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GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOL-LEAVERS

By

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After Matriculation what? This is the enigmatic problem before every student, who, after a long schooling for ten years, passes the ordeal and gets a School Leaving Certificate. It may appear to some that, with the completion of the schooling period, a long problem has been solved. But, in all its realities, the problem starts afresh. What should the Matriculates do now? Surely, the Matriculates are blind at the cross-roads of life. Some seek jobs and struggle hard in the quagmires of educated unemployment. Knowing the low economic worth of Matriculation, some prosecute their studies further and get themselves admitted in a college. That is perhaps the only course that they think is open for them.

Analysing the prevailing situation about the fate of school-leavers, we come to the following conclusions:—

A. A state of utter confusion prevails with regard to the future plans of millions of young school-leavers. Their ignorance about the possible future avenues is responsible for a long indetermination in planning. Very often, the counselling and the advice given by elders prove of no avail, as they themselves have a confused idea of the "world of work", i.e., the educational and the vocational opportunities available. Then again there is scanty guidance from the so called Guidance Services in the country. Even the Employment Exchanges cannot cope up with the tremendous amount of work that confronts them.

B. In the absence of any organised and suitable technical guidance for educational and vocational planning, millions of school-leavers run blindly either to the portals of colleges or to the doors of petty offices. To their disappointment, sometimes they find the seats in the colleges already filled, and the doors of petty offices already labelled with signboards of "No Vacancy". In such a state of affairs the school-leavers fall into three conspicuous categories:—

(a) A vast number of school-leavers knock at the doors of various offices and business concerns, out of whom some lucky few, with the help of recommendations from influential persons, repose in the office-chair with the complacency of having reached the goal of their life. Surely, their talents are wasted, because, due to poverty or lack of sufficient financial resources necessary for prosecuting further studies, they have drifted towards clerical jobs.

(b) Unable to get jobs, or to find any other avenue, an equally vast number of young school-leavers get themselves admitted in Arts Colleges. Their problem of a career is not still solved. They only postpone their problem for four more years of college life. This has created a Himalayan problem before the college and university authorities. During the recent two decades, the mad rush for admission into colleges has created unwholesome conditions like overcrowding, indiscipline, falling standards, mass failures and

wasteful financial expenditure. We have to realise the fact that a majority of the students who graduate are fit for nothing, and are in no case in a better position to choose a suitable career, or avail themselves of suitable vocational opportunities. In a competitive market, only the first divisioners find prospects for themselves. Second divisioners have to face an ordeal of competition, while the third divisioners, rejected everywhere, curse their lot. If the admissions on a mass scale in the colleges are discouraged, the conditions might improve, and the university standards will become normal. The acuity of the competitions will decrease. Graduates will not be forced by circumstances to accept low-paid jobs of Rs. 80 p.m. The abilities and aptitudes of young persons will not go to waste.

(c) A third category of young persons consists of the unfortunate army of the unemployed, who have been rejected everywhere. Financial stringencies stand in the way of their prosecuting studies in colleges. Nor are they able to catch hold of jobs.

The dark and dismal picture painted above need not lead us to pessimism. The solution lies in the diagnosis of the malady and the proper treatment, which is not far from practicability. The root-cause of the malady is that there is no proper planning of the man-power in the country. In all its reality, there is no dearth of jobs, but there are no suitable persons for a good number of skilled and technical jobs. Every year the Public Service Commissions report to the Government about the lack of suitable personnel for particular jobs advertised. There is a huge competition for white-collar jobs, but an acute shortage in candidates for skilled jobs. Thus there are men, but no jobs for them. On the other hand there are jobs, but no men for them. This is the paradox of unemployment. "Neither occupations are designed to suit individuals, nor are individuals made in order to fit specific vocations."

In the Third Five-Year Plan, there are tremendous potentialities for providing work to millions in the field of industry and commerce. Every school-leaver need not go to the university. His talents can be utilised in a number of other fields. The real remedy for the above problem lies in directing the youth to a number of channels in consonance with their talents and economic resources. There are three major channels, which will be discussed below in detail:--

- (i) Major educational courses leading to major vocations.
- (ii) Minor educational courses leading to minor vocations.
- (iii) Minor vocations not needing any special educational training.

Major educational courses

A Matriculate usually runs to arts courses in a college. Arts Classes, F.A. and B.A., have become too much overcrowded. One of the reasons of this overcrowding is that at the High School stage the pupils have studied subjects without any planning. The opening of Higher Secondary Schools all over the country with diversified courses (Humanities, Science, Commerce, Technical, Agriculture, Fine Arts and Home Science) is the best method of directing students to various streams at the very start, and decreasing the rush for Arts Courses. But sometimes pupils are ignorant of the fact that there are a number of courses and avenues available for them. Even in Science subjects there is considerable rush in F.Sc., Non-Medical and Medical classes. Students should be encouraged to take up B.Sc., Agriculture, B.Sc. Pharmacy and B. Com. instead. Beyond the intermediate stage also, pupils lack guidance. All of them need not take up B.A. or B.Sc. courses. They may take up Engineering (Civil, Mechanical, Electrical, Aeronautical etc.) or Medicine (and Dentistry), B.Sc., and M.Sc. Agriculture, B. Pharmacy and M. Pharmacy, B. Com. and M. Com. courses for 4 years. Even ordinary B.A. and B.Sc. courses can lead to B.T. or

B.Ed., Diploma in Journalism; Diploma in Business Management, Diploma in Co-operatives, Diploma or Degree in Library Science, B.Sc. (Honours), B.Sc. Home Science (Honours) courses and course in Nursing for one year. It is better if a Matriculate, joining a college, plans in advance the post-graduate courses like M.A., M.Sc., L.L.B., M.Ed. or any other Master's course. Naturally he would offer a proper combination of subjects in the lower classes. This would eliminate the usual frequent oscillation from subject to subject. If they plan for teaching as their profession, they had better take up the Psychology of Education as one of the compulsory papers in the degree classes. But such planning is scarce these days. In the words of Prof. Humayun Kabir, "Today the teacher is only too often one who has knocked at many doors and after being disappointed everywhere, taken to teaching as a last resort."

II. Minor courses leading to minor vocations

There are a number of certificate courses for Matriculates which lead to minor vocations, enabling the pupil to undertake either an independent vocation or serve in a small concern. He may not get a handsome salary, but he will not remain unemployed either. Very often it has been observed that graduates, forced by circumstances to accept jobs fetching Rs. 80, are no better than such independent workers whose income may rise to Rs. 200 p.m. Those who have not studied Science at the Matriculation stage need not feel handicapped. They can undergo one year or two year's teacher training course, viz., Junior Basic Training or Language Teacher's training course (as in Punjab). The Compulsory Education Act enforced will promise tremendous opportunities for teacher's jobs especially in the rural areas. In the Third Five-Year Plan period, we need more than two hundred thousand teachers for rural areas. With the opening of more schools and provision of more library facilities in the existing schools, a vast number of trained librarians

(diploma-holders are enough for that purpose) are needed. Some institutions provide a 3-month short course in Library Science (as at Aligarh) for Matriculates. Even now there is acute shortage of craft instructors for Basic Schools. Leaving aside teaching, short-hand and type-writing still feed a good number of Matriculates. But there is acute shortage of stenographers knowing typing and short-hand in regional languages. The switching over from English to Hindi or regional languages for official purposes promises good opportunities for new entrants. For commerce-minded young persons, Book-keeping and Accountancy hold good promises. Coaching in Accountancy is provided even in private institutions, and the diploma awarded. The All India Board of Technical Studies in Commerce, the Indian Merchants' Chamber, Bombay, and the London Chamber of Commerce award diplomas after examinations. The Institute of Cost and Works Accountants, Calcutta, awards diplomas in Cost Accountancy. The Government of India Institutes at Allahabad, Bombay and Calcutta award Diploma of Licentiate in Printing and Technology. Since the starting of the Community Development Programmes and also the Block Development Programmes, demand for Gram Sevaks and Gram Sevikas has increased. The Gram Sevak can receive training in Extension Training Centres or Agriculture Training Schools established in all the States. A similar training course is available for training as a Social Welfare Worker. The Indian Statistical Institute, Calcutta, and many departments of Universities provide training in elementary statistics, leading to a diploma in statistics, which promises the job of a Statistical Assistant. The diploma course in Surveying is another short term course. For young women, the Indian Airlines Corporation provides training for six weeks to qualify for the job of Air Hostess. This is a lucrative career for enterprising girls. Public Health occupations are still more promising. We require about two hundred thousand nurses, compounders, health-

visitors, midwives and auxiliary nurses. The training periods of these jobs are in no case more than six months. Even non-matriculates are eligible for Vaccinators' and Compounders' courses. In the field of Technology, Matriculates can attend a two to three years course for Overseers, Draughtsmen, Surveyors, Chargemen etc. Railways also admit Matriculates for short-term courses for fitters, turners, carpenters, painters and blacksmiths. Machine-grinding, Moulding and Rock-drilling have similar short courses. A number of Engineering Institutes provide training for the Radio Technicians' course. Besides these, there are a number of short training courses leading to independent minor vocations.

