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THE LANGUAGE ISSUE

By

A. S. VENKATARAMAN, B.A., L.T., Madras.

This question is now agitating the minds of a good number of people, and if I enter the arena, I may not be in a position to canvass support, but I shall be content with the role of a dispassionate thinker, not taking sides and willing to oppose none.

In the first place, let me at once state that in the matter of an official language at the Centre, we need not set store by any axiom that there shall be only one language; for in a country like Switzerland, Canada or South Africa, there are more languages than one and no interests have been adversely affected. These parallels suggest a solution or stand out as examples for us to follow. Let us therefore take it that it has been established that republics can forge ahead even with two or more languages at the central administrative level.

If we look back on or over the recent past we can at once perceive that we achieved unity by fighting the English though peacefully. And what were the weapons we used? The very ideas that we imbibed from a study of their literature and their history prompted us to think on similar lines. We learnt not only their language, but also their ideas of freedom, life and progress in their own country. In this struggle for freedom, let us not ignore the part of English-educated Indian patriots, of whom Pandit Jawaharlal is an

outstanding example. We won our freedom because it could not be denied by those freedom-loving English who had the best interests of England at heart.

It is argued in some quarters that an Indian speaking English in a country other than England may be looked down upon or feel stultified, but there is the advantage of his being an up-to-date person. For that matter he should speak the language of that country which he visits. If he cannot, he must at least speak a language which is recognised as a major international language or one which contains the latest literature on scientific and modern technology.

If we examine the problem deeply, the question at issue is not exactly the need for a language at the Centre. Rather, we have to seek a language which is common to the intelligentsia all over the country and which would enable an Indian to travel through most countries without difficulty, whether he is a student of technology or medicine or arts or commerce, a trader, merchant or politician. Which is that language which will answer all these purposes?

If it happens to be the language of your erstwhile rulers, are you going to shun or discard it? Which son of a father would relinquish his rights to his father's property simply because he and his father were not on speaking terms

when the father was alive? It may be you hated the English rule, but you never hated English, the language or literature or the people. The position of vantage that we have gained should not be lost.

One solution we can think of is to suggest that it is not a question of script. It is the Roman script common to 51 languages of the world. Even the Chinese are going to adopt the same script. In fact, we can learn four or five languages, provided we have a common script. If this is conceded, much of the difficulty may be got over.

Certain questions loom large when they are viewed through the political angle or against a political background. They are distorted beyond recognition. We must also concede that there are certain questions which need not take a political hue or complexion. What is really wanted is an examination, a dispassionate examination of the real issue. The language issue deserves to be viewed on non-party lines. Just as no Government has stipulated that all people shall adopt the same dress or eat the same food, so also no Government can order the same language to be used at any level, at least at higher levels. The tendency to operate the party machine to the selfish advantage of the party needs to be discouraged and deprecated. The tyranny of the party majority should not be carried to absurd or extreme lengths.

We have now reached a stage when certain questions cannot be decided by men alone. For that matter, women are better educated than before. I am aware that in the recent part in Tirunelveli in a particular family of a so called backward community, which has four daughters, all the four took the M.B.B.S. course and became doctors. All of them in their college careers had fee concessions as members of a particular community. But they had a brother, their only brother, who was a dud. He was given ample opportunities to repeat his S. S. L. C., but he did not pass. Are the girls for this reason to be denied chances of marriage in higher circles or castes, simply because

others of their caste are not so forward or that their brother is a dunce? Now, there are a good number of these women who want the English language and they want to go to other countries for travel and better educational facilities. For that matter, the Stella Mary's College girls chose to fly to distant countries the other day. An educated but sensible girl in a family is better able to shed a wholesome influence not only over the family, but also over society and in the country.

If today the Unión Legislature passed a law that 60 or 70% of the I. A. S. should be drawn from the ranks of women, the women would surely rise to the occasion. But what do they want? They want the English language and medium to continue in Colleges and Universities as well.

Sometimes the real point is lost sight of in any controversy. Let us examine the question as a live issue. Till recently in our schools we have had enough of black-board education. Even test-tubes could not be shown or produced in the class-room. Only sketches were drawn on the black-board. It is only now, after so many years of English education, we are on the way to turn out scholars who can stand comparison with other scholars in any part of the world. And they in their colleges, laboratories, and Universities have drawn on their knowledge of English to study up to date books and face the Western scholars. They have drunk deep of the springs of modern scientific knowledge and the running stream of modern life and culture, all because of their English. And if this English is going to be given up, they should give up their position of vantage, unlearn what they have learnt, spend their time on learning a new language which could better be utilised for making a further study of English books. Not only that, they will cease to pursue their efforts with zeal and zest, and their youngsters and children will in their turn lose the advantage they relied on in order to reckon with what may become a giant later but is only an

infant at present. It will be surprising for us to be told that an aeroplane could not be set right in time, because the men in charge of it had not mastered the *know-how*, and they could not ring up on the phone the exact word for the missing part with the result that the particular spare part could not be had in time.

This Hindi business may be all right in a new place where Indians may go to settle and where any language may be as good as any other language when they begin from the scratch. It will not do in a country where cultural life of a particular standard has come to stay.

So we are at the parting of the ways, whether with the existing advantages you are going to take the next step of progress or whether you are going to turn your back on progress. It will be increasingly difficult for us to force new ideas into any of our Indian languages which are only deficiency languages. Our culture has always been known for its remarkable adaptability to new environments. A correct reading of history tells us that with every foreigner who came into our land, India has responded to the beneficial impulses, assimilating only the good in foreign contacts, but all the while retaining her old strength and vitality. If to-day there is the question of making Hindi the common language of all India, it is due to

the influence of some bad repercussions of Western contact, particularly the spirit of jingoism which we fought against and wish very much to avoid. Why court further troubles and suffer again? United opposition against alien rule has welded us into a nation, and let us not divide it again, all for the sake of one language.

Any one of our fourteen languages exalted to a position of inflated supremacy is sure to be viewed with suspicion and distrust by others, because we are used to ideas of equal property (perhaps the same poverty also sometimes leading to fragmentation of holdings), but not to the law of primogeniture. We are getting used to ideas of equal rights and equal opportunity and in this process of adjustment, why should we allow a disturbing element to come in and interfere with the course of progress?

In short, let us re-orientate our thinking so as to treat the language issue, not as a political party affair but as a non-party affair. I wish to suggest that a snap vote be taken in legislatures on the issue, i.e., whether to treat it on party lines or as one of a non-party complexion. It is also open to people of enlightenment in different centres to convene meetings and discuss this matter in order to press for a snap vote.

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Agents for South India :—

THE CHRISTIAN LITERATURE SOCIETY, PARK TOWN, MADRAS-3

The Imperative Need for Religious Education

By

Mrs. JANAK SAT PARKASH, New Delhi.

What is education? Is it a mere process of crowning one's parrot-like efforts with the university degrees, beating the records, and holding scholarships through the rote memorization of books or something better, real and divine?

The modern way of education based upon Western materialistic philosophy is totally contrary to the ancient Indian educational system with a metaphysical orientation.

True education is that which makes a man complete, real human being; and enables him to enjoy an accomplished, virtuous, contented, cheerful, happy and above all peaceful life under *all* circumstances. The external world cannot play upon the mind of the really educated who possess the real sense of discrimination; or else, where lies the beauty of education and the distinction between an educated and uneducated person? Such an educated person being capable of discriminating between real and unreal, understands the true philosophy of happiness, and therefore even while living in the world of opposites remains indifferent to them—like the lotus in the water—and enjoys eternal peace.

