CHAPTER V

PRIMARY EDUCATION

Introduction

Primary education is universally acknowledged as the irreducible minimum for effective citizenship. 92.9 percent of the total school population were in primary schools in 1960. While the number of children in post-primary schools will steadily increase, it must be realised that the great majority of children for many years to come will leave school after completing the primary school course. The primary school may not, therefore, be regarded merely as a preparatory school for it must in itself offer a complete course of training. It is, in other words, the school which prepares the average Fiji islander for life, and for this reason it may not stop at the stage of just imparting a little knowledge, but must also teach the pupils how to apply this usefully. Any scheme for educational reconstruction at the primary level in Fiji must take cognizance of these factors.

This chapter puts forward suggestions for reorganisation of the primary education in Fiji and they are discussed under the following headings: general considerations, Fijian schools, Indian schools, Mission schools, European schools, mixed schools, compulsory education, curriculum, the medium of instruction, and classification of schools.

General Considerations

Though in the past a great deal has been achieved in the education of the children in Fiji, every unbiassed reader of

Chapter 111 of this study will agree that if it is intended to provide a really satisfactory education much more is required than a mere patching-up of the existing system. The present system, in the words of the 1926 Education Commission, "is built up of shreds and patches borrowed from the school systems of other countries. It is in no sense racy of the soil as all national education should be."[1] Some fundamental reorganisation is necessary. It is not suggested that the desired objective can be achieved in a short time, but a policy should be laid down which, in the course of say ten years at the very most, will provide a satisfactory system. The approach must be essentially realistic. What form of organisation will provide the desired end and what type of control will guarantee that these ends are in the long run achieved? At this stage it is probably necessary to repeat briefly the criteria which should determine the type of system which should be built. In the first place we aim to train young people to take their places as intelligent citizens in a democratic society. Secondly we must see that they are trained not only for citizenship but also to play their part in the economic life of the community.

Perhaps the greatest defect of the present educational system of Fiji is the almost complete lack of integration. There is very little co-ordination among the various bodies which are at the present moment interested in education and, while it is not suggested that there should be any restriction on the freedom of development as far as the general content of education is concerned, unless there is a definite integration of control there will continue to be considerable overlapping which not only will result in excessive and wasteful expenditure but will inevitably leave

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[1] Report of the Education Commission 1926. Op.cit. Para. 8.

gaps which will be nobody's responsibility to fill. The only way in which such an effective system can be created in Fiji is that it must be completely subject to government control. The clash of sectional interests has brought about the present chaotic conditions.

The Indian community of Fiji in its Memorandum for Sir Alan Burns, in 1959, submitted:

> Government should provide a national system of schools open to all races and classes. In our view the responsibility of mass education must rest with government and not with religious societies and ad hoc committees.[1]

In Chapter III we have set out the many reasons as to why the present education system is unsatisfactory.[2] Suffice it to say that from whatever angle the question is viewed, whether control, standard of education, teachers or finance, the present system is unsatisfactory. Much as, in theory, freedom of development is desirable, yet unless under such a system "the children" are effectively catered for, then steps must be taken to see that these children who are the real subjects of education are the first consideration. "The children" is the ultimate criterion, not politics, colour, race or religion.

The only way to achieve this integration, therefore, is for the government to take over gradually all Fijian district schools, all Indian committee schools and ultimately all mission schools. The final responsibility for the planning and administration of a suitable scheme can rest only with the government. To concede a claim of any party is, in effect, to surrender into other hands what should be the duty and responsibility of government alone as the representative of the whole people and the final guardian of their interests.

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[1] Indian Community Memorandum, 1959. Op.cit. Para. 127.

[2] Supra. Pp. 116-120.

In Tanganyika similar conditions obtained. Historical and geographical factors have led to the emergence of separate school systems for different races or groups of races. The need for providing suitable educational facilities for the indigenous population (African) and the non-African communities (Asian and European) was fully appreciated. In 1958 the Tanganyika Government appointed a committee "to consider how the present system may be best integrated" in order to develop "a single system of education for the territory".[1] The Report adds:

> The recommendations of the Committee have been considered by the Government and in December, 1960, the Legislative Council approved a Government Paper setting out the principles which it is intended should govern the future development of the education system and providing for the new integrated system of education to take effect on 1st January, 1962.[2]

In any country there is a strong body of opinion in favour of co-educational schools; and in every multi-racial country there is a growing body of opinion in favour of multi-racial schools. The Governor of Fiji when addressing the Legislative Council in November, 1954, touched on this issue:

> Our educational system hitherto has been based upon racial schools. In view of the difficulties of language and of cultural and of the geographical distribution of the different races, it seems that a system of racial primary schools is the best and most suited to the Colony. As regards secondary education, there is perhaps less educational reason for a system of racial schools, but the framework of secondary schools which we have already lends itself to a continuance of this system up to the School Certificate stage. Beyond this stage only a few pupils proceed to a course designed to fit them for University training. Such a course is not merely an academic one: it is a course designed to bridge the gap between the formal, disciplined,

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[1] Tanganyika - Report for the year 1960. London, HMSO, 1961. Pp. 125-147.

