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MADRAS RECORD OFFICE

Government of Madras

Public Works DEPARTMENT

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Not to be folded or roughly handled

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Works Department,
21st September 1876 No 2,529.*

No 353 Read the following letter from Colonel H. DRUMMOND, R.E., Deputy Secretary to the Government of India, Public Works Department, (Railway,) to Major-General G. W. WALKER, R.E., Secretary to the Government of Madras, Public Works Department, (Railway,) dated Simla, 11th September 1876, No 2,358-R. —

I AM directed to forward copy of a letter, No 455, dated the 26th June 1876, from the Venerable the Archdeacon of Calcutta, containing suggestions relating to the condition of the Railway Schools in the Bengal Presidency, and to say that the Governor-General in Council will be glad to have the opinion of His Excellency the Governor of Madras in Council, as to the state of any schools that may be existing in Madras aided by the Railway Companies in that Presidency, and as to the best means of improving them.

From the Venerable J. BALY, Archdeacon of Calcutta, to the Officiating Secretary to the Government of India, Home Department, dated Simla, 26th June 1876, No 455.

In reply to your letter, No 670, of 22nd June 1876, forwarding papers and reports relating to the condition of Railway Schools, I have the honor to state that having carefully read the documents sent, I regret to find that the remarks which I have made in my memorandum to His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal on that subject have been interpreted by some of the Railway Authorities in a manner not intended by me.

The opinion expressed in that paper of the general character of Railway Schools, based on a close examination of several of them,* was certainly unfavorable, and both there and elsewhere I have stated the points in which I consider them to be principally deficient, viz —

- (1) they are all dame-schools, with the exception of Jamalpore and Howrah,
- (2) therefore unsuited for boys over ten or twelve years of age.
- (3) the mistresses are not trained teachers,
- (4) and consequently the discipline and instruction are not satisfactory.

For these reasons I have said that they are far inferior to average national schools in England, and not to be taken into account as final schools for European boys in India, being unable to educate them to a level with the occupations suitable and open to them—an opinion in which the Consulting Engineer to the Government of India for Guaranteed Railways coincides.

Since I expressed that opinion I have again examined the schools at Lahore, Gaziabad and Toondla (and for the first time the school at Saharanpur which has only been recently opened), and I am glad to say that these schools have much improved since my examination in 1873-74, both in their discipline and the quality of instruction given. In the only educational report† on Railway Schools appended to your letter this improvement is noted in the Lahore School, together with the remark that the "last Government inspection was not satisfactory," and it is probable that the opinion of the Consulting Engineer to the Government of India referred to above would have more completely concurred with mine if he had visited the school some time ago.

The other Railway Schools I have been hitherto unable to examine. I do not, however, doubt but that a similar improvement has occurred in them also, due to the more careful super-

* Gaziabad, Toondla, Lahore, Phillour (now closed), Jubbulpore, Cawnpore and Saharanpur have all been carefully examined by me, some twice.

† Letter No 263 of 2nd March 1876.

‡ By Mr Harvey, 9th May 1876.

vision of them, and the greater interest taken in them, especially by Mr. Campbell during the last two or three years. Still, even in their improved condition, I regret that I cannot concur with the opinion expressed by W. H. Russell, Esq., Secretary to Agent, East Indian Railway, in his letter, No. 364, of 28th March 1876, that, "notwithstanding the fact of these schools being necessarily of a low standard, since we cannot afford to give them more money, the pupils are now receiving, almost without exception, a better education than their parents had." Having an intimate acquaintance, extending over twelve years, at intervals from 1846 to 1872, with English national schools (both in towns, large and small, and in villages), in which I suppose that most of their parents were educated, and with the character of the education imparted in them, and knowing, too, the present condition of the Indian Railway Schools,—I must reluctantly adhere to my opinion that the latter are still far inferior, and do not, as the former do, give an education fully qualifying the boys who attend them for the occupations suitable to their station in life.

I say this in order that the practical value of these schools and their proper place in any system of education for Europeans in India may be clearly understood; but I had no intention to impute as faults to the Railway Authorities defects in their schools which in great part are the necessary consequences of our position in India.

Mr Roberts in his letter, No 201, of 23rd March 1876, acknowledges their existence, and the difficulty of remedying them. His remark upon the frequent changes in the scholars is most true: parents may have to reside for two or three years in a station where there is no school, and the children for the same time remain untaught, or receiving only a very precarious and desultory education at home. From this cause it is not uncommon to see children of ten or twelve standing lower in a class than those of seven or eight years of age, and as the proportion of such children in almost every school is considerable, the standard of the whole school is lowered.

I also fully agree with his remark, that, however desirable it may be to have trained and certificated teachers, it is impossible, on the score of expense, to bring them out from England; and as none can be found in India, we must be content with such untrained teachers as may be had. I do not doubt that for untrained teachers and considering the salaries given in Railway Schools the mistresses are as good as can be obtained, and of those at Gaziabad, Lahore, Toondla, Saharanpur and Assensole I am able to say this of my own knowledge. I also prefer mistresses to the masters that could be found in India, who would almost invariably be Eurasians, as there are generally more girls than boys in a Railway School, and the girls remain to a more advanced age.

