

REPORT

ON THE

STATE AND PROGRESS OF EDUCATION

IN THE

CENTRAL PROVINCES AND BERAR

FOR THE YEAR

1924-25

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No. 900.

GOVERNMENT OF THE CENTRAL PROVINCES

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

Nagpur, the 31st October 1925.

READ—

The Annual Report of the Director of Public Instruction on the state and progress of education in the Central Provinces and Berar for the year 1924-25.

RESOLUTION.

Numerical and Financial Returns.—The number of pupils under instruction increased by 9,013 from 353,140 to 362,153. This increase, though smaller than in the previous year, is satisfactory and is shared by all classes of institutions except recognized girls' schools and special schools in which the numbers decreased by 91 and 297, respectively. Expenditure increased from Rs. 88,35,773 to Rs. 90,40,444 towards which provincial funds contributed 55·4 per cent. The average cost per pupil increased from Rs. 18-15-1 to Rs. 19-4-10.

2. University and Collegiate Education.—Government notes with pleasure the marked and satisfactory growth in the development of the University under the vigorous and able direction of its Vice-Chancellor, Sir Bipin Krishna Bose; K.T., C.I.B. During the year under review the University has completed its organization for the discharge of its statutory functions, published a complete set of statutes, ordinances and regulations in its calendar, held its first convocation, conducted its own examinations and obtained recognition of its degrees by most of the Universities in India and by the British Universities of London, Durham and Leeds and secured consideration of the question of recognition by other Universities. The University is represented on the Inter-University Board which

was recently constituted by the Government of India, and is now considering the question of creating a University Students' Information Bureau to take the place of the present Students' Advisory Committee. Arrangements have also been made for the continuation of the University Extension Lectures and of the University Games and Sports' Tournament which were started during the year under review. Steps were taken during the year for the admission of the Agricultural College to the privileges of the University, for the constitution of a Faculty of Agriculture and for the constitution of a University College of Law by taking over the Law classes from the Morris College. These measures have since been carried into effect. The construction of the University building is being pushed forward with all possible speed. A fundamental need of all University education and the basis of all research is a library, appointed, equipped and administered according to the most approved modern methods, rendering accessible to the student not only the best thought of the past but the results of the most recent modern research. It is therefore a matter of satisfaction to Government that at a recent meeting of the Legislative Council a grant was voted which will enable the University to provide the buildings necessary for a University library. Government trusts that this is but the first step and that in the future adequate provision will be forthcoming for the necessary furnishing, equipment and administration of the library.

3. The number of students in colleges increased from 1,022 to 1,262. The demand for admission to the Science courses was again greater than the capacity of the Victoria College of Science but will shortly be met by the construction, at an estimated cost of eleven lakhs of rupees, of a College of Science near the University building in Nagpur. Sanction has also recently been accorded for the construction of a hostel for this college. The staffs of the colleges have been increased by the appointment of Additional Demonstrators and Assistant Professors for the Morris, Victoria and King Edward Colleges. Government notes with satisfaction the development which has taken place in college education and that the good general tone, discipline and work of the colleges have been maintained.

4. Anglo-Vernacular and Secondary Education.—

A promising feature in the secondary education of the province is the work which has already been accomplished

by the High School Education Board, during the first year of its existence. The Board has drafted regulations, laid down the subjects of the High School Certificate Examination, arranged for the preparation of a syllabus in Agricultural Botany, recommended the opening of new centres of Manual Training until there are two in each district and the encouragement of Manual Training as a hobby, though not as a subject of examination in the High Schools, and, for the first time, conducted its own High School Examination. The re-transference to the Middle School of the top class which had been transferred to the High School in the previous year—a transference which was unpopular—was largely due to the representations of the Board. The High School Examination was complicated by the fact that it was conducted in no less than four languages. It is still too early to estimate the ultimate results of the change from English to the Vernaculars as the medium of instruction and of examination, but some of the problems which it raised are indicated in the Director's report and deserve the careful and serious attention of all who are interested in this important matter. Certain of the difficulties, such as the provision of suitable text-books, have already been dealt with by the High School Board. Government is confident that the Board will continue to give to this and other problems of education the careful and dispassionate consideration, cordial spirit of co-operation and prompt and efficient despatch in the conduct of its business which the Director notes as the characteristics of its work throughout the present year.