[2] Ibid. P. 165.

> classroom teaching of a secondary school and the freedom of university life. A series of such courses at the various secondary schools in Fiji can be neither efficient nor economic, and the establishment of an inter-racial university entrance course must clearly be one of our objectives in the near future.[1]

With regard to the problem of inter-racial education most of the Fijian schools (district) are in areas where there are very few Indians. Conversely most of the Indian committee schools are in areas where thereare very few Fijians. In the rural areas, therefore, provision should be made to continue separate Fijian and Indian schools but in areas where the different races live together, mixed racial schools should be provided. This suggestion is developed in more detail in the ensuing pages.

Fijian Schools

The Fijian district schools are at present under quasi-government control but the lack of integration is creating certain difficulties and preventing the raising of the standard. What is required is adequate supervision and guidance. But mere supervision will be inadequate. Provincial control is not satisfactory. There should be a complete integration of control; but if the control of district schools is integrated the question of provincial financial contributions will also have to be considered. It has been pointed out earlier that owing to the differences in the prosperity of the various provinces, some are unable to provide a satisfactory school system or to employ an adequate number of fully qualified teachers. Only by a more unified control by the Department of Education could a frontal attack be made on this problem.

Although for the reasons stated above it is necessary for the government to accept the direct responsibility for all provincial

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[1] Hansard. Sessions of 1954. Op.cit. Pp. 179-180

outgoings and for the appointment of teachers, it is important that local interest be sustained. The various schools and district committees and provincial councils should continue to have those local responsibilities which may be summed up in the expression that they will hold a watching brief on behalf of the Fijian population in general and of the parents in particular.

The above suggestion for complete integration of control of Fijian schools is in harmony with the recommendation of the Burns Commission which recommended the abolition of Fijian Administration. As Burns Commission says:

> We have examined closely the working of this "dual" administrative system and also the results attained after fifteen years' operation because we feel that in a country such as Fiji where farming is the main industry an essential prerequisite to progress and development is a sound and smooth-working local administrative machine. From this examination we are convinced that, in its present form, the system is not operating to the benefit of the Fijians. The following are some of the reasons for reaching this conclusion:-
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> (a) It is no longer (if ever it was) a local government organisation and it has developed, and is becoming more and more entrenched, as a completely exclusive, autonomous adminsitration (with its own financial and legal advisers) divorced from the Central Government.
> (b) It is tending to isolate the Fijians from all other communities.
> (c) It is continuing to foster an out-dated communal system against the wishes of a large number of people who desire a much greater degree of freedom.
> (d) The present "dual" system is wasteful of time and money.
> (e) For its success it is almost wholly dependent upon "personalities" instead of "pin-pointed" responsibility.[1]

Indian Schools

The Indian community, realising that the present system of

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[1] Burns Commission Report - 1959. Op.cit. Para. 187.

control is unsatisfactory, desires that the government should take over all Indian schools.[1] There will be no question as to reimbursement for the capital money spent. (In an case the monies have been collected by public subscriptions for educational purposes). Furthermore in a number of cases at least fifty per cent of the capital expenditure has been provided by the government. From the point of view of the Indian community, moreover, the question is not the ultimate control of the school but the provision for the children of an adequate education system. Indian committee schools should be taken over at the earliest possible moment.

Mission Schools

Missions in general present an entirely different problem. Each of the missions feels it has a definite religious duty to perform in regard to education. As far as the Roman Catholic Mission and the Seventh Day Adventist Mission are concerned, this attitude is unequivocal. Both institutions will carry on their educational work irrespective of whether they receive grants or not. The Methodist Mission desires to retain its schools and also wants assistance from the public revenue.

That the missions have contributed very considerably to education in the past is accepted by all but the time has come when the facilities at their disposal are not sufficiently great to cope with the problem. They are at the present time quite naturally merely dealing with those phases which are most acceptable and accessible to them, with the inevitable result that the more difficult phases are left to the government. Particularly when it is remembered that a very large proportion of the cost

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[1] Indian Community Memorandum, 1959. Op.cit. Loc.cit.

of the mission educational institutions is borne from the public purse, the government's responsibility for the most effective expenditure of public monies cannot be ignored. Some of the defects of the mission administration have been pointed out in Chapter 111. The missions would be the first to acknowledge such defects, but their reply would probably be that given finance they would be quite prepared to provide better facilities. When it comes to finance, however, they immediately turn round and request assistance from the government. This begging of the question places the whole problem in relief.

The fundamental question at issue is "under what control can the children be given the best education possible?" The expression "education" as used here does not mean merely a knowledge of the three "Rs" but the inculcation of those principles of moral rectitude and civic responsibility without which education is a farce. The strength of the mission lies in the fact that religion is not merely incidental to their work but definitely a basic factor in their attitude towards the children. They say that only in mission establishments can christian principles be adequately taught, that is under conditions where the christian influence is universal. There may be something in this point of view. It is very difficult in a secular school, particularly where the religions are mixed, to teach christian doctrines which are acceptable to all races, all religions and all types of society.

