

~~Letter~~ (1921) Department.

Law (Miscellaneous)

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[Despatch Abstract.]

Legislative Assembly Question No. 90 (Hansard)
on 6.1.21. re Teacher-Pupil ratio at 1:15
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Back Papers.

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Law (1921) Department.

(Miscellaneous)
Ordinary SERIES.

G.O. No. 20

DATED

7-1-21

INDEXED

[Despatch Abstract.]

Spelling of Indian Personal Names---Visvakarma Mahajana Conference---
Madura--Resolution--spelling of Asari--papers recorded.

Kumbakonam, Visvakarma Mahajana Conference

Central Committee Office,

Dated October 1920.

From

The General Secretary,

Visvakarma Mahajana Conference Central Committee,

S. India,

To

The Secretary to the Government of Madras,

Home Department,

MADRAS.

SIR,

I have the honour to submit, for perusal and necessary action, the resolutions passed at the Fifth Session of the Visvakarma Mahajana Conference held at Madura on the 21st and 22nd August 1920 under the presidency of Mr. N. Duraivelachariar, B.A.

2. The Conference was attended by leading members of the community from the several districts of the presidency. Great enthusiasm prevailed throughout and one special feature of the Conference was the number of delegates swelled gradually from 800 to 2,000. As a sign of the real awakening that has arisen among the members of the community, the delegates took a keen and lively interest in the proceedings and there was a full and intelligent discussion of the various resolutions.

3. The resolution on "Loyalty to the British Throne" was proposed by Mr. T. M. Mukkannachariar, President of the Conference Central Committee, in an approximate speech and was carried by acclamation, the audience standing.

4. The Conference noted with regret that no action was taken by Government on the memorials containing specific prayers as resolved at the previous conferences and pressed for a sympathetic consideration and early redress of the grievances detailed in the said memorials.

5. With a view to convince Government that the Conference movement is taking practical steps for the amelioration of the community, a strong representative committee has been appointed to collect funds for educational and industrial purposes. The President of the Conference Central Committee is, at present, on a tour in the southern districts of the presidency, meeting the members of the community in various centres and impressing upon them the imperative necessity that exists of giving at least elementary education to their boys and girls and the extreme desirability of working their industries on up-to-date lines.

6. The Conference again expressed their keen disappointment at the continued inaction of Government in the matter of their caste title being spelt as "Asari" a meaningless term, instead of as "Achari" the original term to which they are entitled by law and custom, and prayed for immediate action being taken in the matter, in view of the strong feeling that exists amongst the members of the community on the subject. It is earnestly hoped that the order of Government which is being construed by a whole community as a distinct violation of the policy of neutrality to which the Government have pledged themselves in the matter of social and religious rights and customs of the people of the country, would be modified without any further loss of time.

7. For some time past a feeling has been steadily gaining ground among the members of the community that an effective way of getting their grievances redressed would be to have their own representatives in the Municipal Councils, Local Boards and the Provincial Legislative Council. In the present backward state of the community, it is not possible to have their representatives returned through the open door of election. The Conference, therefore, resolved that to safe guard the interests of this large industrial class, numbering about 13 lakhs in this presidency, the Government should be requested to nominate suitable representatives of the community to each of the Municipal Councils, Taluk Boards and District Boards and to the reformed Provincial Legislative Council.

I am to request that the specific points dealt with in this letter may be favourably considered by Government and early orders passed thereon.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

C. S. Acharya
for General Secretary.

True Copy

*Please see
Resolutions
XII & XIII
Page 4.*

**Resolutions adopted at the Fifth Visvakarma Mahajana
Conference held at Madura on 21st and 22nd August 1920.**

I. Resolution :—

This Conference of the Visvakarma community of South India begs to convey to Government the unshaken faith and entire confidence of these very important industrialists in the Indian Empire and to express their deep devotion and loyalty to His Most Gracious Majesty, George V, their beloved Emperor.

II. Resolution :—

This Conference of the Artisan Community of South India, the pioneers of all industries, whose numerical strength is about 13 lakhs, begs to express their abiding faith in the administration of His Excellency Lord Willingdon, Governor of Madras, and prays that His Excellency may be so pleased as to evince some interest towards this important community by affording them facilities for their educational and industrial advancement and also allot by nomination some seats for them in the Municipal Councils, Taluk and District Boards of the Presidency and the provincial Legislative Council as has been graciously done in the case of other backward communities.

III. Resolution :—

This Conference places on record its deep sense of regret at the loss sustained by the community through the death of Messrs. T. K. Sundrachariar, T. M. Chockalinga Achariar of Kumbakonam and B. S. Ramaswamy Achariar of Tanjore, who, with a single-minded devotion, worked towards the amelioration of the community.

IV. Resolution :—

This Conference, though not a political one, records its deep sense of sorrow at the demise of Lok. B. G. Tilak, a distinguished son of India, and Prof. T. K. Gajjar, a distinguished member of the Visvakarma Community of Bombay.

V. Resolution :—

This Conference respectfully notes with regret that the Government of Madras have not taken due notice of the important resolutions adopted at the previous Conferences and presses for an early consideration of the same.

