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University Autonomy

BY SRI P. KODANDA RAO, *Servants of India Society, Bangalore.*

Education Vs. University: The Government of India's proposal to create a Central Council to regulate the standards of Indian Universities has been criticised largely on the ground that it would affect the "autonomy" of the Universities. Autonomy is a blessed word. Everybody wants it. Most often, it means that one should have autonomy to spend money which another had raised. Most Indian Universities are examining bodies, whose main work is examining pupils of teaching colleges, which are managed by Government or private bodies. They claim an autonomy from the State which the Education Departments, which manage nearly nine-tenths of the education in the states, from Primary to College level, hardly make, on the ground that University is more than a mere Department of Government. No institution has a special claim for autonomy, simply because it is called a University. Higher education and research are not the monopolies of Universities. Indeed, most Indian Universities do very little of these. The teaching colleges do most of the teaching and some research, while research institutions do most of the research and some teaching. If the Government is competent to manage institutions of higher teaching and research without conceding autonomy to them, there is no convincing reason why it should concede it to an examining University. Indeed, if the Government is compe-

tent to manage its numerous and varied Departments of public activity, including most of the education, there is no reason why it should be considered incompetent to manage the universities as well. If the Government be incompetent, then it is an argument to replace it by a more competent one, and not to rescue only a few universities. When, in the pursuit of the welfare state, Government has undertaken planning of not only the public, but also the private sector of activity, it seems untenable that Universities should demand an autonomy which no others claim or get. Under planning for the welfare state, even private institutions, which neither ask nor receive state grants, have to fall into line. Universities which seek and get large Government grants, cannot claim exemption on the ground that they are "temples of learning", as if even a primary school is not a "temple of learning". As the American President's Commission on Higher Education, in its report, *Higher Education for American Democracy*, said: "Public responsibility for the support of education implies public responsibility for the policies which are supported" (Vol. V.p. 57) This applies to all stages of education, from Primary to University. Indeed, the same Report advocated centralised control of all levels of education in the state. It said:

"The unbroken continuity of objectives of education at all levels makes it highly

desirable for the State to vest in a single State department of education whatever jurisdiction the State should exercise over all education from the nursery through the University." (Vol. III, p. 71)

There seems to be no administrative justification for the distinction between "higher" education under an autonomous University and "lower" education under a subordinate Department of Government. If autonomy is desirable, all education in the State should be under an autonomous board, and not the University alone. In any event, autonomy and the begging bowl go ill together.

Autonomy in England: Often the analogy of England is quoted in support of the autonomy of Indian universities. Sir Ernest Barker, in *British Universities*, (British Council, 1949) emphasised that the British Universities were "essentially autonomous" (p. 17) and were not controlled by the Ministry of Education, though Government grants amounted to nearly two-thirds of their budgets in recent years. But he also added that "democracy in education meant maximum freedom for each educational society—for each school as far as possible, but certainly for each University." (p. 23). Mr. H. C. Dent, in *British Education*, (British Council, 1949) said that British Education was characterised by the "autonomy of the school and the professional freedom of the teacher" (p. 10); that upto 1944 these were "more pronounced in the secondary than in the primary schools" and that they were at their "fullest and most complete form in the universities" (p. 11), that the autonomy of the primary and secondary schools was protected by their management-boards, who gave the "utmost freedom" to the head-teachers, who, in their turn, extended it to their assistant teachers. "For a head teacher to dictate to an assistant how he or she should teach a subject or conduct a school society is rare—and always resented." (p. 11)

Limitation: This universal autonomy was not without limitations. The assistant-teacher cheerfully accepted the advice of the head teacher, which was readily given.

The head teacher enjoyed autonomy, provided he retained the confidence of the board of management. The universities enjoyed autonomy, subject to the authority of Parliament, (p. 11). *It seems that each institution enjoyed autonomy, limited by its superior, at the latter's discretion.* In this sense, autonomy seems universal in all human activities, educational and other.

Dr. H. W. Dodds, who made a special investigation of the autonomy enjoyed by British Universities, said: "Nevertheless, the universities (in Britain) are not free in the sense of the self-determination they enjoyed twenty-five years ago." (*Government Assistance to Universities in Great Britain*, H. W. Dodds and others, Columbia University Press, 1952, p. 24).

Mr. Dodds quoted Lord Simon, chairman of the University of Manchester and of the editorial board of the *Universities Quarterly*, as saying: "Today, the State is entering the field of University affairs with almost explosive force." (ibid. p. 97)

Autonomy in America: In America, there are about 1,800 institutions of higher education, two-thirds of which are private foundations independent of government control, but increasingly receiving grants from Government. As regards the relations between Government and the Universities, the President's Commission on Higher Education, in its Report, already quoted, said: "Sound public policy demands furthermore, that State and local bodies are able to exercise at all times the right to review and control educational policies in any institution or agency for which public monies are appropriated and expended." (Vol. V, p. 57.)

University Grants Committee: It is often maintained that the autonomy of the British Universities was not affected, because Government grants are distributed by the University Grants Committee and not by the Government direct. It is noteworthy, however, that the University Grants Committee is appointed by Government and not elected by the Universities, that it is appointed by the Ministry of Finance and not the

Ministry of *Education*, and that increasingly government assistance takes the form of ear-marked grants as distinguished from block grants. Regarding the effect of the last, Lord Simon said: "This whole procedure makes a revolution in the relations of the Government and the Universities. Hitherto, with quite minor exceptions, the University Grants Committee has given an annual block grant to each university to spend as it wishes. Now, for the first time, this large additional grant is given for a specific purpose, subject to the approval of detailed proposals from each university as to how the money is to be spent. This is the first example of real planning and control of the universities by the Government." (*Government Assistance to Universities in Great Britain*, H. W. Dodds and others. Columbia University Press, 1952, p: 15)

The British University Grants Committee visited the universities frequently, interviewed students, staff and management, and acquired an extensive knowledge of their affairs, and tendered advice without seeking to interfere with the autonomy of the universities. The latter, while free to reject advice, almost invariably found it prudent to accept it, lest the grants be not renewed. In fact, the British Universities have just as much autonomy as the University Grants Committee chooses to give them, and the University Grants Committee has as much autonomy as the Chancellor of the Exchequer allows. According to Mr. Dodds, the success of the University Grants Committee rested fundamentally upon unwritten conventions and personal and social relations unmatched elsewhere, and any attempts to formalise them would destroy them. Dr. Dodds came to the further conclusion that the principle of greater accountability to Parliament would in the long run come out victorious even in England.

British vs. Indian Universities: Most of the British and American Universities are teaching institutions and originated as private foundations, which subsequently received State charters, and inherited strong traditions of autonomy. Their autonomy was affected when they asked for and re-

ceived state assistance. Except for Shantiniketan and the Karve University, which started as private foundations and were given State charters long afterwards, most other Indian Universities were the creations of the State and dependent on State grants from the very beginning and never attained the autonomy of the British Universities at its highest. Further, in England and America there are private organisations to maintain standards, evaluate the work of the Universities and accredit them. In India, the Universities are largely dependent on Government even for such purposes. The need for State intervention is, thus, greater in India than elsewhere.