III Minor vocations not needing any training

There still remains a vast field of work not needing any special training. In some cases, a short apprenticeship is enough. In other cases even the apprenticeship is not needed.

Careers without apprenticeship are numerous:—clerk, daftari, peon, work-charge, salesman, stamp-selling, insurance agent and postman. Persons with pleasing manners and good personality can be good salesmen. Young women are especially suited to this job. The National Insurance Corporation of India appoints Matriculate young men and women, possessing canvassing power and sociable habits, as Insurance Agents.

(b) Careers with apprenticeship—

Matriculates and even non-Matriculates can take up apprenticeship for small periods to work as linemen, cablemen, block-drillers, boiler-attendants, fitters, turners, surveyors and artisans in factories. There is ample scope for working in cottage industries and learning some trade as weaving, tailoring, embroidery, carpentry, basket-weaving, soap-making, designing etc. The Departments of Industries in various States also impart short courses in such skills. In Railways, Ordnance

Factories and many Government concerns, Matriculates are admitted for apprenticeship. Indian Defence Services also offer apprenticeship facilities for learning some trades useful for defence purposes, such as those of flight mechanics, instrument repairing, engine overhauling etc. Our growing number of factories must surely direct the attention of unemployed Matriculates. Working conditions in factories are improving day by day. The false fascination for white-collar jobs must give way to attraction for earning in factories and other industrial concerns. There is a tendency among school-leavers to maintain a false dignity and consider a number of lucrative jobs as mean. Catering is one of such jobs. Bearers in good hotels have a better earning income than clerks or daftaries. Motor-driving is another suitable job for persons with strong physical stamina.

There is no end to suitable jobs for school-leavers. Only a reorientation in their attitude and outlook is needed. Persons with initiative work as commission agents and become millionaires. Adventurous young men start with vending and, progressing steadily, turn out businessmen. Work-charges have become contractors. Taxi-drivers begin their career as rickshawpullers. There is precedent for leather-merchants beginning their career with boot-polishing. Some people invest a small amount of capital in poultry, dairy-farming, production of ink, hosiery, cycle repairing, book-binding and similar gainful pursuits.

Matriculates have a vast field of work. They simply need to be guided to choose a suitable career, howsoever humble it be, from amongst a multitude of jobs with a tin for them in the present world of work. There is no reason for their frustration in a country of huge potential resources. Proper planning of manpower is the best remedy for a number of ills mentioned above. It is the foremost duty of various State Governments and Guidance organisations to disseminate such information on a vast scale.

Book-Selection in the Secondary School

By

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Book-selection is one of the difficult tasks in the routine of the library. This work depends upon some fundamental qualities of the person who selects books for the library. We select those books which we like and reject those which we dislike. So without rejection, there can be no selection of books in the library.

According to Dr. S. R. Ranganathan, the father of modern Library-Science in India, books fall into the three classes as follows :—

1. Informative books ;
2. Recreative books ; and
3. Inspirational books.

Let us consider the first category of books which may contain 'Ready Reference Books'. Ready reference books are among the latest products of the present century. There are some special types of books which may be included in this category. They include cyclopedias, dictionaries, directories, year-books, etc. Such books should be of the standard of the school-children.

A school library should possess recreative books in the library. Books on travels, swimming and other sports and pastimes may be included in the category of recreative books.

A school library should also contain a good collection of inspirational books. Books on the Vedanta and religion may be included in this class. This type of books are not only read by adults, but also by the students of deep thinking and penetration.

Children have a variety of interests. So, every book in the library must be rich in interest. Books should create a charm-

ing environment amongst students in the library premises. Children will never come to love books which are not pleasant to handle and physically easy to read. Hence, the very first thing in the selection of books is that only those books should be selected for the school library which are externally attractive and internally rich.

Finance is an essential factor in the selection or purchase of books for a school library. An annual grant for the library has to cover the supply of text-books to teachers as well as its legitimate purposes. So, the finance available, the supply and the demand, should be balanced, while purchasing books for the library.

The choice of suitable editions may be kept in mind while selecting books. As far as possible, the latest editions should be preferred. The choice may be made on the basis of price, paper, printing, binding and illustrations of books.

A short book is more rapidly read and consequently lends itself to more variety in reading. A smaller book is generally cheaper than a large book. Hence, cheap and small books should be added in the school library.

In book-selection, the first consideration is the taste of the reader. Biography is a very popular subject with school-boys. Poetry will prove to be the most charming subject. Narrative poems are very interesting to students.

"How many and what books should be purchased" is the question which often escapes attention. The school library can very well solve this question in the light of its finance, the school curriculum, the mental maturity of pupils and the

needs of instruction. As an instrument of education, the school library should have not only the right books but an adequate number of them.

Mr. J. Smeaton says, "Books are indeed one of the teacher's main tools, and one the child has been brought to read, where he can explore for himself, the wealth of human experience and knowledge." Children need an environment of attractive books from the beginning, and it is one of the first and foremost duties of the school to provide this environment. If a child's early experiences with books are pleasurable, a sound foundation is laid for their use in his future development.

The books in a school-library must be carefully selected to suit the requirements of pupils and teachers. The school library trains the school child in the use of books and helps him to develop the reading habit.

In the actual selection of books, the most important point to be remembered is that the task is selection, not collection. Every book must be carefully considered and nothing bought which is irrelevant to the purpose of the library.

The work of book-selection may be performed by the school staff, and help must also be sought from outside from other schools, from the public library and from publishers and booksellers. Every book which comes up for consideration, must be examined on its individual merits and in relation to the school child.

Generally, a teacher is engaged to work as librarian in a school library. This is of course justified. The teacher-librarian must have a clearly defined policy of book-selection. He should be interested and a lover of books. Only those books should be acquired which will be used in the library. The teacher-librarian must also realize that discarding is as important as acquiring books. He must remove books which have proved unsuitable. His objective in the library should be to increase the use of books and not merely to increase the number of them.

Without the teacher-librarian's own interest in books, all the work of book-selection is meaningless. Therefore, the book selection must be done by the trained librarian or the willing and efficient teacher-librarian with the assistance of the library committee.

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OUR EDUCATIONAL DIARY

By "PEPYS"

21-4-61 The Kerala State Education Advisory Board proposes to consider the revised syllabi for Primary and Secondary education. The draft syllabi provide for "innumerable learning situations and practical activities" in the new course of studies to ensure the harmonious development of all the talents of children. Among the suggestions to improve the standard of teaching are improvement of the inspection of schools and reducing the size of the classes. The merits and demerits of the shift system in the primary classes will also be considered. In second-

dary education, the contents of mathematics and general science have been substantially reduced in the revised syllabi. But for those who intend to have higher education, advance courses in mathematics, general science and social studies have been provided for in the new curriculum. Another innovation is that S.S.L.C. students will hereafter not be declared eligible or not; only their marks will be mentioned in the register. It would be left to the various Universities, Public Service Commissions, trades and industries to stipulate their requirements.