VI. Resolution :—

This Conference again resolves that the members of the community should give their children, both boys and girls, compulsory primary education and that no parent or guardian shall take his children or ward into his profession before 12 years of age and that all loyal members of the community should see to the enforcement of this resolution.

VII. Resolution :—

This Conference resolves that the members of the community should take very early steps for starting co-operative societies for the improvement of the industries of the community in all important centres as has been done at present in a few places.

VIII. *Resolution* :—

This Conference resolves that very early steps should be taken by the Conference Central Committee in conjunction with Mr. K. Kanniappachari of Madras to form an influential committee to collect necessary funds for the purpose of starting schools of our own in important centres wherein youths of the community may receive general, industrial, architectural and religious education in the same institution and also for the granting of scholarships to deserving students receiving higher education.

IX. *Resolution* :—

This Conference again resolves that the members of the community should strictly observe the religious rites and other ceremonies as laid down in their scriptures.

X. *Resolution* :—

This Conference resolves that the members of the community, without exception, should subscribe for "Visvakarman-Industry" of Madras and also such other journals as may be devoted to the advancement of the community.

XI. *Resolution* :—

This Conference, while repeating its respectful but emphatic protest conveyed in the resolutions adopted at the previous conferences regarding the unwarranted interference of the Government with the time-honoured caste title of the community 'Achari,' prays for the cancellation of the order, without further delay, in view of the strong feeling prevailing amongst the members of the community in the matter.

XII. *Resolution* :—

This Conference resolves that in order to safe guard the interests of these industrialists, in view of their importance and usefulness to the country at large and their numerical strength, the Government may be pleased to exercise its power of nominating some deserving members of the community as members of Municipal Councils and Local Boards in this Presidency, as has been done in the case of other backward communities. X

XIII. *Resolution* :—

This Conference respectfully begs of Government that they may be pleased to reserve two of the nominated seats in the Local Legislative Council for the members of this large community residing in South India and also begs to suggest, for the present, the names of the following gentlemen as likely to serve the best interests of the community :— X

Mr. N. Duraivelachariar, B.A., of Madras.

„ C. Subramanyachariar, B.A., L.T., of Salem.

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Madras, 6th December 1918.

To

The President and Members

OF

The Franchise Committee.

SIRS,

On behalf of the Central Committee of the Visvakarma Mahajana Conference, South India, I beg to submit the following representation for your favourable consideration. The Visvakarmas form an important industrial community in South India, with a population of 10,17,465 according to the last census. The report of the Indian Industrial Commission recently issued, bears testimony to the past industrial greatness of the community whose members were engaged in producing not only arms, weapons and implements of domestic and industrial uses, but carved stone, wood and ivory, wrought metal, jewellery and other articles of luxury, often of exquisite workmanship and high artistic value. It should, however, be pointed out that the unrestricted foreign competition of machine-made goods, the withdrawal of Royal and Ecclesiastical patronage, and the resultant impoverished condition and backward state of education of this great community which comprises the whole of what in European countries are called the artisan classes, have led to a great decline in its status and in social and economic condition. As so well emphasised in Chapter XVII of the Industrial Commission Report relating to the cottage industries, the interests of the community require special protection. Attention is invited in this connection to the opinion of Mr. R. B. Ewbank, an eminent Bombay civilian, on the subject of Indian handicrafts. "The preservation of its handicrafts is essential to the well being of India. They embody traditions handed down from the remote past and knit into the very texture of National life."

Since it is so essential to revive the traditional industrial eminence which the community had occupied in the past, to preserve its ancient handicrafts which would form an important factor in the future industrial development of the country, and to improve the present neglected condition of the community, to enable it to contribute to the future economic progress of the country, it is submitted that at least in the Provincial Legislative Councils, the progress and well-being of this economically and industrially important community should be specially protected by adequate and suitable methods of representation.

Having explained the necessity and importance of the representation of the community in the Provincial Legislative Assembly, a few words may be necessary to explain how the representation may be given effect to. The several classes constituting the Visvakarma community such as gold-smith, brass-smith, copper-smith, black-smith, carpenter, wood-carver, stone-worker etc., form a homogeneous whole, so that in the formation of electorates there will be absolutely no difficulty on the ground of sub-divisions of castes, or diversity of territorial interests. It is, however, suggested that in view of the impoverished condition of the community, the general minimum qualification of the voter may be made as low as possible. It is thought that the granting of this concession would result in a fairly large electorate considering the numerical strength of the community.