State Vs. University: It has been repeatedly admitted that the standards of education have been falling since independence. The Indian Universities, individually or collectively, do not seem to have been able to stem the tide, much less reverse it. Such revelations as have to come to light about the inefficiency and corruption in the Universities are sickening to a degree. The Inter-University Board does not seem to have done anything in the matter. It was Government that instituted enquiries and published reports. For instance, the Mysore Government requested the late Sir C. R. Reddy to report on the education system in the Mysore State. His Report exposed in restrained but unmistakable language some of its very grave defects at all levels, including the University. During the debate on the Agra University Amendment Bill on the 6th Nov. 1952, the U. P. Education Minister made revelations which do no credit to the University or other "autonomous" bodies. *Thought of Delhi* had not exaggerated, when it said on the 15th Nov., 1952, that some universities positively reeked with the kind of petty scheming and intrigue one would have associated with the court of some decadent princeling, rather than with a centre of enlightenment.

The U. P. Education Minister said that while Government had no intention to disturb the autonomous character of the universities, it could not remain a helpless spectator of corruption and nepotism in the

universities. It may be that the Government themselves are not altogether above board and free from personal, political and communal influences. As political bodies, they are bound to face such pressures. But the University, which is an academic body, has no excuse for it. In any event, the Government is responsible to the legislature, the electorate and the tax-payer in a way and to an extent that the University is not.

Pickwickian Autonomy: Nobody was a greater advocate of university autonomy than the late Sir C. R. Reddy, who was Vice-Chancellor of the Andhra University for several years. In his *Report on Mysore Education*, he pleaded for greater autonomy for the Mysore University, which is a State University unlike most other Universities in India. Paradoxically enough, he advocated that the Syndicate should consist only of Government servants and nominated members. In effect, he recommended autonomy in a Pickwickian sense: a Government-dominated Syndicate, with an appeal to Government! His reason was that only thus would the University command the confidence of the Government! While his paradoxical recommendation has been cri-

ticised in some quarters, his reflections on the University have not been denied.

Cooperation Vs. Autonomy: If, in the interest of securing common standards among several affiliated colleges, it is necessary that the University should control them, it seems equally necessary that somebody should control the several Universities to secure minimum common standards and parity of value for the degrees conferred by the several Universities. If each University should claim autonomy from the State to maintain its individuality, it seems equally reasonable that each college should have autonomy from the University to maintain its own individuality. It is much more useful to stress mutual cooperation than individual autonomy.

Control Vs. Tool: It seems desirable that the Central Government should exercise effective control over all the Universities. It is only of incidental importance whether it is exercised through a new Central Board, or a University Grants Committee, or by the more frequent and effective use of the Visitorial Powers already vested in the Government. It is the deed that matters, not the tool.

Indiscipline in Students—A Nation-wide Disease

BY SRI GOPAL KRISHNA B. A. *Haldwani*

INDISCIPLINE has become a problem to-day. But in a country, like ours, where selfishness has become everybody's birth-right, ideals a hollow-mockery, conscience a dead element, national welfare a thing of past, blackmarketing a daylight practice, corruption and favouritism the fashion of the day, stabbing in the back a common tendency, misleading and deceiving a prime concern of the political leaders, it is no wonder, if her students have gone unruly and indisciplined.

Mr. Modi, while addressing the Kishori Ramman Degree College, Mathura, on 13th

November, 1951, has rightly observed: "The evil was, however, not confined to the students, and they alone were not to be blamed.....The students' problem should be treated as a part of the disease (of moral turpitude), prevailing on a nation-wide scale." To redress the indiscipline, we have to deepen the moral consciousness in the entire community of people.

Anyway, there cannot be two opinions that the sense of discipline is losing ground in the younger generation with rapidity, and I shall venture to analyse this problem wherein lies the destiny of the nation, below,

The first and the foremost reason for the students' indiscipline, in my point of view, is that the students remain unengaged for most of their time. They remain in institutions hardly for three or four hours, if they have not crossed the intermediate classes, and as their studies progress, the time goes on lessening to the extent that in their post-graduate classes (leaving the science faculty) they have to attend only two periods a day. When they have no work to do, their indulgence in mischiefs is more natural than habitual. An idle mind is the Devil's workshop. I feel sure, if the students be provided, as in foreign countries, with part time jobs, things are bound to improve. This would not only lessen the burden of the guardians, but would also make the students feel their individual responsibilities more. Too many holdings should also be avoided.

Further I would sum up the reasons of indiscipline under four heads: (1) neglect by parents, (2) inadequate attention by teachers, (3) misguidance by political leaders, and (4) the effect of social ills.

They begin with the attitude of the parents towards their wards: it can be said that they are so hard-hit economically these days that they have time only for worrying and no leisure to attend to children. Moreover, they have mostly large families, on account of which their attention is divided among too many children. Parents should watch over the movements and interests of their wards negligently. Now I come to the second factor, that the teachers do not adequately look after the students. I think that to prepare them for, and getting them through, in their coveted examinations, is not the only concern of the teachers. They have to make each of them a man, for "no Man unless he is more than a Man". They avoid coming into close contact of them though they can be of much help to the students, if they do so. They can easily impress the students, can mould them in the way they like, by their individual personality, good qualities, enviable virtues, and treasures of learning. It is, therefore, necessary that very able and capable per-

sons are appointed on the staff. But here we should not forget an important factor that the teachers are very poorly paid, on account of which they cannot pay so much attention towards their students, as they wish to, and as they should. Senior and influential lecturers and professors and proctors should hold meetings of the students every now and then, advising and exhorting them to be more disciplined. I would also like to suggest that the method of prevention, and not of detection, can deliver the goods. Imposing heavy fines and rustications or expulsions would not be of any avail, for the former would be a tax on the guardians, and the latter would lead the students from bad to worse. They may, however, be marked absent for a few days, as a last resort (I do not mean expulsion) because it is only attendances of which students are a bit afraid. They do not like to waste a year through inadequate attendance.

The present political leaders are also responsible in part for the growing indiscipline in students. Many inefficient and undeserving persons have been crowned as leaders on the support of particular parties. They are not conscious of nor do they bother to be, their enormous duties as leaders and on account of their gross negligence of their functions, they have become parasites for the nation. To call them mis-leaders would not be inapt. They cannot think their addresses to students complete, unless there is a political tinge in them. They try to arouse emotions in students, who are easily liable to fall in their trap. But this degrades and vitiates the young minds of our country, as well as poisons and injures the healthy atmosphere of the temples of learning. Such short-sighted policies give way to frustration and diversion and ultimately to indiscipline, in students. Our so-called leaders should mend their ways in the interest of the students and the nation at large.