In any case mission activity of recent years tends to be selective. The fact that any particular school is successfully run and is making a contribution, is hardly an answer to this particular point of view, because any institution which is selective as far as its supervision and its scholars are concerned can probably do

better work than a school where scholars are not so chosen; and further, where any pressure, religious or otherwise, is brought to bear on parents to send their children to any particular school, it is obvious that it is impossible to form other than subjective judgments as to the efficiency of that school. The ability to pass examinations is not the final test. The only body which can define the ultimate direction in which people shall move is the government as representing the people as a whole.

With a few notable exceptions the mission schools are not keeping pace with modern requirements nor do they appear to have prospects of being able to do so.[1] The Methodist Mission has no margin of funds on which to draw and hence cannot out of its own funds either enagege the many new European teachers who will be required if a major development as envisaged in this study is undertaken, or provide the necessary capital to equip adequately its day and boarding schools. The Roman Catholic Church is running its own system on very inadequate finance. Its European teachers, that is, Brothers and Sisters in religious orders, do not in general receive a salary from the Church; the salary grants paid by the government are pooled for the maintenance of the religious orders in Fiji. On that side therefore the costs to the Church are very low. The majority of the Seventh Day Adventist Mission schools are not up to the standard and to require the employment of registered teachers would impose a fairly heavy financial burden on this mission.[2]

The above paragraphs raise the question of the extension of school facilities so that ultimately the children in Fiji will have an adequate opportunity at least for a good primary education.

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1 "The missions are finding it more and more difficult to raise funds to supplement fee revenue." Report on Education in Fiji-1955. Op.cit. Para. 9.

2 Supra. Table 5 at page 57.

The government must take the initiative in this direction. When desirable objective has been attained that it is obvious that if any or all missions or private bodies desire to start new private schools they may do so without any subsidy from the government and always subject to the right of the government to determine educational standards.

Some mission institutions do provide facilities for higher primary education. At the moment there are not sufficient facilities in the Colony for all higher grade primary pupils. In such cases the present grant system should be continued until it is possible to reach the higher standard in the local government schools for Fijians and Indians, but when that standard has been reached all subsidies should be withdrawn. This will give the church involved sufficient time to reorient its general policies and they will recognise that if for no reason other than purely religious they desire to continue their work, they will have to do so without government assistance.

In this connection it is of interest to note that two countries, namely Ceylon and Panama in 1960 incorporated the private school system into the framework of the state educational system.

> Ceylon. In December, 1960, all assisted schools, with the exception of 55 grade 1 and 11 schools, were brought under the management of the Director of Education. Those exempted were permitted to remain under the management of the denominations which own them, but they ceased to receive any grants from State funds and were required to provide education free, while new admissions were restricted to pupils whose parents professed the religion of the proprietors.[1]
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> Panama. The Ministry of Education, wishing to associate itself more closely with the development of private schools, decided

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[1] International Yearbook of Education. Vol. XXIII, 1961. Publication No. 236. Paris, Unesco; Geneva, IBE, 1962. P. 80.

> to incorporate private education, both primary and secondary, into the framework of official education. Primary and secondary private schools have therefore been placed under the direct jurisdiction of the primary and secondary education directorates respectively, and the directorate of private education has been abolished.[1]

In New Zealand where education is free and compulsory until the age of fifteen, 12 percent of the primary school population and 18 percent of the secondary school population receive their education in privately managed schools. A large majority of these privately managed schools are conducted by the Roman Catholic Mission. Private schools in New Zealand receive no financial assistance from the government funds.[2]

This study suggests that the government should take over complete control of all Fijian district schools and all Indian committee schools. The complete responsibility for staffing, maintenance and equipment would then fall on the government. As far as mission schools are concerned, those schools which are in effect district schools, whether for Fijians, Indians or Europeans, catering for day pupils from the surrounding areas should also be integrated into the government system. The question of compensation to these institutions will have to be considered though it is felt that no such question will arise unless the government desires to utilise the land and buildings of the missions. No compensation is to be paid for buildings to be left vacant. In view of the fact that a very large portion of the finance has ultimately been found in Fiji either by the government (by way of building grants) or by the people themselves, this question will not be very difficult of solution if all parties concerned realise that the children of Fiji are the ultimate consideration.

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[1] Ibid. P. 289.

[2] Compulsory Education in New Zealand. Paris, Unesco, 1952.P.42 P.42.

European Schools

As stated earlier, facilities for the schooling of European children (including part-Europeans) are provided by the government, the missions, European committees and private commerical concerns. Many European children leave the Colony when they are between ten and eleven in order to complete their education in either England, Australia or New Zealand, but whilst this is true of some European children, a large majority of children whose parents are in the lower income groups and most of the part-European children have no opportunity to proceed abroad and, therefore, their education must be completed within the Colony.