No doubt the present system of education and training at home enables a person to earn money (even makes him too-much money minded), for that is the only means to meet his unlimited desires, which are a direct source of misery, but they in no way help a person to develop ethically, morally, and spiritually, which should be the *aim* of every earnest man and woman and is the only channel through which happiness and peace can be achieved.

It is really a pity that the youth of today, especially the so-called modern educated, of both sexes feel pride in sporting

tit-bits of information and consider it a matter of shame even to talk metaphysical philosophy. What a blasphemy and an inferiority complex? These false notions have ruined people, and yet there is no end to them.

Never can such a literally educated one, who has become a real slave of his mind and senses (due to the lack of ethical, moral and spiritual education), attain virtue and wisdom. His soul is in his unlimited desires and cravings. His ambition is to raise his standard of living to American levels, but as regards the standard of his moral life, it is quite bottomless.

Instead of development which is the duty of every earnest man and woman, he chooses pleasure as the principal aim of his life, and due to his shallow knowledge regarding happiness (*ananda*) takes pleasure (*sukha*) as its substitute. Pleasure may be mistaken for happiness, as poisonous toadstools are sometimes eaten instead of delicious and nutritious mushrooms. Pleasure is finite which comes through senses, whereas happiness, being the real nature of the self, is infinite. He may have much fun and frolic, but he remains a dwarf in mind and soul. And whose lot is sadder than a dwarf's, for each living being must be measured by the highest possible ethical, moral, and spiritual development, and that is why people pity a dwarf, though his food and clothes cost him less than if his body was fully developed, he (such a literally educated materialist) hates serious exertion, mental or physical, and tries to live for the moment, catching the froth and foam on the surface of life; for he is too lazy and indifferent to dive deep in search of the jewel (metaphysical perfection, the hidden treasure). He wishes also to experience as many pleasant sensations and thrills as he can manage to get. Time is

for him something to be "killed" as painlessly as possible, whereas for the truly educated time is life. He believes that he enjoys himself immensely while he is making fool of himself. He may be compared to the children who play with paltry toys and coloured pebbles. But an adult with an infantile mind is a pitiable sight indeed. For all this I would blame the guardians, and above all the present system of education in schools and colleges. It is due to the lack of ethical, moral, and spiritual training which is real education.

The present system of training and education is not only objectionable, unsuitable and a direct cause of the all-round downfall of the new generation which is the hope of India; but a hinderance to the real growth and development of the self and the nation. If it continues for any length of time, then the blessed land of India, the sacred living place of ancient saints and sages, would be converted into a horrible jungle full of two-legged animals. For, a man without religion is a beast. And then, the sacred dreams of establishing divine 'Ram-Rajya' would have to rest absorbed in deep slumbers of impossibility in the cosy laps of the Goddess Sleep for a pretty long time.

To establish 'Ram Rajya', parents will have to become *dharmavira* parents like Dashrath and Kausalya and the modern teachers the real preceptors like Vashista. The only ambition of the so-called modern literally educated parents is that their children should beat the records of the university. (May be, by parrot-like efforts or through the rote memorization of the books). For it brings a little glory to them also. Again, that their son should either become an I.A.S. or a big businessman, may be by hook or by crook, maintaining a high standard of living. Not only this much, but that their daughter should get married to a multimillionaire: may be, he is a dwarf in mind and soul.

But how many are there, who wish that their children should have the full and

deep knowledge of their religion and real literature, which is the paramount necessity, the first and the last duty of a man? How many are there whose ambition is that their children should follow the sacred path of life shown by Rama and Sita? How many are there who wish that their house, nay, the very air, should be purified morning and evening by offering *arati* and reciting the inspiring, holy, stanzas of the "Patit Pawni Geeta"?

Before having the privilege of 'Ram Rajya', we shall have to labour hard physically and mentally. Who can make it? Is it our beloved Panditji or revered Rastrapati. Not the Government. If the public expects so, then it is not only a great misunderstanding, but a mere ignorance. It is we, the people, ourselves who shall have to establish divine 'Ram Rajya', by developing metaphysically *individually*, by being true to ourselves, and treading the divine path shown in the Song Celestial, (the Geeta) understanding the true theory of Karma Yoga. Each one of us, young or old, will have to jump in the ocean of 'Purushartha' with high will power and great self-confidence and dive deep with enthusiastic zeal in the search of the hidden real pearl; "Truth" (Metaphysical perfection). It is then and then only that we can dream of the restoration of the divine 'Ram Rajya'.

Revered Bapu, the father of the nation, no doubt apparently was a politician, but in reality he was a great saint. His policy was ever based upon truth which is the substance of all morality, ethics, and spirituality. His contribution was greatest in the realm of the social, and moral regenerations of India, the basis of 'Ram Rajya'. None knew better than him how hard was the way to non-violence and truth, and yet he believed that it was the way of salvation for mankind. He felt that it was possible for India to adopt it by reason of her past tradition and rich spiritual heritage, and he hoped that if she could rise to the heights which he expected of her, she might be able to give lead to the world. And I daresay, he was

cent per cent right to expect this ideal lead from India, due to its ancient moral record, and am sure even now if we, Indians, who have become so much *materialistic*, use our heads, think of our real ancient character and resolve once for all with burning desire, strong will-power, and high self-confidence, backed with true auto-suggestion to get rid of this materialistic philosophy, which is the sole cause of this moral downfall of India and embrace the metaphysical philosophy with open arms, then certainly 'Ram Rajiya' can be established.

Until and unless enough importance is given to and light thrown on the metaphysical training and education of the children and youth of to-day, no real success, not only in nation—building activity, but in any sphere of life, is possible, for religion is the innermost core of education.

"The child is the father of man", the leader of to-morrow, the hope of the nation, the solace and source of pride, pleasure, peace, and honour to his parents and dear and near ones. The child and the youth both react to the environment and surroundings even more powerfully than the adults. Not infrequently their whole life is made or marred by their early education, training and environment. The arena of life into which the individual first tumbles in his childhood and then steps into youth (the most delicate and important part of life) is the most important, and the best time in which to put these high standards and values of life as strong and positive footholds in front of the child and the youth, on which they can tread the path to turn up a real human being with divine qualities.

Taking this psychological science of the mind and the urgent need of nation-building, I very cordially wish to attract the attention of the Government of India, the Ministries of Education, the Vice-Chancellors, the Principals and Headmasters of

the colleges and schools (of both the sexes) and of the parents to consider deeply this most important but often neglected aspect of the metaphysical (spiritual) training which is the real education by reciting and explaining the real deep-rooted philosophy of some stanzas of "the Song Celestial." (*The Geeta*) every day which is the essence of *Vedas* and *Upanishads*, the oldest literature.

The education, the students get from their schools and colleges which only enables them to earn their livelihood is really a mere husk as compared with the real metaphysical education. By saying so I do not mean that the literal education should be neglected in any way, for it is an asset through which real knowledge can be achieved, but it comes next.

I have given preference to this scripture, not because I am a Hindu or a devotee of the *Geeta*, but its very divine worth compels me to do so. For it does not refer to any special sect and throws great light on the metaphysical principles, which is the only way to achieve self-realization, the culmination of all the religions. Herein the Lord has explained the sacred word "Dharma" in a very simple and practicable way. It belongs to no sect or nation as such, as Gandhiji said. "When doubts haunt me" he said, about thirty years ago "when disappointments stare me in the face and I see not one ray of light in the horizon, I turn to the *Bhagwad Geeta* and find a verse to comfort me." (*Young India*, Aug. 6, 1925).

