

GOVERNMENT OF BENGAL.

Education Department.

Education.

RESOLUTION No. 2517EDN.

Calcutta, the 27th July 1935.

Minister in charge : The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. Azizul Haque.

INTRODUCTION.—Exactly a hundred years ago, the famous Resolution of the Government of India gave a new direction and a strong impetus to education in India. Since then the growth of education in Bengal has been rapid. The growing demand of the people of Bengal for educational facilities has been one of the most impressive features of our age. Schools and colleges arose in all parts of the province. The range of studies became gradually wider and wider and teaching more extensive. The University of Calcutta was established to co-ordinate higher education and later developed to foster research. Under the present system a large educated community has grown up, which has supplied the province for generations, in increasing measure, with the personnel for its administration, its learned and humble professions, its business and industry and its social and political leadership, and the province can legitimately take pride in what has been achieved in the field of education.

This process of expansion is still going on. "Education has come to be regarded generally as a matter of primary national importance, an indispensable agency in the task of nation-building." Communities, which in the early days of English education, were slow to respond, are now fully awakened to the need and possibilities of education for their children. The demand for more institutions for the education of girls has been persistent all through the province for some time past. The movement has spread to backward classes—the depressed classes, the scheduled castes and even to the aboriginal tribes. All now demand education as a right.

But with all this, as time passed, it became manifest to thoughtful observers that the present educational system was tending to become stereotyped and mechanical and was not meeting in full the changing needs and requirements of the province. A great mass of the intelligent manhood of the province is at present driven in ever increasing numbers

along the same, often unfruitful, course of study, which creates expectations that cannot be fulfilled and sometimes actually unfits those who pursue it from undertaking many useful occupations, necessary for the welfare and well-being of the province.

Attempts have been made in the past to remedy this state of affairs and to improve the system of education in the province. Public men and educationists, the Universities and the authorities of schools, have done much to adapt education to the new requirements of the times. There has been a great awakening to the need of improvement both in the quality of education provided and in the conditions which determine the working of educational institutions, but, in spite of the rapid expansion of education and attempts for a better type, we are still far behind and have a long way to make up, if Bengal is to take her proper place in the future history of India.

A hundred years have passed since Lord William Bentinck's Resolution on education. We stand to-day on the threshold of a new era. In a short time Bengal will be an autonomous province and its destinies will be very largely in the hands of its own people. "To educate our masters" will be more than ever a duty and a responsibility. For the last few years public opinion has shown genuine anxiety about the future of education. The time is ripe, therefore, for a review of the whole position, especially of primary education, in which Bengal lags most behind, and there is more than ever to-day an imperative necessity to face the problems of education, estimate their magnitude and devise practical measures for their gradual solution. Bad education is as detrimental to the welfare of the community as want of education and forms a great menace to good Government, however it may be constituted, whether it be bureaucratic or popular. Expansion of education is still certainly the need of the province, but, if it follows unhealthy and unprofitable channels, the flood may devastate instead of fertilising the country. The problem is complex enough and the longer it is postponed the more difficult it will be, as its solution vitally concerns the future social, political and economic welfare of the province.

The following resolution is, therefore, an attempt to reorganise the present system and conditions of education, and particularly primary education, and the

Government in the Ministry of Education are genuinely anxious that something should be done to better the conditions of education and so to train up the future generations that every Bengali child may reach, according to his aptitude and irrespective of his parents' position, the full measure of intellectual and moral achievement and that the young man of Bengal, who wishes to go in for higher education, may not at the end of his career find himself in a morass of disappointment but may be better equipped for the increasing struggle of life.

1. Defects of the Educational System.—

The condition of education in Bengal has for many years caused anxiety to thoughtful observers and it has often been pointed out that the province is gradually losing the position of pre-eminence it once occupied in education. In 1917 the Calcutta University Commission was appointed to investigate the state of higher education in the Colleges and University and it presented a thorough and detailed Report with a carefully considered scheme of recommendations for reform. Very few of its proposals have, however, been carried out. The Auxiliary Committee on Education to the Statutory Commission (Hartog Committee) again surveyed the position of education in this province, as in the other provinces, and exposed many defects, especially in the system of elementary education. The Bengal and Indian Quinquennial Reports on Education also contain candid criticisms of many aspects of education in the province. Speeches in the Legislative Council, articles in the newspapers and the utterances of many prominent leaders provide further proof that there is much that is ill-designed, inefficient and wasteful in education in Bengal.

These criticisms are not of recent times. Ever since the reconstitution of the Presidency of Bengal in 1912, educationists have realised the dangers of the situation, but the war of 1914-18 made any educational reorganisation impossible.

The new reforms were inaugurated in 1921 and Bengal, as a result of the Meston Award, has been in great financial difficulties and this in spite of retrenchment and additional taxation. The result has been that expenditure on education in Bengal has practically remained stationary, being Rs. 1,23,16,000 in 1922-23 and Rs. 1,27,67,000 in 1933-34. Primary education has particularly suffered from this inability to expand and education in general has suffered in comparison with other provinces, as will appear from the following figures:—

Province.	Population.	Revenue receipts.		Total expenditure on education.		Expenditure on primary education.	
		1921-22.	1933-34.	1921-22.	1933-34.	1922-23.	1933-34.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
		Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Madras ..	46,740,000	15,70,20,000	16,03,05,000	1,43,24,000	2,49,85,000	1,39,17,000	1,42,00,000
Bombay ..	21,931,000	13,10,73,000	14,60,74,000	1,72,45,000	1,30,99,000	1,09,17,000	1,14,80,000
Punjab ..	23,581,000	8,77,42,000	10,72,63,000	80,53,000	1,54,26,000	78,48,000	81,03,000
United Provinces ..	48,409,000	12,63,61,000	11,23,63,000	1,52,00,000	1,91,19,000	70,85,000	77,88,000
Bengal ..	50,110,000	9,87,82,000	9,05,73,000	1,20,84,000	1,27,07,000	30,28,000	30,11,000

2. Thrown into relief by (1) Retrenchment.—The result for education has been disastrous. What was bad has become worse and what was tolerable has in many instances become bad. Successive years of world-wide economic distress and the general fall in prices, and especially in jute, aggravated the situation. The Retrenchment Committees recommended many economies in educational expenditure and, although all their proposals were not accepted, those which were accepted owing to the exigencies of finance inevitably retarded progress. Improvements, long meditated and long overdue, had to be postponed indefinitely and, instead of even normal progress, there was at many points a visible retrogression. The grant given by Government to institutions had to be curtailed at the very time when their other sources of income had diminished or disappeared.

(2) Economic Depression and Unemployment.—

The economic difficulties and rigours of these days have thus thrown into bold relief the weaknesses of the educational system in Bengal. But other causes also have combined to reveal them more clearly and to focus public attention on them. The growing extent of unemployment among certain classes, intensified by the general depression of trade and industry, has produced a storm of criticism directed against a system of education, which did not fit the youth of the province to earn their own living, criticism which was perfectly natural even if not altogether justified. The Vice-Chancellor of the University of Dacca said in evidence before the Unemployment Inquiry Committee, "I regard the education given now in the majority of cases.....in Bengal as tending to diminish the intellectual energy of those who receive it. It is sterilising. I think the education at present imparted is in many cases a positive disadvantage to those who receive it and tends to render the students more worthless in the market than if they had worked by themselves."

(3) Terrorism.—The outlook of *Bhadralog* youths in Bengal to-day is one of gloom and despair and it has thereby predisposed their minds to the morbid attitude, which allowed revolutionary and terrorist leaders to find ready disciples in many of the schools and colleges. The terrorist movement in Bengal, which assumed menacing proportions in recent years, revealed some of the weaknesses of the present educational system.

But the financial stringency, the growth of unemployment and of subversive political movements are not themselves the cause of, although in many ways they have intensified, the defects of education in Bengal. Those defects are of long standing and have only been made prominent—more difficult to solve—by recent events. The primary causes should be sought rather in the general social and political history of the province. A complete analysis of them would be out of place

here, but attention may be drawn to one or two of the more singular features.