The Colonial Sugar Refining Company's schools are being run at the present time very efficiently, and the co-operation of the Company with the Department of Education leaves nothing to be desired. None-the-less the government should accept full responsibility for these schools. It is the responsibility of the government to provide for basic primary education to all its children. The schools should be absorbed into the government system, teachers brought within the government scheme, and general conditions further integrated with the revised education system for Fiji. With regard to schools conducted by other institutions similar conditions should apply, namely that they should be taken over by the state.

There is little justification for the existence of mission schools for European and part-European children. Government schools are available (or will be available if the C.S.R.Company's schools are taken over) for the children of these races in all places where such mission schools are in existence. It is wasteful of public money and detrimental to the child's education to run two small independently staffed European schools in each town.

Mixed Schools

The Director of Education in his Report on Education for the year 1960, writes:

> Although the number of schools officially classified as racially "mixed" is small, this is because a school is not so classified unless at least 25 per cent of its total roll is composed of other than the predominant race. The extent to which "racial" schools are multi-racial in practice, though not in name, is shown by the following statistics for 1960:
> (a) of the 20 primary and two secondary schools officially classified as "European", nine primary and both the secondary schools had non-Europeans on their rolls;
> (b) of the 325 primary and 13 secondary schools officially classified as "Fijian", 83 primary and four secondary schools had non-Fijians on their rolls;
> (c) of the 166 primary and 26 secondary schools officially classified as "Indian", 53 primary and 25 secondary schools had non-Indians on their rolls.[1]

The problem of inter-racial education presents a stimulating challenge to the educationists in Fiji. Up to the present moment the government policy has been to educate the races separately. Certain of the mixed racial schools have been very successful and do definitely point the way towards further developments. In some of the schools, particularly in urban areas, English is the medium of instruction from Class 1.[2]

Before we suggest a plan for developing multi-racial schools for Fiji, let us see how far multi-racial schools have been developed in a few other countries. We shall study two countries, Tanganyika and New Zealand. Conditions in Tanganyika are very much like those obtaining in Fiji. New Zealand is considered one of the educationally advanced countries of the world. The Maoris are the natives of New Zealand.

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[1] Department of Education. Annual Report for the year 1960. Op.cit. Para. 74.

[2] Ibid. Para. 61.

The Tanganyika Government has adopted a definite policy of integrating schools with a view to evolving a single unified system of education for the territory. As regards multi-racial schools the Tanganyika Government report for the year 1960 says:

> The European Education Authority has agreed that children of other races, if they are able to take advantage of the type of education provided and are able to pay the fees, may be admitted to European day schools on the condition that places are available and that no European children are likely thereby to be excluded. The Indian Education Authority has similarly agreed to the admission of children of other races to Indian schools; this has been the policy of the H.H. The Aga Khan's schools for several years. The Trustees of St. Michael's and St. George's School at Iringa, the co-educational boarding school run on English Public School lines which is the only European secondary school in the Territory, have declared their readiness to admit suitable pupils of other races.[1]

Let us see how the Maori children are educated in New Zealand. In 1951 the Maori children in New Zealand numbered approximately 31,000, nearly 10 percent of all children of school age. The laws governing Maori education are substantially the same as those for the European children. Both primary and post-primary education are free for Maori children from 5 till 19, and there is the same obligation to attend school from 7 till 15.[2] In fact almost all Maori children of school age are enrolled, and they attend school as regularly as do European children. Maori children attend either the ordinary public schools managed and controlled by the district education boards, or the separate Maori schools (of which there are about 160) controlled directly by the Education Department. This twofold system, however, "implies no deliberate separation or segregation of Maori children from European children". Pupils of either race attend either kind of schools,

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[1] Tanganyika - Report for the year 1960. Op.cit. Pp. 165-166.

[2] Compulsory Education in New Zealand. Op.cit. P. 9

mainly according to the particular district in which they happen to live, about 9 per cent of the children attending Maori schools being Europeans, and three per cent of children attending ordinary schools being Maoris. The division arose in earlier times when special provision had to be made for Maori children in districts containing few Europeans; and so long as this need remains the division will no doubt continue.

The missionaries were the first to establish schools for the Maori children. They taught the practical arts of carpentry, agriculture, dressmaking, and so on; and after the native tongue had been given a written form they taught their converts to read the Bible and the Prayer Book, to write, and to do simple arithmetic. The Maoris showed keen interest in acquiring European knowledge, and the mission schools spread rapidly. When New Zealand became a British colony in 1840, i.e. after signing the Treaty of Waitangi, the British government made itself responsible for the education of its Maori subjects. While leaving the day to day work of founding and managing the schools to the churches, the government granted them land and money to sustain their work. At the same time the organised European settlement of the colony was proceeding rapidly, especially in those areas where the native population was small, and the settlers began to make provision for educating their own children. When the colony became self-governing in 1852, the provision of education in Maori districts remained in the hands of the central government, while the provinces took over the responsibility for providing schools for children in European settlements.