Education is ever divine, but people misunderstand it. For it is not the amount of information that is put in the brain and runs riot there, undigested, all the life. It means a life-promoting, character-building assimilation of high ideas. The assimilation of even five divine ideas, higher values of life in the life and character, makes one much more educated than one who has got by heart the whole library and achieved the best degrees of Oxford.

ADULT EDUCATION IN MODERN TURKEY

Tribute is paid to the active part played by the British Council in Turkey in a report published by UNESCO (*Adult Education in Turkey*, by Turhan Oguzkan, price 2/-)

Turks are curious about other cultures, says the author. Even local newspapers are full of international news, and there is a widespread demand for learning foreign languages. The British Council is one of the important bodies contributing to better international understanding in Turkey. The Council organises English language classes in a number of centres and provides summer schools in England for Turkish teachers. Four English lessons arranged by the Council are broadcast every week by Radio Ankara. There has been a series of tours by distinguished British lecturers, including Sir Richard Livingstone, Sir Herbert Read and Sir Stephen King-Hall. In 1953-54, nearly 15,000 books were borrowed from the Council's libraries.

Since Turkey became a Republic, Turkish society has undergone some of the most drastic changes that the modern world has witnessed. Turkey's experience, says the preface, contains many lessons for all who are interested in the problems of education in relation to social change. The foreign reader has had little access to information describing the experiments and achievements of the adult education movement, and the present study has been prepared at the request of UNESCO.

Illiteracy is one of Turkey's greatest problems. Three out of every five people aged seven or over are illiterate. Until recently, schooling was considered unnecessary for women and today more than 90 per cent of women over forty are illiterate. There has been a rapid increase in the number of schools and pupils, but the school represents a new culture which

contrasts in many respects with the home and community background and outlook. One solution to this problem may well be an effective programme of adult education.

In 1928, Turkey adopted a new alphabet to replace the Arabic script. Everyone between the ages of 16 and 45 was required to attend a "national school", until he obtained a certificate that he could read and write the new letters. More than half a million certificates were awarded in the first year of the campaign, and after a period of decline the national schools are again becoming a large-scale movement to fight illiteracy.

Another major problem is the improvement of public health. Tuberculosis alone is estimated to account for 40 to 50 thousand deaths each year, and in 1950 there were approximately nine million people living in recognised malarial areas. So health lessons are often an important part of adult education activities.

After a general survey of the country from the geographical, political, social and economic points of view, the author gives an account of the various adult education measures adopted by Turkish Ministries and other organisations. There are a number of different types of vocational, commercial and home-making courses. Owing to difficulties of communication, many are "travelling courses", and it is not unusual for a single agricultural institution to hold as many as 36 courses all over the country in a single year. This type of travelling village course lasts 8 weeks and attendance is compulsory for every male villager over the age of 13. Much practical instruction is given in building carpentry and farricry. There are also a growing number of village courses for women, teaching sewing, home management and child care. Some ten thousand women attended these courses in

1951-52. In the towns there are vocational and commercial evening schools for both men and women, and an experimental workers' school in an industrial area has had highly encouraging results. More of the latter are expected to start in the near future—as a contribution to industrial and commercial development as well as to the general standard of living in the district.

The Educational Film Centre, founded in 1951 with the help of Unesco, produces new films, slides and film—strips every year. It is estimated that nearly two million people a year attend film shows organised by the 200 local branches of the Centre, some of which are equipped with

mobile units. Villagers are particularly fond of these film shows and sometimes the effects are immediate. For example, people in a Village in the southern part of Turkey were in the habit of drinking water from a nearby river; after seeing a picture called "Clean Water", they started boiling the river water before drinking it.

The Report concludes with a review of the outstanding needs of the adult education movement in Turkey. Chief among these, it is suggested, are the establishment of a nation-wide organisation for adult education under the Ministry of Education, and the creation of facilities for the training of teachers.

The Place of English in Our Education

By

M. S. V. Chari, Tindivanam

It is extremely unfortunate, from the point of education, that this question has ceased to be educational and has become the subject of acute political controversy.

The educational policy of the Centre, broadly speaking, aims at giving English sufficient importance in the curriculum of studies. While the States seem also to assent to this scheme of things, in actual practice, they are only sabotaging it. At least, as far as the Madras State is concerned, this conclusion seems inevitable.

The Centre wants to give the pride of place to Hindi, as the National Language, while the States want to introduce the Regional Language as the State Language. The non-Hindi States, specially Bengal and Madras, however, are fighting shy of Hindi as National Language. As far as the Madras State is concerned, it has introduced Tamil as the Regional Language and in a memorandum issued by it instructs its officers to use English, as sparingly as possible, the obvious aim being to

exercise English from internal official correspondence within a *minimum* period of time.

At the same time, it has proposed a compromise formula, that both English and Hindi may be used as the National Language, until such time till Hindi could completely replace English as the National Language. But this is not all. With all its apparent desire not to come into conflict with the Centre in making Hindi the National Language, it has not been able to agree, unlike as in the case of English, to make Hindi even a compulsory subject of study or as an examination-subject. The position taken up by the Madras State in regard to the language policy is extremely puzzling. On the one hand, it wants to drive away English from the Government Departments once and for all; and on the other, it is not agreeable to making Hindi as a compulsory subject of study in Secondary Schools. It seems to be satisfied, if its subjects become acquainted with Hindi in a way which

would neither enable them to read, write or speak in that language with any degree of intelligibility, nor to speak of proficiency. This will turn the future subjects of the Madras State into frogs in a well.

What would be the probable effect of such a policy on the future citizens of Madras? It is idle to expect the teacher charged with the teaching of English to have any enthusiasm in teaching it, which may rightly be regarded as an educational luxury, under these circumstances. Of course, evaluation of English answer-papers will be liberal enough to enable a certain decent percentage of students to be declared eligible, even as now. The question for whose benefit the pupils of Madras State are to take to the study of English, if the State will have nothing to do with it, becomes very pertinent. Very few will have anything to do with the other States, who will certainly have their own Regional Language as their State Language or with the Centre, whose National Language is going to be Hindi.'

The study of English would then be only for the individual's own benefit, i.e., to enable him to pursue higher studies. The study of English would thus be conducted in a very unreal and chilling atmosphere. I wish the Madras State had made both English and Tamil as the State Language as a fillip to the future citizens of Madras, to have some enthusiasm for learning English apart from its being a compulsory subject. The fate of English is sealed, declared Mr. Kamaraj. I am inclined to agree with him. I would only add that the fate of Hindi would be no better in Madras State. With the North Indians clamouring to make Hindi as the National Language, and the States in general tending to be parochial and growing fanatical about their own Regional Languages, the fate of English is indeed sealed. Rajaji described this hatred against English as hatred against education itself.

We can only pray to God that He will endow our rulers with some sanity of thought, if not vision, in this matter.

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HOW MUCH HINDI?

By

Professor M. Y. BHIDE, B.Sc., M.Ed.
St. Xavier's Institute of Education, Bombay.

