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200-17-15

Educational (1904) Department.

ORDINARY PRINTED.

G.O., No. 464

DATED 29.7.04

N. P.

INDEXED.

ORIGINAL

[Despatch Abstract.]

Serial

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Government {1904} of Madras. EDUCATIONAL.

Recd.

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ORIGINAL

G.O., No. 464, 29th July 1904.

JULY.

Religious Instruction.

Stating that it is undesirable to allow the Muhammadan school building at Arni to be utilized for the purpose of imparting religious instruction.

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS.

EDUCATIONAL DEPARTMENT.

READ—the following paper:—

From the Hon'ble Mr. A. G. BOURNE, D.Sc., F.R.S., Director of Public Instruction, to the Secretary to Government, Educational Department, dated Madras, 5th July 1904, Ref. on Cur. No. 4310.

I have the honour to submit, for favour of orders, the following letter from the Inspector of Schools, Central Circle:—

"The Muhammadan inhabitants of Arni are very desirous that religious instruction should be given to their children.

"(2) There is one Muhammadan Lower Primary school in the town managed by the President of the Local Taluk Board. A religious teacher has recently settled in Arni and as no religious teaching is allowed in the Board school some of the inhabitants have withdrawn their children from the Board school and put them under the charge of this teacher who gives, I understand, some secular instruction as well probably of a very inferior kind.

"(3) They say that they are willing to send their children again to the Board school if this religious teacher is allowed to impart instruction in that school. They are ready to pay this teacher out of their own pockets; and it would be understood that no religious instruction would be given during the hours allotted for secular instruction.

"(4) The only question, therefore, is whether it is permissible for the buildings of a school under public management to be used for purposes of religious instruction. There seems to be no objection; but it is apparently necessary to ask for your orders on the subject.

"(5) The President of the Taluk Board concerned is not averse to the project, and the teacher of the Board school and most of the parents seem to be in favour of it".

2. It is clear that religion cannot form part of the instruction in a Board school.

The question then arises whether rule 9 (d) of Chapter III of the Educational Rules bears upon the question. The rule governs institutions under public management and therefore Board schools. In this particular case I ask for a ruling as to whether the existence of sectarianism among Muhammadans entails a "question upon which the opinion of the community is likely to be seriously divided" or perhaps more generally as to whether the building of a school under public management may be used for religious teaching of any kind, provided always that this does not take place at a time which would cause interference with educational work. If this be allowed it is probable that such teaching would take place either at the beginning or end or both of the school meeting. In that case it appears to me that rule 20 of the Grant-in-Aid Code should be made of general application. Any such alteration of this rule would, however, doubtless cause dissatisfaction among Missionaries.

3. I find that a correspondence took place with regard to religious instruction which terminated so far as Government was concerned with their order in the Educational Department, No. 506, dated 5th August 1899. Copies of the papers are not forthcoming in my office, and I merely draw attention to their existence as it is possible that they may have some bearing upon the present question. I know of no other rules which deal with this matter. In this connection I submit, for the consideration

of Government, the desirability of making the rule quoted above from the Educational Rules with regard to the use of buildings and in particular clause (d) more definite. It is difficult to say beforehand in many cases whether the opinion of the community is likely to be seriously divided or whether the discussion of any particular subject is likely to cause unnecessary offence.

ORDER—No. 464, Educational, dated 29th July 1904.

The Government consider that it is undesirable to allow the school building at Arni to be utilised for the purpose of imparting religious instruction, which may be of a sectarian character and may not be always acceptable to the whole of the Muhammadan community. The mosque seems to be the more appropriate place for such instruction.

(True Extract.)

H. D. TAYLOR,
Ag. Secretary to Government.

To the Director of Public Instruction.

Ed. V. A. Rajavelu.

EDUCATIONAL DEPARTMENT.

NOTES CONNECTED WITH G.O., No. 464, EDUCATIONAL, DATED
29TH JULY 1904.

[SUBJECT.—*Imparting of Religious Instruction in the Board Muhammadan
Primary School at Arni.*]

From the Director of Public Instruction, dated 5th July 1904, No. 4310.

The Inspector of Schools, Central Circle, asks the Director whether it is permissible for the building of a school under public management to be used for purposes of religious instruction and the Director refers the matter to Government for orders with reference to rule 9 (d) of chapter III of the Educational Rules—page 20. Under this rule an officer in charge of an educational building may grant the use of such building for the holding of meetings connected with public affairs provided that "the object of the meeting is not of a political character, nor connected with any social or other question upon which the opinion of the community is likely to be seriously divided, or the discussion of which is likely to cause unnecessary offence."

2. The Director desires to have a ruling on the point whether the existence of sectarianism among Muhammadans entails a question upon which the opinion of the community is likely to be seriously divided or whether the building of a school under public management may be used for religious teaching of any kind. It is submitted that in the first place no class for religious instruction should be allowed to be held during or even immediately before or immediately after regular school hours in a school under public management. There should, however, be no objection to the holding of classes in the morning or evening long before or long after school hours so as to make it distinctly clear that such classes have no connection with the school.

3. The imparting of religious instruction during some of the vernacular hours in a week was approved in the United Provinces, but in 1899 the Government refused to have any such system introduced here—*vide* G.O., No. 506, Educational, dated 15th August 1899.