The following scheme is submitted for the constitution of the Provincial Legislative Assembly :—

MADRAS LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Proposed strength	...	150	Territorial electorate.		
Nominated members	...	25	Ganjam	...	3
General election on a territorial basis	...	65	Vizagapatam	...	3
Mohamadans	...	18	Godavari	...	3
Depressed classes	...	10	Krishna	...	3
English trade and commerce including planters and miners	...	6	Guntur	...	2
Indian trade and commerce	...	4	Nellore	...	3
Artizan { Weavers & dyers 3 Smiths & carpenters 3 }	...	6	Cuddapah	...	3
Indian Christian community	...	4	Kurnool	...	3
Landlords and Zemindars	...	6	Bellary	...	3
Uriyas and Agency tracts	...	2	Anantapur	...	3
Corporation	...	2	Chittoor	...	2
University	...	2	Chingleput	...	3
			N. Arcot	...	2
			S. Arcot	...	3
			Tanjore	...	3
			Trichinopoly	...	3
			Madura	...	3
			Ramnad	...	2
			Tinnevely	...	3
			Salem	...	3
			Coimbatore	...	3
			Malabar	...	3
			S. Canara	...	2
			Niligris	...	1
			Total	...	65

The scheme is designed to meet all the requirements of this Presidency. The number of seats allotted for nomination and for the representation of the Mohamadan Community is in accordance with the recommendations contained in the Montagu-Chelmsford Report. The seats assigned for election on the territorial basis provide for the adequate representation of the interests of the various Districts. It is submitted that in filling up these seats the franchise would be widened to the fullest possible extent. With regard to the number of seats assigned for the representation of other interests, the relative claims have been carefully weighed and the minimum number has been noted for each interest.

It is hoped that the representation made on behalf of an important industrial community like the Visvakarma community will receive due attention at the hands of the Franchise Committee whose recommendation to His Majesty's Government in the matter will be almost final. As no further opportunity will be accorded for urging the case of an industrial class like ours upon the attention of Government, the responsibility of settling the future economic condition of a large class of His Majesty's subjects, who once occupied a position of industrial eminence in the country, will entirely rest with you.

A copy of the memorandum on the subject prepared for the information of the Secretary of State and H. E. the Viceroy is also submitted for the perusal of the Committee.

As Vice-President of the Committee, I am authorised to tender evidence before you on any point which may require elucidation in connection with the above representation.

I beg to remain,

Sirs,

Your most obedient servant,

Vice-President,

Visvakarma Mahajana Conference Committee,
MADRAS.

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Memorandum explaining the importance and the necessity of safe-guarding the interests of the Artizan Community of South India in any scheme of reforms that may be formulated by the Government of India and the Secretary of State.

The Visvakarma Mahajana Conference movement was organised by the Artizan classes of South India for improving the material condition of the community. Prior to its organisation there were a number of local institutions attending to purely local wants. The Conference movement which was started in 1915 affiliated the other institutions as branches carrying out the objects of the central body.

The first Conference was held in Kumbakonam, the second in Tanjore and the third in Trichinopoly. The resolutions passed at each Conference were communicated to the Local Government and their help sought towards the amelioration of the community wherever necessary. It is not known what steps the Local Government have taken to remedy the grievances brought to their notice. But the delay in passing orders brings out one serious defect clearly i.e., the absence of representatives of the community in the Municipal Councils, the Local Boards and the Provincial Legislative Council, who can take a real interest in the matter and move the Government to action.

The Central Committee of the Conference have therefore deemed it proper to avail themselves of this opportunity to represent to His Excellency the Viceroy and the Right Honourable the Secretary of State for India a few important details with regard to the traditional industrial eminence which the community had occupied in the past, its present neglected condition, and the imperative necessity to preserve its ancient handicrafts, and the integrity of the community as a factor in the future economic progress of the country. The Central Committee have therefore quoted in this connection the weighty opinions of some distinguished writers who can speak with authority on the industrial uplift of India. The views of these eminent men with regard to the remedies that should be adopted for the amelioration of the Artizan class and the general improvement of the arts and the industries of the country, deserve special attention.

Visvakarmas, the descendants of Visvakarma, the Divine Architect, form an important industrial community in South India with a population of 10,17,465. The members of the community were and are the master-builders of the land. The awe-inspiring temples and the mighty and beautiful palaces are their works. The exquisite workmanship displayed in a wealth of gods and horsed warriors, in stone work, metal work and ivory carving, bear ample testimony to their artistic and industrial greatness.

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Though the community can still boast of master-builders and clever artists here and there, it should be admitted as a patent fact that there is a considerable decline in the status of the workmen and in their industry. The causes are not far to seek. The unrestricted foreign competition of machine-made goods resulting in the import of cheap metal, wooden and earthen wares and glass utensils, the withdrawal of royal and ecclesiastical patronage due to the imbibing by the Indian Artistocracy of purely western tastes and customs, the impoverished condition of the community brought about by a gradual decline in their trade emoluments, and the backward state of education resulting from their impecunious circumstances, are among the chief causes that account for the industrial degeneration of the community. At the present day the rural artizan has to depend upon the village money lender and merchant who insists on the sale of manufactured articles through his own shop at a rate which just covers the expenses of manufacture. Thus circumstanced, the artizan is without any prospect of bettering his condition.