3. Peculiar features of Educational system:

(1) **Its urban bias.**—The great majority of Bengal's population is engaged in agriculture. The greater part of the province consists of the vast deltas of the Ganges and Brahmaputra, land admirably suited for agriculture but destitute of mineral resources. It possesses also important industries but these are located almost entirely in two relatively small areas, Calcutta and its neighbourhood and the coal-field area in the Burdwan district. Speaking generally, Bengalis have stood aloof from the development of these industries and the labour force is very largely drawn from outside Bengal. (As is natural in an agricultural land, the people live for the most part in villages and the towns are small country towns, rural rather than distinctively urban in character.) Apart from Dacca, Calcutta and Howrah, which is practically a part of Calcutta, there is not a town in the province with a population of 100,000 and very few with 50,000 inhabitants. Nor is the urban population increasing relatively, except in Calcutta and its neighbourhood. Excluding Calcutta and Howrah, 38 per thousand of the population lived in towns in 1911; in 1931, the proportion had fallen to 34 per thousand.

In spite of this predominantly rural and agricultural character of the province, the system of education is better adapted to an urban than to a rural population. The subjects taught are those helpful to the boy who has to live and earn a living in a town rather than to the boy who will be a farmer or cultivator. This is true even of the lowest stages, which have been designed to lead up to what is often summarised as "an English education." In other words, boys have sought and been given not so much a training for life as the specific kind of training, which would qualify them for a clerkship or at best for one of a limited number of professions. The middle vernacular schools, in which boys might obtain a good general grounding, have never been popular in Bengal and are now almost extinct and even the primary schools teach English. This is an extraordinary paradox.

(2) Preponderance of Private Schools.

Another paradox is to be found in the fact that the early and rapid spread of English education in the province is one of the chief causes of its general inefficiency at present. A hundred years ago, when the first public schools and colleges were established in Bengal, they proved so popular, largely as a pathway to official preferment, that similar institutions were founded by private persons in large numbers all over the province. As the pupils were willing to pay for their instruction, such private schools not only diffused learning, but provided occupation and profit. In other words, schools became a remunerative business and it is not surprising that they sprang up on every side. Many other motives of a higher kind undoubtedly contributed in great measure to the multiplication of schools; but in any case the result was that far more schools in Bengal owed their origin to private enterprise than to public foundation and, as a corollary, the condition of many of them was ephemeral and

precarious, resting neither on a substantial endowment nor on the resources of the State or of public bodies. Thus, in Bengal, we have the peculiar and characteristic feature of a predominantly "private" system of schools under no adequate public control.

4. **Defects (1) of Primary Schools.**—But, whatever the historic causes may be and whatever the aggravating circumstances of the present, the condition of education in Bengal is such as to compel the anxious consideration of Government and of all interested in the welfare of the province. The primary schools are numerous indeed; but in almost every other respect they are deficient. The great majority of the pupils are in the lowest class and go no higher—nine out of ten of them never become really literate and derive little if any benefit from their year or two of schooling. The curriculum is not altogether adapted to the rural environment from which the children come and to which they return. The teacher is often untrained and generally unenthusiastic, and, even when he has both energy and skill, is faced with impossible problems—the problem of teaching three classes single-handed, the problem of how to live on six or eight rupees a month, the problem of engaging and maintaining the attention of pupils who and whose parents are more or less indifferent to education, the problem of sustaining his keenness when he is isolated from year's end to year's end except for the single visit of the inspector. At their best the primary school and its staff may be the centre of village life and the chief motive power of rural progress—but the least that they should do is to make the pupils literate: it is, however, the belief of those qualified to judge that the ordinary primary school in Bengal does not adequately perform even this elementary and fundamental task. The aid which Government have been able to give to primary schools has been disproportionately small; and the levy of the cess provided in the Primary Education Act of 1930 has had to be postponed on account of general economic depression.

(2) **Of Secondary Schools.**—The secondary schools are little better adapted to their function. The complaint has been general that they have devoted themselves to the single task of passing pupils through the Matriculation and that the interests of those who never proceed to a college course are betrayed. Nor was the course of studies for the Matriculation satisfactory, even as a general preparation for higher studies. The school tended to neglect all the other important aspects of education, the training of the body and of character; and the nature of the teaching was such as to stimulate the use of the memory rather than of the mind.

(3) **Financial Instability.**—Even this limited and too narrowly academic task the schools were in many instances ill-fitted to discharge because of the inadequacy of their staff, equipment and financial resources. The rapid growth in the number of schools has led, especially in towns and developed areas, to competition for pupils, with the result that the average number of pupils in a school is uneconomically small. There are on the average less than 250 pupils in a high school and the

income from fees is only a little over Rs. 500 a month: but in many schools the number of pupils and the fee income are actually much less. In the last Quinquennial Report it was pointed out that Bengal is much worse off than Madras or Bombay in these respects. The consequence is that many schools are unable to entertain a sufficient number of teachers or to pay them properly or even regularly, the teaching is inefficient and both teachers and pupils are driven to private tuition to eke out the deficiencies of the school. There is nothing more ominous and significant in the educational system than the almost universal prevalence of private tuition.

(4) Lack of extra-academic activities.—

It is not surprising that in such institutions the school does not supply the facilities, and the teachers have neither the time nor the enthusiasm, for the stimulation and supervision of the activities of the pupils outside the class room. Few healthy outlets are provided for their occupation or amusement. There is often little attempt at organised games or physical recreation, apart from the dull routine of drill, little attempt at any regular measurement and record of physical progress or the detection, diagnosis and treatment of physical weakness. Many of the boys have no interests or hobbies and perhaps the teachers have none either. The actual teaching, too, is imparted generally by men, who have perhaps in many cases no special gifts or talents of their own, little devotion or loyalty to the school, no scientific training, and who are pre-occupied with the necessity of adding in some way to their meagre salaries; and teaching under such conditions can scarcely be expected to arouse the interest, touch the imagination or develop the intellectual curiosity of the pupils. Most of the faculties of the mind lie numbed and inert in this wintry scholasticism.

It is with such material that the colleges have to deal—plants already so mishandled and stunted as to need the most favourable influences to bring to flower and fruit, individual attention, sympathetic care, the fostering of mental and spiritual light and warmth. The task would be difficult enough in any event, but our colleges can scarcely be said to offer this exceptional environment. Another series of examinations are again held out as the goal of intellectual endeavour. Many of the colleges are too large to permit of effective personal guidance or tutorial help. Many of those in Calcutta especially have no adequate playing fields. Few of them are able to create any corporate tradition or attract any deep sense of loyalty. A school or a college means little more to a boy than the shop to which he gives his custom or the train which takes him on a journey.

This picture may seem to be painted in colours too sombre to be true, but it is intended to be only an impressionistic sketch of the effect produced by the existing educational system on those who are aware of the progress made not only in other countries but in other provinces of India and who cannot regard the stagnation in Bengal with equanimity. Among the chief weaknesses are these. First, the lack of funds has not only hampered development but led to actual

retrenchment and retreat at some points. Education is an expensive commodity and some of those who take a narrow view, who fail to realise how fundamental it is to national health and progress, are inclined to regard it as a luxury.

(5) Superfluity of Schools.—But, secondly, the unnecessarily great number of educational institutions in some overschooled areas of Bengal, far greater in proportion than those in any other province, has become a source of danger and inefficiency, depriving schools of that necessary financial stability without which efficiency is impossible.

(6) Lack of variety.—In the third place, all the schools have been cast in the same mould and directed to the same end, so that individual aptitudes and gifts have often been crushed out and the potential soldier, explorer, saint, business man, inventor, farmer or artisan have generally been transformed into potential clerks. Again, the scheme of studies has not only been uniform but unsuited to the background, tradition and needs of the majority of the pupils—and in a country, where 14 out of 15 persons live in villages and three out of four of those who work for a living are employed in agriculture, we have a curriculum intended mainly for town-dwellers and workers.

(7) Inadequate Control.—Over this enormous mass of institutions, there is no well-organised control: many of them are private schools and many receive no grant from public funds and escape even that measure of supervision which the receipt of a grant entails. Over the high schools there has been a divided control, which has long proved unsatisfactory and detrimental to any thorough reorganisation of secondary education. The inspecting staff of the Department has been and is quite insufficient to carry out any effective inspection, which should imply guidance and inspiration as well as supervision.

(8) The Teaching Staff.—Again, the schools left largely to their own devices have been staffed by teachers who are often neither numerous enough nor sufficiently qualified, trained or well paid nor so imbued with a sense of vocation as to be equal to the high responsibilities of their task. They generally content themselves with the minimum, uninspiring instruction in the class room, neglecting all the possibilities of influencing the character of their pupils for good or of training them to be healthy, happy, useful citizens. And the pupils so trained, or rather untrained, have in not a few cases been drawn into the toils of revolutionary conspiracy and done inestimable harm to themselves and to the entire political development of their country, for which they cherish such a disastrously misdirected love.