[This last feature is to be warmly welcomed. It is on the lines of the G.C.E. in England. It is in vogue in Ceylon. Only the students should be at liberty to appear again in subsequent examinations to improve their attainments in any subject in which they had fared badly previously. It is to be earnestly hoped that other States will follow this salutary innovation.]

26-4-61 The Chief Minister of Kerala State said that the work of newly appointed teachers should be assessed after five or six month's service and inefficient ones should be weeded out. This would apply to teachers to be newly appointed, he said.

[Now that the pay of the teachers has been raised, it is but proper that they should be put on probation for a year or two before they are confirmed. Those found to be unfit should be given marching orders. In recent years, there is no doubt that many unemployed young men have taken to this profession. This is not an evil in itself, provided they do not take up to this employment just as a stepping stone and have no abiding interest in the profession.]

2-5-61 The Madras Government have issued orders enhancing the maximum amount of pension payable to B.T. Assistants and Head Masters from Rs. 30 to 60 and Rs. 35 to 75 respectively. This will apply in the case of all teachers who retired from service on or after July 1960.

The Chairman of the U.G. Commission has exhorted the Universities in India to increase the percentage of passes. He considers it impossible to believe that student's attainments are so bad as not to deserve a high percentage of passes.

[I wonder how the Universities are to bring this about. I hope an artificial increase by undeserved liberality in

marking is not intended by the Chairman. By more efficient teaching? That is certainly one way. But there is a limit to this, for students with a very low standard who are admitted into colleges, find it difficult to follow the lectures, and the colleges are so overcrowded that individual tuition which might improve results cannot be given. On the one hand, restriction of admission to intelligent boys is opposed, while, on the other hand, more colleges cannot be opened for financial reasons.]

4-5-61 A correspondent has written to the Mail that Head-Masters of secondary schools in Andhra Pradesh feel that formal English grammar is absolutely necessary for study in schools along with the detailed and non-detailed books and that pupils are handicapped by not having formal grammar for study.

[This is but natural, for the mere structure pattern will not help the student to express himself. There may be many occasions where the structures may not fit in with his needs. While the structures are good as far as they go, they are not enough by themselves. They have to be supplemented by at least the rudiments of grammar.]

6-5-61 Boy students of Pondicherry will receive free education till the Matriculation from the ensuing academic year.

The Kerala Chief Minister pleaded that students should be given coaching as to how to answer question papers. Success in examination depended on this, he said.

[A few rehearsals of the examination atmosphere before the real examination will indeed greatly benefit the students.]

9-5-61 In a despatch to the 'Mail', Madras, by its Trivandrum correspondent, it is pointed out that serious malpractices are being indulged in by private manage.

ments in the recruitment of teachers. It is said that the Deputy Chief Minister, Sri R. Sankar, had openly declared that sums amounting to Rs. 3000 were being paid as bribes for such recruitment to private managements.

[The report of the malpractice seems to be grossly exaggerated. It is inconceivable that a poor schoolmaster can manage to give such a big sum as a bribe to secure recruitment. After all, the school world is fortunately still a wide field, and unemployment among teachers has not yet developed into a problem. No teacher would be willing to give big bribes to secure recruitment, as he can find a job elsewhere out of the province.]

A public school is proposed to be opened at Munnar in Kerala State. It was resolved that it should be a residential institution.

The Kerala State Education Advisory Board has made the following recommend-

ations: (1) The abandonment of co-education above the middle school stage. (2) The appointing of male and female teachers and headmasters in boys' and girls' schools respectively. (3) Separate schools for boys and girls. (4) Introduction of the shift system in high schools, one section from 8 a.m. to 12 noon and another from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. The first shift to be attended by girls and the second by boys. (5) Saturday to be working day in the case of shift schools to make up the deficiency in working hours. (6) Primary schools to be conducted only for 3 hours in a day or 18 hours a week. (7) Promotions and increments to teachers should be on the basis of satisfactory work of the teachers recorded by the headmasters and also on the results obtained in the subjects. (8) Pay of teachers in private managements should be left to the discretion of the managements, and the relation between the teachers and the managements should be entirely on a contract basis. (9) The opening only of departmental schools in future, permission to start aided schools being exceptional. (10) Sanctions to the starting of a limited number of unaided private schools.

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RABINDRANATH'S POETRY

Sri M. R. Sampathkumaran, M.A., Madras.

The centenary of Rabindranath Tagore, celebrated throughout the world this month, is likely to revive the controversies that have raged round the question of his true poetic worth. He had a long and distinguished ministry in the service of the Muse, his literary career having begun while he was yet a boy and continuing almost till the last hours of his conscious life.

His early songs in Bengali almost immediately became popular and have not yet ceased to be so. For a generation or two, every one has been humming them in Bengal from the prince to the peasant. The late E. S. Montagu, some time Secretary of State for India, once revealed how riding through an Indian forest one night, he came upon a clearing where two or three men sat around a fire. "Not being certain of his road, he was glad to dismount and rest his tired horse. Shortly after he had joined the group, a poor-looking ill-clothed lad came out of the forest and sat down also at the fire. First one of the men sang a song and then another. The boy's turn came and he sang a song more beautiful in words and music than the rest. When asked who had made the song, he said he did not know: 'they were singing these songs everywhere'. A while after, Mr. Montagu heard these words and music again, this time in a different place, and when he asked for the name of the maker of the song, he heard for the first time the name of Rabindranath Tagore.¹"

But though his songs were immensely popular, the poet's literary technique provoked fierce criticism. For Tagore clean broke away from convention in the diction and style and sometimes even in the prosody of his poems. "The tears in

the eyes and the smile on the lips of our own native muse" he said, "have been hidden behind the meretricious tinsel of a veil borrowed from Sanskrit. We have forgotten how piercing and significant is the glance of her dark eyes, I have done what I can to pull aside the encumbering garment. Followers of convention may blame: I care not a whit. Let them, if they will, appraise the workmanship of the veil and the price of its glistening embroidery. What I want to see is the bright eyes behind it. In them you will find a wealth of beauty not quoted in the market rates of the bazaar's pedantry".² Such daring experimentation could not escape condemnation, and the Calcutta University, as the guardian of the established order, for several years used to ask its examinees to rewrite in chaste Bengali passages from the poet's work. It was in fact the award of the Nobel prize that silenced criticism at home (though only for a time) and persuaded the Calcutta University to revise its views and confer a doctorate on the poet.

Of the later, and perhaps inevitable ebb of the tide of enthusiasm Mr. C. J. Ghosh provides an example: "Tagore...skims the surface of the old Indian spirituality and mysticism and of *fin de siècle* European aestheticism and combines the two with a complacency, which strikes us as amazing, though it endeared him to the pre-war world."³

Out in the West, too, Tagore's reputation has had a chequered career. Like some speculative share in the Stock Exchange, it has suffered amazing fluctuations. When Rothenstein first introduced his poems to the English literary world they created a profound effect. Yeats found in their thought "a world he had

1 Ernest Rhys: *Tagore: A Biographical Study*.

2 Quoted in K. S. Ramaswami Sastri's *Sir Rabindranath Tagore, his life, personality and genius*.

3 Garret: *Heritage of India*.

dreamt of all life long". He goes on to say, "I have carried the manuscripts of these translations about with me for days, reading it in railway trains, or on the top of omnibuses and in restaurants, and I have often had to close it, lest some stranger should see how much they moved me. These verses will not lie in little well-printed books on ladies' tables, who turn the pages with indolent hands that they may sigh over a life without meaning, or be carried about by students at the University to be laid aside when the work of life begins, but as the generations pass, travellers will hum them on the highway and men rowing upon rivers. Lovers, while they await one another, shall find, in murmuring them, this love of God a magic gulf wherein their own more bitter passion may bathe and renew its youth".¹ Ernest Rhys quotes a famous critic as saying of the *Gitanjali*: "I have met several people not easily impressed who could not read that book without tears. As for me, I read a few pages and then put it down, feeling it to be too good for me. The rest of it I mean to read in the next world." Some passages in the *Gitanjali*, Maeterlinck said, are among the loftiest, most profound and most divinely human ever written. In fact, as was well said at the time: "Not since Fitzgerald's *Omar Khayyam* won its vague has any Eastern poetry won such acceptance."