Last, but not the least important factor of the indiscipline in students is the effect of the social ills, which cling to the whole of the society from top to bottom. These

mal practices and evils considerably contribute towards leading the students astray. Moreover, people show no sympathy towards the students: nay, they, instead, nurse prejudices against them. It can safely be said that our students are not so indisciplined as they have been thought of by the people. We should not forget that generally hasty and unripe conclusions do more harm than good to the nation.

The police and the students—the two dynamic forces of the society do not enjoy perfect harmony of feelings and viewpoints. Many judicial inquiries have revealed that the police dragged innocent students into the picture as mischief-mongers, due to their being already prejudiced against them. Such a spirit is not healthy for the country. We should, therefore, follow the suggestion given by the editorial of the *Hindustan Times* of 18-11-52, to encourage "social contacts

between the police and the students, that police officers be invited to address the students and University professors the police." An active co-operation between the police and the students would go a long way in making India a strong and disciplined country.

When the entire social structure is full of ills, how can students, who are part and parcel of society, remain unaffected? It is impossible. Would it, therefore, not be obnoxious and ridiculous even to think of bettering the affairs of the students, without improving the whole of society, purging and purifying it of its ills? We have to concentrate our attention on "developing character among teachers, parents, students and community at large." Every one of us should therefore, give his or her bit, towards attaining this goal, wherein lies the future prosperity of the nation.

Fulfilment of vows as part of Education

BY SRI R. M. THAKUR, *Kangri*

Mr. G. W. Valentine of the University of Birmingham says in his well-known work, *The New Psychology of the Unconscious*:

"Probably, the thrill of pleasure experienced when we feel that we have done the right thing helps to stamp the tendency towards the performance of that action, so that on another occasion it is more likely to recur than it was previously. It is quite likely that the unpleasantness of failure leads to an avoidance of repetition of the useless action, an automatic tendency for it not to occur, which we may also call a repression. Now this inhibition of the unsuccessful action is usually quite unintentional if not unconscious. We can sometimes detect an erroneous movement, but normally, specially as we get more skilled, the modifications become more and more automatic and whether we are in form or out of it depends on the working of the

facilitation of wrong impulses and the right ones."

Prof. Laird, the great psychologist, says in a letter to the author of the book quoted above:

"If, as you do, you make repression part of the general process of turning away from what is painful, it is surely clear that in most cases such repression is useful, and this seems in line with your general points, i. e., that repression is (only) occasionally hurtful, and that the hurtful cases (at least when pronounced) are the neurotic ones."

ANCIENT SYSTEM

The ancient sages of India fully understood and grasped this psychological truth and made voluntary suppression, or even involuntary repression, in an atmosphere of reverent faith and desire for the attainment of spiritual merit, an essential part of their system of education.

A 'brahmachari or neophyte (a child who had been entrusted to a teacher with religious fervour and to the accompaniment of Vedic recitation which created an atmosphere of sanctity that affected both the master and the disciple and made them feel that they were being transported into a universe of new values and made to undergo a process of moral transfiguration) was required to get up early in the morning, have a dip in a flowing stream even in bleak cold, go about bare-footed and bare-headed even when the sun shone in sweltering heat, to partake of simple food not at all seasoned or converted into a delicate dish, to take the threefold vow of chastity, poverty and humility, and to avoid mixing overmuch with members of the other sex except under conditions which hereditary inhibitions and racial repressions invested with sanctity, i. e., with women at the sight of whom the stimulation of the sexual impulse was a sacrilege which degraded him not only in the eyes of the world but in his own eyes. Rigid isolation of the sexes was no part of the ancient Indian system of education, but indiscriminate intimacy between juvenile sections of both sexes was tabooed. Looking upon a woman to lust after her was regarded as a sin of the deepest dye which could be wiped off only by severe penances.

The result of this system of education was that young men and women of that period were strong, healthy, handsome, self-reliant, practical, brave and absolutely unconventional with no trace of the prurient about them.

Inspired by the teachings of Rishi Dayanand, Swami Shradhdhanand made an effort to revive this ancient system of moral discipline and started the first Gurukula on the bank of the Ganges. The university has now passed the experimental stage and has turned out hundreds of graduates or *snatakas*, as they are called, who have taken their rightful place in the arduous work of national upheaval—religious, social, moral, and political.

They are not convention-ridden and are not ashamed of their heritage. They do

not feel that an Indian cannot raise his head in pride and rise to the full height of his moral stature, unless he stiffens himself up, even in the hot month of June, in foreign dress which is unsuited to tropical climates. They do not feel the least hesitation in rubbing shoulders with the most eminent foreigners, while dressed in the Indian style and squatting on the floor. They do not despise the magnificent culture which is their precious heritage. On the contrary, they consider themselves as its custodians, while always eager to enrich it by assimilation of all that is best in occidental culture and dovetailing into it all that has tended to the glory of modern Europe and America. They are dutiful sons and faithful husbands. They enjoy the natural taste of wholesome nourishing food and do not run after condiments and over-cooked dishes which ruin the stomach and derange the liver.

OLD SPIRIT, NEW FORM

In the Gurukula, the spirit is ancient, but the form is modern. The system is ancient, but the methods of teaching and organization are modern. There we have the old ambrosia in new bottles. For the last few years, a new experiment in moral training and inculcation of right behaviour has been tried and been crowned with a fair amount of success. In ancient times, only a small number of students lived in the home of the teacher as members of his family, and the Acharya or Guru was in a position to watch personally the development of the faculties of his pupils with a view to the eradication of evil propensities and the fostering of noble impulses. In the Gurukula University of Kangri at Hardwar, we have thousands of students and quite a regiment of teachers. It is an educational colony.

In such a colony, it is impossible for the Acharya to give individual attention to all his pupils. He has to relegate a part of his authority to his colleagues, who, in the very nature of things, cannot command the same amount of reverence as the Acharya who has initiated them—however worthy they may be. The boys care much more for

the approbation of their Acharya than for that of those who are immediately in charge of them. In order to ensure that the Acharya may be kept informed of the behaviour of each individual pupil and of the moral progress that he is making as evidenced by outward forms of conduct, a new subject of examination has been added, called the Vrat-Abhyas Pariksha, or Examination to ensure the Faithful Fulfilment of Vows.

TRUST BEGETS TRUST

There are two printed forms. A copy of one of the forms is supplied to each pupil in the college department. On the psychological principle that "trust begets trust," he is expected to make daily entries as to the time he gets up from his bed and takes his morning bath, as also whether he has taken physical exercise and joined the congregational prayer. Most pupils take the view that it is shameful to make false entries when they are trusted so much. In their case the psychology that operates is the same which makes a normal person think many times before he tells a lie when an oath has been administered to him, even though on ordinary occasions he may not be punctilious as to what he utters. An exalted notion of self-respect is fostered which makes it difficult for the pupil to commit an act of self-abasement. A powerful motive for the observance of solemn vows is thus brought into play.