5. Multiplication of Lower Primary Schools.—The spread of literacy in Bengal has been surprisingly slow and in the last ten or twelve years it is doubtful if it has spread at all. The explanation is to be found in the fact that the overwhelming proportion of primary schools are lower primary schools with only three classes, that most of these schools have only a single teacher each and that the great majority of the pupils

never proceed beyond the infant class. Three years of schooling under such conditions is not sufficient to make a pupil permanently literate. But new schools of this type are arising every day. During the five years from 1927 to 1932, the number of boys' primary schools decreased in three provinces and the largest increases were about 900 in Assam and 800 in Bombay; but in Bengal there was an increase of over 5,500, far more than the new schools in all the other provinces put together. This fact is sufficient indication of the ill-considered manner in which primary education in Bengal is proceeding. On the other hand, little was done to effect any real improvement in the quality of the teaching. The Indian Quinquennial Report for 1927-32 contrasts the position in Bengal with that of the North-Western Frontier Province, where the people live widely scattered and where the difficulties are perhaps as great, though not of the same kind, as those of Bengal. "Whereas there are in Bengal an unknown number of lower primary three-class schools (the Hartog Committee estimated the number at 39,000 in 1927), there are none in the Frontier Province. Whereas there are only 54 vernacular middle schools in Bengal, there are already 199 such schools (inclusive of lower middle schools) in the Frontier Province. Whereas the average enrolment of a primary school in Bengal is 38.4, that in the Frontier Province is 51.4, in spite of the fact that most of the well-attended primary schools have been converted into middle schools and have thereby been removed from calculation. Whereas the percentage of boys in Bengal in Class I who reach Class IV in the normal period of time was only 13 in 1932, that in the Frontier Province rose from 12 to 18 during the quinquennium." The Bengal Quinquennial Report also concluded that "an improvement in quality rather than in quantity is the first requisite of an effective system of primary education in Bengal."

6. Programme of reconstruction.—With this state of things neither Government nor the discerning public can any longer be content. It would be useless to apportion blame, when many of the causes lie far in the past or in circumstances beyond the control of any individual or even the province as a whole. But, on the other hand, it would be fatal to adopt the attitude either of complacency or of despair. Government are conscious that the complexity of the problems and the magnitude of the difficulties have often in the past induced a policy of drift; and that no piecemeal reorganisation, no changes of detail, will avail to remedy weaknesses and defects which are so far-reaching. They propose, accordingly, a comprehensive programme of reconstruction, a programme which cannot immediately be carried into entire effect but which will be steadily pursued till its objects are achieved. In other words, they propose a plan of reconstruction for education which they intend to follow in future years. Important parts of the plan will have to wait for more prosperous times but the great advantage will be that schemes will be ready to be put into operation as soon as funds are available.

7. Proposal for four-class Primary Schools.—Government accordingly believe that the time has come to plan for primary schools of a higher standard. At present, the full primary course extends over five years but the upper primary schools are comparatively few. A five years' primary course would be most desirable, but the cost of providing and staffing a large number of such schools throughout the province would be prohibitive. It is accordingly proposed that the distinction between Upper and Lower Primary schools should be done away with and that the primary course should last for four years, Classes I—IV.

8. Staff.—Each primary school, as organised in this scheme, would also be expected to maintain a staff of four teachers as a condition of receiving recognition or aid. In special circumstances it may be necessary and desirable to start a school with a smaller number of classes, but the number of teachers must always be the same as the number of classes. Only thus can the instruction be made satisfactory and the increased help which Government hope to be in a position to give will make this possible. Provision will also be made to train more primary school teachers, for at present the proportion in Bengal is the lowest in all India. There were 73.3 per cent. of trained teachers in the Punjab, 59.4 in Madras; and only 28.1 in Bengal in 1932.

9. Free instruction.—The ultimate aim is that instruction in all primary schools shall be free, at least for those who are too poor to pay any fees at all. This will involve the loss of a few lakhs of rupees in fees but will throw elementary education open to even the poorest.

10. The question of compulsion.—It is not proposed, however, to make it compulsory at this stage and that for three reasons. In the first place, the cost of a free compulsory scheme would be entirely beyond the financial resources of the province now, and, until the Primary Education Act is given effect to, nothing in the way of compulsion can be achieved, except perhaps in a few selected areas. Estimates of the cost of compulsory education differ, but the lowest is about Rs. 3½ crores, about five times the total amount now spent on primary education from public and private sources. In the second place, compulsion, where it has been tried in India, has not yet proved an unqualified success in rural areas; in municipalities, of course, the problem of ensuring attendance is far simpler than in rural areas. In the third place, a well-designed net-work of four class primary schools will provide the opportunity for education to a very large proportion of children of school-going age and, without compulsion and the machinery and unpopularity it entails, practically the same result may be achieved. The last Indian Quinquennial Report points out that "unless a system of compulsion is based on firm foundations, unless the majority of parents are actively in support, unless an ample supply of trained and efficient teachers is available, unless there is careful supervision and a wise distribution of schools, compulsion will do more harm than good."

11. Compulsion to continue at school.—But there is another type of compulsion, which

is absolutely necessary to prevent the wastage which has so often been exposed and deplored. In 1932 there were about 1,344,000 children in the lowest class and only about 100,000 in the highest primary class. In other words, a great majority of the children did not stay in school long enough to become literate. On the average, a primary school in Bengal consists of 22 children in the lowest class, 7 in the second class and 5 in the third. [The crowd in the infant class is alone what enables the school to carry on, what in fact gives it the semblance of a school.] The ordinary primary school now is not even a lower primary school of three classes, it is practically a school with only one class, the infant.

While, therefore, Government do not believe that it would be wise at this time to compel all children to come to school, they recognise that steps should be taken to prevent this wastage. [They desire that every child, whose parents send it to school, should be given the opportunity to learn to read and write and they propose that, once a child joins school, it should be compelled to remain at school till it has finished a primary course or for five years—and, as a corollary to this, that no child should be allowed to remain in the same class for more than two years.] Compulsion to continue in school will give the children and the teachers a real opportunity to teach and to learn. It is not an unreasonable assumption that a parent, who sends his boy to school, wishes him to become literate; and he cannot very well complain if measures are taken to realise this end. The first step is the parent's own; but he will take it in the full knowledge of the consequences which it entails.

12. Curriculum: Rural bias.—Another important matter remains—the curriculum of primary schools. It has already been pointed out that in a mainly rural and agricultural province like Bengal the course of study in the primary school should be adapted to the needs and environment of the majority of the children. [At present the curriculum is designed not to be complete in itself but to lead up to higher studies; and, in fact, two out of three children who come to the end of the primary course pass on to the middle school. The natural result is that, while the country as a whole depends on its villages and on agriculture, every intelligent boy is drawn away to the towns and to occupations which can only be followed in towns; the countryside is regularly drained of its most hopeful and intelligent elements. And, on the other hand, no villages need instructed leadership and service more desperately than the villages of Bengal, afflicted by malaria and other diseases, oppressed by the growing burden of debt. Under the new system here proposed, the number of children in the upper classes of the primary schools will probably be very much greater and there will be all the more need for a re-orientation of the curriculum. This revision is necessary, first because the existing course is generally regarded as too heavy and wide for the average village boy, secondly because the primary course should be a self-contained course suited to the village child, lastly because the child will be able to grasp more quickly and intelligently teaching with a "rural bias," dealing with ideas and things which are part of its own background.]

Primary education will thus mean for the village boy not only a grounding in the rudiments of general knowledge, but also in some sense a preparation for his own vocation. A curriculum on these lines for primary schools is being prepared.

13. Programme of Primary Schools.—There are at present over 60,000 primary schools in Bengal, mostly one or two-class schools, mostly one-teacher and only a small number two-teacher schools. [These 60,000 probably do not produce 60,000 literates in the year.] It is obvious that any scheme of reorganisation may involve, until more funds are available, a reduction in the number of schools receiving aid from Government and public funds without in any way reducing the sum total of grants. This may be inevitable, because funds are not available to render all of them even moderately efficient. In many villages there is a general patshala, a maktab for Moslem boys and a school for girls—none of them properly housed, equipped, staffed or taught, useless for any purpose of good. Some amalgamation and selection is an indispensable preliminary to effective reconstruction. It should always be remembered that many of the present schools teach so little and so badly that their abolition is no real loss to anyone. Government propose, however, not to abolish but to expand facilities for education and, as a preliminary, desire that a survey should be undertaken of the location and standard of the existing schools and that the number should be reduced to about 16,000 and that for the time being a programme involving this number of good primary schools, fairly distributed throughout the province, should be carefully worked out. If they were properly distributed, there would still be in general a school within less than two miles of every child. The provision would thus not be very inadequate considering the present financial condition of the province, and, when more money is available, more schools could be established. Sixteen thousand are all that are now possible with any regard for efficiency.