The preservation and development of the handicrafts of India is a matter of vital importance to the national well-being. Dr. Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, the most rational exponent of Hinduism and its ideals, believes and believes rightly, that nations are made by artists and poets, and not by traders and politicians. "It is for us," he further says, "to show that industrial production can be organised on socialistic lines without converting the whole world into groups of state-owned factories. It is for us to show that great and lively cities can be built and beautiful things made in them without the pollution of the air by smoke or the poisoning of the river by chemicals; for us to show that man can be the master and not slave of the mechanism he himself has created." Mr. E. B. Havell who was for a long time the Superintendent of the School of Arts in Madras and thus well acquainted with the arts and handicrafts of South India, writes, "It is of really greater importance that India with the help of the great traditional industrial organisation which she still possesses, should show the world how a prosperous system of handicraft may be built up in conjunction with agriculture, than it is to show how she could add some crores of rupees to her income by the method of Western Commercialism." Mr. R. B. Ewbank, an eminent Bombay civilian, writes in unmistakable terms, "that the preservation of its ancient handicrafts is essential to the well-being of India. They embody traditions handed down from the remote past and knit into the very texture of national life. They so exactly reflect national temperament and meet popular needs that domestic life would be poorer and less vivid for their disappearance. . . . A state cannot but be the richer for a citizen who is a skilful and honest workman delighting in his own handicraft and can ill afford to exchange him for the ordinary mill hand enslaved by a mechanical and soulless routine".

It thus becomes the paramount duty alike of the state and the craftsman to tackle the problem of preserving the indigenous industries and find out an effective solution. The remedies to arrest the decay and degeneration of the handicrafts and to enable the hereditary artizan to take his proper place in the industrial regeneration of the country which is bound to come

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after this great world-war, are education and organisation. Education, then, is the panacea for all evils to which artizans and others are subject. The children of the artizans should be taught not only the three R's to do business with the money-lenders and retail agents, but also they should be taught to welcome and use every labour-saving machine to their special craft. To rescue the craftsman from the greedy hand of the village usurer, co-operation is the only remedy that has been found successful. "The only practical method" says a distinguished civilian "is the organisation of co-operative societies on the Raiffeison model which have proved so remarkably successful among the agriculturists. Organisations on these lines, correlated with the technical revival which in several provinces the Directors of Industries are trying to promote, cannot fail before long to arrest the decay which has already set in."

The time, therefore, has now come for the Provincial Governments to enter the field of industry and to solve the great industrial problem not so much by establishing power-mills and encouraging grandiose commercial schemes, as by giving a lead which shall once for all set the greatest crafts of the country beyond the fear of an unnecessary extinction. It is a matter for regret that the establishment of technical and industrial schools for the community out of Municipal revenues, as contemplated under sections 118, 224, of the Madras District Municipalities Act, has been grievously neglected by the Municipal bodies. All these grievances, evils and neglect make an overwhelmingly strong case to show that redress can be effected by Government only through the help and with the advice of the chosen representatives of the Artizan class. Hence the utility, the necessity and the expediency of the adequate representation of the Artizan community on the Municipal Councils, Local Boards and the Provincial Legislative Council.

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VISVAKARMA MAHAJANA CONFERENCE
CENTRAL COMMITTEE OFFICE,
32, SEKKADY STREET,
KUMBAKONAM.

Dated, November, 1917.

To

The Chief Secretary to Government,
HOME DEPARTMENT.

Fort Saint George, Madras.

SIR,

I respectfully beg to submit on behalf of the Central Committee of the Visvakarma Mahajana Conference, the resolutions passed at the third annual session of the Conference held at Trichinopoly on the 26th, 27th and 28th May 1917 under the presidency of Mr. NAMASIVOYAM SIVAKOLUNDU ACHARIAR, Proctor, Supreme Court, Jaffna, for favour of consideration and necessary orders.

The Conference was attended by over 800 delegates and as many visitors, from all parts of South India; and the various resolutions brought before them for consideration were discussed fully and intelligently which showed the keen interest evinced by them towards the advancement of the community.

The first resolution on the agenda, the resolution of Loyalty to Government and speedy success to the British Arms in the present War was adopted amidst much enthusiasm. So was the resolution expressing the readiness of the members of the community to join the Government Ammunition factories and workshops of the province.

It is with no small amount of regret the Conference noted the absence of remedy by Government to the grievances of the community regarding the revival and development of the Industries pertaining to the community and spread of general and industrial education among its members on the lines set forth in the memorials of preceding years and the committee fervently hope that the resolutions adopted at this Conference on the same subject will be attended with beneficial results.

It will be observed from the XI resolution that the Conference is solicitous about the help of the local Co-operative Registrar in organising small Co-operative Societies among the members of the community to improve the cottage industries pertaining to the community or allied thereto. In this connection the committee regret to state that the Registrar of Co-operative Societies has not chosen to help the committee till now in spite of a special invitation to him to kindly attend the Conference and give the necessary advice. A similar request was made to the Director of Industries inviting him to attend the Conference and suggest by way of advice practical measures for the improvement of the industries of the community but, he was not able to comply with the request on the score of military duty which detained him in Madras at that time. The Committee confidently hope that the Government be pleased to issue necessary instructions directing the Registrar of Co-operative Societies to bestow on this community as much attention as is bestowed by him on the other communities such as weavers etc, with regard to the formation of Co-operative Societies.