Although we rely upon this motive force as the mainspring of action, the fear of public opinion and desire to win the approbation of elders are also exploited. The teachers are expected to go round and to note down the names of boys who have been guilty of lapses and dereliction of duty in these matters. When the monthly meeting of the Examination Board is held to award marks, the teachers' notes are carefully compared with entries made by the pupils, and if fraud is detected, marks are deducted

and the reason for deduction given wide publicity.

PLEASING HABITS

There is a second form which is filled up by the superintendent actually in charge of the boy in consultation with other members of the Board and the Acharya, who, likewise, are expected to watch the outward behaviour of the boys and to seek and create opportunities for doing so. Marks are awarded by the Board under this head for personal cleanliness, neatness of the seat in the dormitory, orderly arrangement of books and other belongings of the pupil, obedience, punctuality, social service, willing co-operation with the teachers, etc. The result is that the responsibility for this desirable form of behaviour rests with the pupil, and he feels that, however bright he may be in intellectual work, he will not get his degree, unless he attains a minimum amount of efficiency in desirable and prescribed forms of outward behaviour.

Just as the imperative need of getting a degree makes even naturally easy-going boys studious and creates in them a habit of study which, in many cases, persists through life, this examination spurs on university students to shake off slovenly habits and acquire the habits of personal cleanliness and neatness and orderliness in relation to their physical surroundings, makes the unpunctual punctual, teaches those who are rough in their manners the art of polished speech, and induces the naturally impertinent lads to assume the forms of polite speech surcharged with humility. In course of time, the pupil perceives the moral and even material value of these virtues, and habits are formed which conduce to the augmentation of the totality of pleasurable sensations, and a relapse into repressed habits of solvenliness and slatternliness becomes psychologically and even physiologically difficult on account of new psychological associations and newly formed pathways of nervous discharge.

The Falling Standards

BY Sri: K. SATHYANARAYANA MURTHI, B. A., B. Ed. *Head Master,
Board High School, Nagari (Chittoor District.)*

When I was correcting S. S. L. C. Examination papers a few ideas occurred to me about why the standards were falling and how they could be raised. I thought I could share my thoughts with educationalists.

Papers on 'knowledge' subjects are now divided into two parts. Part I contains small essay-type questions, in which the pupils are expected to give a few facts cogently about one incident or experiment or theory etc. The performance of the pupils in this part is far below expectations. The pupils do not possess the necessary grasp of the facts of the subject-matter for arranging them cogently. They forget the fundamentals and make a mess of the points.

It cannot be denied that the performance of a pupil in part I is the best test for assessing his knowledge of the subject. If he really understands the subject, he should be able to argue and arrive at the required point.

Is it not therefore right to take the marks which the pupil receives in part I as the basis for evaluating his abilities?

(2) Part II of the question paper aims at testing the exactness of isolated points. It is a recent innovation in the educational field. These types of questions are excellently suited for revision.

But there are a very large number of cases, where pupils, who lack woefully in part I, getting less than 5/50, get as much as 30/50 in part II, and thus get through with credit.

Children are trained in the powers of observation in the new scheme. It is easy for them to see their friends' papers from a distance and put the letters A, B, C, or D, or 1, 2, 3, 4 in the matching type of questions. To avoid such easy methods of "copying", I suggest the following procedure:

Multiple choice type: The children may be asked to underline the correct answers instead of inserting the letters in the brackets.

Matching type: The children may be asked to frame one sentence on the two matched units and give a complete idea. Any sensible, fully correct statement may be awarded a score. Thus the pupil's ability to express correctly will be tested.

(3) Next, I wish to put forward my view in the valuation of parts I and II. The marks got by a student for part I constitute a more correct estimate of his ability. The marks for part II are only for stray ideas which the student is able to recapitulate.

To view part I and II as equal with equal maxima has resulted, I feel, in a perceptible lowering of standards, about which our national leaders are constantly warning us.

So I propose this remedy: The marks which a student gets in paper I must be taken as the primary marks. In paper II, no student should be awarded more than twice the marks he gets in part I. Let me give a concrete example. Suppose a student gets 8 marks in part I. Then, if he gets 20 in part II, he should be given only 16 and no more. If he gets less than 16, the actual marks that he gets must be taken. This moderation may be a better method for judging the students' abilities. Then the students will try to do well in the essay type questions, which will help to raise the standards.

(4) Lastly, I wish to put forward a very novel idea for improvement of standards. The Government must make it compulsory for all masters to answer the question papers of the respective subjects which they are handling. Then, the masters can give their answers, which give a clear indication of the masters' standards on which depend the pupils' standards.

The masters may be asked to give not only the answers, but also a brief criticism of individual questions. A constructive criticism of the questions may also throw light on the way the questions are set and taught.

This scheme, I submit, is not costly, but has much advantage in quickly raising the falling standards.

Elementary Education in Madras

1

NEW SCHEME FOR RURAL AREAS

A new scheme of rural elementary education under which the school hours would be reduced to three a day leaving the pupil free to engage, during the rest of the day, in their respective family avocations will come into force from 1953—54 and would be introduced in lower elementary schools, excluding basic schools, in rural areas not included in Municipalities or major Panchayats.

The details of the new scheme are as follows :

Modification will be made in the school hours and training of elementary school pupils in rural areas, to begin with, to enable them to keep up the habit of doing work which they have been doing. It is not desirable that because of their schooling the pupils should become physically and mentally incapable of productive activity which is needed for their individual advantage and that of the country. The burden of long school hours which impair the health of young school children should be reduced and they should have opportunities for usefully engaging themselves in village activities so as to improve their general knowledge and their usefulness to the community. Young boys and girls should have allotted places in the social organizations that constitute the family and the village.

The application of these modifications will, for the present, be limited to lower elementary schools excluding basic schools for the present in rural areas, i. e., those not included in Municipalities or major Panchayats.

HOURS OF WORK

A school-day for the pupils will be reduced to three hours a day, but the working week will extend, if necessary, to six days. Every school will be divided

into two batches. One batch will have work for three hours alternately in the forenoon and the afternoon ; the second batch will come to the school during the other part of the day. This arrangement is wholly different from the shift system which was hitherto permitted in overcrowded schools, though the same teacher will handle both the batches.

The proposed scheme of work will leave the children free for one half of the day ; they are expected, during this time, to join their families and do whatever work the family normally does. This will apply to all pupils belonging to occupational families, i. e., those who work with their hands either as agricultural labourers or land-owning peasants or artisans such as potters, carpenters, ironsmiths, etc. All girls, irrespective of the occupation of the parents, will come under this category because they can usefully occupy themselves in the home.