14. Probable increase in number of literate pupils. In 1932, there were about 21 lakhs of children in all the primary schools, of whom only about 8 lakhs were above the infant class. The schools under the proposed scheme, situated as they will be in the larger villages and within easy reach of the smaller villages, will be able to have on the average a much higher enrolment, especially as wastage will be prevented and children will move on regularly from class to class. Most of them will probably easily obtain an enrolment of 120 pupils, 30 in each class. The 16,000 schools will thus have over 19 lakhs of pupils, of whom about 14 lakhs will be in the three upper classes against the present actual number of 864,659 pupils in the top four classes of the primary stage. The total number of children at school will thus not be very much smaller, especially because the primary stages of middle and high schools in rural areas will also absorb a considerable number of pupils, but the number made literate will be out of all proportion greater. The opportunities for real education will expand rather than contract as a result of this reorganisation.

15. **Maktabs and Girls' Schools.**—Of the 43,000 or more boys' schools which we have now, about 16,000 are maktabs and about 27,000 are general schools. Of the 18,000 girls' schools, about half are maktabs. But it is proposed that under the new scheme all classes of children should attend the same type of schools, provision being made in the curriculum for especial Islamic subjects.

To take first the case of Maktabs: the curriculum in these schools is practically identical with that in a general primary school except that provision is made for religious instruction and the teaching of Islamic subjects. There is no reason why instead of two, one single school, so organised as to provide for the necessary variation in school studies, should not, in all but the most exceptional circumstances, satisfy the needs of both the Hindu and the Moslem communities in primary education. Similar arguments apply to primary schools existing entirely for the education of girls. A school which is to teach girls must provide instruction in subjects which find no place in a boy's curriculum, but this can be done as well in a large general institution generously housed and staffed as in a small and inefficient school to which only girls may go.

Government regard it as a paramount duty to do all that is possible to forward the education of girls and they believe that a great step in this direction will have been taken when the distinction between boys' and girls' primary schools goes.

The positive advantages of such fusion and condensation of schools, even apart from any considerations of efficiency and economy, are great. Every primary school will, under these conditions, have on its staff both Hindu and Moslem, men and women, teachers and will be able to provide, with increased efficiency, all the advantages which accrued to the special and separate institutions.

In schools where a majority of the pupils are Moslem the title of Maktab, traditionally attached to Islamic primary schools, might be given, while in the bigger centres of population, where some of the foregoing arguments have less force, it may be found of advantage to have separate schools for girls and for Moslem pupils.

16. **An outline of distribution.**—The Presidency of Bengal occupies 77,521 square miles, roughly one-fifth of which may be deducted for waste lands, hill tracts, jungle, rivers and beel areas. If 16,000 schools were properly distributed, there would still be in general a school within less than two miles of every child. Bengal has a total population of about 50 millions, of which a little over 46 millions live in rural areas. There would thus be at least one efficient primary school to serve the need of a rural population of a little less than 3,000. In effect, it will mean that in districts like Hooghly, Howrah, Dacca, Mymensingh, Faridpur, Bakarganj, Tippera and Noakhali there will be a primary school to almost every 2 to 3 square miles or a school within less than a mile of every child in these districts. In some districts, the situation of the school will depend upon the existence of beels, rivers, forests, hills and these factors

may necessitate local adjustments. But, subject to this, the following distribution of primary schools is suggested, on the basis of one primary school per 3,000 of population:—

District.	No. of schools.	In urban areas.	In rural areas.	Area of the district in square miles.	Area served by each school in square miles.*
1	2	3	4	5	6
Burdwan ..	625	43	482	2,705	5.82
Birbhum ..	316	7	309	1,099	5.5
Bankura ..	370	22	348	2,625	7.5
Midnapore ..	933	46	887	5,245	13.5
Hooghly ..	371	68	303	1,189	3.0
Howrah ..	366	85	281	522	1.9
24-Parganas ..	904	179	725	5,257	7.2
Nadla ..	610	35	475	2,881	6.0
Murshidabad ..	456	30	426	2,091	4.0
Jessore ..	557	7	550	2,902	5.3
Khulna ..	542	12	530	4,089	8.8
Rajshahi ..	476	13	453	2,600	5.8
Dinajpur ..	585	6	579	3,048	6.0
Jalpaiguri ..	327	6	321	2,032	6.0
Darjelling	106	14	92	1,212	..
Rangpur ..	805	22	843	3,490	4.0
Bogra ..	362	6	356	1,384	3.8
Pabna ..	482	18	464	1,818	4.0
Malda ..	351	12	339	1,764	5.2
Dacca ..	1,144	57	1,087	2,713	2.5
Mymensingh ..	1,710	46	1,664	6,237	3.7
Faridpur ..	787	16	771	2,356	3.0
Bakarganj ..	979	22	957	3,523	3.6
Tippera ..	1,036	25	1,011	2,597	2.5
Noakhali ..	568	8	560	1,518	2.7
Chittagong ..	599	20	579	2,570	4.2
Chittagong Hill Tracts.	70	..	70	5,007	..
Total ..	16,207	625	15,472	77,521	..

*If the area served is a circle.

If the area served is a square.

Area of circle.	Radius.	Area of square.	Minimum distance from centre.	Maximum distance from centre.
Sq. miles.	Mile.	Sq. miles.	Mile.	Mile.
3.14	1	4	1	1.4
4.9	1½	6.25	1½	1.7
5.5	1½	7.11	1½	1.9
7.07	1½	9.0	1½	2.0
9.6	1½	12.25	1½	2.46
12.5	2			
14.1	2½			

The table will make it clear that in all except 6 districts the area to be served by each school will be near about or even less than 5.5 square miles, which means that, if the area served is taken as a circle, then the schools will be within 1½ mile distance of every boy or girl. The six districts where each school area is over six square miles are Bankura, Midnapur, 24-Parganas, Khulna, Dinajpur, and Jalpaiguri. All these areas have forests and jungles, hill tracts and uninhabited areas; if these are excluded, the school area in these districts also will probably come to the level of the other districts.

The Government wish to make it clear that in putting forth these proposals before the

public, they are genuinely anxious to expand the opportunities of real education and to bring in a better condition of instruction. Nor do they wish by these proposals to delay the operation of the Primary Education Act, should the economic condition of the people justify the introduction of the Act at any particular time. On the other hand, the establishment of the new type primary schools will give an immediate programme of work to those districts which have accepted the partial operation of the Primary Education Act. When the Act is introduced in full, these schools working in double shifts will meet the needs of the rural areas as contemplated under the Primary Education Act and in many respects will be the models, so that the people may get good value for their money, and the dangers of wastage, of lapse into illiteracy and of bad education may be avoided.

17. **Employment of 64,000 teachers.**—Under this scheme, 64,000 men and women teachers will be settled in village life with a new avenue of employment. Sixteen thousand of them, as will be seen later, will be employed on a pay of Rs. 20 and 48,000 on a pay of Rs. 15. They will, in addition, have opportunities to look after their village lands and cultivation. One may fairly aim at creating a new life in the villages and incidentally these men and women will be directly interested in the improvement of village agriculture and will be better informed about market conditions.

18. **The Primary School Teacher.**—In education, even more than in other social activities, everything depends in the last resort on the human factor and the teacher is the key to the success or failure of an institution. All earlier proposals are intended merely to remove obstacles and to provide a favourable environment for the efforts of the teacher; and they would by themselves be futile unless the quality of the teaching is sound. But in Bengal the teacher is not only overworked and underpaid, but generally untrained and ill-qualified for his work. The last Quinquennial Report stated that "most of the teachers remain untrained. Bengal, in this respect also, was at the bottom of the list of provinces. Of the untrained teachers there are, it is reported, many who cannot even read correctly or with ease.....The fact is that the conditions of service of the primary school teacher are such that the profession can scarcely attract any but those who are driven into it in despair as the last refuge of the unemployed.....the average salary in Bengal is the lowest in all India."