There were thus two different systems of education in the

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[1] Ibid. Pp. 18-20.

country, and while the provincial system differed widely among themselves and made very uneven progress, the mission schools grew steadily. Then came the tragic Maori Wars of the sixties, which undermined the Maoris' trust in the missionaries and led to the destruction of many mission schools and the decay of nearly all the rest. After the wars the Central Government itself set out to rebuild a Maori school system. At first this was administered by the Department of the Native Affairs, but shortly after the central Department of Education was founded the Maori schools were placed in its care, and have remained ever since.

During the present century there has been a steady rise in the number of Maori children at school. Moreover, with the rapid extension of European settlement and the increasing movement of the Maori people out of their villages and into the towns and the European farming districts, the proportion of the Maori children seeking admission to the ordinary public schools controlled by the district education boards has been increasing year by year. Since the turn of the present century, there have been more Maori children in the ordinary schools than in the Maori schools. At the present time about 60 per cent of the Maori children attend the former.[1]

The dual systems of education, as stated above, implies no deliberate separation or segregation of Maori children from European children. In the words of the study on Compulsory Education in New Zealand:-

> The Maori children in the public schools conducted by the education boards receive their formal schooling under exactly the same conditions as do the European children. They sit side by side in the same classroom, they learn the same lessons, they share the same privileges and responsibilities of the daily life of the school, they take an equal part in sports and

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[1] Loc.cit.

> other extra-curricular activities, they may go to the same post-primary schools, they sit for the same examinations, they are entitled to the same scholarships and bursaries to attend the university, and may prepare for the same vocations as their European neighbours. In sum, they receive a "European" schooling (though it may be noted that the current primary school curriculum in physical education, art, music and literature include a little material from Maori culture, and that Maori life and history find a place in social studies).[1]

For Fiji, however, it is suggested that positive measures should be adopted to encourage the establishment of multi-racial schools. In urban centres where the major races are mixed, multi-racial schools should be established or the existing racial schools be converted into multi-racial schools. This step would not only be an economic measure but would also be a definite move to bring the various races together and thus help in bridging racial differences and fostering friendly feelings amongst the different races. Children of different races should be brought together when they are young and before they have had chance to develop fixed anti-social attitudes. Even Burns Commission recommended the establishment of multi-racial primary schools. At paragraph 668, the report of the Commission reads:

> We consider that some economies could be effected by the amalgamation of schools now catering for the children of different races, in close proximity to one another, and we recommend that Government should refuse financial assistance to any school opening in an area already adequately served by another school. Apart from the economies that might result from such amalgamation, we consider that schools separated on racial lines are a handicap to the understanding and friendly relationship that should exist between the different sections of the population. Within a short distance of one another on either side of the main road, we saw two schools labelled respectively "Drauniivi Indian School" and "Drauniivi Fijian School". This ostentatious display of racial exclusiveness creates a bad impression.[2]

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[1] Ibid. P. 62.

[2] Burns Commission Report - 1959. Op.cit. Para. 668.

Compulsory Education

In Chapter III we saw that fairly adequate provisions are made for the education of Europeans and Fijians. On the Indian side there is a serious deficiency. It is obvious that however desirable it may be to provide facilities for all children of all races, this is not a question that can be solved overnight. Quite apart from the financial and material questions connected with the erection of school buildings, the problem of finding and training sufficient teachers is one which obviously must take a number of years. When sufficient facilities are available for the whole Colony then universal compulsory education can no doubt be adopted.

Education is compulsory for the Rotumans. As far as Fijians are concerned, education is compulsory, it being laid down by the Fijian Affairs Regulations that every Fijian child between the ages of 6 and 14 years must attend school if one exists within a distance of three miles. Sufficiently adequate sanctions to guarantee that this provision is not a dead letter are in existence but they have not been strictly applied. As pointed out earlier the total Fijian/Rotuman primary roll in 1960 for age-group 6-13 was 31,482, that is, 87.8 percent, and the Indian primary roll for the same age-group was 33,372, that is, 69.7 percent.[1]

Before a proposal for free and compulsory education is put forward for Fiji, let us see how far the other British colonies have advanced in this direction. Almost all the British colonies are expanding their educational facilities. In some of the colonies provisions exist for free and compulsory education, in some education up to primary school is free but not compulsory

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[1] Supra. P. 81.

and in a few others education is compulsory but not free. The extent to which a particular colony has advanced in providing educational facilities is largely conditioned by the progress that it has achieved in economic, political, social and cultural spheres. Moreover, the development and provision of educational facilities are more rapid in those colonies which have an industrial economy than in those where the economy is mainly agricultural.