Of late, there has been raging a great controversy over the language issue. Much heat has evolved, but little light. In spite of assurances that making Hindi the official language will in no way come in the way of the progress of the regional languages right from the President to some minor fry both in the Government and in the Congress, the fears from the minds of the non-Hindi speaking people from the south, from states like Bengal, and to a certain extent from the people of Maharashtra are not dispelled. A staunch supporter of Hindi in the pre-independence era like the elder statesman Rajaji has changed his side in this controversy and the recent Gauhati Session of the Congress had to take cognisance of the growing opposition to the early introduction of Hindi as the language of the State and to temper its resolution so as to appease the strong opposition to the above measure, i.e., introducing Hindi as the State-language from 1965. From the academic side the question has taken the form: what should be the medium of instruction at the University stage? Below is an attempt to throw some light on this problem from a rational point of view.

It will be worth our while to see the arguments of the protagonists of Hindi and to examine them with a view to find how far they are justified and how far not. In a multilingual federal state like ours, no sane person will deny that there should be one language of communication which all the people in the country will understand and speak. But while accepting this, we shall also have to consider the fears and doubts, the feelings and emotions in the minds of the non-Hindi speaking majority in the country and to see how far their fears are genuine and how far they are exaggerated. It is only after a careful examination of both the points of

view that we can aspire to arrive at some rational approach to the problem.

Before the new organization of the States, I had an opportunity to visit the old States of Madhya Bharat and Madhya Pradesh. Both these states were bilingual, Marathi and Hindi being the official State languages. In each State, however, the Marathi-speaking people formed a minority. In the minds of these minorities—I refer to the vocal section among them—there was a kind of bitterness over the language question. While almost every Marathi speaking person, understood and could speak Hindi at least tolerably well, the same could not be said of the Hindi-speaking people. The proportion of Marathi-knowing, Hindi-speaking people was insignificant. This apathy towards Marathi was not peculiar only to the non-governmental staff, but it was equally shared by the Government servants. Almost every Marathi-speaking Government servant knew Hindi, while very few Hindi-speaking Government servants, even though they were actually working in the Marathi regions of the State, bothered to learn Marathi. The reason was not far to seek. They had a complacency and a kind of superiority complex in their minds. Their language was not only the language of the majority and most widely known in the whole country, but to crown all it was also the national language. They conveniently forgot that the constitution recognised all the major languages of the country as national languages and that Hindi was going to be (however, it had not yet become) the 'official language'. No wonder that such an attitude created some resentment in the minds of the minority. It must be admitted that officially the status of both these languages was the same. But it used to remain on paper only.

To the best of my knowledge the Marathi^o speaking people still form quite a sizable group in the present Madhya Pradesh their language will never get any importance since the official language now is Hindi.

However, the Marathi-speaking people are not so sensitive to this problem as those in Madras, and hence we do not find that great protest against Hindi in Maharashtra. But there is no doubt that the seed of discontent is sown, and it is the Hindi-speaking people who have to thank themselves for it. Unless great care is taken, the seed will germinate and grow into a tree yielding unpalatable fruit. The steps taken by the U. P. Government in making one of the major languages other than Hindi a compulsory school-subject is a step in the right direction. This step and similar such steps must be vigorously pursued to dispel the doubts in the minds of the non-Hindi-speaking people. The sooner the Hindi speaking people discard their fond idea that Hindi is *the* National language from their minds and fully understand and realize that it is but a National language, the better it is for the future of Hindi. The distinction between the National language and the Official Language must be clearly understood.

I had several occasions to discuss this problem with several friends of mine from North India. The burden of what they say is that the non-Hindi speaking people need not at all worry that Hindi will come in the way of the progress of the regional languages and that if the Hindi-speaking people do not learn regional languages it is they who will be doing the greatest disservice to the cause of Hindi. I may add here that such conversations have always taken place in Hindi and not in Marathi or Gujarathi, as these friends of mine, inspite of their stay in Bombay of over 10 years, are still unable to converse in intelligible Marathi or Gujarati. In sharp contrast to this, in the Bombay State, we can find large numbers of Marathi or Gujarati-speaking people who have mastered Hindi as if it were their mother-tongue,

and still large numbers who understand Hindi tolerably well and can express themselves in it inspite of the fact that they had never been to U. P. or Bihar. The arguments by friends from North India, like those mentioned above are far from convincing. If they want to dispel doubts and suspicions in the minds of the non-Hindi speaking people as regards the bonafides of their views, they must act, learn the regional languages, identify themselves with the people of the region where they are staying, stop living in an ivory tower of Hindi and stop merely expressing platitudes. Please let this not be construed as expressed with heat, but rather with a warmth of feeling.

Now let us consider the argument based on national unity. It is stated that for the purpose of national unity, we must have one language from Kashmir to Kanyakumari and from the Arabian Sea to the Bay of Bengal, which will be understood by all. This is all very well, if it stops at that. But if it aims at making all the people in this great land of ours Hindi-speaking, as some suspect, rightly or wrongly it will invite a very strong opposition. The recent "Save Hindi" campaign in the Punjab has set people a-thinking and contributed not a little to the growing distrust in the South.

It must be well understood that Unity does not mean Uniformity. Even in Diversity there can be Unity, and it is this Unity in Diversity that enriches human culture and relationships. If Unity is wrongly interpreted as Uniformity it stinks; it leads to dictatorship; and we have been crying from house-tops that the days of dictatorship are over.

So far, English has come in the way of progress of Indian Languages. Under the British regime, English enjoyed a privileged position, and due to its dominant position, Indian languages were unable to make progress. To begin with, English was the medium of instruction even at the school stage. Now at the school level, it has been largely replaced by regional languages.

But it still continues to hold sway in the field of University education. As a result, the regional languages remained and continue to remain undeveloped. Now, after Independence, if English were to be replaced by Hindi, the other national languages of India will fare no better. A question may well be asked whether Hindi has sufficiently developed so that it can replace English. If it has, many regional languages like Marathi, Bengali or Tamil can put forth the same claim, since they are as well developed, if not more, as Hindi. Bitterness will grow, when people find that their languages are denied the opportunity to grow and progress even after Independence. There is already some talk of "Hindi Imperialism". If such a state of affairs remains long, it will vitiate the atmosphere and will surely lead to disintegration. In other words, giving Hindi predominance under the fair name of unity will itself lead to disunity. Such signs are already becoming visible on the horizon. It is exactly to preserve unity that Hindi must not be imposed on people against their desire.

In recent times, there has been considerable discussion over the medium of instruction at the University stage. At the seminar organized by my college on the Educational Problems in Bombay State, held on the first and second of March this year, Smt. Yamunabai Hirlekar, a leading educationist of this city, spoke powerfully on this subject. She stated in distinct terms that in no other country in the world she had visited, there existed the anomaly of a language other than the mother-tongue of the students being the medium of instruction. She decidedly aimed at the talk in certain quarters of making Hindi the medium of University Education. She staunchly and rightly championed the cause of the mother-tongue which for majority of students in every State is the regional language, being the medium of instruction at the University. Here we might digress a bit. But for the strange concept of the Nehru-brand, all the States would have been formed on the

linguistic principle. But, due to the whims of certain political leaders and due to the obstructionist and self centered policy of vested interests, a bilingual State has been thrust on an unwilling people in this part of the country. This decision, though mainly political and economic, must be considered here, as it has educational implications.