19. **Need for Rural-minded Teachers.**—Nor is this all. Many of the teachers are men with an urban rather than a rural outlook, with a smattering of an "English education," who belong by upbringing or longing to the towns rather than to the country. A new type of teacher is required, men and women who have had a thorough vernacular education, who have been trained in the art of teaching small children, who are interested in the welfare of the village and eager to play their part in its improvement. The Auxiliary Committee wrote thus:—"There is little hope of real progress in primary education,

unless a definite break is made with the policy of inconsiderately multiplying schools, and of hastily expanding or improvising new ineffective arrangements for training the additional teachers required. As matters stand in India, effective arrangements for training vernacular teachers must, generally speaking, precede the expansion of primary schools, as the training of vernacular teachers itself depends upon a good supply of recruits from middle vernacular schools. Hence money spent on expansion or improvement of middle vernacular schools and on vernacular training institutions will yield a larger and more permanently fruitful return than money spent on almost any other of the many objects which are dear to the heart of the educationist."

The last Indian Quinquennial Report quoted from the report of a committee of American experts about missionary educational work in India to the same effect. "We would get further in the end," they suggested, "if we closed one half of our village schools and spent money in training teachers for the other half.....What we need for village teachers are not foreigners, nor even the urban, English-trained Indians of the city schools. The one has never had, and the other has lost, the ability to think along the furrows cut by Indian tradition. The need is for young men and women who, having grown up in a village, are used to its ways of living; and who have been given an education that opens their eyes to village and agricultural problems and gives the means of dealing with them."

20. **Results of the New Policy in the Punjab.**—What teachers of this type can achieve can be seen in the remarkable progress made in recent years in the Punjab. The percentage of boys at school to the total school-going population in that province increased from 23·9 in 1922 to 44 in 1932 whereas in Bengal it increased only from 37·2 to 48·8. The number of pupils in Class IV increased from 41,729 in 1917 to 109,582 in 1932—in Bengal it remained almost unchanged about 128,000. In other words, in Bengal about 45,000 schools were producing 128,000 literates, but in the Punjab about 10,000 institutions were producing about 109,000 literates; the cost in Bengal was about Rs. 70 lakhs, in the Punjab only about Rs. 38 lakhs. The waste of money and effort in Bengal is lamentable. Nor is this all. The school and the teachers in the Punjab have become the centres of community life. "There is not a tahsil or sub-tahsil, where useful work has not been done by teachers and inspecting officers.....Scores of schoolboys have formed themselves into singing parties for carrying on uplift propaganda in villages.....As a result of this propaganda vigorously pursued, one is beginning to see a streak of light on the horizon, and one has occasion to see signs of the wholesale effect of the work now being done. Thousands of lectures have been given by teachers and inspecting officers. Thousands of people have been vaccinated and inoculated at their persuasion. Prophylactic measures have been taken in hundreds of villages against disease. Streets have been cleaned, manure pits have been dug, wells have been purified, and so forth."

The explanation is simple. In the Punjab, only 17·4 per cent. of the schools are single-teacher schools, in Bengal 59·8 per cent. Nearly three in four of all the primary school teachers in the Punjab are trained, in Bengal only about one in four. In Bengal only about one in five of the men teachers have a higher qualification than that of having passed the primary stage, in the Punjab the proportion is two in three. In 1932 in the Punjab there were 853 pupils in the 18 women's training schools, in Bengal only 234 in the 10 schools.

21. Pay of Primary Teachers.—To attract suitable men and women to the profession of teaching in primary schools and to train them adequately is, therefore, a necessary preliminary and concomitant to any re-organisation of primary education. But this would be hopeless unless the teacher is better paid. In 1932 the average salary in a school under public management was about Rs. 15 and in private schools only a little over Rs. 6. A man during training gets a stipend of Rs. 10, but after training he would be fortunate to get a salary of Rs. 10. Unless the prospects of the teachers are improved, we cannot hope to improve their quality. Government propose to work in future on the plan that in all recognised and aided primary schools the salary of the headmaster should be at least Rs. 20 and that of the assistant masters Rs. 15. The minimum cost of a four-teacher school would thus be Rs. 65 for salaries and about Rs. 10 for contingencies, or Rs. 900 a year. The 16,000 schools proposed would ultimately involve an annual expenditure of Rs. 1,44,00,000.

22. Inspecting staff.—Even good teachers will benefit by the stimulus and check of sympathetic inspection; and a competent inspecting staff is as indispensable as a competent teaching staff. At present the lower inspectorate suffers in two ways: each sub-inspector has far more schools under his charge than he can give proper attention to and he is too often a man trained in the methods of English rather than of vernacular education. The new rural school will need a new type of inspector, a man or woman tuned to the needs and conditions of the village and at home in it. Government suggest, therefore, that the number of sub-inspectors should be fixed at one for a hundred schools, that a fourth of the cadre should be filled up by the most capable and experienced of the primary school headmasters and another fourth from the staffs of the middle vernacular and vernacular training schools. There will thus be a career open to talents among the teachers. It is hoped that at least 10 per cent. of the sub-inspecting staff will be women.

At present sub-inspectors of schools are chosen from those who have passed the course for the degree of Bachelor of Teaching, which is designed more for teachers in secondary schools than for men whose work will be the inspection of primary schools. This training is unsuitable for the type of officer required, and Government propose to institute a new system which will involve a special six months' course at one of the Training Colleges, followed by nine months'

practical and theoretical work at selected centres in primary school teaching and supervision, together with an intensive training in rural reconstruction work.

Such men should be able to bring to their work a fresh and sympathetic understanding of the problems of primary education in all its aspects.

23. Secondary Education: (a) Middle Vernacular Schools.—From what has been said of the primary school and its teachers, the significance of the middle vernacular school will be apparent. But nothing has been more striking than the steady decay of these schools in Bengal. In 1917 there were 349 middle vernacular schools, in 1922 only 217 and in 1932 the number had dwindled to 54. Contrast this with the amazing expansion of such schools in the Punjab, where they increased from 151 in 1917 to 672 in 1922, 2,114 in 1927 and 3,241 in 1932 and the enrolment during the period from 28,711 to 447,514. For every one boy in a middle vernacular school in Bengal, there are over a hundred in the Punjab. And this remarkable development is the result of a deliberate policy, most successful in the Punjab but followed also in almost every other province in India. "The aim of vernacular middle education," says the last Quinquennial Report of the United Provinces "is to improve the rural youth, to provide the necessary teachers for elementary education and, while making rural boys literate, to retain them in the country-side." Without a well-distributed system of middle vernacular schools, it would be idle to expect either to improve primary education or to raise the level of village community life or to keep away from English schools the many who do not benefit by higher education and now clog and hinder the work of high schools and colleges. The middle vernacular school is not merely a school where all the instruction is in the vernacular and where English is only an optional subject, it is or should be a school with a rural outlook, adopted to the needs of those who come from the village and will go back to the village. There is no reason why what has been achieved elsewhere should not be accomplished in Bengal and the middle vernacular school made the corner-stone of the new educational programme.

Government propose that there should be one middle vernacular school to every police-station, roughly one middle school to 25 primary schools, and that the number should be gradually increased till the ratio becomes one to five. These schools will have their three middle classes and most of them will have attached to them the four classes of a primary school.

These middle vernacular schools would have a curriculum designed to give a sound general training to rural boys and to fit them in some measure at once for their agricultural occupations and for village uplift work. "What India needs more than anything to-day," wrote the Agricultural Commission, "is a new and wider system of education, a system which will be in harmony with village conditions and requirements, which will train boys and girls desirous of remaining a part of the village and of spending lives of service to the progress of the country-side." Accordingly in the

Punjab agriculture forms a part of the course in many middle vernacular schools and "rural science (a composite subject embracing agriculture, science, village sanitation, co-operative and elementary civics) has recently been provided as an alternative to English at the Vernacular Final Examination." The curriculum for Bengal will be on similar lines and is now under preparation.

24. Training Class.—It is from these schools that the primary school teachers will be largely drawn and for the purpose of training them training classes will be attached to selected middle vernacular schools.

25. Revision of Middle and High School curriculum—(b) Middle English and High Schools.—With the establishment of the new type of primary schools, Government will slowly attempt to convert the existing middle English and middle vernacular schools into the improved type of such schools.

The middle English stage will also cover a period of three years and will be intended for the urban or developed areas. But in one important respect it will differ from the present system; it will lead up to the high stage and will be a preparation for it but it will also be complete in itself, providing a satisfactory general training for the boy who wishes either to proceed no further or to pass on to a technical or vocational school. In other words, the end of the middle stage will be a definite terminal or diverting point for many pupils and the curriculum will be constructed accordingly. With the revival and reconstruction of the middle vernacular schools, there will be need for middle English schools only in urban or other developed centres and their numbers can be reduced, with a corresponding improvement in efficiency. In 1932 Bengal had 1,845 middle English schools for boys, while Madras had only 174 and no other province had 600.