5. The total number of pupils, 23,368, attending both High and Middle Schools for Indians during the year is the highest on record by no less than 2,365. The numbers attending the Middle Schools increased from 16,958 to 19,196. In the high department alone the numbers rose from 3,759 to 4,172 and the Director expresses the opinion that there is little doubt that in the high departments the high water-mark, which was recorded in 1917-18, will soon be passed. A considerable number of pupils still attend unrecognized coaching classes or read privately for the Punjab or Calcutta University Matriculation Examinations, and it is noteworthy that in the Nagpur Circle alone the number of such pupils is reported not to fall short of 300. The deleterious effects of such cramming are indicated in the figures and remarks quoted by the Director from the report of the Principal of one of the colleges. These figures and

remarks deserve the careful consideration of all parents and guardians. To meet the growing demand for High School Education, new High Schools have been opened at Katni and Amraoti and extensions to existing institutions, both with regard to class-rooms and hostel accommodation, are being carried out elsewhere. With few exceptions the Government Anglo-Vernacular Middle Schools are suitably housed and where this is not the case the question of providing new buildings or extending existing buildings is receiving the attention of the Education Department. A large number of Aided Anglo-Vernacular Middle Schools are still badly housed, equipped and staffed, but a distinct improvement has taken place during the year. Much still remains to be done, but the improvements noted in the report indicate that the public is becoming increasingly alive to its responsibilities and to the educational needs of the country.

6. The revised scheme of medical inspection which came into operation during the year under review has already proved its value in bringing to light various ailments and defects in the pupils of higher schools. At the Model High School, Jubbulpore, for example, 120, out of 474 pupils examined, were found to be defective. These defects are brought to the notice of parents and guardians. The boys are reported to be taking a keen interest in this inspection and to shew themselves anxious to remedy the defects which are pointed out. Government trusts that this interest will be shared by parents and guardians and that the latter will co-operate with the school authorities and medical officers in this important matter.

7. **Vernacular Education.**—The report again emphasises two main problems in connection with the Vernacular Middle Schools. The first is concerned with the introduction of optional English as a subject of instruction in the schools, and the second with the unsatisfactory state of the staff, buildings and equipment of these schools. The teaching of English in these schools is undoubtedly popular and probably accounts to some extent for the increase in the number of pupils in Vernacular Middle Schools in Berar where pupils, who were unable to get admission to Anglo-Vernacular Middle Schools, have been content to enter Vernacular Middle Schools and study English as an optional subject. This, however, as the Director points out, may have detrimental effects on both Anglo-Vernacular Middle and High School Education. For the syllabus

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of the three years' course in the Vernacular Middle Schools is the same as that of the first three classes in the Anglo-Vernacular Middle Schools. The former, however, are not nearly so well staffed and the instruction is consequently on a lower level. The danger, as the Director points out, is that the two courses may come to be regarded as equivalent and that pressure may be brought to bear to admit considerable numbers of badly prepared pupils from the Vernacular Middle Schools into the corresponding classes of the Anglo-Vernacular Middle Schools. The possible deterioration in the standard of both Middle and High School education which might result from such a step is a matter which cannot lightly be dismissed. On the other hand, it is doubtful whether the amount of English which can be imparted by an ill-trained and incompetent staff during the short period of the Vernacular Middle School course will ever be of benefit to a pupil who does not continue his education to a higher standard. With regard to the unsatisfactory nature of the staff etc., it may be pointed out that the education imparted in the Vernacular Middle Schools is the natural complement of that imparted in the Primary Schools for the benefit of the rural population. These schools are also the recruiting ground for Primary School teachers who are selected for a course of training in the Normal Schools. No elementary education can, therefore, be developed along satisfactory lines until the Vernacular Middle Schools are improved. The problem of Compulsory Primary Education still continues to occupy the careful attention of Government. Progress has been slow during the year under report and the increase in the number of pupils in those villages in the Amraoti and Akola districts in which compulsion has been introduced is reported to be less than was anticipated. Signs are not lacking, however, that progress will be more rapid in future. Schemes have been prepared for an extension of Compulsory Primary Education by various Municipalities and District Councils and are now under consideration. Meanwhile it is for Local Bodies, through their attendance officers, to see that the time which must elapse between the introduction of compulsion and the attainment of maximum attendance is reduced as far as possible. Wherever Compulsory Primary Education has been introduced, Government has allowed new posts in higher grades so that the existing district cadres are improved and teachers who do good work can look forward to improved pay and prospects. In 1921, as a result of the general rise in the cost of living, Government sanctioned recurring grants to enable Local

Bodies to raise the minimum salaries of their teachers. The educational returns from Local Bodies last year, however, revealed the fact that in certain cases the prescribed minimum is not paid. Certain Local Bodies also still display a tendency to confirm untrained teachers. This is to be deprecated, for the presence of ill-paid, untrained teachers is bound to militate against present efficiency and future improvement. Certain Local Bodies are still apathetic in the conduct and management of Primary Schools which have been entrusted to them and some of the complaints which have been made against them are mentioned in the Director's report. Others, however, have taken a living interest in this most important work and Government notes with satisfaction the Director's view that this interest is increasing. Progress, however, must necessarily be slow until Local Bodies have the courage to obtain by taxation the funds which in many cases are at present lacking for the carrying out of necessary improvements.