The problem in such a State is what should be the language of the administration? Again, under the name of unity, some people claim that since Bombay is a bilingual state, the language should be Hindi. But more considerate people say that in the Marathi-speaking areas, it should be Marathi and in the Gujarati-speaking areas, it should be Gujarati. Quite right. (But then one may equally well ask; why not split up the State into two Linguistic States? Here politics weighs more than the will of the people). But a careful consideration will show that it is not quite so all right. Many Government servants (and in modern States with nationalization in the air, their number is fast growing) are required to serve in a region whose language is different. So Government servants are required to know both the regional languages, and gazetted officers are required even to appear for tests in the other regional language which is not their mother-tongue. Of course, they must know English, and if they do not know Hindi, their promotions will be stopped. In addition, there arises the question of the education of their children. It will thus become clear how complicated the problem is. It has many facets, and it is a vast problem. But for want of space, it cannot be discussed at length here. Suffice it to say that this undemocratic dictation has done considerable harm to the cause of education by increasing the burden of studies on the pupils. They must learn their mother tongue, the other regional language, English, Hindi and in addition, some are forced to study either an ancient Indian language like Sanskrit or a modern Asian or European language.

The other subjects are of course there. This is all cruelty to the young children.

After this digression, we shall come back to the problem of the medium of instruction at the college level. Let us examine the important arguments put forth in favour of Hindi.

We have already examined the argument of unity and have shown how mischievous it is. It is mischievous, because many ardent enthusiasts of Hindi go to the extent of dubbing and one who dares to express an opinion different from theirs as exhibiting linguism, parochialism, regionalism and similar abusive terms now become very popular, thanks to our esteemed Prime-Minister. Only when a person votes 100 percent in favour of Hindi, he is a patriot, otherwise he is a traitor, a disruptionist. The beauty of the whole thing is that these Hindi enthusiasts, more often than not, send their own children to Convent Schools. Let them be at least honest, more rational and say boldly that English, which has been the medium of instruction so long, continue to be so indefinitely. After all, English is a beautiful and powerful language, and we are accustomed to have our University education through it. Why then remove it and upset the existing order?

But then, this is so unpatriotic; How can we keep the language of the British who had kept us in bondage under their iron heel for 150 years? A dramatic appeal is, therefore, made to the people, their emotions aroused and wrongly exploited. To a rational thinker who refuses to be swayed unduly by emotions, it will appear that there is hardly any sense or propriety in replacing English by Hindi.

Furthermore, people are deceived into believing that Hindi is the mother-tongue of over 15 crores of people in Northern and Central India. Nothing can be farther from the truth Hindi is the mother-tongue only in the metropolitan area of Delhi and the educated elite in U. P., M. P., Bihar, Rajasthan and the Punjab (some

districts). These people form an insignificant proportion of the vast mass of people who live in these States. In U. P. Urdu, Avadhi and Braj are the languages spoken. The Malwi of Madhya Pradesh is different from Hindi. In Bihar, there are Bhojapuri and the Maithili. In Rajasthan, there are the Poori Rajasthani and the Paschimi Rajasthani. The latter is so close to Gujarati that the Gujaratis claim Meera to be a Gujarati poetess. It should be noted that these are not dialects of Hindi, but independent languages with rich literary traditions. To give a few illustrations, in addition to Meera, mentioned already, Vidyapati wrote in Maithili, Tulsi in Avadhi, and Surdas in Braja. In fact, Paschimi Rajasthani is as different from Maithili or Bhojuri as Marathi is from Gujarati if not more. Any dispassionate student of Hindi will accept this. A Hindi-speaking professional colleague of mine, himself a professor of Hindi in a local Bombay college, admits that even people of Northern India are required to learn Hindi. If this is so, it is really generosity on the part of the people to the South of Vindhya to have accepted Hindi, and it is when this generosity is being abused that they have risen in protest. The solution, therefore, appears to be that English should be taught for 5 to 7 years at the secondary school stage and English should remain at the University stage as the medium of introduction.

But human emotions are a powerful force and are not to be ignored. So let us accept that English cannot become the medium of instruction at the collegiate level and carry the discussion further.

It is a universally accepted principle that every child should be taught through his mother-tongue. This principle is followed in our country only up to the school stage. If the entire school education is carried through the mother-tongue, is it not unnatural to change over abruptly to Hindi at the doors of the college? Protagonists of Hindi fail to see this. They fail to appreciate that Hindi is as much a foreign language to the people,

particularly in the South, as English, as Rajaji has so forcefully pointed out while presiding over the All India Languages Conference at Calcutta. (The conference is still going on, while this article is being written). After all, if Hindi is to become a compulsory subject at the Secondary school stage (and I think that no sane person will oppose this), what harm is there for the child's mother-tongue continuing to be his medium of instruction at the University stage ?

Champions of Hindi say that, if regional languages are made the media of instruction at the University level, there cannot be any inter-university exchange of professors. The argument is extremely hollow for a number of reasons. The Universities of Europe do not all have the same medium of instruction. Yet there has not been experienced any great difficulty on this account. If Professor P wants to leave University U1 and join University U2, let him gain proficiency in the language used at University U2. But a more basic question can also be asked: Why should Professor P want to migrate to University U2? For his own betterment? Then he is a career-hunter, and we need not have any soft corner for such career-hunters. The cause of education is more likely to suffer than benefit at the hands of such persons. Besides, how many professors want to go from University to University? Their number must be insignificantly small. So what justice is there to thrust a language other than their mother-tongue on students for the sake of these few fortune-seekers ?

Another powerful (!) argument is sometimes put forward. Suppose in the University U Professor A is an outstanding authority in his or her subject. Will it not be in the interest of students from other Universities that their Universities should arrange for a series of lectures by Professor A? But, if the media of instruction in different Universities are different, how can Professor A lecture as a visiting Professor in other Universities? Can there be a greater fallacious statement

than this? Our basic presumptions are: Every student will have studied Hindi for about seven years before joining the college. In his college also, he studies Hindi as a compulsory subject. The Professor of tomorrow will also have studied Hindi for an equal number of years. The technical terms are to be the same all the country over. A person aspiring to be a professor is expected to be a foot taller intellectually than the average student. When we take into account this back ground, the fallacy of the above argument clearly stands out.

If we, college professors, have not found it difficult to carry our work successfully in a foreign language, why should our successors find it difficult to express themselves in Hindi while visiting other Universities? They too would have studied Hindi for about 10 to 12 years. I am particularly referring to professors of mathematics and science in the Universities of Bombay State. At the time when my generation was in college, English was not taught to those who took the science course. Yet, in spite of such "meagre" training in the English language, the professors have not found great difficulty in expressing themselves fluently in English. Let it be borne in mind that we are talking of professors and not of persons of average intelligence. The English language differs from Indian regional languages much more than does Hindi. Even the languages of South India are a little closer to Hindi than is English (since the southern languages have also adopted quite a large number of Sanskrit words). Thus, if a person who is a professor and who has studied Hindi as a subject for 10 to 12 years, is unable to express himself through Hindi before students of other Universities, well might we ask: does he deserve to be a professor ?

In my frank opinion, Hindi cannot replace English at the University stage, and if at all any replacement is to be made, it must be made by the regional languages. Under such circumstances, the media of instruction at the regional Universities should be the respective regional languages,

Hindi being taught as a compulsory subject, while the three old Universities of Bombay, Calcutta and Madras may be allowed to retain English as the medium of instruction. The admission to these Universities should be restricted on the basis of selection. Otherwise, students will flock to these Universities. We cannot do away with English, as it is an international language, and we want persons to work in international fields. These older Universities can well serve the purpose of a training ground for personnel or cadre for foreign services. Needless to say, these Universities should also teach the other major languages of the world—Spanish, French, German, Arabic, Chinese and Russian.