TRAINING UNDER CRAFTSMEN

There will, however, be in every village a certain number of boys whose parents do not belong to the occupational groups. For them some provision will have to be made to keep them occupied in a craft. If there is a village craftsman, these boys may be sent to that craftsman for learning work during the half day that they do not go to school. They will, for all purposes, work like apprentices under this craftsman. There will be no other school teacher supervising this work ; the craftsman will be the teacher. He will have to maintain an attendance register indicating that the boys are present during the allotted time. It may be that he will sometimes fail to secure that the boys effectively do the work and learn the craft, but, nevertheless, so long as they are about the place, they are likely to pick up the work sooner or later. It is expected that there may not be more than 5 to 10 children in each small village school who do not belong to occupational families and would require this special arrangement for craft education,

There are, however, villages where there is no local craftsman. In such cases it will be necessary to induce one to come and settle in the vicinity of the school. This may be more difficult, as he will have to be provided with a plot of land and some kind of a roof for working and living. Where a school has a sufficient compound, this craft shed may be erected inside the compound and provision may gradually be made for more than one type of craft suitable to the locality.

Another kind of work which pupils must get acquainted with is cultivation: for this purpose suitable arrangements may be made with farmers in the vicinity. The pupils will be attached to the farmer in the same manner as to the craftsman. It will perhaps be found most convenient to send the pupils to the farmer in certain seasons, and to the craftsman at other times.

In addition to the regular learning of a craft and cultivation in this manner, all the pupils may be organised to render service to the village in whatever manner it may be possible to do, building sheds, laying bricks, digging wells, making and improving village roads, etc. The status and importance of the teacher in the village is likely to improve in proportion to the extent to which he is able to organise these activities successfully.

In order to make the local people of the village take an interest in the school and guide these extra activities, a village school council may be constituted consisting of persons really willing and capable of taking interest in these matters.

NO DIMINUTION OF BOOK KNOWLEDGE

Though the pupils will have work for 20 to 24 periods per week in the school under the proposed scheme as against 35 periods provided in the Elementary Education Manual, it can be stated with confidence that there will be no diminution of the standard in the language, elementary mathematics, history and geography, hygiene and civics and moral instruction. In these subjects, the same syllabus as be-

fore will be followed and the same number of periods can be provided for each of those subjects. Subjects such as nature study and gardening, physical training, music, hand-crafts and subjects like drawing, coming under optional subjects, will not be attempted inadequately in the school, but done realistically in the normal setting.

II

THE SCHEME EXPLAINED

The Staff Reporter of the "Indian Express" writes under date, May 5:

The New Scheme of rural elementary education will be introduced in those places where there are facilities available for introduction during this year, it was officially stated here today.

The basis of the whole scheme, it was explained, was that where the majority of the parents of the children are of the occupational class, the children would be required to attend school for only half a day, thus permitting them to assist their parents in their vocations for the rest of the day.

It is recognised that there are villages, where the majority of the parents do not belong to the agriculturist, artisan or other occupational class and therefore arrangements will have to be made for the schooling of their children just as in towns and major panchayat areas. In such places, the new scheme would not be put into operation, an official told the *Indian Express*. "Where facilities are not available we will not spoil the scheme by putting it into operation there," he added.

Circulars have been sent to all the elementary schools to furnish information relating to number of children from occupational families compared to the total strength of the school in order to determine the places where the new scheme should be introduced.

It is realised there may be several villagers who work as mere agricultural labourers, who may not find it possible to take their children to the field, as the owner of the land or a tenant can. There are villages

too; where the entire adult population gets up in the morning and proceeds to neighbouring workshops or factories for work. The children of such workers will, it is pointed out, have to be treated on a separate footing. The authorities have taken into consideration all genuine fears and objections raised in regard to the new scheme and taken note of the feeling that reforms should not be rushed through hastily.

The proposal of the Director of Public Instruction that the scheme will be introduced only in places where there are facilities available must satisfy many who have raised objections on this ground. It is stated what has already appeared in the Press about the scheme is only an outline of the policy and details are being worked out to implement it.

It was stressed by an official that the aim and object of the scheme was not the introduction of any shift system to provide for the schooling of double the number of children in elementary schools. The fear that the scheme would result in increasing the burden on teachers was unfounded. It was pointed out that for the purpose of grants, elementary schools were permitted to have a teacher for every 20 students. If, for instance, in a school of five standards, there were, say, 20 boys in each standard, the school was permitted to have 5 teachers. The number of teachers permitted depends on the number of pupils in the school on this basis.

NO HARD & FAST RULE

Another important feature of the scheme is that there will be no hard and fast general rule that the schools begin work at a particular hour in the morning or evening. It is proposed to give the largest latitude to suit the convenience of the local people.

What will be insisted upon is that the schools should function for three hours either in the morning or evening. If in an area the majority of the people are found to be engaged in a particular occupation, and they would like to have their children with them in the morning, the school can func-

tion in the evening and vice versa. This will be left to the discretion of the local people.

It is also proposed to permit the closure of schools, if necessary, for seasonal operations, where the majority are agriculturists.

The number of working days has been prescribed, and so long as this can be adjusted, it is pointed out that it will not matter much as to when the holidays should be. This may be left to be adjusted according to the needs of the people of the locality.

The school hours, in short, will depend on the kind of work done by the parents, and the holidays too can be adjusted.

An official stated that there was no reason why children should be forced to attend schools at a time they would be useful to the parents at home, particularly at the time when the agricultural operations are on. Not only this should be recognised, but encouraged, he added.

NO LOWERING OF STANDARDS

There is another fear expressed in certain quarters that the new scheme will result in lowering of standards, and this section feels it would be necessary to have another type of secondary schools later on for the children who undergo instruction under the new scheme. This fear, it is pointed out in official quarters, is an unnecessary one.

A study of the working of the elementary schools at present compared to what would be the case under the new scheme will make the position clear. Under the present elementary school time-table, provision has been made for 30 periods in a week. Ordinarily, the total number should be 35. Five periods have been left for any activity which the children like in each school.

Out of the 30 periods, there are only 19 periods for what may be called "books knowledge subjects." Language, Mathematics, History, Geography, Civics and Moral Instruction constitute the 19 period-

The remaining eleven periods are allotted for subjects intended for physical or artistic development of children. In many elementary schools, these amount to nothing. The position of subjects like drawing, crafts, music, physical instruction etc., in elementary schools is well-known.

So far as the "book-knowledge" subjects in which pupils are tested when they are admitted in First Form are concerned, the time allotted for them under the new scheme in the school will be the same. If in the three hours of school daily, they can provide for four periods, it will come to 20 periods a week for these subjects.

EXPLOITATION FEAR

The City Headmasters mentioned at their recent meeting that if children were sent to farmers or craftsmen without the teacher with them, there was the danger of the children being exploited. They stated that the children should be guided by the teacher who was the one eminently fitted for the job.

