution refers only to the authority to grant the certificate. What has that got to do with the point now raised? Even now the authority to grant the certificate is a particular class of officers mentioned in the rule. Hereafter, the authority will be the managers or the headmasters or headmistresses of the institutions. That has nothing to

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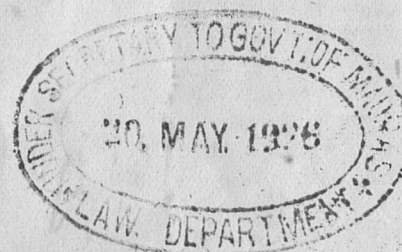
[Mr. M. Krishnan Nayar]

do with the point now raised, as my friend correctly pointed out. My point is this: that the rule must be made absolute, and irrespective of considerations of poverty, fees should be levied from girls only at half the rates. I hope my friend will see to it that the consideration of this point is expedited and that the result of the consideration ends in favour of this motion. Seeing that my friend says it is under consideration, I request him to expedite, to speed up, the consideration."

The motion was by leave of the House withdrawn.

With refer: to 'A' on the previous page, it may be noted that the question will probably be considered by the Finance Committee at its next meeting. Attention is solicited to the note to be placed before the Finance Committee. The notes may be

Ship XVI



degree II:
Motion - Half fee
concession to girls
irrespective of
poverty - notes -
referred

Order: 934 2/20. 5. 26.
M.S. Recommended.

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LETTER OF GOVERNMENT.

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