I think we should be satisfied with teaching our children Hindi enough for the purposes of conversation with others. We should not expect them to speak high-flown Hindi. Hindi should become a compulsory subject both at the secondary school stage and the University stage, as is the case in the Universities in Bombay State. Of course, those who want to be pundits in the language, can always choose it as a special subject. In the end, I may draw the reader's attention to the small delightful book *Bharat ki bhashaem aur bhasha Sambandhi Samasyayem* by Dr. Sunitikumar Chattetji and close.

OUR EDUCATIONAL DIARY

By

'PEPYS'

7—1—58. Speaking in Poona, Mr. C. D. Deshmukh put in a vigorous plea for bringing about a balanced and coordinated development in linguistic studies in Indian Universities. In the present context of the regional languages being made the media of instruction, the study of the science of linguistics would be invaluable to Indian educationists, specially language teachers.

9—1—58 The Union Government have set up an All India Council of Elementary Education to accelerate the pace of expansion of Elementary Education in India. One of its functions would be to produce or assist in the production of literature which would help education officers and teachers to improve the quality of elementary education.

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The following points were brought out at the All India Seminar on Basic Education: (1) The social and economic view of life underlying the basic system must be firmly held in view; (2) The training period of basic teachers should be

increased from one to two years; (3) Steps should be taken to attract intelligent young men to the teacher's profession by providing for service-training, proper selection of trainee-teachers, payment of stipends, etc.; (4) There should be State Education Directors who could exclusively devote their time to basic education; (5) The conversion of non-basic into basic schools must take place at a faster rate; (6) The productivity aspect of basic education must be given greater attention; (7) It would be wrong to encourage the dual system of post-basic schools and multi-purpose schools.

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The Congress Subjects Committee adopted a resolution on educational reconstruction which calls for priority to basic education and the raising of the standards and status, both economic and social, of teachers.

Mr. Kabir cautioned that in transforming our educational system to the basic type, we could not do away with the present primary schools and millions of

teachers engaged in these schools. We must ensure that there was no conflict between the traditional system and the new one, he said. According to him, the basic pattern must be "flexible and dynamic".

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Speaking in Bangalore on the occasion of the celebration of the golden jubilee of the St. Joseph's College, Sri Jayachama rajendra Wudiyar paid a handsome tribute to the great work done by Christian missionaries in India in the cause of education. He regretted that there were maladjustments in University matters. It was imperative, he said, that only students who were fit for higher education and were likely to prove useful to themselves and to the nation that should seek and be admitted to higher education: otherwise, it would be a colossal waste of finance and talents to the nation. He also stressed on the need for the highest standards of discipline in University life.

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2-2-58. The Headmasters' Conference held in Madras passed a resolution pleading for the reduction of the language and script load confronting South Indian students. While the headmasters agreed that it was desirable to teach more than one language to children before they attained eleven or twelve years, at which period their brain cells had the greater receptivity, they at the same time felt that, as far as the South Indians were concerned, they had to learn the maximum number of languages, because of the multi-lingual character of the country. They recommended therefore that the conversational style of teaching and the adoption of a common script would be preferable. Mr. Kuruvilla Jacob who presided, suggested that Hindi might be taught in the Roman script or in the script of the regional language, and that the regional language might gradually adopt the Nagari script. The Conference also recommended that the present system of examinations must be critically examined to see what was wrong with it as nearly fifty per cent of the students failed in the S. S. L. C. examination.

LXIV—3—3

(It is not the examination system that is at fault. It is the students who are to blame for this sad result. In fact, the examination papers nowadays are easier and evaluation is also very liberal. With all that, the standard of the students is so low and their application to their studies is so bad that large scale of failures are inevitable).

Nehruji declared, speaking at Banasrhali, that primary education was much more necessary to the people than anything else and that he would like the rural people to shoulder the responsibility for running as many primary schools as possible. It was more essential than even food and housing, he said. Classes could be held even under the shade of the trees. Whatever money was available should be spent on improving the economic and social status of the teachers and equipping the classes with necessary educational accessories. Buildings could wait. Teachers deserved a better deal because they were playing an important role in future society. He said that all primary school students should get one good mid day meal free of cost, as was the practice in Japan and some other countries.

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Mr. V. K. Krishna Menon, speaking at Hyderabad, made an impassioned appeal that politicians should not interfere with Universities, for that would mean the corruption of educational machinery and educational purposes. He stressed the importance of the study of history in every faculty i.e., history of medicine, history of law etc., which would place the human mind in the context of expansiveness. It would help to cultivate tolerance. That should be the basis of education. The chief aim of education was to develop self-help and a capacity for mental and spiritual determination, otherwise the object of education had failed.

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Addressing the Central Advisory Board of Education, the Union Education

Minister said that great progress had been achieved in the direction of developing Hindi as a medium of instruction in schools and colleges. The programme of translators of scientific and technical books into Hindi had been taken in hand, and the preparation of terms for the secondary stage had been completed, while that for the University stage had been begun. There had been great expansion in technical education both in quantity and quality. He also said that during his tenure of office, the central budget for education had increased from two to thirty crores. He assured the Board that the Centre and the States would do their best to make the teachers feel that the Government appreciated the importance of their profession. He made a special plea for cheaper buildings for educational institutions. He said that villages must undertake the responsibility of maintaining schools in their areas. He stressed the importance of English in Indian education, and said that knowledge of English was essential, if adequate standards were to be maintained in the Universities. The late Maulana Azad referred to this criticism levelled against the undue importance attached to examinations, and said there was no adequate substitute for examinations. It was proposed, he said, to conduct research in the field of examinations and devise methods to improve examination technique.

4—2—58. Minister Subramanyam, speaking at Umayalpatti village said that teachers should equip themselves for their task. Efficient teachers were essential for good progress of proper education. He assured the teachers that their work would be adequately appreciated in future.

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Speaking at Shiyali, the Minister stressed the importance of the progress of women's education. The Shiyali Taluk Elementary Teachers' Association presented a memorandum urging the fixation of new scales of pay for Higher Grade

Elementary Teachers and for the Secondary Grade Teachers, the assumption of management of Elementary Schools by the Government and other concessions like house-rent allowance etc.,

7—2—58. The following points were covered by the Central Advisory Board during their two days deliberations in New Delhi: (1) The need for narrowing the gap between Basic and Non-Basic education at all stages: (2) The question of recognition and equivalence of degrees and diplomas to be awarded by the Institutes of Rural Higher Education, so that the students passing out of these institutes may not be handicapped by undue hardship with regard to employment or in taking up higher education courses: (3) The desirability of making the newly started extension services a permanent feature: (4) The scheme for the development and study of various modern Indian languages, in view of the general replacement of English, viz., the preparation of scientific terminology and of books dealing with science, completion of dictionaries, graded basic vocabularies, common vocabularies among different Indian languages etc.: (5) The creation of a central education pool: (6) The disposal of products of Basic Education Schools and utilisation of such funds for the benefit of the children of the schools: (7) Provision of finance to further Basic Education in backward states: (8) Education of the handicapped children: (9) The opening of adult schools to spread social education: (10) Expansion of girls' education and training of women teachers: (11) The provision of facilities to be provided to teachers in secondary schools to appear as private candidates for M. A., M.Sc. and other examinations: (12) The collection of data regarding Dr. Penfield's views about the teaching of more than one language to children at a young age: (13) The desirability of making radio broadcasts as an integral part of education in every school activity, instead of being the extra-curricular activity that it is now.