With reference to the XII resolution adopted at the Conference the Committee pray that Government will issue early instructions to the Director of Industries to institute necessary enquiries regarding the drawbacks and disabilities of the community brought to the notice of the Industrial Commission by the representatives of the community during their sittings at Madras in the early part of the year.

The Conference deplored the continued neglect shown by the Local Boards and Municipalities towards the spread of both Technical and General Education in their respective areas for the advancement of an industrial class like the Visvakarma community and resolved to again request Government to take speedy action in the matter, in view of the fact that the Government of India is anxious at the present juncture to investigate and improve Indian industries

Another serious matter which the Conference discussed with great concern and strong feeling, was the order of the Government of Madras that the caste designation of the community should be spelt as 'Asari' and not as 'Achari' as was spelt from time immemorial. As already pointed out, 'Asari' is a meaningless and ungrammatical term and the enforcement of that title by the Government upon the community without first obtaining their opinion on the matter is being construed as a distinct violation of the policy of neutrality observed by Government in matters affecting the social and religious customs and privileges of the various communities in the country. The Committee pray that this pressing grievance of an ancient and large community in this Presidency should be redressed without further delay. In this connection it was pointed out at the Conference that the title 'Achari' was being used by 98 per cent of the members of the Visvakarma community as their birthright, the rest using the title of 'Pathars'; whereas the brahmanic title 'Chari' was in use among a small body of 'Vaishnavas' and 'Mathvas' more as a matter of fancy. The majority of these two sects of brahmins use the term 'Iyengar' and 'Row'. It was also pointed out at the Conference that the Government by their attitude in this matter evinced undue solicitude for the claims of a small minority to a title assumed more out of fancy and totally ignored the strong and long standing claims of a whole community six times the number.

In concluding the committee respectfully trust that the Government will be pleased to deal with the questions submitted to their consideration favourably and will thus safeguard the interests of a large community who form the industrial backbone of the country. I beg to add that I am desired by the Committee to submit copies of Reports of the Proceedings of the 2 Conferences held at Kumbakonam and Tanjore for perusal and record.

I beg to remain,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

G. KRISHNASWAMI ACHARI,

General Secretary.

Resolutions adopted at the Third Visvakarma Mahajana Conference.

Held at TRICHINOPOLY on 26th, 27th & 28th May 1917.

I. RESOLUTION :—

This Conference begs to convey to Government the profound loyalty of the community to the British Raj and prays that the Great War which is still carried on be brought to a speedy and successful end and that great glory attend on His Most Gracious Majesty George the V, our beloved Sovereign.

II. RESOLUTION :—

This Conference of the Visvakarma community of South India begs to convey its condolence to His Excellency Lord Chelmsford, the Viceroy of India and Her Excellency Lady Chelmsford in the irreparable loss sustained by them in the heroic death of their beloved son at the front.

III. RESOLUTION :—

This Conference of the Artisan community of South India begs to offer their humble services in connection with the present great war and begs to convey the readiness of its members to help the Government by joining the Government Ammunition Factories and Workshops of the province in large numbers should their services be needed owing to the exigencies of the situation.

IV. RESOLUTION :—

This Conference again prays that the Government may in view of the impoverished condition of the community and the decay of their Arts and Industries caused by powerful and unfair competition, be pleased to order the admission of Visvakarma youths into Secondary Schools and Colleges of the Presidency on half fees

V. RESOLUTION :—

This Conference of the Industrialists of South India agains begs of Government that they will be pleased to take the necessary steps for the early establishment of Industrial Schools in some select centres of South India, wherein the Visvakarma youths may be trained in the Industries pertaining to the community or allied thereto, on improved scientific methods and necessary stipends awarded to deserving students.

VI. RESOLUTION :—

This Conference, while reiterating the importance of inherent advantages derived from hereditary occupation in the selection of students for receiving Technical and Architectural training in foreign countries begs of Government to select youths of the Visvakarma community who have received Secondary education, the rules requiring the possession of academic distinction being relaxed in their case.

VII. RESOLUTION :—

This Conference resolves to undertake to start at an early date schools of its own in select centres, wherein the youths of the community may receive general, industrial, architectural and religious education in the same institution.

VIII. RESOLUTION :—

This Conference resolves to appoint a committee consisting of select gentlemen with powers to add to their number for the purpose of collecting funds to carry out the objects of the foregoing resolution.

IX. RESOLUTION :—

This Conference again resolves that the members of the community should give their children both boys and girls compulsory primary education and that no parent or guardian shall take his children or ward into his profession before 12 years of age and that the Branch Committees shall see to the enforcement of this resolution.

X. RESOLUTION :—

This Conference resolves that with a view to give elementary education to the illiterate adults and youngsters engaged in their profession, immediate steps be taken for starting night schools wherever necessary.

XI. RESOLUTION :—

The Conference resolves to request the Registrar of the Co-operative Societies to help the Conference Central Committee with efforts to start Co-operative Societies among the members of the community in different centres for the improvement of local industries pertaining to the community or allied thereto.