But the reaction was not long in coming. And though Yeats remained true to his first love and went out of his way to include Tagore's poems in the *Oxford Book Of English Verse*, and there were many consistent admirers in Europe and America, it soon became the fashion to suggest that the Indian poet was overrated. Typical of this tendency was the sneer made by Sir John Squire (not yet a knight) that the reputation of Tagore rested mainly on a mystical bag of tricks.

Such vagaries in appreciation are by no means unusual in literary history. But the

reason why Tagore should have had so mixed a reception deserves some consideration. The fundamental fact about Tagore is that he was both a poet and a mystic. It was a vision of mystical illumination that started him on his career as a true poet. The story may be given in his own words as told by him to C. F. Andrews: "It was morning. I was watching the sunrise in the Free School Lane. A veil was suddenly drawn, and everything I saw became glorious. The whole world was one glorious music, one wonderful rhythm. The houses in the street, the men moving, the children playing, all seemed parts of one glorious whole, inexpressibly glorious. The vision went on for seven or eight days. Every one, even those who annoyed me, seemed to lose their outer barrier of personality; and I was full of gladness, full of love for every person and every tiniest thing. That was one of the first things which gave me the inner vision, and I have tried to exalain it in all my poems. I have felt ever since that this was my goal, to express the fullness of life, in its beauty as perfection, if only the veil were withdrawn."

This was the first of many similar experiences, that moved him to the depths of his being and inspired his creative imagination. The theme of the *Post Office*, for instance, was suggested by a snatch of folk-music. "The deliverance sought and won by the dying child (in the play) is the same deliverance which rose before his imagination, Mr. Tagore has said, when once in the early dawn he heard, amidst the noise of a crowd returning from some festival, this line out of an old village song: "Ferryman, take me to the other shore of the river".² Of his love of meditation, and passion for retreat into the ivory tower, Yeats observes, "Every morning at three-I know, for I have seen it-he sits immovable in contemplation, and for hours does not awake from his reverie 'upon the nature of God'"³

¹ Introduction to the '*Gitanjali*'.

³ Introduction to the '*Gitanjali*'.

² Introduction to the '*Post Office*'.

Tagore was not, however, purely or even primarily a mystic. He was equally an artist. The queer blending of musical and mystical inspiration, of artistic and transcendental impulses, which lay at the root of his poetry, is well revealed in the following glimpse, given by the poet himself of the workshop of his mind. "When I began to write a line humming, 'Do not hide in your heart, O Sakhi, your secret word', then I saw that wherever the tune flew away with the words, the words could not follow on foot. Then it seemed to me as if the hidden word that I prayed to hear was lost in the gloom of the forest, it melted into the still whiteness of the full moon-light, it was veiled in the blue distance of the horizon, as if it were the innermost secret word of the whole land and sea and sky... The tune of my song led me to the very door of that stranger who ensnares the universe and appears in it".¹

Artistically, Tagore took as his models the medieval Vaishnava and Sakta lyrics and classical Sanskrit literature. The influence of the former is seen in Tagore's love of simplicity and his extensive experimentation in a new diction and a new prosody from out of the music of popular speech. The mystical bag of tricks, to which a supercilious critic so contemptuously referred, is probably the wealth of imagery which the poet's works revealed, and these too might be traced back in some measure to the songs and sonnets of the medieval *bhaktas*: "The traveller in the red-brown clothes, which he wears that the dust may not show upon him, the girl searching in her bed for the petals fallen from the wreath of her royal lover, the servant or the bride awaiting the master's homecoming in the empty house are images of the heart turning to God. Flowers and rivers, the blowing of conchshells, the heavy rain of the Indian July, or the parching heat, are images of the moods of

that heart in union or in separation, and a man sitting in a boat upon a lake, like one of those figures full of mysterious meaning in a Chinese picture is God Himself."² Compare these images of the poet with the figures in a typical Vaishnava lyric:

Ferry us over to the other bank, O beautiful pilot.
We have come to your *ghat* for that purpose.
We are poor and cannot therefore pay the ferry toll.
And wherefore do we come to your *ghat*?
Because we have been assured you are merciful.

The criticism has sometimes been made that Tagore merely re-dressed for the modern reader the age-old songs of Bengali devotees. Not merely does it insinuate that Tagore's inspiration is not authentic, it also ignores the poet's debt to classical literature. The prevailing lyrical tone of all Tagore's works, whether poetry, drama or novel; the concern in all his plays and stories with creating a sentiment or producing an emotional effect, even at the cost of plot and character; the descriptive exuberance of his verses in the original Bengali; his feeling for Nature in all her moods—all these proclaim his kinship with the classical tradition.

Dr. K. S. Shetye refers to Tagore drawing his inspiration mainly from two of the central traditions of Indian history, the secular, aristocratic tradition and the religious fervour of the masses, and goes on to add:

"Blending these with the lofty mysticism of the *Upanishads* Rabindranath Tagore achieved a distinctive synthesis, which is as perfect an expression as perhaps it is possible to have of the spirit of India."³ Greater poets India has had and greater mystics and thinkers. But none in our times has ever united in such magical harmony the inspiration of the hermitage in the woods and the civilised sophistication of urban culture and conscious artistry.

¹ Quoted in K. S. Ramaswamy Sastri's *Str Rabindranath Tagore, his life, personality and genius*.

² Yeats: *Introduction to the "Gitanjali"*.

³ Quoted from Shishir Kumar Ghose's *Lord Gauranga* by K. S. Ramaswamy Sastri.

⁴ *Great Men of India*.

The many strains in Tagore's genius may be seen in any of his poems. Combining in himself the roles of the mystic and the poet, he naturally did not believe in rigorous asceticism or rigid mortification of the senses. "Deliverance is not for me in renunciation," he declares. "I feel the embrace of freedom in a thousand bonds of delight. No, I will never shut the doors of my senses." Again, "Much knowing has made my hair gray and much watching has made my sight dim.....I'll take the holy vow to be worthless, to be drunken and go to the dogs." Looking upon the universe as a revelation of joy, he sings: "The light is scattered into gold on every cloud, my darling, and it scatters gems in profusion—Mirth spreads from leaf to leaf, my darling, and gladness without measure. The heaven's river has drowned its banks, and the flood of joy is abroad."¹ Here is a fine picture of the soul as the bride of God. "She who ever has remained in the depth of my being, in the twilight of gleams and glimpses, she who never opened her veils in the morning light, will be my last gift to thee, my God, folded in my final songs."² The exaltation of love is thus described: "My heart the bird of wilderness, has found its sky in your eyes. They are the cradle of the morning, the kingdom of the stars. My songs are lost in their depths. Let me but soar in that sky in its lonely immensity."³ Again, "I hold her hands and press her to my breast. I try to fill my arms with her loveliness, to plunder her sweet smile with kisses, to drink her dark glances with my eyes. Ah, but where is it? Who can strain the blue from the sky?"⁴

Here is the secret of a mother's love. "You were hidden in my heart as its desire, my darling. You were in the dolls of my childhood's games, and when with clay, I made the image of my God every morning, I made and unmade you then.—When in girlhood my heart was opening its petals, you hovered as a fragrance

about it. Your tender softness blooms in my youthful limbs like a glow in the sky before sunrise. Heaven's first darling, twin-born with the morning light, you have floated down the stream of world's life, and at last you have stranded on my heart. As I gaze on your face, mystery overwhelms me, you who belong to all have become mine"⁵ Something of the wonder of the child's blossoming imagination is revealed here. "I will be waves," says the young one to its mother, "and you will be a strange shore. I shall roll on and on, and break upon your lap with laughter"⁶ Again, "I shall be the cloud and you the moon. I shall cover you with both my hands and our house-top will be the blue sky."