4. Such classes as those referred to at the end of paragraph 2 *supra*, if held, should not be regarded as falling under rule 9 (d) of chapter III of the Educational Rules. That rule relates to the grant of buildings for occasional meetings, which are open to all classes of the community. In this case the building is required by a section of the community for a regular class for imparting religious instruction. The danger here is that other sections of the community may also ask for the use of the building, but if there is space enough for them their request may be granted. Otherwise the request may be refused.

5. The Director also desires that rule 9 of chapter III and especially clause (d), should be made more definite. The Director's difficulty is that in the case of many of the meetings it is difficult or impossible to say beforehand whether the opinion of the community is likely to be seriously divided on the question to be considered or whether the discussion of it is likely to cause unnecessary offence. It

is submitted that it is hardly possible to make the rule clearer. All that is required is that due precaution should be taken by the officer lending the building. Nevertheless the unexpected may happen at times, but this cannot be helped.

P. T. THARYAN—16-7-04.

H. D. TAYLOR.

Submitted that rule 9 of the Educational Rules does not apply, and that Board school buildings cannot be used for religious instruction at any hour of the day. The Arni parents may send their children to the mosque for instruction.

A. GALLETTI—18-7-04.

Vide paragraph 3 of Director's letter. Parents cannot be allowed to impose conditions under which they will or will not send their children to school. They must accept the Government rules. Presumably the Muhammadan children who attend the school are not all of one sect, and if an instructor of one sect were allowed the use of the school, permission would have to be given to the other sect also. The institution must be kept purely secular. Rule 9 does not apply to the present proposal. It is not a question of a general meeting for public affairs or a debating society.

H. D. TAYLOR—19-7-04.

I think we must stick to the general rules. At Arni the Muhammadans are probably all of one sect—but one dissident would give rise to trouble. In the order we might add that in the opinion of Government such instruction will most appropriately be given at the mosque.

2. Of course there is one point in their favour and that is that the school is specially established for Muhammadans who are not a national division but a religious community. The real difficulty is that there may possibly be both Shias and Sunnis.

3. Please circulate to His Excellency the Governor.

G. S. F[ORBES]—19-7-04.

To His Excellency the Governor.

H.D.T.—20-7-04.

I cannot find anything bearing on the subject in the Code and Educational Rules except the conscience clause in schools for Europeans—section 20 in chapter I of the Code. So far as it is referred to in the Quinquennial Review it is that religious instruction cannot form any part of the curriculum—page 420. But paragraph 1137 on page 375 shows how the matter is attempted to be met in Bombay.

2. I believe there is no use in a Muhammadan school that will not undertake some form or reality of religious instruction: and I should say that in Vellore and everywhere else it is a matter for (1) the parents and (2) for the school management if they can agree therein. It would seem well to get a clear understanding of how many of the parents of the school children wish to have a teacher of religion for their children, out of school hours and how many do not and be guided accordingly.

3. Circulate please to Hon'ble Mr. Stokes.

J. T[OMSON]—23-7-04.

To the Hon'ble Mr. Stokes, C.S.I.

H.D.T.—23-7-04.

It is clear that clause 9 (a) of chapter III of the Educational Rules does not and was not intended to meet the case. Clause 20 of the Grant-in-aid Code is the clause for the analogous case of European Christians. The question seems to be whether it would be expedient to extend the clause to Muhammadans. I do not think it would be so or that the Muhammadans generally would like the Maulvi introduced into the curriculum. There is really no difficulty for, as suggested by the Hon'ble Mr. Forbes, the mosque is available for and is the usual place, I believe, for religious instruction. In this case the school is a purely Muhammadan school and in its circumstances there seems no special feature of difficulty at present but before long there will probably be a row and this teacher will be evicted. This case would be the thin end of the wedge.

I do not understand that the request comes from the people. It rather comes, I think, from the teacher who wants for his own ends to lure back the boys to his school. When the Muhammadans ask for it, clause 20 can be enlarged.

G. S[TOOKES]—26-7-04.

A draft is submitted for approval.

H.D.T.—27-7-04.

When writing my note of the 19th it occurred to me to call for a report as to the numbers of different sects, if any, and the wishes of the parents—as His Excellency suggests. But on consideration I thought, as Hon'ble Mr. Stokes does, that the admission of the principle of consultation might be dangerous. The animosity between Sunnis and Shias is most bitter and irreconcilable: and even if there were unanimity for the moment, the advent of a single pupil of the other sect would give rise to recrimination and appeals to Government. Accordingly I thought it best to reject the appeal, and await developments.

I have revised the office draft.

G.S.F.—27-7-04.

Seen.

J.T.—29-7-04.

Issue.

H.D.T.—29-7-04.

[G.O., No. 464, Educational, dated 29th July 1904.]

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Educational (1904) Department.

CURRENT No. 1182

From

[Name] The Hon'ble Mr. A.G. Bourne, D.Sc., F.R.S.,

[Designation] Director of Public Instruction,

[Station] Madras.

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Region Cur No. 4310 of 04

Dated 5th JULY 1904

Enclosures

Received 7-7-1904

Registered 7-7-1904

SUBJECT.

Enquiring whether the imparting of religious instruction in the Board Muhammadan Lower Primary School at Arni out of school hours may be permitted.

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