Similar improvements are necessary in the high stage as well. The high school should be an avenue to the college, but it should also be a stopping point for a considerable number of the pupils who do not wish to proceed further. With the changes already suggested, the demand for a high school education will probably become less general, especially in the rural areas, in which hundreds of schools are now situated. It will, therefore, be possible to turn many of them into middle English or middle vernacular institutions and to use the resources set free to strengthen the others. At present, the multiplication of schools has led to severe competition, which reduces the number of pupils and the income from fees below the economic minimum and is in many ways detrimental to discipline and efficiency. Government have also been unable to bestow an adequate grant-in-aid on these schools.

26. Comparison of Bengal with Madras in Secondary Education.—A comparison with Madras will illuminate the position in Bengal. A boys' middle English school in Bengal had in 1932 an average enrolment of 88, in Madras 152. A high school in Bengal had 239 pupils and in Madras 416. Between 1912 and 1932, in Bengal 594 new high schools for boys were started, in Madras only 210. The average grant to a boys' secondary school in Madras was Rs. 3,256, in Bengal only Rs. 870. One

thousand and forty-nine out of 2,995 boys' secondary schools in Bengal were unaided, in Madras only 9 did not receive aid out of 552. The average number of teachers per school in Madras, taking all secondary schools, was 17, in Bengal 8. 81.6 per cent. of the men teachers in secondary schools in Madras were trained and 30.5 per cent. had a degree, in Bengal the corresponding figures were 19.7 and 22.6. Bengal has about three times as many boys' high schools as Madras, but the number of pupils in the high stage is scarcely greater. These figures are sufficient to show the wide differences in secondary education between two provinces, of which the population and area are approximately the same. Bengal has far more institutions, but they are ill-attended, ill-staffed, inadequately aided or altogether unaided, financially unstable.

27. Necessity of reorganisation.—The reorganisation of vernacular education will, on the one hand, reduce the demand for high English education in Bengal and may render some of the high schools superfluous, and, on the other hand, no radical improvement can be effected without a reduction in the number of institutions in over-schooled areas either by amalgamation or by the abolition of inefficient schools. Both efficiency and the law of supply and demand will point in the same direction; and Government consider it necessary to undertake a survey as a preliminary to a more satisfactory geographical distribution of schools. If the schools are located in the towns and large villages and if competition is eliminated, then each school would have a much larger enrolment than at present, a larger revenue from fees and a larger Government grant, and these in turn would enable it to afford a larger, better paid and better qualified staff and more adequate equipment.

28. Free studentships.—If, however, secondary schools are in future to be situated in the larger centres of population, it follows that boys from the country will often be at a disadvantage in pursuing higher studies. As a complement to their proposals, Government intend accordingly to offer a larger number of free studentships to pupils on the results of the primary and middle school examinations. There will be, as now, a certain number of scholarships for those who occupy the highest places in these examinations; but, in addition, each recognised school will be entitled to grant free studentships to boys who are in need of financial help; these free studentships will be intended primarily for boys from rural schools.

For boys who come from their villages to attend the middle or high school, residential arrangements will also be necessary. Many schools will accordingly have hostels and some concessions should be arranged for those boarders who hold free studentships and under the same conditions.

These concessions will enable a great number of poor and intelligent boys to complete their higher education without serious difficulty; and the concentration of schools will place no obstacle in their way. On the other hand, the generous provision of free studentships may permit in some schools some increase in the rate of fees.

29. Quality of School Work.—One very general complaint is that apart from formal

instruction the teacher and the school do very little for the pupils and that even the teaching is lifeless and uninteresting. The last Quinquennial Report stated that "schools are too often merely coaching establishments and neither seek nor achieve any training of the mind in discipline, leadership and corporate action or any proper training of the body." And again, "little effort is made to arouse the dawning intelligence, to develop the innate spirit of questioning and curiosity, to teach through the medium of all the faculties instead of merely one." In these criticisms there is a great element of truth and, especially, at the adolescent stage it is essential that all the latent powers and interests of the boy should be drawn out and that the influences by which he is surrounded should be healthy and happy.

30. New Matriculation Regulations.—It is hoped that the new Matriculation Regulations will go a great way in improving the quality of school work. The average Matriculation student will be better equipped generally, will be required to pay greater attention to History and Geography as compulsory subjects and to pass in a paper of elementary scientific knowledge. His burden will be lightened by the introduction of vernacular as the medium of instruction and examination and he will be able to pay greater attention to English as a language. Every school must also give him training in physical development.

31. The Teacher.—The decisive factor is the capacity and personality of the teacher. If he is a man with some sense of vocation, some pride in his profession, some knowledge of its technique, then he will in one way or another impress himself on his pupils. It is, therefore, of the utmost importance that the best men should be selected as teachers and that, on the other hand, teaching should be made attractive to the best men. At present the teachers in many aided and in most unaided schools are generally obliged to resort to private tuition or other occupation to supplement their meagre salary. Many of them come to school tired—they have little interest in their work, they have no prospects to stimulate their ambition. Government propose, therefore, that in all recognised institutions there should be a minimum scale of salaries for teachers, as well as a minimum number of teachers. Many of them are now overworked and even a school teacher needs leisure if he is to do his best. Teaching is both an art and a mission, and the teacher needs not only vision but quiet if he is to express what is in him. In 1932 in high schools, the average number of teachers in Bengal was 13, in the Punjab 17, in Bombay 17·5, in Madras 20·5, differences only partly to be explained by the existence of divisions in a class.

32. Methods of Training.—The teacher needs also training, as in any other vocation. In this respect, Bengal is very backward. In 1932 there were 15,088 high school teachers in Bengal and in Madras 9,124 and 5,247 in the United Provinces. In the same year, there were 187 students in the training colleges in Bengal, while there were 342 in Madras and 413 in the United Provinces. The training colleges actually supply Bengal with 120

trained graduates on an average every year. The provision for training in the province is sadly inadequate and even if the number of high schools is reduced, it will be many decades before a majority of the teachers are trained.

It is essential that the facilities for training teachers should be extended and this can be done by establishing more training colleges or by devising schemes in which teachers may under suitable conditions, do a large part of this training while at school.

Although sooner or later Bengal will have to face the necessity for more training colleges these institutions are expensive things and Government have under examination proposals whereby in specially selected school teachers may, by carefully supervised reading and practical work, fit themselves for an examination entitling them to a diploma or a shortened course preparatory to taking a degree in teaching.

It is proposed also to make these schools centres at which will be held "training camps"—short courses of training for teachers in individual subjects. Courses would be designed both for primary and secondary school teachers, the former under the supervision of the staffs of Normal Schools the latter under that of Training College staffs.

33. Improvement of teaching.—Teachers with professional keenness and training will be able to make teaching more vivid and stimulating than it is at present. They will remember that it is the business of the teacher not merely to prepare the pupils for an examination but even more to train them to read and think for themselves.

34. General knowledge and library work.—Apart from the formal subjects of instruction, it is of importance that the school-boy should acquire a taste for reading and through it a store of that general knowledge which is the foundation of culture. These are notably lacking at present and the school should devise ways to impart them. Books should be more carefully selected and libraries should be made more easily accessible. It is not unusual now to find a school library, which is open only once a week and from which the issue of books for reading in school or for taking home is made as difficult as possible. Inspection has shown that in many cases library books are kept in a disorderly fashion, equipment jumbled together, stationery and other articles thrown anywhere, instruments and maps uncared for, pictures in class rooms dirty and the school compound bare and untended. In some cases the library books are not at all suitable for school-boys. There are, however, a few schools, where a daily bulletin is put up on the notice board, consisting of cuttings on interesting topics from the newspaper and where at the end of each day five minutes are set apart for a talk on some general subject by one of the teachers. These and other methods can be more widely used to arouse the pupil's interest and to disseminate general information. Government propose to make a beginning with Government schools and they further propose to examine the whole question of library facilities in schools.

35. Responsibility of the parents—Religious and moral teaching in schools.—But the

boy is in school only for five or six hours in the day and no sound scheme of education can altogether leave out of account the rest of his time. For that, the school, unless it is a residential school, shares the responsibility with the home and it is well to remember that, while the home and the school should co-operate, neither should trench on the legitimate province of the other. For instance, education in India has often been denounced as "godless," but the indictment is at least as much against the home as against the school. In a country where there is such a variety of religions and where Government profess an attitude of religious neutrality and where society itself is so thoroughly permeated with and controlled by religious rules and observances, instruction in religion can be given most easily and most effectively in the home and the parent has no right to transfer his responsibility altogether to the school. At the same time, in deference to the wishes of a large section of the people that our schools must definitely inculcate some religious or moral teaching, Government are prepared to make a beginning and the question is under examination.