XII. RESOLUTION :—

This Conference resolves to solicit the help of the Director of Industries in this Presidency in the matter of necessary enquiries being instituted regarding the present condition of the Visvakarma community—the pioneers of Industries—both as regards their industries and education and to take steps for improving their condition.

XIII. RESOLUTION :—

This Conference prays that the Indian Industrial Commission under the Presidency of Sir Thomas Holland—may bestow earnest attention on the various drawbacks and disabilities of this large industrial community of South India, duly brought to the notice of the Commission at their sittings at Madras by the two chosen representatives of their community in their evidences and suggest to the authorities practical steps for industrial advancement of the community on modern lines.

XIV. RESOLUTION :—

The Conference again prays that all Municipal Councils and Local Boards of South India may be pleased to open Technical and Industrial schools out of their revenue as contemplated by the legislatures, wherein Visvakarma youths may receive both general and industrial education side by side.

XV. RESOLUTION :—

This Conference while reiterating the emphatic protest conveyed in the resolutions adopted at the previous Conferences regarding the undesirable interference of the Government with the time honoured caste designation of the community "Achari", prays for the cancellation of the order without further delay in view of the strong feeling prevailing among the members of the community on the matter.

XVI. RESOLUTION :—

This Conference resolves that the Central Committee should form an expert Sub-Committee to make necessary researches regarding the community in general and the caste designation in particular and prepare at an early date a memorandum for general information.

XVII. RESOLUTION :—

This Conference again resolves that the members of the community should strictly observe the religious rites and other ceremonials as laid down in their scriptures.

XVIII. RESOLUTION :—

This Conference resolves that the Central Committee should take immediate steps for strengthening the constitution of the Advisory Boards pertaining to Education, Industry and Religion.

V. K. PRESS, MADRAS.

VISVAKARMA MAHAJANA CONFERENCE
CENTRAL COMMITTEE OFFICE,
32, SEKKADY STREET,
KUMBAKONAM.

28th August 1916.

TO

The Chief Secretary to Government,
PUBLIC DEPARTMENT,
OOTACAMUND.

SIR,

I respectfully beg to submit, on behalf of the Central Committee of the Visvakarma Mahajana Conference, the resolutions passed at the Second annual session of the Conference held at Tanjore on 22nd and 23rd April 1916, under the presidency of MR. N. DURAIVELACHARIAR, B. A., for perusal and favour of necessary action.

2. The Conference was attended by over 500 delegates elected at different centres by the members of the community resident in various parts of Southern India; and the sittings were marked throughout by great enthusiasm and order, and the delegates evinced an intelligent and lively interest in the discussion of the various resolutions brought before them for consideration.

3. The first resolution on the agenda, the resolution of "Loyalty to Government and Success to the British Arms in the present war" was proposed by the President in an eloquent speech, a copy of which is enclosed for the information of Government.

4. Among the important topics that engaged the serious attention of the Conference were :—

- (1) The revival and development of indigenous arts and industries;
- (2) The encouragement and spread of education among the members of the community.

5. It is a fact admitted on all hands that the artizan classes represented by the Visvakarma community form the industrial back-bone of the country. It therefore follows that prompt measures should be taken by the benign Government to afford every encouragement to the members of this community, in order that they might equip themselves properly for the skilful and efficient solution of the various industrial problems that have arisen at this crisis. The Conference viewed with grave concern the present neglected condition of the indigenous arts and industries, and resolved that Government be requested to open industrial schools at various centres in the presidency, with sufficient inducement in the shape of stipends, to enable boys of the artizan classes to get themselves trained in these schools in different arts and industries, according to improved methods. The Conference also resolved that intelligent young men of the community, who have received secondary education, should be sent abroad to receive higher technical education, the present rules requiring collegiate education in the case of the candidates, being relaxed in favour of these young men, in view of their special aptitude for such training.

6. As regards the utter deficiency of education among the members of the community, the fact that there are only eight persons who have attained academic distinction among a male population of about 3 lakhs in Southern India, speaks for itself. Though elementary and secondary education have spread among the members to a slightly higher degree, over 98% of the number still remain illiterate. A community steeped in such ignorance should be considered by all fair-minded persons as backward in point of education. The Conference, while exhorting every member of the community to give at least

2
elementary education to his children, resolved to request Government to extend to Visvakarma boys, the concessions granted to members of the backward classes in the shape of scholarships, which will dissuade boys of the community from taking to their profession at a premature age, out of poverty, a tendency working injuriously towards the educational progress of the community.

7. A valuable suggestion which was embodied in the form of a resolution and which received the unanimous support of the Conference, was the prayer that Government should direct the several Local and Municipal bodies under their control, to open technical and industrial schools within their jurisdiction, and accord necessary facilities therein to the boys of the Visvakarma community, to receive education and industrial training. The Conference felt confident that this prayer would meet with a ready response at the hands of Government, as it merely involved the issue of instructions to the Municipal councils and Local boards, to pay prompt attention to a vital branch of their work hitherto neglected.