Such extracts may be endlessly given. No sober critic will find in them a mere mystical bag of tricks. Nor do they suggest a complacent combination of the surface of old Indian spirituality and the decadent glow of *fin de siècle* aestheticism. It was the glamour of novelty that first made Tagore's reputation in the West. "The great popularity of Tagore as a prose-poet," explains George Sampson, "can be easily explained by the general appetite for moral reflections not too deep, with an Eastern setting, not too remote."⁷ And when he ceased to be the latest sensation, Sir John Squire found him so different from the formal English poetry with which he was familiar that he did not hesitate to discover the poet's secret in a mystical bag of tricks. And even in India, the synthesis he effected was so new that it provoked adverse criticism. But his subtle fascination lies in his having at the same time something of Kalidasa, something of the *Upanishads* and something of Kabir.

Poetry is apt to be maimed and disfigured in any translation, and it may be permissible to question whether Tagore

1 *Gitanjali*.2 *Ibid*.3 *Gardener*.4 *Ibid*.5 *Crecent Moon*.6 *Ibid*.7 *Concise Cambridge History of English Literature*.

was right in pruning his poems, as he appears to have done, for the English reader. There is some point in Mr. Sampson's complaint that it is difficult to find in Tagore's prose-poems in English "anything richer in thought and expression than the pages of the English Bible to the receptive reader." The occasion of the centenary may be utilised for a closer translation of Tagore's songs and lyrics. We may get then a better idea of what they are in Bengali, and of the poet's true stature. But when the passing controversy is

stilled and the poet is studied in proper perspective, the proud claim that lies hidden behind the beauty of the following lines, is certain to be upheld, in spite of the barriers of language and inadequacies of translation :

"Entering my heart, unbidden, even as one of the common crowd, unknown to me, O King, thou didst press the signet of eternity upon many a fleeting moment of my life."

— = —

51st Madras State Educational Conference.

The 51st Madras State Educational Conference met at Tiruchirapalli from May 11 to 13. More than 1500 delegates attended. Mr. M. V. Krishnamurthi Rao, Chairman of the Reception Committee, in his welcome speech, emphasised the need for parents taking part in such conferences. He congratulated the Director of Public Instruction on the introduction of the free mid-day meal scheme.

Mr. G. Krishnamurthi, President of the South Indian Teacher's Union, drew attention to the presence of anti-national and anti-social ideas in several text-books. He suggested that they might be brought to the notice of the Government by the sectional meetings to be held as part of the State Conference. Inclusion of such ideas in text-books was responsible for indiscipline noticed among students.

Mr. N. K. Venugopal, Secretary and Treasurer, read messages received among others from President Rajendra Prasad, Vice-President Radhakrishnan and Mr. C. Subramaniam, Madras Education Minister.

Inaugural Address

Inaugurating the Conference, Mr. K. Kuruvilla Jacob, complained that even in

the Third Plan, compulsory education was possible only till the age 11 and the majority of children would be without education during the period of adolescence. Could not some adjustment be made in the pattern of education, so that education could be provided at least up to the age of 13?

He also pleaded for better quality among teachers and for better conditions of service; for trade and craft schools where pupils who wanted to enter life after primary education might get vocational training for skilled and semi-skilled professions.

Many people had now come to recognise that 12 years of education before the three year degree course as a practical necessity. This could be achieved if after the 10 year S.S.L.C., there could be a two year unit—called higher secondary or junior college attached to high schools or colleges or even as independent units.

These two-year Junior Colleges could have college preparatory course, or vocational or semi-vocational courses and could become a very useful terminal stage. The secondary grade teachers of the future and clerks in the Government Offices could have this as the minimum general education and

on the other hand the entrance to the polytechnics and other vocational courses could be after the S.S.L.C. The arrangement would raise the level of the degree courses, the level of the secondary grade teachers and Secretarial staff.

"The standard of our examinations and the percentage of passes in schools and colleges should be taken up as an urgent matter for careful study. In many progressive countries, 60 per cent marks is the minimum for a pass, but we go down even to 25 per cent. It is also a fact that in those countries the percentage of passes in an examination like the SSLC will be over 70; in Russia it is 90. There are many factors involved, such as selection of pupils, suitability of courses, efficient textbooks, efficient methods of teaching and methods of evaluation, but the fact remains that the existing conditions are unfair to the pupils and to the teachers and to society. A top level enquiry is essential."

Also it was very necessary that the University and the Government should jointly establish institutes of education which would undertake educational planning.

Presidential Address

Mr. T. P. Srinivasaradan, in the course of his presidential address, said:

"The teaching profession, through its organisation, should continue to have as its objectives, (1) securing improvements in the education of the child and (2) achieving a higher status for the teaching profession. It should continuously concern itself with such matters as the recruitment of teachers, qualifications of teachers and the securing of an increasing supply of qualified teachers to meet the requirements of every stage of education, primary, secondary, higher and technical."

Reviewing the educational changes in the country since Independence. Mr. Srinivasaradan said that the present pattern-

seven years of elementary education, four years of higher secondary education and the three-year degree course—was only a compromise. He however, pointed out that the three-year degree course and the lengthening of secondary education were not new ideas suggested by the Secondary Education Commission but were the main recommendations of the Sadler Commission as early as 1917. Those recommendations were not adopted widely on account of financial considerations.

In all advanced countries it was recognised that secondary education was a complete unit by itself and not merely a preparatory stage and that at the end of this period, the student should be in a position to enter on the responsibilities of life and take up some useful vocation. The period of secondary education should normally cover the age group of 11 to 17 years.

The secondary education course should help the students to attain a reasonable degree of maturity, understanding and judgment which would stand them in good stead in later life or which would enable them to pursue higher education most profitably. Properly planned education should take into consideration those who left school and who formed about 70 per cent.

The new pattern was introduced two years ago and the first batch would appear for the examination in March 1963. Before it was given a fair trial, it should not be condemned.

"It is high time that the Government thought of constituting a Statutory Body for Secondary Education, which will direct the courses. Such a body will bring about the necessary changes from time to time on sound educational lines. The Education Department, by the nature of its very constitution, cannot be expected to do the function of educational experts.

It is hampered at every stage by financial considerations.

It was a sad feature of the educational allotment of the Third Plan that no provision had been made for pre-school education. At least from the current expenses, he said, sufficient sums should be set apart year after year for pre-school education. At present there were about 1300 boys and 1700 girls in the voluntary pre-primary classes of all types and this was a poor figure.

While noting the expansion of education at all levels, he regretted the deterioration in quality. Such deterioration could be prevented only by reducing the teacher-pupil ratio to 1:30. From the way in which elementary and secondary schools were coming up, there would be continuous shortage unless more training sections were opened to train the additional teachers required.

In regard to women's education, he pleaded for proper planning.

"The basic system of education need not become a fetish or a platform for a political party where it is not popular with the people, because they have no faith in it. It is unwise on the part of the Government to spend large sums of money on experiments of doubtful value."

Mr. Srinivasavaradan pointed out that in Madras State there were only about 3,000 basic schools out of 46,759 elementary schools and the number of post-basic school is only four. At this rate, to convert non-basic into basic schools, it would take at least half a century.

"The present scheme of the study of languages is the best that can be evolved in the existing circumstances. Some slight adjustment is necessary to give facilities for the study of one more languages for those who want to study it. If a student wants to study Sanskrit, then he must give up Hindi. Similarly if a Telugu

student, taking Telugu under Part I, wants to study Tamil under Part II, he must give up Hindi. Recently, the Minister for Education stated that if students wanted to study Sanskrit as a fourth language, the schools concerned might make provision for such a study outside school hours and the salary of the teachers engaged would be assessed for grant. It is hoped that such a concession would be taken advantage of to further the study of Sanskrit. There is one other defect in the scheme. The study of Hindi begins only in the VII standard, i.e., at an age when students will take a long time to learn the alphabet. Schools may be permitted to make provision for the study of Hindi even from standard VI to such of the pupils as desire it, either within the school hours or outside. The salary paid to Hindi teachers should be assessed for grant.