In answer to such fears, it is pointed out that under the scheme, the majority of the children sent to the farmers or artisans will be children of the farmers or the artisans and only a small number not coming under this category would be tagged on with the majority. Parents would obviously not exploit their own children. As regards the rest, any complaint of exploitation would be immediately looked into. After all in a village, it is stated, nothing can be done in secret, and there is bound to be a hue and cry if there is an injustice.

The official added that where a majority had practical training, it was necessary that the remaining too should fall in line, so that every one would realise the dignity of labour. While the majority did a sort of manual labour, a few should not be allowed to go with a false feeling of superiority. They should also be made to realise the dignity of labour.

There have been in the past several village industries, which have lost their importance and position, due to machines and

big factories in urban areas. The village industries have not been able to withstand the competition. Under the new scheme, the children will be made to learn something practical about work in the fields or crafts. An enthusiastic teacher can play his role by teaching how best the village industries or their products can be improved.

What occupational training can be given to the children in other elementary schools is one of the major schemes, which will have to be considered later on, the official said.

Criticism of the scheme on the ground of "child slavery" is dismissed as one made without realising the position. The children are sent to their homes, from where they come, to be with their parents. Where is child slavery here? What happens to them if they do not come to school at all? Instead of 5 hours in schools, they are asked to come for three hours and they are made to stay for longer hours with the parents, and that is what is required under the scheme.

EXTENSION TO HIGHER CLASSES

It is further recognised that the scheme (of providing for occupational training) should be "gradually" introduced in the higher classes also. But this is one of the things which would have to be done only gradually.

"We wish to learn by experience what the things are which would require improvement and then go to the higher classes," an official said.

The importance of "Citizenship Training Course" introduced as early as 1948 is stressed in this connection. It is felt that the interest of every student in a high school will have to be looked after. The Citizenship curriculum has been revised, and according to this revised scheme, there are two important aspects. One is that inside the school itself, the students should get into the habit of social service and self-help. It is felt that a beginning should be made from inside the school in this regard. In-

provements to schools by cleaning, white-washing and beautifying are some of the ways in which students could engage themselves. The second aspect is that the students take pride in what they have done and take a personal interest later on. The students will realise that there is nothing derogatory in helping themselves by doing such jobs.

In the elementary schools at present there is no provision for this type of work.

The question of reducing the number of hours in high schools is a major problem and the recommendations of the Elementary Education Commission are awaited for reforms to elementary education.

It is explained that which is now sought under the new elementary education scheme is not totally new, a start having already been made in the high schools in 1948 (under the Citizenship course).

SOCIAL WORK

The Government of India have a proposal for promoting a Youth Welfare Movement and they have promised help to the State to some extent for organised social work in community project areas. For the maintenance and work of a batch of students in those areas, what is required is finance, and if that is forthcoming, social work will be an easy task.

"It is not as if nothing is being done now in high schools. We are only taking it to lower classes to do more realistic work," the official explained.

One of the reasons why this was delayed, he explained, was because it was merely part of the basic school idea, with the difference that in a basic school everything had to be brought inside the school, as it obtained at present, even though it was intended that viljagers would co-operate with every kind of activity of a basic school. "This is a thing which we have not yet been able to secure," the official remarked. Whatever kind of craft activity was provided in a basic school, everything had to be brought into the school. That was why the pace was slow.

NO PERPETUATION OF VARNASHRAMA

"The opposition to the new scheme based on the fear that its object was to perpetuate the 'Varnashrama Dharma' is born out of ignorance," the official remarked. Their idea is not that the boy, who is given training in cultivation, should stick to cultivation. He can progress like any other from the Fifth Class to First Form and then to high school and college.

The idea is that the student can have a choice as to what he wants to do, and then take to it, the official said. By this method, no attempt is made to force anybody to stick to the traditional occupations at any cost.

Either by choice or for any other reason a student will have a second kind of thing to do, and that is the idea behind the scheme. In the high school classes, there is the bifurcated course. If it is possible to link with the Secretariat course practical training in running a small retail shop, then a student can take to the retail shop for his livelihood, if he is left with no other choice. There is no ban on any one continuing his study in the college.

The official stated: "We are not by any means seeking to arrange to give this training through school to all the pupils. We can deal only with a small percentage in the schools, because we expect the majority of the pupils to be looked after by their parents who have independent occupations of their own that come under the scheme."

The scheme can be approached from the psychological problem of adolescence. In western countries it is stated boys become restive when they are about 16 and they become irresponsible as well. So long it has not happened in India. But with the increase in the number of students coming to high schools, there is that danger which should be prevented. In a kind of economy like ours, children must grow up with a sense of responsibility at each stage, and this will help to solve the discipline problem as well.

III CRITICISM BY EDUCATIONISTS

MANGALORE. May 8:

Mr. S. Natarajan, President, South Indian Teachers' Union, said today that the proposed scheme of elementary education, though based on high ideals, was impracticable, unreal and visionary.

Addressing the basic and primary education section of the fortythird Madras State Educational Conference here today, Mr. Natarajan said that at a stage of life, when regular habits had to be formed in children, the new scheme made it impossible for children to acquire these habits. He regretted that Government had rushed with the scheme without previous consultation and proper planning.

Mr. Natarajan further stated that the scheme was vague and left so many doubts to be cleared up. No proper details had been given. He said that though the scheme would bring 37 lakhs more children into schools, it would leave children idle for the greater part of the day. It was doubtful whether children would actually learn crafts from their parents. He wanted to know whether it was the duty of Government, the teacher, the school management or the parent to find apprenticeship for the child. He further stated that Government had not consulted any one about the practicability of the scheme.

Mr. M. S. Ekambara Rao, Head-master of Anandashrama High School, Ullal, presided.

Smt. Saraswathy Srinivasan, Head-mistress, Avvai Home Girls' High School, said any change in the system of education should be the work of educationists. She said basic education meant education of the body, mind and the soul through the practice of productive basic craft. All lessons in History, Geography and Arithmetic were correlated to the craft. But in the modified system of Elementary Education, a craftsman had to teach the craft and

as such could not correlate the lesson with practice.

Messrs. T. P. Srinivasa Varadhan, Secretary of the S. I. T. U., K. Kuruvilla Jacob and Rev. Thambuswami stated that the scheme was a surprise to all and needed careful study before its introduction.

Mr. Ramakrishna Shetty, Head-master of the Government Basic School, Maipady, said basic education was all that was good in the old system plus something new, and practical experience had shown that basic education had completely eradicated caste restrictions.

Mr. Kuppaswamy, Head-master, Basic School, Peelamedu, said only teachers interested in Basic Education ought to be given training.

—*The Indian Express*

IV C. R's REPLY

MADRAS, May 16

Mr. C. Rajagopalachari, Chief Minister, yesterday maintained that it was not a practical proposition to consult everyone before starting on a new reform.