Barbados. The prosperity of the island depends on the sugar crop and the prices paid for sugar and its by-products. Education at the primary stage is free, but in the preparatory departments of aided secondary schools and in independent secondary schools fees are charged. No fees are charged in the primary and secondary modern schools, but pupils of secondary grammar schools pay tuition fees.[1]

Cayman Islands. The islands' economy depends to a marked degree on the wages of Cayman Islands seamen employed in American-owned ships "flying flags of convenience". In order of economic importance the islands' industries may be listed as the export of seamen, the tourist industry, manufature of thatch rope, turtle and shark fishing and, lastly, the sale of coconuts and copra. As regards education, the official report on Cayman Islands says:

> Primary education is free and compulsory for all children between the ages of seven and fourteen. There are no government nursery or kindergarten schools. Where staffing and accommodation allow, pupils of six years of age are admitted to primary schools. Reading books and writing materials are supplied at cost except in the case of pupils whose parents are unable to afford them, when they are provided free of charge.[2]

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[1] Barbados - Report for the years 1958 and 1959. London, HMSO, 1961. P. 56.

[2] Cayman Islands - Report for the years 1959 & 1960. London, HMSO, 1961. P. 21.

Hong Kong. Hong Kong is an industrial country. In the last twelve years the pattern of Hong Kong's economy has changed, and industry, which before the Second World War was of secondary importance to the entrepot trade, has assumed a dominant role; three-quarters of the Colony's total exports are now products manufactured or processed locally.

In Hong Kong education is neither free nor compulsory. The government, however, is taking strong measures to provide educational facilities to all children of primary school age. The seven-year primary school expansion programme which was launched in October, 1954, officially ended in 1961. The total increase in primary school places achieved by September, 1961 was 313,000. During the first nine months of the year 57 new schools were built; 51 of these were primary schools, making available 631 new classrooms and 51,265 more school places.[1]

Although education is not free, yet in all government and government-aided schools fees are kept as low as possible and 10 percent of all places are reserved for the education of poor children. In government and aided secondary schools between 30 percent and 45 percent of the places are also made available for free education.[2]

Jamaica. The economy of Jamaica is based partly on agriculture and partly on industry. The present educational policy which is based on the National Plan for Jamaica 1957-1967, is as follows:

1. That every child should obtain a primary education - that is to say buildings, teachers, equipment and services

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[1] Hong Kong - Report for the year 1961. Hong Kong, Government Printer, 1962. P. 112.

[2] Ibid. P. 125.

must be provided on a continuously expanding scale sufficient to provide universal primary education for all children between the ages of 7 and 11.

2. That the system should provide to the fullest extent that our finances will allow for further educational opportunities to those children who possess special ability in order that we may, out of our own resources, fill the needs of the community for trained people to take their proper places in industry, agriculture and farming, trade, commerce and the professions and provide forourselves the special services which the country requires.

3. That the educational opportunities provided by government should be opened and available to all on a basis of genuine equality.[1]

Sarawak. Sarawak is essentially an agricultural country producing and exporting primary products and it is largely from the export of such produce that the national income is derived. Primary education is not yet compulsory. It is, however, the government's aim, as the official report says, " to provide, as soon as possible six years primary education for all children".[2]

Seychelles. The economy of the Colony is largely agricultural, copra being the chief item of export. Primary education is completely free but not compulsory. About 80 percent of the children of primary school age 6 to 12 attend school. Most schools are managed by the various religious missions, government paying teachers' salaries, stationery and materials.[3]

Singapore. Singapore's prosperity is based largely on its role as an entrepot for surrounding territories in south-east Asia. With the development of tin and rubber in Malaya, Singapore became

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[1] Jamaica - Report for the year 1958. London, HMSO, 1961. P.162.

[2] Sarawak - Report for the year 1960. Sarawak, Government Printer, 1961. Pp. 95-96.

[3] Seychelles - Report for the years 1959 and 1960. London, HMSO, 1961. P. 25.

an important processing centre and the main outlet for these commodities, besides handling much of Malaya's imports.

The educational policy of the government is to provide free primary education for all children in Singapore. By 1961 the six-year primary education course was available to every child in Singapore of the appropriate age.[1]

St. Vincent. Agriculture is the chief occupation of the people of St. Vincent; bananas, arrowroot and sweet potatoes, sugar, and cotton being the main items of export. Primary education is free for the age-group 5 to 15, but it is not compulsory.[2]

Tonga. Tonga is essentially an agricultural country. There are no mines or factories. In this land of peasant proprietors, each man cultivates his own statutory holding.

Education is compulsory for all Tongans between the ages of 6 and 14 years. Education is free in government schools, but in all mission schools fees are charged.[3]

Trinidad and Tobago. Although Trinidad and Tobago derives most of its wealth from its oil industry, agriculture is of great importance to the economy as it provides employment for a large proportion of the population. Sugar ranks as the principal agricultural industry.

It is the government policy to provide free education for all children between the ages of 5 and 15 years, and since 1945, all children between the ages of 5 and 12 years, if resident

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[1] The State of Singapore. London, British Information Services, 1961. P. 15.