Still the fact remains that these schools being under mistresses are rather girls' than boys' schools, and their mistresses being untrained, the discipline and instruction are inferior. Teaching is an art which must itself be taught, and the trained teacher has the art of imparting the knowledge possessed, the technical skill in managing a school and keeping the several classes employed together, and the powers of maintaining order and discipline, which are very rarely acquired by untrained teachers, and the want of which impairs so seriously the efficiency of schools taught by them.

On these grounds I consider that all the Railway Schools I know, except those at Howrah and Jamalpore, can only be regarded for boys at least as preparatory, and that these at the age of ten or twelve should be transferred to a school of a higher class—if possible to such a school as that at Nani Tal.

Mr Roberts in the letter already quoted implies the need of a higher education than the Railway Schools can give in his remark that these "are intended only to impart elementary education to the children of the Company's employés, who would otherwise grow up entirely uneducated, and it was never contemplated that they should serve but as the means of instructing the pupils in the very rudiments of knowledge."

It is evident that something more than the "very rudiments of knowledge" is necessary to enable the European boy to get his living in India, and in order to make the Railway Schools as efficient as possible under present conditions, and to assist the boys in obtaining a higher education, I beg to suggest the following measures to the consideration both of Government and of the Railway Companies —

I —That the schools should be regularly and carefully inspected by an English Inspector, and that his report of the school should be duly forwarded both to the Government and to the Railway Company.

The fact that only one report of a Government Inspector has been appended appears to indicate that less importance has been attached to Government inspection than is due.

II.—That the Government grant-in-aid should be allotted on a system similar to that adopted in English primary schools, instead of being given as a lump sum, viz —

(a)—That for every child in average monthly attendance a fixed sum of 1 Rupee should be allowed.

(b)—That children above six years of age should be examined by certain standards according to their age up to twelve to be fixed by the Directors of Public Instruction in (1) *English* (including reading, writing, grammar and dictation), (2) *arithmetic*, and (3) *general subjects* (geography and history, &c), and that an additional grant of at least 12 Annas should be allotted for every pupil passing the standard of his or her age in each of these three subjects.

By this scheme the minimum grant for a pupil would be Rupee 1, the maximum, Rupees 3-4-0. I do not think that at present the grant thus allotted would be in excess of the lump sum now given. If it should become so the Government would be assured of a corresponding improvement in the efficiency of the school.

III —That the salary of the teachers should be thus made up—

(a)—Of a fixed sum guaranteed by the School Committee,

(b)—Of half the Government grant-in-aid, and

(c)—A capitation fee on every child in average monthly attendance.

IV —That in every school of not less than twenty pupils the mistress should be aided by a pupil-teacher for the younger children to teach them to read, spell, count and repeat the multiplication tables, and keep them quiet and employed while the mistress is teaching the elder children. The want of this assistance is a principal cause of slow progress and poor discipline in Railway Schools.

V —That as a prize for boys not less than ten nor more than twelve years of age a scholarship to be held at some higher approved school of Rupees 10 per mensem (Rupees 5 to be contributed by the Provincial Government, Rupees 5 by the Railway Company) should be awarded annually in every school containing not less than ten boys to the boy passing the best examination at the Government inspection, and whose parents are in circumstances rendering such help necessary.

VI —That the schools should be better supplied with school materials, as maps, class-books, copy-books, &c, than I have generally found them to be.

These measures would entail small additional outlay on the part of the Railway Companies, but they would, I venture to think, raise the standard of their schools very considerably, and tend to improve the teachers as well as the taught.

What, however, is really wanted for all Indian Schools for Europeans is a supply of trained teachers of both sexes, which cannot be had without the establishment in the country of a normal school or training college. This was one of the objects proposed by the late Bishop of Calcutta in starting the Anglo-Indian Educational Fund, and it is much to be regretted that the further progress of the fund has for the present been stayed by his death.

Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Works Department,
21st September 1876. No. 2,529.

No 350

ORDER THEREON, 21st September 1876, No. 2,529.

RAILWAY, No 31

COMMUNICATED to the Consulting Engineer for the observations of the Railway Authorities.

(True Extract.)

Colonel,
Offg. Under Secy. to Govt., P.W.D.

No. 2529 dated 21 Sept 76.

Communicated to
the Consulting Engineer
for the observations of the
Railway Authorities.

mm

No 353/56

Confirmer for P.W.D.

Decd 5/10/76

With order

67458

Govt. of 1876 Madras.

PUBLIC WORKS.

To

The Secy. Genl. for P.W.

Dated

Issued

Recd.

Encl

G. O. 27th 1876, No.

2529

Nos. 353/50

Schools - Letter from
the Govt. of India request-
ing opinion as to the state
of any schools aided by
the Railway Companies
in this Presidency
and as to the best means
of improving them.

Butcher
1-10-76