Meeting indirectly the criticism offered by a section of educationists that they were not consulted prior to the introduction of the reorganised scheme of elementary education, the Chief Minister pointed out that if it was laid down as a matter of general policy that there should be all-round consultation before they were to embark on any new scheme, then they would take millennia before anything tangible could be achieved.

He said he had recently suggested the need to reduce the school hours for their children in the early elementary classes, so that the present system of torturing the child's mind with over-burdened school hours might be given up and the child be allowed to remain in the school only three hours in a day, spending the rest of the time in close communion with nature. His

main objective in making this suggestion was to see that the child's interest and aptitude for learning was not allowed to be dried up by too much of school hours.

But, what was the reaction to this suggestion? Immediately, people saw some red rag in it and began to suspect that this was meant to harm them all. But, if he had only consulted the children about this, he was certain that they would have acclaimed it as the right thing. Who were those who viewed it critically? They were only the teachers. They were apprehensive about this scheme because they seemed to fear that this proposed schooling of the children for only three hours a day might progressively get reduced still further to an hour and a half and even less, so that ultimately there might not be any schooling at all and they might stand in danger of losing their jobs. Whether he be a teacher getting a salary of only Rs. 15 a month, or Rs. 100 or even Rs. 1,000 a month, it was this same 'fear complex' that vitiated their approach to this subject.

They also complained that this scheme was framed without prior consultation with them. But, what would be the result of prior consultation with them all? Each one would give a different suggestion, and in the end, nothing tangible would have been achieved. This was their bane as a nation. "If you are anxious to do anything good, you could do it only without consulting anyone. (Prolonged cheers). You are now applauding what I say; but, when I begin to do it, people accuse me of being dictatorial. If we are to consult one and all before we embark on any new scheme, I am convinced it will take not only one yuga but even four 'yugas'."

But it was contended that this was a matter affecting the education of their children and therefore, a fit subject in which every one should be consulted before introducing any reform. But, that was not a practical proposition, he asserted. He was convinced that nothing concrete could be achieved that way. People should not entertain unnecessary fears and doubts, added the Chief Minister.

2

TIRUCHIRAPALLI, May 16

On his personal guarantee that the introduction of the new scheme of elementary education would neither lower the standards of education nor affect the level of intelligence of children, the Chief Minister, Mr. C. Rajagopalachari, put in a spirited plea here today for all-out support to the scheme.

Mr. Rajagopalachari, who was speaking at a public meeting here this evening at the "Mahe grounds" in the St. Joseph's College claimed that far from lowering the present standards of education, the new scheme would help to improve the position in the country today.

"I am convinced of this", he declared, and added in an emotional strain: "I may not live long; but the arrangement that I propose to make is primarily intended for the benefit of generations yet unborn. You are all at liberty to throw mud on my 'samadhi' later on if, contrary to my expectations, this scheme of mine fails. But I am sure it will not. Defects, if there are any noticed in its actual working, can certainly be rectified."

VI

IN PRAISE OF THE SCHEME

"The Hindustan Times" writes:—

While the basic education scheme is making steady progress in the country, the Chief Minister of Madras has introduced a revolutionary change in rural primary schools in the State which other States may well desire to copy.

Over two million children in rural primary schools in the State will spend half their day at school and the other half at home assisting their parents in their ancestral occupations or learning a new craft. The idea is that the boys, because of the long hours spent at school, should not become physically and mentally incapable of productive activity; and they should improve their general knowledge and their usefulness to the community by engaging themselves in village activities.

One of the greatest defects of the existing system of education is that it takes the son of the farmer, the village artisan or blacksmith and, instead of making him a better farmer, a better artisan and a more efficient blacksmith using modern methods and technic, turns him into an indifferent clerk or typist in the nearest town. Our social system too is so organized that even today there is a certain amount of prejudice against manual labour, while so-called intellectual work is overrated. A system of education which instils in the child the idea of the essential dignity of all labour and which keeps him in the village in order to make it a better place to live in has everything to commend it.

Basic education as conceived by Gandhiji was intended to achieve this and the value of the Madras experiment is that it will carry the fundamental conception of basic education to all village schools in the State, without waiting for the day when there will be none but basic schools everywhere. Hailing Gandhiji's concept as "one of the world's great contributions to education," the Radhakrishnan Commission has pointed out that the essence of its philosophy is that "education should combine practice in the everyday process of living and working with more formal training." A system of book education which either has very little to do with life as lived by most children in their homes and

villages or pretends to teach natural sciences in the class room, instead of in the open country around, has its limitations which are all but apparent in its products.

Side by side with the pursuit of theoretic knowledge, our students must be kept in continuous touch with life as it is in our villages and towns and the occupations in which their elders are engaged, so that the process of fitting them into life after they leave school or college may not present as many difficulties as it does today. By keeping in close association with the realities of life of our people, the new system of education should aim at steadily improving it, instead of seeking to impose on people alien but, possibly better systems from above.

Commenting on the fact that our villages have scarcely been influenced by secondary and higher education, except for the permanent withdrawal from village life of those able and young men who have left the villages for the universities and on the poverty and lack of cultural opportunity of the rural population, the University commission remarks in its report that the path of wisdom is not to deny or ignore this glaring lack, but rather "to create the types of educational opportunity which are appropriate to Indian life." The Madras experiment is a move in this direction, and as such it will be watched with interest by the country.

NOTICE

Our Report of the proceedings of the State Educational Conference, held at Mangalore at the beginning of this month, has been held up for want of space and will be published in our next issue.

Editor.

Editorial

ELSEWHERE we have given some particulars of the new scheme of primary education for rural areas, started by the Government of Madras, and some of the views for and against it. The timing of the announcement about

The New Scheme of Primary Education

the scheme was perhaps a little unfortunate. It came just on the eve of the State Educational Conference at Mangalore. Even before full details could be given and doubts elucidated, the Conference was obliged to consider the scheme. In the circumstances—and taking also into consideration the natural irritation of the teachers at having been kept in the dark about the scheme all along—it is perhaps not to be wondered at that the Conference viewed the scheme with marked disfavour. It passed a resolution to the effect that the new scheme, far from producing the effects desired by the Government, might result in harmful effects on children of the age group of six to ten, and it called upon the Government not to proceed with the new scheme.

This reaction on the part of the teachers seems to have annoyed the Chief Minister, who has the primary responsibility for sponsoring the scheme. In his replies to the criticism by the teachers he has suggested that their attitude has been determined in a large measure by the fear that their jobs or emoluments may be endangered by the new scheme. We feel that in taking this view the Chief Minister has been less than fair towards a hard-worked and desperately underpaid profession who have been the worst sufferers in the inflationary economy of the war and post-war years. The teachers are entitled to disapprove of a scheme for the sole reason that it affects their legitimate interests. In this case, their opposition has been actuated by other considerations based on educational principles and policies. And while we do not agree with the resolution passed at Mangalore, we feel that teachers have a right to be

heard and that criticism from the point of view of pedagogics should be answered from the same point of view.