36. Responsibility of the school: Games, etc.—On the other hand there are many things which are best done corporately and which the school can organise better than the individual parent. The care of the health of the boy and his physical development is a task which belongs in large measure to the school. Every school should have its playing fields, and, even where much land is not available there are small-area games which are economical of space and equally interesting and useful.

It often happens, however, that the school regards its responsibility as finished when it provides a playing field: it is far more important that every boy should be induced to play. Not only is the superintendence of teachers necessary, but also their participation in games—and on the playing field the teacher can help the boy to learn many lessons which he can scarcely learn as well in the class room, to co-operate with others, to obey orders, to play fair, to accept defeat with equanimity. The introduction of mid-day tiffin makes the institution of compulsory games practicable; and if schools, when they appoint teachers, could give weight to athletic prowess they would have men who would be at once competent to supervise games and able to evoke the hero-worship and spirit of emulation latent in the boy.

There is considerable scope for the development of increased facilities for recreation, in the widest sense of the term, and extra-school activities. These features of youthful life, which in other countries make it a period so full of interest, are almost unknown in Bengal.

A wise headmaster helped by an enthusiastic staff will discover innumerable ways along which to proceed. Visits to local places of historical interest, to mills and factories, to technical schools and agricultural farms, to waterworks and electric generating stations; the encouragement of hobbies and of interest in machines and instruments, such as aeroplanes, motor cars, microscopes, barometers, etc.; school clubs, musical and dramatic; hand-work, whether artistic or more narrowly educational like the making of geographical

models and plans; welfare and social work, the cleaning of tanks and jungle in villages and the care of the sick and those on pilgrimage or at melas and fairs—these are but a few of the methods by which it is possible to arouse in children those instincts of curiosity, creativeness, and sympathy, which lie at the very foundation of all true education.

In order to help schools which are remote from the larger centres of population and whose staffs are, for that reason, out of touch with recent developments in educational practice, Government propose that periodical circulars will be issued containing suggestions and plans for the use of teachers.

37. Other Activities.—Apart from organised exercise and games, there are other ways in which the body, mind and character can be developed. The Scout movement and the Bratachari movement have already spread widely, but in most schools they are represented by a dozen or two dozen boys in a school of some three hundred. There is still abundant scope for expansion and an even greater need for an improvement of the quality of the actual work done. The aim should be for the whole school to participate in a Boy Scout demonstration or Bratachari display or games and sports. "A game for every boy and girl and every boy and girl in a game" should always be the objective. In the last resort, parents and the community generally will rightly judge the value of such movements not by their reputation but by the definite results in their children. There is at present a real danger that they may become mechanical and superficial; and schools and teachers are urged to make sure that they should not attempt more than they can do and that whatever they do should be done well.

38. The "Block" system.—In all these ways the teacher can come near the boy in a friendly and informal manner and can help him; but even here a little organisation is useful and in some schools the boys are all divided into groups or blocks and each placed under a teacher. The teacher is expected to get to know the boys of his group, their homes, their progress, their aptitudes and weaknesses and to help them in every way he can. A relationship of this kind is helpful and the tutor may be able to train and restrain his pupils in many ways that the more formal intercourse of the class room does not permit; but it has its dangers: it would be useless to expect teachers to know everything about the boys nor is it desirable. The value of the relationship depends on its being informal and friendly and, if it becomes inquisitorial, more harm may be done than good. The boy has a right to his own reticences and reserves and a teacher who pushes his way into them will naturally arouse resentment.

39. Need for unified control: Secondary Board.—Many of the suggestions that have been made can be carried out at once, at any rate in Government and aided schools—and that is what Government propose. But it has long been recognised that any radical reform of the secondary system is difficult, if not impossible, as long as the present dual system of control exists. The University can regard the high schools only as preparatory to the colleges but they should be more. While,

therefore, Government gladly recognise that in recent years the University has done much to improve the state of the high schools, its work has naturally been limited and the constitution of a separate single controlling authority is an essential condition of thorough reorganisation. Government consider that the proper course would be to establish a Board of Secondary Education to control all middle English and high schools, a Board on which there will be adequate representation for all the different interests involved. The details of the curricula and so forth can be largely left to the Secondary Board to work out; but the broad principles to which attention has been drawn in this Resolution should govern any future reorganisation.

40. Co-ordination of Madrasahs and other Schools.—Government also desire that the reformed madrasahs and the ordinary secondary schools should be co-ordinated so that passage from one to the other and from either to the colleges or professional schools may be made easier and duplication of institutions as far as possible avoided. A scheme is under preparation.

41. Agricultural farming.—It has already been mentioned that, in spite of the predominantly rural and agricultural character of the province, the present system of education is better adapted to an urban rather than to a rural population. A child after a few years of school education develops a tendency to look upon agriculture as an occupation not belonging or suitable to him. He loses interest in his ancestral pursuits and occupations. Bengal is fast losing the position it once held owing to the growth of this spirit among its literate people. The only way to check this is to create an interest for the child in agricultural and rural vocations. It is therefore proposed that every village primary school and every middle or secondary school in rural areas shall have a small plot of land for some form of agricultural or horticultural work such as is provided by farm, garden or poultry. Bengal villages have still enough land to spare for its schools. The proverbial liberality of Bengalis, especially in educational matters, will always find some suitable land for the school farm. The proprietary rights of these lands need not be transferred to the school; it would be quite enough if some land near the school were made available for even a season or two.

In the school field or the garden, the boys, especially those of the upper classes, can be usefully employed during spare hours on Sundays and holidays in growing flowers or vegetables or raising small crops or keeping poultry. Such occupations would be a delightful change from the ordinary class routine and would be both attractive and helpful. In the Phillippines, practically all schools have gardens attached. In middle and secondary schools, the farming will further develop, though some schools will take up other vocational work such as carpentry, weaving, masonry, hut-constructing, etc. For girls, handwork, cooking, home-craft, village hygiene may be substituted.

A boy is very quick to take the colour of his surroundings and the material environment affects him as surely, if not as profoundly, as

the intellectual or spiritual. Plato said that he who lives in lovely surroundings will become lovely in soul. But many of our schools are unattractive without and within. It is not possible to erect new buildings everywhere, but much may be done to improve and beautify the existing buildings, by a greater attention to cleanliness, neatness and order, by the removal of dust and dirt, by pictures on the walls and perhaps more than all by the cultivation of school gardens. Such gardens can be cared for by the boys under the guidance of a teacher and will serve not merely to adorn the school compound but to keep the boys engaged in a healthy and delightful occupation. If a boy learns to like books, games and flowers, there will not be much wrong with him.

42. Vocational Schools.—An integral part of the scheme of Government is the diversion, at different stages of general education, of such boys as wish to go further to such institutions as can give them the particular type of training for which they are best fitted. This involves the provision of a carefully graduated series of technical, vocational and professional schools and colleges, which will work in co-operation with the general institutions. Vocational training can be given either in the ordinary schools as a part of or an alternative to the general courses or in special vocational schools. Educational opinion at the present time appears to incline to the view that vocational training is best given in separate schools. On the other hand, it is important that in general schools there should be some kind of manual training or handicraft. This has not only a high educative value as a splendid training for the eye and the hand and as a method of self-expression and creation, but it may help boys to discover and test their aptitudes and may predispose some of them to technical careers. Rural science, including some agricultural training, gardening, carpentry, drawing and painting, needlework, these are all subjects which should form part of the curriculum of the different types of primary and secondary schools. But they are intended to vary and widen the general training of the boy and not to prepare him for a craft or industry. It has already been proposed that, in every Government and aided school and in the new type of primary and middle schools, the school compound shall be arranged to provide for a small farm or a kitchen or flower garden or some other outside interest of this nature but that in the primary stage only boys of the topmost class will do regular work therein. There is at present a definite scheme for vocational training in Bengal. In the junior technical schools there are artisan and technical classes suited respectively to the barely literate and to those who have finished the primary or middle stages. The senior technical schools are intended for those who have passed the Matriculation or Intermediate. What is needed is perhaps a more detailed programme and a more extensive system of schools on these general lines. The proposed rural primary schools will give a boy a general training for his ancestral occupation of agriculture; but there should be also schools for teaching village industries such as carpentry, basket-making and so forth. The

urban primary schools should lead out to the middle schools and also to industrial schools imparting a general training in small urban industries, such as smithy and carpentry. The boy who passes out of the middle vernacular school will have the choice between agriculture, primary teachers' training and industrial schools of a rather more advanced type—and the same or slightly different schools would be open to the boy who has passed the middle English stage. Similarly, there should be craft schools for boys who have finished the higher secondary stage. There will thus be three grades of technical or vocational schools and boys should be able to pass from one to the other, if they so wish, just as they pass from one stage of general education to the next.