Referring to the problem of linguistic minorities, spread over the whole of the country, Mr. Srinivasavaradan stressed the need for provision for their education at the primary stage in their mother-tongue by the State Governments. At the secondary stage, such children could study their mother-tongue as an optional language.

Deploing the low educational standards, he pleaded that there should be rigorous selection of students at each stage. Spectacular budgetary provisions could not produce miracles in our standards, and so long as we were indifferent to the quality of human material on either side of a class room table, the standard would be lower and lower.

"The defects of our examination system are admitted by all; but when the time comes to consider practical remedies, differences arise. The present examination system is not always fool-proof, emphasises only on memory, and makes the estimate of the student's whole work in a subject, dependent on his answers to one or two or three hour papers. Even oral examinations fail

to test the capacity of the student, judging by his subsequent career. All these reflections are no doubt true; but the alternatives proposed are often too theoretical, or they require the existence of a large number of teachers of high character and intelligence whose judgement shall be infallible. A poor country like ours cannot afford to have such a large body of teachers needed to conduct such examinations. Whatever modifications are made in the present system, the results would not be revolutionary.

"The public should regard examinations as a limited indication of a student's possible capacity, which his future achievements may or may not justify"

"Before any radical change is made in the method of examinations, it is better that experiments are conducted in a limited number of schools and on the basis of experience gained, changes are thought of.

"The problem of medium of instruction in the universities has evoked a great controversy among educationists and administrators. It is difficult to consider in a calm and detached manner when the question is wrapped up in sentiment. It is practical wisdom to use the English language as the medium for higher education, if our country is to advance industrially. The absence of suitable text-books and reference books in higher education must be realised. In faculties of Science, Medicine, Engineering and Technology, the status quo may be maintained for at least 25 years, care being taken to see that, meanwhile, planned efforts are made side by side to introduce and popularise the teaching and learning in these faculties in the regional language."

"No College either professional or Arts, should be forced to switch over to the Tamil medium when the requisite atmosphere is not there. Grant should not be denied to colleges which still continue to have English medium. The Government,

as a pilot scheme, started the teaching of History, Economics, Geography and Psychology under main subjects, and Statistics, Biology, Physics, Chemistry and Astronomy under minor subjects through Tamil medium. The Government would do well to watch the progress of this experiment before extending it to other colleges."

"Both the Central and the State Governments have recognised the importance of the study of English as a language. Our Government have organised a scheme of in-service training of graduates and secondary grade teachers in the method of teaching. English with the assistance of the British Council. The study of English may begin from Standard IV and the introduction of it at that stage will not in any way harm the study of the regional language. Further suggestion is that in the last two years of the higher secondary stage more periods may be allotted to the study of English."

To hasten the introduction of Tamil medium, all scientific terms used internationally should be transliterated. There was a tendency now to substitute Tamil words for internationally used ones. Those Tamil words were not only understandable, but only add to the confusion. Where commonly understood words were not available to replace foreign words, the latter should be freely borrowed.

On the problem of discipline, Mr. Srinivasavaradhan recalled the remarkable progress made by the Soviet Union who, forty years ago, was in a worse position than India. The majority of parents did not take as much interest now in their children's conduct as they did before.

Another factor that contributed to student indiscipline was there was no religious teaching as before. "Curiously enough there are many people who say that religion is not of much use nowadays. They say that it is sufficient if people are moral, as if there is a conflict between

religion and morality. For the majority of people moral virtues without religion is lifeless. Religion opens the mind to great conceptions. Religion is the foundation of society, the basis on which all true civilisations rest. Great thinkers of the world, and friends of humanity, have spoken in this strain.

"A simple short prayer before students begin the day's work would be quite enough. Prayer will strengthen the minds of students, chasten their heart and ultimately go to form a solid character. Much of the indiscipline that we find here and there in educational institutions is due to the absence of religious instruction."

The best human material available must be attracted to the teaching profession. This could be done by comparable salary scales high enough to attract and retain highly competent persons, old age provisions, and conditions of service similar to those of civil servants.

"The teaching profession is grateful to the Government, especially to the Minister for Education, for introducing provident fund cum insurance cum pension scheme, free education to teachers' children and the liberal revision of the scales of pay of teachers from June 1, 1960. The Government has done well in extending fee concessions to poor children up to Standard XI. Thus our State has been the forerunner in conferring such benefits. Very recently they have raised the rate of pension to L.T's, and headmasters, partially accepting the principle of 25 per cent of the average monthly salary during the last three years before retirement.

There are still certain concessions to be extended to teachers in aided institutions. House Rent Allowance has not been granted. Common leave rules are not insisted upon.

"The Government should take steps to give statutory protection against unlawful

termination of service of teachers. A teacher must have academic freedom, security of tenure, regular payment of salaries and freedom of thinking, to carry on his work."

There were still certain anomalies in the concessions, granted to teachers.

In conclusion, Mr. Srinivasavaradan suggested the introduction of the contributory health service scheme in which college teachers also should be included.

In the implementation of mid-day meals and other schemes, teachers should not be drawn from their normal work. Such schemes, should be entrusted to voluntary agencies.

Whatever concessions were given to teachers, they should be extended to the clerical staff.

"For the sake of efficiency, freedom of thinking and economy, the Government should give all encouragement to private agencies. Of late there has been a tendency on the part of the Educational Department to interfere unnecessarily even in the day-to-day administration of high schools by issuing irksome circulars. The Department seems to be of the opinion that private agencies exist only to find money to fund institutions and when funded, it should exercise control over them on the plea that it is public money. There may be a few managements which mismanage the funds, but to tar all with the same brush is most unfair and uncalled for. The departmental audit of the high schools has unnecessarily fettered the hands of managements and headmasters in spending on items which are highly essential for the efficiency of the school. Such interference will smother all initiative and enthusiasm on the part of private managements."

(To be Continued.)

Teachers and Education in Pre-Mutiny India

S. K. De., M.A. (Cal). H. Dip Ed. (Dublin). Cer-in Psy. Edinburg. Calcutta.

(Continued from page 67).

The condition of Bengal in the earlier half of the 19th century may be known from the reports of William Adam. From them, it is known that there were 100,000 schools in Bengal and Bihar which Sir Philip Hartog called a myth or a legend. Of course, most of these schools did not contain more than 30 to 31 students, on the average. There were a few schools with a large number of students. Adam found 27 elementary schools with 262 pupils of which 10 were Bengali schools with 167 pupils. The tuition fees varied from one anna to eight annas. The cause of this variation was, perhaps, in those days as at present, some enjoyed full free studentship and some half and quarter free studentship according to the circumstances of the parents. The average pay of the teachers in these schools was Rs. 5-8-0 per month. But no teacher can maintain his family with this small pay; so some of them used to follow occasionally some other profession or trade for their maintenance (just as teachers of the present time undertake private coaching of students to supplement their income). The average pay of elementary teachers in Bengal seems to be lesser than that of Madras and Bombay as the number of schools in Bengal was greater than those of other provinces. No other province in those days could claim so many schools as in Bengal, so the average pay came down to Rs. 5-8-0 per month.

Whether there was demand for education or not, the people of Bengal had always a great yearning for education. How strong was the thirst for education may be easily guessed from the way of running a school in a village, named Bharail, as mentioned in the report.