The essence of the new scheme consists in reducing the working hours of primary schools to 3 per day, and in asking the children to learn the craft of their parents or some other craft during the rest of the working day. This scheme, as we see it, is an attempt at a radical solution of the problem of primary education. The most important obstacles standing in the way of the spread of primary education in India are finance and unwillingness on the part of many parents in rural areas to send their children to schools. Both these difficulties spring ultimately from the type of education till now given and envisaged.

Our educational system, as remodelled by the British administration, had for its objective the supply of administrative personnel in the lower ranks of the Government service. At best it could turn out some members of the learned professions—doctors, lawyers, engineers and teachers. The scheme of education therefore largely stressed academic values and was mainly 'bookish'. It was definitely education for the classes—and 'classes' more or less in an English sense. Thus it suffered from a divorce with the kind of life lived here in India, and the divorce was more complete with rural life than with urban.

Schemes for reorganisation of education have long sought to bring education more in accord with the life of our people. The most notable instance of this was Gandhiji's basic education scheme. Mahatmaji thought at first that he had found a solution both to the problem of finance and to that of relating education to life by his basic scheme. He expected the sale of craft-products made in the school to cover the cost of its upkeep, and craft-centred education to be closely related to rural life.

But as a matter of fact Basic Education as it developed, solved neither of the two problems. Very early in its career, the idea of making it self-sufficient in the matter of finance was given up. Craft-centred education, refined by experts, became academic in its own way. The craft had to be taught inside the school, and takes on at least a slightly academic tinge. Probably Gandhiji's prejudice in favour of spinning as a universal craft has also hindered the untrammelled development of Basic Education. What is even more important, Basic Education makes its own demands for buildings and equipment, and has not so far succeeded in integrating itself with the routine of rural life.

It is against the background of the comparative failure of the Basic Education scheme to advance elementary education in the manner expected of it, and the impracticability of organising in India an educational plan with teachers, buildings and equipment on the model of western countries, that our own staggering problem of education has to be viewed. The Sargent Report said that it was not bothered about finance. But our statesmen are bothered by it. And if no solution of the financial aspect of the problem is found, educational progress will continue to be slow. It has also to be remembered that in western countries, the growth

of education was organically related to the growth of industries and wealth.

Except the Basic Scheme, no scheme till now has tried to take note of the social and economic realities of the Indian scene. Industrialisation is just beginning to make headway in our country. And we still have lots and lots of crafts and craftsmen amongst us. Most of them pick up a traditional vocational technique, and formal education of any kind leaves them practically untouched. The great, the unique merit of Rajaji's scheme is that it carries modern education to them instead of asking them to come to it. Side by side with training in crafts, they are to be initiated into the mysteries of the three R's and all that they may lead to. Thus any disinclination on the part of rural parents for sending their children to school is overcome. Progress is not hindered, but the transition to a more modern economy is made smoother.

In the circumstances, the scheme deserves at least a fair trial. Mr. Kuruvilla Jacob, as president of the State Educational Conference, gave some marks for it at least as an emergency measure. The Conference, however, has completely disapproved of it. We hope that misunderstandings about the scheme will be cleared and that it will be tried with a due appreciation of its radical attempt to solve a difficult and almost insoluble problem.

Book Reviews

AN INTRODUCTION TO CO-OPERATIVE PRACTICE. THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE, GENEVA. PAGES 50. PRICE 50 CENTS OR 3 SHILLINGS.

This small book, which forms No. 32 in the New Series of Studies and Reports by the International Labour Office, gives information about the main problems of co-operative organisation and the different branches of the co-operative movement. It has six chapters. The first deals with the principles and methods of co-operation, and has a fine description of the meaning of

co-operation and its usefulness in many forms. In the next chapter different types of co-operative societies are dealt with—credit, marketing, consumer, thrift and industrial co-operatives: reasons for their success and failure are given. How each society should follow the principle of simplicity and have an exact definition of its aims and objectives, if it is to succeed, is explained in the third chapter. Organisational problems form the theme of the fourth chapter—the area to be served by each society, the capital required, management costs, risks run, the manner of settle-

ment with members etc. We have in the fifth chapter an account of the administrative aspect of co-operation—the rights of members of societies, general meetings, elections etc. The last chapter surveys the whole field of co-operation and concludes with an appeal to the governments of the world to make legislation for co-operative societies “only to protect the true character of the co-operative association and to assist co-operative societies to maintain this character in their own internal organisation.”

Though this book gives a great deal of information within its brief compass, yet it may be noted that it fails to take notice of some important branches of co-operation like insurance, house-building and milk union societies. The value of the book would have been considerably enhanced if it had included a line about each country's developments in co-operation. But taken as a whole, this book gives a valuable introduction to the principles of co-operation. And we have no hesitation in endorsing the claim put forward on behalf of the book by the International Labour Office that it “will be of service within its given limits to governments, non-official institutions and others requiring a basic document of an easily assimilated character for use by workers in the field and others directly engaged in the preparation and establishment of co-operative societies and the guidance of their members.”

THE 'STAR' ENGLISH READERS: GENERAL READER 1, EDITED BY S. NARASIMHAN B.A., (HONS.), L.T., PRINCIPAL, A. M. J. COLLEGE, MADRAS. VENKATRAMA & Co., ANDERSON STREET, MADRAS 1. PP. 120 PRICE AS. 14.

This first English reader (for Form I) has been prepared to meet the requirements of

the new syllabus in English for secondary schools prepared in September, 1952. Mr. Narasimhan has kept close to the syllabus and has not deviated from it, even though he does not approve fully of the scheme followed in the syllabus. He holds that the postponement of the interrogative form to the ninth week of the first year and the imperative to the second year deprives the teacher of very useful tools in class-room work. In spite of this, however, he has closely followed the syllabus, in order to avoid confusion.

This only departure that he has made from the syllabus is in adding a few words to the essential word-list. These are *anna*, *bat*, *chairman*, *class*, *class-room*, *class-leader*, *count*, *cradle*, *doll*, *drawing-pencil*, *drawing-book*, *duster*, *English*, *foot-ball*, *gardener*, *hurle*, *mango*, *reader*, *rice*, *rupee*, *stump* and *vase*. As Mr. Narasimhan points out, most of these are very common words and seem to have slipped out of the list through inadvertence. Among Mr. Narasimhan's additions 'hurle' and 'vase' may be slightly difficult.

The lessons are so planned that the sentence patterns and structures taught in one week are illustrated in the reading lesson for the next. All the lessons are built round situations familiar to the pupils: and plenty of exercises have been provided in respect of the language feature of each lesson.

Some simple poems have been included in the reader. Among them W. H. Davies's 'School's Out' also finds a place.

The get-up is good and the illustrations are attractive.

We commend this reader to the attention of teachers.

THERE IS NO OTHER BOOK
of its class that is quite so
good, either in plan or execution.

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