43. Medical inspection of High School children.—In the past the medical examination of students has not formed a part of school work. We are still far from the time when regular health inspection of primary school pupils is possible. But the examination of the boys of the top five classes is a task that can be easily taken up. Most municipalities and all the district boards have Government Health Officers and the medical inspection of school children is a part of their duties. Unfortunately sufficient attention is rarely given to this side of the work mainly owing to the lack of interest of the school authorities. It is, therefore, proposed that every school will have one teacher or two teachers in charge of the medical inspection of its pupils. It will be his duty to write to the Health Officer to come from time to time and medically inspect the boys. He will maintain a medical inspection register, see that action is taken on each defect, if necessary by placing the matter before the Managing Committee or by arranging with the local hospital or local medical practitioner for free treatment of the poorer pupils. The head master will generally take steps to develop the habit of cleanliness in dress and person and will arrange with the Health Officer for regular quinine treatment of the pupils in the malarious season.

44. Deficient School Areas.—In any proposals of redistribution, it should be borne in mind, a fact which the Government fully recognise, that all Bengal is not overschooled, and there are areas which require more schools than they have at present. It is proposed that in the reorganisation of schools the needs of such areas will be specially considered and it is hoped that this will meet the requirements of the educationally backward communities.

45. Mass Education.—With the introduction of the new Constitutional Reforms, the province will need an intelligent and informed electorate, capable of judging the economic and political issues of importance. The problem, therefore, of educating the masses, apart from making them literate, will soon assume definite importance and the Government feel that some beginning should be made at an early date. The work of educating villagers through the Inspectorate has already been outlined. Another proposal is that important villages should possess village Halls with a small library attached, containing books suitable to village needs and requirements.

But this can be developed only if the public and the people interested come forward with their sympathy, co-operation and generous help.

46. Proposed Programme.—Such is the outline of the proposals which Government now put forward for the improvement of elementary and secondary education. They are designed, on the one hand, to adapt the whole system to the social and economic background of the people and the social and economic requirements of the province, so that a healthy correlation may be established between demand and supply, needs and aptitudes, work and talents; on the other hand, they are intended to improve the quality of the training now given, so that a child should not only get what he is fitted for, but should get the best training possible, a training not only of the memory but of the mind, of the body, of character.

Until the financial condition of the province improves it will not be possible to put into practice at once many of the proposals which have been adumbrated in the preceding paragraphs. But, though progress may be slow, the public has a right to know what is the goal aimed at and how it will be reached. A tentative programme has, therefore, been drawn up to indicate how Government propose to attack the problems of education in Bengal:—

(1) Creation of a Board of Secondary Education.

(2) Transformation of the existing system of primary schools into one of four-class four-teacher schools with a revised syllabus.

(3) Reorganisation and extension of the system of teacher training both for primary and for secondary schools.

(4) Reorganisation of the inspectorate for primary schools.

(5) Insistence on the provision and maintenance of arrangements for healthy extra-academic activities in all Government and aided secondary schools and the withdrawal of grants from schools which do not fulfil these conditions within a fixed time.

(6) Provision of a "vocational" side to the instruction in secondary schools and in the highest classes in primary schools.

(7) Survey of secondary schools with the ultimate object of the establishment of schools where they are necessary, and the consolidation or amalgamation of schools in "over-schooled" areas.

(8) Transformation of middle English schools in rural areas to middle vernacular schools.

(9) Co-ordination of the work of maktabas and primary schools, and of madrasahs and secondary schools.

(10) Introduction of some form of religious or moral instruction in schools.

(11) Legislation, if necessary, to prevent wastage in primary schools.

(12) Institution of final examinations at the end of the primary and middle stages.

(13) Provision of craft classes at the end of the primary and middle stages.

(14) Enlargement of the scope of the village school to serve as a village welfare centre in

co-operation with other departments and utilisation of the Inspecting Staff for this work.

(15) Better arrangements for the medical inspection of children.

(16) Revision of curriculum on the lines previously indicated.

47. **Principles underlying proposals.**—The proposals which Government are making are based on two generally-recognised facts: first, that the real objects of the different stages of education have been till now confused or neglected, so that it has become necessary to envisage and define them afresh and organise each stage with reference to its object; and, secondly, that the quality of the instruction now given is so unsatisfactory that in many cases it does more harm than good and the youth of the province is being defrauded of its rights. These are the facts which have dictated the proposals and by which they have to be judged. Government have no desire whatever to make the commodity of education more expensive or to restrict the supply; on the contrary, they are proposing to offer a wider variety, a better distribution, so that every boy may be able to obtain what is best adapted to his capacity and best fits him to serve the country, and, at the same time, to improve the quality of the product.

48. Government believe that the proposals, if adopted, will remove or mitigate the chief evils and weaknesses of the existing educational system. The problem of the large numbers of unfit pupils in schools and colleges will be solved, first, by the ruralisation of the primary and middle vernacular schools which will keep the average village boy in the village; secondly, by the provision of alternative courses at the different stages in the vocational, technical and professional institutions; thirdly, by the organisation of each stage of general education as more or less complete in itself; lastly, by better teaching in the school itself and by more individual care and attention. The problem of the large numbers of bad schools will be solved partly by a better and more unified scheme of control and by the grant of recognition and aid only to schools for which there is a need and which are efficient. Government will give more generous grants, but only to institutions which have a reasonable number of pupils in each class, an adequate and well-paid staff and arrangements for extra academic activities. Scholarships will be open only to pupils from such schools and will be tenable only in such schools.

49. The problem of unemployment among the educated classes will probably be simplified by the diversion of large numbers of boys unfit for higher education at different stages and by the increased provision of craft classes. The problem of political terrorism will be mitigated by more adequate control over schools, by greater facilities for and insistence on games and outdoor activities, by the more vigorous exertion of the influence of teachers over their pupils, and generally by providing healthy outlets for the energy and idealism of boys; and, in another way, by the reduction of unemployment.

50. There are other matters to which Government are giving their careful consideration: these include the development of female

education, the reorganisation of the college system and the special problems affecting the Muslim community and the scheduled castes and educationally backward classes. It has not been found possible to deal with these questions in this Resolution, but Government hope to formulate their proposals in these spheres as early as possible.

The early establishment at Rajshahi College of an Agricultural Institute with the help of the endowment of the late Kumar Basanta Kumar Roy will provide an interesting experiment in the development of farm work in combination with a scientific laboratory training. With the assistance of the Ministry of Agriculture, schemes have been drawn up for training in dairy work including preparation of butter, cheese, etc., poultry upbringing and horticulture; the latter, it is proposed, should comprise, among other things, the growing of garden produce, and the preparation of such things as syrups, jams, etc., from fruit. Besides those who join the Institute as full-time pupils, students of the college, will be encouraged to employ their spare time in taking courses at the Institute.

The Government College at Krishnagar with its extensive grounds is another obvious place for such experimental work, and the establishment of a Government fruit research institute in Nadia district points to training in fruit-farming as the natural adjunct for the college. There are other colleges in Bengal where agricultural and vocational works can be taken up, provided public opinion gives sympathetic response to the new line of educational activities.

51. **Public opinion invited.**—Government believe that a thorough overhauling of the whole system of education has long been overdue. The defects and weaknesses they have sketched are far-reaching and every day become more threatening. The time has come for a well-considered policy and for vigorous action. Government have put forward the tentative scheme outlined above, but they recognise that it is not possible to carry out any scheme of educational improvement, unless it is supported by public opinion and has borne the test of scrutiny by educationists. Government, therefore, do not intend to proceed further with the proposals until those interested in the future of education and the welfare of the province have had an opportunity of expressing their opinion on them. Government will give the most careful consideration to any criticism and any alternative proposals that may be brought to their notice.

Such opinions should reach the Secretary, Department of Education, Government of Bengal, on or before September 30th, 1935.

Order—Ordered that the resolution be published in the *Calcutta Gazette* with a view to elicit public opinion thereon.

By order of the Govt. of Bengal
(Ministry of Education),

H. R. WILKINSON,
Secy. to the Govt. of Bengal.