[2] St. Vincent - Report for the years 1958 and 1959. London, HMSO, 1961. Pp. 22-23.

[3] Tonga - Report for the years 1958 and 1959. London, HMSO, 1961. Pp. 29-30.

within two miles of a school, have been required by law to attend school. The government also aims at providing secondary education up to the age of 19 years in various types of schools (grammar, secondary modern and technical) and to this end subsidises various religious bodies which conduct approved secondary schools. Free places have been provided by the government and other bodies for an increasing number of secondary pupils and the government is planning introduction of free education in all secondary schools. All schools in receipt of a government grant must be open to all children without distinction of religion, nationality or language.[1]

Conclusion. We see from the above that a number of British colonies have in fact introduced free compulsory education at the primary school level, and some are boldly planning for introducing it. Conditions in Fiji are very much alike those obtaining in the countries discussed above; and yet the Government of Fiji has no plan whatsoever for compulsory education.

It is axiomatic that education is essential to progress and that no country can develop adequately unless adequate educational facilities are provided for the people. Moreover, essential services like health and education are important basic requirements for the progress and prosperity for any society. Fiji requires educated, healthy people to develop its resources and to build up the personnel to exploit the resources. It is, therefore, in the fitness of things that these services should be provided at public expense and that no one should be deprived of them because of his inability to pay for them directly.

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[1] Trinidad and Tobago. London, Central Office of Information, 1960. Pp. 21-22.

The most important single obstacle in the way of introducing compulsory education in Fiji is undoubtedly finance. If there is sufficient money available for education, the problem of teachers and shortage of school buildings can be solved easily. The Indian people are quite willing to pool their share of contribution if an education tax or an equitable system of education rate is levied to meet the cost of education. Honourable Pundit Vishnu Deo, in his address to the Fiji Legislative Council, on the 8th July, 1954, indulged in no hyperbole when he stated:

> The Indian community has never said that they would not pay for education. Right from the beginning, when a Commission came in 1926, we find that every witness who went before it to represent the views of his district or his community said that the community as a whole would be quite willing to contribute to an education rating fund which should be devised. That fund has not been devised as yet, and the Indian education rate has not been raised. But we are quite willing to make a contribution towards any such scheme which may be devised for the extension of educational facilities so far as primary schools are concerned.... So for secondary education as well, as far as the Indian community is concerned they would be quite ready to meet taxation if that is imposed.[1]

In the last chapter entitled "Financing Education" this study puts forward a number of possible sources of revenue for education. If the measures suggested are adopted, Fiji will be able to raise sufficient revenue for educational purposes.

The problem of the teacher is a crucial one in the field of compulsory education. The problem of the supply of teachers is discussed in Chapter VIII, "Teachers - Their Status and Training". Suffice it to say here that in order to attract men and women of sufficiently good character and in adequate numbers, better conditions of service will have to be offered and at the same time their economic and professional status must be raised.

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[1] Hansard. Sessions of 1954. Op.cit. P. 109.

If sufficient finance is forthcoming and a steady supply of suitably qualified teachers is assured, free and compulsory education can be launched. It is suggested that the Department of Education draw up a ten-year Education Plan with a view to making primary education for all children of all races of school age 6 to 14 years free and compulsory. Before we discuss in detail the proposed "Ten-Year Education Plan" let us pause for a while and take stock of the present condition of primary school education.

This study advisedly adopts a ten-year plan for the development of compulsory education system for the primary stage in Fiji. There are certain defects in our primary education system that needs immediate attention. This study deplores the inadequate provision of educational facilities, the unsuitability of the content of primary school curriculum, the appalling wastage during the eight-year primary school course, the acute shortage of trained teachers, and lack of integration of control of schools. One may ask: "Why then resort to compulsion to force unwilling pupils to attend schools which either do not exist or which do not attempt to satisfy their needs?"

The Hartog Committee of Burma sounded a warning against precipitate action:

> We have been much struck by the feeling expressed in many places that an immediate panacea for all defects which now darken the picture of primary education is to be found in compulsion... In many places a drastic reorganization of the elementary system should precede any wide application of compulsion ... To compel children to attend or stay in ineffective, ill-equipped and badly staffed schools, can only result in a serious addition to the existing waste.[1]

Within this ten-year period much can be done to remove the major deficiencies in the present system of primary education. But

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[1] As quoted in Report of the Unesco Educational Mission to Burma. Paris, Unesco, 1952. P. 35.

if we wait for every item to fall in its proper place, the time may never come for introducing compulsory education in Fiji. The ultimate remedy for existing deficiencies is surely an efficient system of compulsory education. Plan must be made and steps must be taken towards the development of such a system.