WHO IS TO BLAME —‘LIVER’, ‘BRAIN’ OR ‘STOMACH’?

By

BHABES CHANDRA CHAUDHURI

(Founder: "The World Jnana Sadhak", Jalpaiguri)

Is it a fact that after our English King left India—on August 15, 1947—the proverbial King's English is fast losing what may be called 'life' in the usage of the country? Or, is it not—to speak it candidly—a fact that the English-knowing intelligentsia is rather dwindling in our land?

And, indeed, are not our boys and girls—the citizens of to-morrow—gradually eschewing English, as they are mostly eschewing politics?

No doubt their English sounds, as they say sometimes, almost like a Pidgin variety or a Greek; but can you deny for aught, however, that it lacks generally that characteristic ring of a Michael Madhusudan or a Rev. Lalbehari Deo,—what we call 'life'? Sir James Jeans once said that the human body is made up of hydrogen, oxygen, nitrogen and carbon; yet, said he, something else, some mysterious element is needed to bring forth life in human body!

So, this is likewise true in a way with English, as it obtains now in our academic institutions, in general. May be, we have no longer to worry for the future of English, in India: but does it then, altogether, make for any reasons not to be worrying for the future of the future citizens?—

They are 'plucking'? Yes, as they say, "boys and girls are getting plucked!" That has, no doubt, created so much noise about large failures in examinations. The teachers have been blamed, for are not they the light and the guide? What, indeed, you do not realise is that they hit at the wrong point! For, the Seat of Learning is no longer the true liver, as in olden times; it is no longer, too, the

brain, as in days past; or is it now the stomach then, which "rationing and queue-ing" can satisfactorily answer, not the teachers?

And, to cite, *inter alia*, some actual specimens of King's English as handled by our students—to illustrate causes relating to so many cases of post-Matric failures in examinations!

Specimen No. 1. The *aunt* (ant) says to the cricket that why you sit idle in summer? Do you not see that we *aunts* never *barrow* and never lend. Kindly sing the winter away.

Specimen No. 2. One cannot *rich* the top of a tree by a jump. He is to rise little by little and thus to *rich* the top. We should not try to gain all knowledges at a time.

Specimen No. 3. Though it (life) is very short. Yet the beauty is more better than a big thing which has very long period. As an *oke* (oak) tree is very big. It may stand for three hundred years. But it will must *vadish* after three thousand (hundred) years.

Specimen No. 4. I *well* come the untimely death of an *athelet*, simply because it is not good to live for a long time. But we cannot materialised our achieving experience as the little lily can do. The Perfumes and the beauty of the *lilly* steals our mind, through (though) her life is too little to imagine.

Specimen No. 5. The lily flower of England blossms in *may*. It remains only for a day and *dis* (dies) at the very night. Though it remains only *foraday* (for a day), but her *beautys* is very charm *full*. So life is short as lily flower.

Specimen No. 6. A band of young *soldiers* to fight against the French *soldiers*. Suddenly one of them lost his one hand. A *soldier* said to him to stop the war. At this, the young Bengal (Bengali) said why should I go home whenever I have got another arm. So his will is very strongly and he will be die then he did not go to home. Duty is the best work than life. It is better to death for work of duty.

Surely !

Are you now inclined any more to put the blame at the door of Universities? Are you tempted *then* to suspect that Government have some sort of motive to create failures, on a large scale, just to keep down unemployment? Or, do you still cherish your animus against the proverbial Sampson Dominie just to hit a nail on his head for the so-called laches?

Does any body, however, know where the root of the trouble lies?

Of course, everybody can't be expected to know the true story of a teacher's lot! No doubt, society pities him, but how many, indeed, seek to relieve the deep wounds of social injustice and economic ills, to which the pedagogues are ever victims in life?

To take the much talked of "private tuition", for which he is so often "rough-handled" in society, press or even thoroughfares. Indeed, how bitter and painful must be the varied experiences of teachers—school and college alike—in this regard!

As you know here in India when the 'examination fever' (or should we call it 'examinitis'?) sets in epidemic form in February or March, naturally 'tutors' have got a 'boom' time of it as it is

understood in business parlance; and no wonder, they are engaged generally, as early as from November. The schedule is on an average, three days a week basis: but, as it is, within the three months at your disposal, you are to complete the whole course and make your pupil a 'finished product' for the successful purpose of the examination market, without fail! Naturally, you blink: but as you know that the cost of living is rising more and more, you should yield and agree. But, don't you feel a bit disheartened, when you ask for Rupees sixty per month, but your employer comes forward with an agreeable offer of Rupees thirty with a vicious glare of smile on lips! After, a good deal of haggling, however, you come down by Rupees ten; he goes up by annas four. Ultimately, you close at Rupees thirty-seven and odd annas, say. For that's the price-level, may be, of a 'sari' to be immediately bought for your wife, daughter or some dear ones!

Then you have to 'make up' your age—which must 'look' something like forty—if it is a boy-student; or fifty if a girl-student! Again, you need to be 'married' as a rule in case of the girl-students. Then, you must needs be punctual with clock like regularity! And, and late fine? Yes, it is usually heavy: but, there is no advance credit in the bargain, even—far, *sure-success* bringers! Then again, if he is a college-teacher, he is over-qualified for a boy-student, while if a school-teacher, he is naturally 'unfit' for a college-student! And, so you find why Education to-day must come to such a rot! Under the circumstances: whom to blame, pray,—'Liver'; 'Brain' or 'Stomach?.'

EDITORIAL

Evaluation in Secondary Schools

An interesting note on Evaluation in Secondary Schools, prepared by the Central Bureau of Educational and Vocational Guidance, is published in the latest issue of *Teacher Education*. The problem here tackled is that of the sufficiency of an external public examination for awarding the School Leaving Certificate. The note takes the view that such an examination is apt to be a snap judgment and that it requires to be corrected or modified by the results of internal assessment. Indeed, it is asserted that internal assessment is the only true standard, as it is naturally built up on the cumulative evaluation of pupil performance over a long period of time.

The programme suggested is that the achievement of each pupil should be assessed periodically—weekly, monthly and the end of each term. The sum total of such assessments must be deemed to be a standard of reference, being the nearest approximation to the experience criterion. Suggestions are made for integrating this final internal assessment with the evaluation by the external public examination.

As internal assessment is likely to vary from school to school, there arises the problem of standardising these different evaluations. It is proposed that the mark awarded by any school should be multiplied by a moderation factor obtained from dividing the sum of the average marks of the pupils of the school at the public examination by the sum of average marks awarded to them by the school. Then the marks obtained at the public examination are multiplied by a coefficient and moderated. This is finally taken as the true assessment. The combined final mark can also be used for reaching judgments about the pupil's position in each subject and gradings groupwise or traitwise.

A scheme on the lines adumbrated above may be tried experimentally in some

select areas. It may be remembered that when the S. S. L. C. scheme was first started in 1911, there was a great deal of talk about putting a high value upon the pupil's achievement, as shown by the records in the S. S. L. C. book. Some subjects were also kept out from the public examination apparently in the belief that the pupil's progress therein should be judged entirely by the school records. Unfortunately, however, school records were allowed to exercise little or no influence on the results of the public examination. And nobody—neither teachers nor pupils cared for the so-called "B" group subjects in which no papers were set in the public examination. As a scheme for using the school records, the S.S.L.C. scheme was never properly worked.