8. Education of Girls.—The number of recognized schools for Indian girls decreased by one from 373 to 372 and of pupils from 23,655 to 23,466. The number of Anglo-Vernacular Schools remained at 12, of which 4 are High Schools, but the number of pupils increased from 614 to 702, the increase in the High department being from 120 to 144. The number of Vernacular Middle Schools increased from 35 to 36 and of pupils from 3,645 to 3,891. In some of these schools English is taught as an optional subject and is said to be popular. The number of Primary Schools fell from 317 to 314 and the enrolment from 18,836 to 18,236. The proportion of girls who complete the school course is still too low. Considerable difficulty is sometimes experienced in getting teachers for the Anglo-Vernacular Middle Schools and in obtaining candidates for training as teachers for Primary Schools. Meanwhile in many cases men act as teachers in Girls' Primary Schools and an increasing number of girls—12,394 as against 12,167 in the previous year—attend Boys' Primary Schools. Except in the Amraoti and Yeotmal districts and in the more backward parts of Chhattisgarh there seems to be no great objection to co-education at this stage. In view of the difficulty of obtaining suitable women teachers, Government trusts that the rewards which it gives to Head Masters will result in increasing the Primary education of girls through attendance at boys' schools.

9. Other activities.—The number of Muhammadan pupils has increased in all kinds of institutions except in

unrecognized girls' schools. It is satisfactory to note that, as in the previous year, there has been an increase of Muhammadan students in colleges. A temporary post of Assistant Professor of Persian in the Provincial Educational Service has been sanctioned in the Morris College for the purpose of teaching Persian up to the M. A. standard.

The work of training institutions has been satisfactorily reported on. One of the important features of the year in connection with the Spence Training College, Jubbulpore, has been the appointment of a Lecturer in Physical Culture to train students of the Training College as instructors of Physical Training. The number of Normal Schools for males remained unchanged at 11, but there has been a reduction from 1,403 to 1,120 in the number of students under training. Out of a total of 660 stipends which are sanctioned for award each year no less than 72 remained vacant. In some districts there is a shortage of qualified candidates. The remedy lies in the improvement by certain District Councils of the quality of their Vernacular Schools, in the improvement in the pay and prospects of the Middle School staffs and in the employment by Local Bodies of only trained teachers. The matter is important, not only because the quality of the instruction given in the Vernacular Schools depends on the work done in the Normal Schools, but also because the introduction of Compulsory Primary Education should carry with it an increased demand for the product of the Normal Schools.

The total number of pupils of the Depressed Classes increased by 2,406 from 28,553 to 30,959. It is satisfactory to note that the numbers attending Middle and High School classes increased by 527 and that this year candidates were forthcoming for the five college scholarships which are sanctioned for annual award although only one scholarship could be awarded during the previous year. Government grants for hostels for pupils and students of the Depressed Classes increased during the year and bonuses were given as usual to Head Masters of schools from which boys of the Depressed Classes pass the Primary Examination.

The number of pupils in European Schools increased from 1,977 to 2,128. Of this increase 53 were boys and 98 were girls. It is regrettable that the great majority of pupils of the European Schools do not proceed beyond the Middle School stage. During the year under review only 153 European pupils attended High School classes and

only 8 were admitted to colleges. The year under review is the last of the old system of assessing grants to European Schools. In future the grants paid to these schools will be assessed on exactly the same principles and will form the same proportion to expenditure as in the case of Indian Schools.

The report from the Government Engineering School, Nagpur, indicates that progress has been satisfactory both from the point of view of results and of numbers.

During the year under review a new constitution for the Rajkumar College, Raipur, came into force with the approval of the Government of India. The two main features of the change are, first, the placing of the governing control of the college more in the hands of the Ruling Chiefs and Zamindars and, secondly, the giving to Behar and Orissa representatives an equal share in the control with those of the Central Provinces.

The Boy Scout Movement has continued to develop in a most gratifying manner and the admirable training which the movement gives in good citizenship is shown by the extent to which advantage is taken of the services of scouts in connection with large public gatherings of all kinds.

10. Acknowledgments.—Government desires to place on record its appreciation of the work done by the University through its Vice-Chancellor, Sir Bipin Krishna Bose, and the members of the various University Bodies; of the zeal and efficiency displayed by the administrative staffs and by the teaching staffs of the schools and colleges; and, in particular, of those specially mentioned in the Director's report. To Mr. Jones, the permanent Head of the Department, and to Mr. Beckett, who held charge during the latter half of the year, and who has written the interesting report under review, the obligations of Government are due for the whole-hearted devotion with which they have discharged their arduous duties. Government also desires to acknowledge the valuable services rendered by Mr. Dix, Deputy Director of Public Instruction.

By order of Government,

R. H. BECKETT,

*Officiating Secretary to Government,
Central Provinces.*

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