8. One other matter which engaged the earnest and serious consideration of the Conference, was the order of Government directing that the caste designation of the members of the community should be spelt as "Asari," instead of "Achari," as hitherto. It is stated that the order was issued to avoid the confusion caused by the same spelling being adopted by members of two different communities, to denote their caste designation. If the order was based on this consideration, the Conference was emphatically of opinion that the confusion arose out of the members of the *Vaishnava Brahmin community* styling themselves indiscriminately as "Iyengars" and "Charis," according to their whims. In the same family, one member calls himself "Chari," and another, "Iyengar;" instances are common in which the same member is addressed both as "Chari" and "Iyengar." In a *Vaishnava Brahmin family* in Srirangam, the eldest member styled himself Gopalsawmy Iyengar, the second, Krishnama-chari, and the last, Kuppasawmy Sarma. The Conference pointed out that the proper course to avoid the confusion, was to have restricted the other community, to the use of the title, "Iyengar" only. If, on the ground of avoiding confusion in spelling, the above order was issued, the Conference could not understand why no action was taken in the matter of *Tamil Smartha Brahmins* and *Patnulkars*, styling themselves "Iyers," and *Telugu Smartha Brahmins* and *Sathanis*, calling themselves "Iyabs." The Conference deplored that as a substitute for their proper caste designation based on *Shastras* and long standing custom, the Government should have, without ascertaining the views of the community in the matter, subjected them to the humiliation of using a meaningless, ungrammatical and unphonetic term. In view of the strong feelings roused in a whole community on the subject, it was resolved that Government be requested to take early steps to modify the order which is being construed as a distinct violation of the policy of neutrality observed by Government in matters affecting the social and religious customs and practices of the various communities in this country.

9. The Conference noted with regret that no reply even by way of acknowledgment, was received with regard to the memorial on the subject of the last year's conference, addressed to Government by Mr. T. M. Mukkanachariar, President of the Conference Committee, under date the 21st May 1915. It is earnestly hoped that the present memorial will not share the same fate, but will receive the kind and sympathetic consideration of Government at an early date.

The Conference Committee await favourable orders on the points dealt with in the memorial.

I beg to remain,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

N. DURAIVELACHARI, B. A.,
President,

Second Visvakarma
Mahajana Conference, Tanjore.

G. KRISHNASAWMY ACHARI,
General Secretary.

16
**Resolutions adopted at the Second Visvakarma Mahajana
Conference.**

Held at TANJORE on 22nd & 23rd April 1916.

I. RESOLUTION:—

This Conference begs to convey to Government the profound loyalty of the community to the British Raj and prays that the great war which is now being waged by His Most Gracious Majesty George V. and his Allies for a just cause be brought to a speedy and successful end.

II. RESOLUTION:—

This Conference prays for long life and prosperity to Lord Hardinge, Ex-Viceroy of India, who notwithstanding his most grievous bereavements and personal afflictions, ruled India with sympathy and affection, and wishes him a safe voyage home.

III. RESOLUTION:—

This Conference welcomes His Excellency Lord Chelmsford, the new Viceroy, and prays for his kind attention to the educational and industrial needs of the Visva-karma community, the pioneers of Indian arts and industries.

IV. RESOLUTION:—

This Conference deplores the irreparable loss South India has sustained in the death of Mr. G. Subramania Aiyar B.A., who dedicated his life for the revival of South Indian industries, the promotion of Social reform, and the growth of Tamil journalistic literature.

V. RESOLUTION:—

This Conference begs to express its deep sense of disappointment at the action of the Government of Madras in not even acknowledging the receipt of the memorial containing the resolutions and certain specific requests of the Conference, submitted to them in May 1915 by the President of the Conference Central Committee.

V.(a) RESOLUTION:—

This Conference again prays that Government out of special regard to the poverty of the community, owing to the decay of their arts and industries brought about by powerful and unfair competition, and the present industrial dislocation and consequent poor income of the community, will be pleased to order the admission of youths of the Artisan community into Secondary Schools and Colleges on half-fees.

V.(b) RESOLUTION:—

This Conference of the Industrialists of South India again begs of Government that they will be pleased to take the necessary steps for the early establishment of Industrial schools in some select centres of South India, where necessary industrial education on improved scientific methods may be given to the youths of the community with necessary stipends.

V.(c) RESOLUTION:—

This Conference, while reiterating the importance of inherent advantages derived by hereditary occupation in the selection of students for receiving technical training in foreign countries, begs of Government to select youths of the Visvakarma community, who have received secondary education, the rules requiring the possession of academic distinction, being relaxed in their case.

V.(d) RESOLUTION:—

This Conference prays that Government will be pleased to depute the Registrar of Co-operative Societies to educate the minds of the members of the community as regards the advantages of business co-operation and the formation of co-operative societies in various centres for improving their industries.

V.(e) RESOLUTION:—

This Conference, while endorsing the emphatic protest conveyed in the resolution adopted at the first Visvakarma Mahajana Conference, as regards the interference with the caste designation of the community, again prays that the Government will be pleased to modify without delay the order altering their time-honoured caste title "Achary" to "Asary"—a meaningless, ungrammatical and degrading a term.