The agitation for setting a high value upon internal assessment by each school has been gathering force for sometime past. This is, however, part of the movement decrying the utility of public examinations generally. It cannot be gainsaid that this movement owes its origin and continuance to mixed motives, not all of them academic. In the general atmosphere of corruption and decline in standards that has invaded our educational institutions after the advent of Independence, the external public examination stands out, by and large, as one of the few things which continue to be relentlessly impartial and unmoved by political or communal considerations. Therefore, when any attempt is made on purely educational considerations to tamper with the finality of the public examinations, every care should be taken to see that communalism, favouritism and the influence of political bosses is not allowed to enter by the backdoor.

Prospects for Elementary Education

The provision of universal, free and compulsory education, though recognised as an urgent priority in the Constitution

with a date-line fixed for its accomplishment—a date-line drawing dangerously near with everyday that passes—has failed to receive considered attention at the highest level. Even when Rajaji drew pointed attention to it with his revolutionary proposal of a shift-system, the old indifference continued. Perhaps all along there has been an unconscious feeling that there are not sufficient financial resources available to embark on any ambitious scheme of primary education. Perhaps too there is the further complication produced by the ambivalent attitude towards basic education—the divorce between profession and practice that is so conspicuous.

Whatever the causes for this refusal till now to do anything more than tinker with the problem, it is a matter for some gratification that the All India Council for Elementary Education, newly set up and now meeting for the first time, resolved at its two-day session on March 10 and 11 to recommend that the provision of universal free and compulsory education, at least for the age-group 6-11, by the end of the third plan-period, should be regarded as an integral part of the core of planning. We are afraid however that this will never be achieved unless practical proposals, well within our resources, are made and implemented from even now on. In this connection, it is unfortunate that the Council should be casting covetous eyes on the productive aspect of basic education. This is likely to prove a mirage, unless indeed basic schools are to become factories exploiting child labour. With due deference to Mahatmaji, who first thought of basic education with a view to make elementary education self-supporting, basic education has been found valuable for other reasons. And in actual

practice, it costs more than elementary education of the traditional type.

So the solution for the provision of universal education lies either in finding the necessary funds by taxation or other ways, or by reducing costs through some such device as the shift system. It is doubtful whether the necessary funds will be allotted by the Planners. So far as the first two plans are concerned, education has received only step motherly treatment. And as for cutting the costs, which is the only other practical alternative, no serious thought has been given to it, and no concerted efforts made. On the other hand, suggestions are light heartedly made, as by the Council, for additional burdens like the provision of free midday meals and free text-books to elementary school pupils.

We wish to sound a note of warning against another resolution of the Council also. This calls for the equalisation of the uneven distribution of schooling facilities not only as between States but also as between different regions and classes within each State. If this resolution is taken to mean that additional facilities should be provided where they are lacking, it is welcome. But if politicians take it in the sense, as well as they might, that existing facilities in some instances should be curtailed in order to provide them elsewhere, we shall be taking a backward step. The reference to various classes within each State may well stimulate communalism of the worst kind in administration. We trust that the proposed study through pilot projects will clear the path and lead us to the goal without dangerous excursions into byways and alleys.

LETTERS TO EDITOR

SECONDARY GRADE TEACHERS IN LOWER ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

Sir,

While the general consensus of opinion is to fix the minimum qualification of teachers in Elementary Schools as S.S.L.C. eligibles and while it is a fact that such trained hands were taken in the revised scale of Rs. 45 to 85 recently, it is most unthinkable that the Government should have passed an order fixing the scale of Secondary Grade teachers happening to serve in Lower Elementary Schools (1 to 5) at 40—1—48, making rather a meaningless distinction affecting the unfortunate hands in Aided Lower Elementary Schools only. It is really a serious situation requiring immediate attention and justice. There would be ever so many Secondary Grade hands with years of service in Aided Schools getting some increment, whatever it is, with no weightage. (Be it noted that the seniormost hand with 25 years' service gets only

Rs. 49, while a fresh hand perhaps a grandson, gets Rs. 47 with a difference of Rs. 2). While senior teachers are expecting some weightage in salary, it is strange they are to be put on the scale of Rs. 40—1—48 only. What about the P. F. contribution, they could have made at the increased rates of salary?

None is unaware of the cry "Equal pay for man of equal qualification and service." And it is gratifying to some extent that this is being acceded to in a way. Such being the case, it passes my comprehension as to the need for the revised order, which is proving to be a hardship in every way. It is earnestly hoped that the order will be rescinded in toto without showing any distinction as between existing hands and the future hands to come for service.

M. Nagasubramanya Ayyar,
Papanasam.

THE DETERIORATION IN EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS

Sir,

Many educationists and politicians have attributed the present deterioration in educational standards to various reasons. But, it is not a strange coincidence that this deterioration has come in the wake of the vernacularisation of the medium of instruction? The real reason seems to be this. So long as the medium of instruction was foreign, the student had to contend against both the study of the medium and the subject. Naturally, he put in more effort into his study and was able to produce good results. Now that the medium is the vernacular, the students think that they can master the subject easily and without effort, and so they do not put in that effort which their predecessors used to put in their studies.

The second reason is that students are not given sufficient home-work to test their assimilation of what is taught to them in schools. The class-teachers are afraid of giving home-work, lest they should be saddled with the burden of perusing them. And they could hardly be blamed for such an attitude. So the best way is to employ tutors whose duty would be to go through the home-work of the students in all subjects. This alone would help to raise the standards. Tutors should thus form an essential part of the School-staff.

M. S. V. Chari,
Tindivanam.

Teachers' Constituency-Madras Legislative Council (Two Seats)

The Rev. D. THAMBUSAMI, M.A., L.T., B.D.,
Principal & Correspondent.

The Kellett High School, Triplicane,
Madras, 13th March. 1958.

Dear Sri/Madam,

On account of the casting of lots which gave me a term of 2 months only, I am obliged to stand for re election.

I have been a teacher for well over thirty years, and I have been the Manager and Principal of a premier High School in the City of Madras for nearly twenty-five years. All along I have been associating myself actively with everything that has been in the best interests of the teaching profession through the Senate, the South India Teachers' Union, the Head-masters' Conference and the District Teachers' Guild. The S. I. T. U. Protection Fund gave me the privilege of being its President after the demise of Prof. M. S. Sabhesan. I have also been closely connected with the Board of Higher Education and the Cristian Education Council. I was a member of the Alagppa Commission on Elementary Education and I have served on many responsible Committees in the cause of education.

As President of the Madras Teachers' Guild in 1942, I did my best to see that schools did not suffer loss in Government Grant on account of evacuation and fall in strength. I have been re elected thrice to the Presidentship of the Madras Teachers' Guild: and in that Office, I have been striving for the cause of teachers and for the betterment of their salary-scales and service conditions. You can count on my continued interest in, and support for the teachers' cause in the higher spheres also. I shall feel very grateful if you will be pleased to support me by giving yor **FIRST VOTE** and persuade your colleagues also to do likewise.

Thanking you for your support,

Date of Polling

12th April 1958.

I am, Yours sincerely,
(Sd.) D. THAMBUSAMI,
President, Madras Teachers' Guild.

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