"The school at Dharail affords a good specimen of the mode in which a small

native community unite to support a school. At that place there are four families of Choudhuries, the principal persons in the village; but they are not so wealthy as to be able to support a teacher for their children without the co-operation of others. They give the teacher an apartment in which his scholars may meet. One of these families further pays four annas a month, a second an equal sum, a third eight annas, and a fourth twelve annas, which include the whole of disbursements on this account, no presents or perquisites of any kind being received from them, and for the sum mentioned their five children receive a Bengali education. The amount thus obtained, however, is not sufficient for the support of the teacher, and he, therefore, receives other scholars belonging to other families of whom one gives one anna, and five give each four annas a month, to which they add voluntary presents amounting per month to about four annas and consisting of vegetables, rice, fish and occasionally a piece of cloth, such as a handkerchief (Gamcha) or an upper or under garment. Five boys of another village attend the school. Of the five, two give together two annas, and the three others give together four annas a month, and thus the whole income of the master is made up. This case shows by what pinched and stinted contribution the class just below the wealthy and the class just above the indigent unite to support a school; and it constitutes a proof of the very limited means of those who are anxious to give a Bengali education to their children, and of the sacrifice which they make to accomplish that object."

Three R's were generally taught in the schools. The subject that would be useful to the child in his future life formed the part of the curriculum, i.e., it catered to

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the needs of the petty Zamindar, the Bania and the well-to-do farmer.

Generally speaking, the schools had no buildings of their own. In most cases, classes were held in the local temple or mosque, or in the out-house of some village patron or of the teacher himself and sometimes under the shade of trees. The school used to sit and close according to the convenience of the local people. The instruction of the junior boys was usually the charge of the senior boys or monitors, while the senior students received the sole attention of the teacher,

Punishments for breaking discipline and to for coming school without preparing lessons were usually very severe, so much so that they may be called inhuman in many cases. Some of the usual forms of punishments are mentioned here:—

(1) "A boy is made to bend forward with his face towards the ground; a heavy brick is then placed on his back and another on his neck, and should he let either of them fall, within the prescribed period of half an hour or so, he is punished with cane. (2) A boy is condemned to stand for half an hour or an hour on one foot; and should he shake or quiver or let down the uplifted leg before the time, he is severely punished. (3) He is made to sit with his feet resting on two bricks and his head bent down between both legs, while his hands twisted round each leg so as painfully to catch the ears. (4) A boy is made to hang for a few minutes, with his head downwards from the branch of a neighbouring tree. (5) His hands and feet are bound with cords; to these members so bound a rope is fastened, and the boy is then hoisted by means of a pulley attached to the beams of rafters of the school. (6) The boy is put up in a sack along with some nettles, or a cat or some other noisome creature, and then rolled along the ground. (7) Four boys are made to seize another, two holding the arms and two the feet; they thus alternately swing him and throw him violently on the ground. (8) Two boys, when both have

given offence, are made to knock their heads several times against each other, etc., etc."

This is a short account of education and condition of teachers some hundred and fifty years back. The schools that have been mentioned here, are all primary schools—there were no secondary schools in India in those days; consequently no account of them may be had.

Now let us discuss the justification of the scale of tuition fees and the pay of primary teachers of the earlier half of the 19th century in the perspective of the present age. The average tuition fee of the students of Madras, Bombay and Bengal was annas five and the average pay of the primary teachers was Rs. 7 to 8, a pay which Munro, Elphinstone and Adam, all have declared to be too low for a teacher to maintain his family, even in those days. The price index of the present day has increased at least 25 times of those days. Calculated on this basis, the tuition fee of a primary school of our time, ought to be annas $5 \times 25 = \text{Rs. } 7-13-0$ and the pay of primary teacher ought to be $\text{Rs. } 7 \times 25 = \text{Rs. } 175$ or $\text{Rs. } 8 \times 25 = \text{Rs. } 200$ a month. Again it may be said in comparison with the pay of a teacher of those days, the scale of tuition fee was too high in proportion to the average income of the people in general. Can the present Government conceive the idea of paying Rs. 175 to 200 to a primary teacher of Bengal which they call a welfare state? For the improvement of education this should be the minimum pay. But our benign government, has, after much agitation and unpleasantness, consented to pay Rs. 75 to a graduate when the intrinsic value of a rupee has come down to 4 as. If a half educated teacher of a village primary school could draw Rs. 6/7 a month a hundred and fifty years back, what, should be the pay of an M.A., B.T. of the present day?

In those days there was no demand or appreciation for education. Education was

purely a non-official or individual effort. The people of the country in their collective or individual character made arrangement for as much education as was necessary in those days. The economic condition of the people was far from satisfactory due to anarchy and unsettled condition of the country, which is bound to follow a transition period. Mr. M. R. Paranjpe gives a vivid idea of the political, economic and social condition of the country in this period in his 'Source-book of Indian Education.' "It was a period when life and property were always in danger and when it was risky to confide even in one's dearest friend or relation; when learning was at a discount; appalling ignorance and superstition prevailed in the land, and the people were harassed by thugs, pindarees or mercenaries in alien employment."

They could not pay the teacher more even if they wished to; that is why they tried to supplement his income by giving him presents of various kinds besides small cash money. This shows the sincerity and large-heartedness of the people in general of the time.

But what do we find now? The Government is callous, society is indifferent. Those who are better placed in life look down upon the teacher and think them as objects of pity. They never think that if teachers be in constant want and worry, they will never be able to do justice to the children who have been entrusted to them for their training and guidance. Seeing this deplorable condition of the teachers, even Dr. Mudaliar, Chairman, The Secondary Education Commission, has been forced to admit:—

"During our tour, we were painfully impressed by the fact that the social status, the salaries and the general service conditions of teachers are far from satisfactory. In fact, our general impression is that on the whole their position today is even worse than it was in the past. It compares unfavourably not only with persons of similar qualifications in other professions, but also, in many cases, with those of lower qualifications who are

entrusted with less important and socially less significant duties. They have often no security of tenure and their treatment by management is, in many cases, inconsistent with their position and dignity. The same story of woe was repeated at every centre by Teachers' Organisations and by responsible headmasters and others interested in education. It is surprising that, in spite of the recommendations made by successive Education Commissions in the past, many of the disabilities from which teachers suffer, still persist and adequate steps have not been taken to remove them. We are aware that in recent years, in many States, there has been a revision of Teachers' grades and dearness allowances have been sanctioned. But they have not brought adequate relief, because, meanwhile, the cost of living has risen steeply and thus nullified the concessions that have been granted. We are fully conscious of the financial difficulties of the State Governments and the fact that they have to attend simultaneously to a large number of other urgent and pressing problems. But we are convinced that, if the teachers' present mood of discontent and frustration is to be removed and education is to become a genuine nation-building activity, it is absolutely necessary to improve their status and their conditions of service."

Now our country is free and it claims to be a welfare State. Our national Government has undertaken various big projects for bringing prosperity to the country; but may we ask what they have done for the teachers who are euphemistically called the "builders of the nation." Will the people at the helm of the State merely cite the example of Ramnath and prescribe tamarind-leaf soup for the teachers alone? Who will remind them of Rishi Yagnavalkya and Raikya who said they were needy and so they must be paid first before they should give Brahma Vidya. Are sacrifices of all sorts and high ideals meant for the poor teacher community alone? Let us pause for a moment for answer.

* Vide "A Source Book of Indian Education" by M. R. Paranjpe.

Vide the Report of the Secondary Education Commission, Chapter XII.

EDITORIAL

The Tiruchi Conference

The most important features of the 51st Madras State Educational Conference held at Tiruchi from the 11th to the 13th of May include the plea by Mr. T. P. Srinivasavaradan, who presided, for a National Secondary Education Board, his condemnation of the Madras Government's threat to withhold grants from colleges to enforce the use of Tamil as the medium of instruction in higher education, the proposal of Mr. Kuruvilla Jacob, who inaugurated the Conference, for reviving the Intermediate course, and the resolution for observing July 4th as the House Rent Allowance Day.

Mr. Srinivasavaradan's presidential address was a fairly comprehensive and sober survey of current educational problems. His suggestion of a Secondary Education Board is in effect a call to politicians to impose a self-denying ordinance on themselves in the matter of interfering constantly with courses and curricula and a thousand other matters vitally affecting the future citizens of the nation. Few will disagree with his criticism of the Government's declared policy in regard to discouraging colleges from persisting in teaching through English.