VI. RESOLUTION:—

This Conference begs of Government to issue necessary orders to all Municipal councils to institute enquiries as to the educational needs and status of this community and to start technical and industrial schools out of municipal revenues as contemplated under sections 118, 224, of the District Municipalities Act, for the benefit of the community.

VI.(a) RESOLUTION:—

This Conference resolves that the members of the Visvakarma community residing in municipal towns should submit memorials to their respective municipalities, requesting them to provide adequate means for promoting the general and industrial education of their children.

VII. RESOLUTION:—

This Conference again resolves that the members of the community should give their children, both boys and girls, compulsory primary education.

VIII. RESOLUTION:—

This Conference resolves that the members of the community should strictly observe the religious rites and other ceremonials as laid down in their scriptures.

IX. RESOLUTION:—

This Conference accepts and passes the rules of the conference framed by the Central Committee.

X. RESOLUTION:—

This Conference resolves that it is very essential to collect funds not only by way of subscriptions, but also by other means such as donations, contributions, etc., to enable the Central Committee to achieve its objects.

XI. RESOLUTION:—

This Conference prays that the All-Merciful Providence might vouchsafe protection and a safe return home to Mr. T. A. RAMASWAMY ACHARIAR, an enthusiastic and earnest member of the community, who has just completed his higher technical education in Japan.

XII. RESOLUTION:—

This Conference, while placing on record its appreciation, accords its warm thanks to those members who submitted for the consideration of the conference, their essays containing valuable practical suggestions for the amelioration of the community.

NOTES.

E.O. No. 659 Public of 26.5.1913
 " " 1562 " of 16.XII.1913
 " " 1563 " of 16.XII.1913
 " " 167 " of 6.2.1914
 " " 195 " of 14.2.1914
 " " 1564 " of 2.XII.1914
 " " 366 " of 10.3.1915
 " " 1278 " of 31.8.1915
 " " 1394 " of 22.7.1916
 " " 282 Home (Mis) of 3.XI.1916
 " " 2 Home (Mis) of 3.1.1918



N.D-328-1.

GOVERNMENT HOUSE.

Madras

10th December 1920.

My dear Ramachandra Rao,

Will you kindly send me a copy of the
the spelling of
Government Order regarding the caste title of the
Visvakarmas as 'Asari' instead of 'Achari'?

Yours sincerely,

Handwritten signature

M.R. Ry Diwan Bahadur R. Ramachandra Rao A.V.L.,

Secretary to Government, Home Dept.,

Fort St. George, Madras.



Home (Mis) & wh

For the Reg.

The papers on the subject
are submitted below.

Attention is specially invited
to para 6(1) of the Committee's report on page 4
(5) of E.O. No. 659 Public of 26.5.1913 and to
the undermentioned E.O's :-

E.O. No. 1562 Public of 16.XII.1913

" " 366 " of 10.3.1915

15.XII.20 11.XII.20

11/12/20. P.S.G

14/12/20

15/12/20

Returned with thanks.

I am dealing with the application for the representation of Visvakarma community on the Legislative Council. The rest of the memorial is for Secretariat to deal with.

(B.O)

P.S.G.
18-12-20.



EC-5851
18-12-20.



Handwritten text in Nagamese script, likely a reply or note related to the memorial.

I don't see after looking through the file
any outstanding action a/c. according to
Main report

16.12.20

18

Home (Misc) Dept

For the Reg.

A copy of the
resolutions passed at the conference
held on the 21st and 22nd August 1920
has been received separately and the
file ^{relating} to it is being dealt with in
Home Education.

Resolution XI regarding
caste title 'Achar' relates to this
department.

It is for order whether
the file may be circulated with
reference to H.E.'s note above.

JAP
23.11.20

23.11.20

25.12.20

In Miscellaneous, we are concerned with
Resolution XI only.

25/12/20

C 4 There appears to have been a
little row over the question in 1913 and was
settled against the prohibition of the said action

Home (E) C no 2907A
4.12.20

Sub note Home Misc
Rev (S/L)
L + M
Regimes

Who is the member
in charge?

23/12/20

27.12.20

27.12.20

For Cue Reqⁿ

5837

It is submitted
that the papers may be
Ex 20^c recorded for

Mis dated 7/1/21

future reference.

CRP.
3.1.21
82
4.1.21

A.
4.1.21
5

W
57/29

Handwritten notes on the left page, including "For the Red" and "This is a copy of the original" (mirrored).

When given for copying _____
 When copied _____
 When examined _____
 When signed _____

192 .

READ AGAIN G.O. No. _____
 192 .

DATED

CURRENT No.

ENCLOSURES TO C. No.

ORDER OF GOVERNMENT

A A A A A A A

LETTER OF GOVERNMENT.

STATEMENT WITH DITTO.

PAPERS NOT FILLED UP, BEING KEPT FOR DESPATCH
 IN ORIGINAL.

N.B.—

- A = Copy in full.
- B = Not to be copied.
- P = Copy abstract only.
- Q = Copy heading only.