He did well again in drawing attention to the parlous position of Sanskrit in the schools in our State. It is clear that, with the Hobson's choice offered between Hindi and Sanskrit, the latter is bound to get out of our schools altogether within the next five years or so. The permission accorded for the study of Sanskrit outside the school hours and the provision offered for recognising the holding of such classes is hardly likely to retrieve the situation. Mr. Srinivasavaradan knows too well how teachers and students respect subjects not required for the public examination, such as the B-group subjects in the old S.S.L.C. course, or Hindi in the present high school course. For our part, we are unable to

see why the system till now obtaining of permitting students to offer Sanskrit as an alternative to a more intensive course in the regional language should not be continued. We do not think that the three-language formula adopted by the Central education Advisory Board stands in the way. West Bengal has not been deterred by the formula from making Sanskrit compulsory for certain classes. In our State, compulsion is out of question, but the death-knell should not be allowed to be rung for Sanskrit in schools as an important feature of education reorganisation.

Mr. Srinivasavaradan urged a higher age than 5 plus being fixed for admission to schools. In his concluding speech, he expressed the view that 17 should be the minimum age for admission to the University. We are afraid that the school of thought advocating these reforms is anxious to follow the example of Western countries without studying the social and cultural milieu in India. It is likely that Indian children grow faster mentally and physically in the earlier years than children in Europe or America. To start schooling earlier here is no mistake or folly. Moreover, the widespread facilities available for pre-primary education in Europe and America are absent in India and likely to remain so for decades to come. Mr. Srinivasavaradan deplored the neglect of pre-primary education, no doubt. But this seems to us an educational luxury we can ill afford in the present state of our country. It is more important for us—and it will cost us less—to have a lower age of admission to schools than to insist on a higher age and be obliged thereupon to arrange for pre-primary education.

As regards the age of admission to the University, there are two conflicting trends. The Secondary Education Commission urged the extension of the school course by a year and the Universities Commission recommended that the degree course, after the Intermediate, should run to three

instead of two years. The combined result of these recommendations is to raise the age of graduation by two years. But, as irony would have it, the reorganisation now made cuts off a year from the school course and replaces the two years of the Intermediate by one year of the Pre-university course. In the event, the age of graduation has been reduced by two years.

Attempts are, however, being made to offset this reduction by insisting on a higher age of admission to the school and by the fantastic scheme of compulsory national service, for a year after completing the school and before beginning higher education. Neither of these devices is wise or practicable. The best way of increasing the age of graduation is to revive the Intermediate course, as suggested by Mr. Jacob.

The Conference in its resolutions has protested again against disparities in salary scales of teachers having the same qualifications and doing the same kind of work, urged a decent minimum salary for pandits and reiterated the demand for house-rent allowance for teachers. The last demand is to be pressed, by widespread demonstrations on July the 4th. It is usual to denounce such demonstrations on the ground that the teacher's calling is sacred and that he should not allow himself to be influenced by mercenary considerations. But he has to live, and in all conscience he is asking for nothing more than subsistence wages. It is in this context that the extremely modest demand made for House Rent Allowance has to be viewed. We trust that the Government will be pleased to grant it even before July 4th.

Letter to Editor

Disparity in Teachers' Salary

Sir,

At the Madras State Educational Conference held last week at Tiruchy, the Government have been urged to end the disparity of pay scales by the month end among teachers of same qualifications, especially of secondary grade. In bringing into force G. O. No. 556 Edn. 24-3-58, creating 'sanctioned and declared posts' in all aided elementary schools (an unnatural and unhappy thing)—on the analogy of board schools working in groups, on and from 1-4-58 in respect of secondary grade teachers, it is not unlikely that, in spite of clarifications on the G. O., there would be disparities in the mode of interpretation even rangewise, which could be ascertained by calling for statistical information such as direct appointments of such men in secondary grade posts, the appointments in leave vacancies, assessing secondary grade scale to teachers who passed the T.S.L.C. examination in March, 1958, and so on. These who joined the training in secondary grade in 1957 and earlier must have taken to the profession with the idea

of getting the secondary grade scale after training in aided schools. The said G. O. must be considered to have adversely affected such teachers economically and mentally even. The introduction of English in Standard V has been somewhat a relief to most of the teachers, as they would have been absorbed in 'sanctioned posts' in lower elementary school to handle English. There could be only an insignificant number of secondary grade teachers now drawing higher grade salaries only, in aided elementary schools, in utter disappointment and discontent and for no fault of theirs.

In all fairness, considering the heavy integrated syllabus, the idea of manning lower elementary schools by secondary grade men at least in higher elementary schools as in secondary schools must be welcomed and not discarded. The Government would be doing a kind act by rescinding the G.O. referred to and allowing a uniform scale to secondary grade teachers, wherever they are, irrespective of elementary or secondary schools and irrespective of management.

M. Nagasubramanya Aiyar,
Papanasam.

NEW PICTURE OF ATOM'S CORE

An international group of scientists at Stanford University have presented a new picture of the atom's nucleus. They say that the fundamental particles of the nucleus—the proton and neutron—are but different aspects of a single entity they call the nucleon.

Their picture of the atomic core agrees with the generally accepted theory of quantum electrodynamics and brings some order to the modern concept of the nucleus. Physicists in the post-war years have been able to detect more and more subdivisions of the neutron and proton. The new work tends to reverse this trend and to see the neutron as the "mirror image" of the proton.

Stanford Professor Robert Hofstadter, Dr. Conrad De Vries, a research associate at Stanford on leave from Amsterdam's Institute of Nuclear Research, and Dr. Robert Sherman of General Motors Laboratories reported their experimental findings to a meeting of the American Physical Society on April 26.

The scientists said that the only difference between the proton and the neutron is "isotopic spin" or vibration which can be compared with the way one magnet acts in the magnetic field of another. They said the spin gives the proton a strong positive electric charge, while the neutron has no charge at all. The reason for this, the scientists said, is that while the proton contains only a positive charge, the neutron contains equal amounts of positive and negative charge which cancel each other out.

The experimental findings were a culmination of seven years' work, at Stanford involving the use of many advanced tools of physics research, including the university's linear accelerator.

The Stanford group describes the two nuclear particles as being composed of mesons, sometimes called "the glue" that holds the nucleus together. They found that each particle has a very dense, point-like meson core surrounded by two

"Yukawa clouds" of mesons (named after Professor Hideki Yukawa of Japan, who conceived the cloud idea and in 1949 won a Nobel Prize for it.)

In many ways their structure resembles the atom itself, Dr. Hofstadter point out. Just as "concentric shells" or clouds of moving electrons surround the atomic nucleus, so the shell of moving mesons surround the cores of the neutron and proton. In each particle, these clouds, though intermingled, match those of the other almost exactly, that is, the proton inner and outer clouds match the neutrons in both size and amount of charge.

For purposes of comparison and understanding, Dr. Hofstadter referred to the dimensions of the core in the neutron and protons as no longer than 00000000000000 centimetres. If the core were the size of a BB shot, its surrounding protons would be as big as a marble, and the atom containing it the size of the city of New York.

Distribution of magnetism in the neutron and proton was also measured precisely by the group. The proton and neutron were found to be approximately equal in magnetic size. Physicists previously could not reconcile this fact that with the apparent difference between them in the electrical charge size which was shown by earlier experiments of Enrico Fermi, Isadore Rabi and others, and gave rise to doubts about the validity of quantum electrodynamics theory. "If our results are correct," said Dr. Hofstadter, "the structure of the proton and neutron is much simpler than we expected."

To examine the extremely minute nuclear entities, the group used a 150 ton, million-watt, 500,000 dollars magnetic spectrometer. It measured scattering of electrons from hydrogen nuclei under bombardment by Stanford's billion volt linear accelerator, prototype of the currently proposed two-mile-long machine.

The Stanford group's measurements are among the deepest and most accurate yet achieved for the neutron and proton.



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