Compulsory education for the age-group 6-14 may be promulgated in two cycles. It may be a little too ambitious to plan for the age-group 6-14 years right from the beginning. It is suggested that the initial attempt to provide compulsory schooling may be confined to the age-group 6-11 years, and when the system is working efficiently the period of compulsory schooling may be extended to include children up to 14 years of age, that is, for the age-group 6-14 years. Such has been the practice in a number of other countries; India, for instance, is working to a plan to provide free compulsory schooling for the age-group 6-11, and the principle of compulsory schooling has been adopted by the territory of Delhi and by other federated states.[1] It is suggested that the scheme for promulgating compulsory education in Fiji be attempted in three steps.

Step No. 1. The first step towards this goal would be to ensure regularity of attendance; that once enrolled/, the child except in the case of sickness, or for other unavoidable causes, should be required to attend school regularly, and if non-attendance can be put down to the wilful neglect or wilful action of the parent, then penalties should be provided enforceable in the nearest court of summary jurisdiction.

Step No. 2. The next step would be to proclaim education compulsory in certain areas commencing with towns and urban areas.

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[1] International Yearbook of Education 1961. Op.cit. P. 175.

Provisions exist in the present Education Ordinance No.24 of 1960, for such a measure:

> The Governor may proclaim areas for compulsory education... It will be the duty of the parents of all children in a proclaimed area to ensure that they attend school, but exemption will be granted if the child is receiving proper instruction in some other way, or if he is prevented by sufficient cause from attending school, or if he lives more than a specified distance from the nearest school.[1]

Step No. 3. Finally, the government should proclaim education free and compulsory for the whole of Fiji. Before the third step is taken, the government would be in a position to know whether there are sufficient numbers of teachers and that there would be no shortage of school buildings.

Curriculum

The primary school curriculum, as pointed out earlier, is defective in that it is overloaded, subject-centred and book-centred, divorced from children's everyday world and little related to their interests, abilities and activities. Thus primary education lacks meaning and purpose, and a sense of relevance to life.

The curriculum, therefore, needs reconstruction. Some quantitative reduction in content is necessary to bring about a qualitative improvement in education. Mere reduction of content, however, will not provide the solution. The need is rather for a more thorough-going adjustment of curriculum and methods to the needs, interests and maturity levels of the children in the various classes.

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[1] Hansard. Sessions of September-October 1960. Op.cit. P. 192.

Demands for Curriculum Change. From the point of view of both teachers and parents, the significant proposals for educational reconstruction are those which deal with the curriculum. Indeed, an increasing awareness of the inadequacy of the traditional curriculum is reflected in recent volumes of the "International Yearbook of Education". The 1961 volume, for example contains the following statement:

> The fact which emerges on examination of the situation as regards the organization, curricula and syllabuses of primary education is the increasing number of countries which have made structural changes at this level of education. This trend appears to be one of the most active, since it has almost doubled in strength since last year. To a lesser extent, the tendency to revise curricula and syllabuses has also increased again since more than half the (eight-six) countries studied have undertaken revision during 1960-1961. The percentage of countries which have introduced reforms concerning the number and content of subjects taught is virtually the same for primary and secondary education (52% and 54% respectively).[1]

From amongst the many factors which impel educational authorities the world over to revise the school curriculum, the following may be singled out as being most significant:

1. The changes taking place in all branches of life as a result of the rapid growth and application of scientific knowledge.

2. Changing view as to the purpose of education.

3. Increased understanding of children and of the learning process, as a result of developments in psychology, biology, and education itself.

4. The extension of the concepts of democracy and human rights to include all citizens regardless of race, colour, sex, religion, political affiliation, economic and social status.

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[1] International Yearbook of Education 1961. Op.cit. P.xxxiii.

5. The efforts being made to gear education to community development, i.e. to use the schools and the teachers as effective instruments for raising the standards of living of the people.

6. Change of status from dependent territory to sovereign state.[1]

Trends in Curriculum Planning. Traditionally, the curriculum has been regarded as a list of subjects to be studied by pupils under the guidance of the teacher - i.e., essentially as a body of knowledge to be memorized. The environment and atmosphere of the school, while considered important, were not the concern of curriculum planners. The emerging view of the curriculum is, as the Unesco study "Curriculum Revision and Research" puts it, "that it comprises all the activities, experiences, materials, methods of teaching, and other means which are employed by the teacher or taken into account by him, to achieve the aims of education."[2]

At its third session, the International Advisory Committee on the School Curriculum noted that the main trends in curriculum development seemed to be the following.:

(a) Curriculum revision is coming to be based increasingly on the analysis of social conditions and needs on the one hand, and on the known facts about child development and growth and children's interests on the other.
(b) Classroom teachers, parents, professional groups and the public are beginning to play an increasing role in curriculum revision.
(c) Curriculum or educational research bureaux, pedagogical academies or similar institutions are becoming

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[1] Curriculum Revision and Research. Educational Studies and Documents, No.28. Paris, Unesco, July,1958. P. 5.

[2] Loc.cit.

the central agencies in which data are essembled, collated and finally formulated into proposed curricula with the help of educational specialists and teachers.

(d) The proposed curricula are first tried in a limited number of experimental schools, and revised according to experience, before being put in general use in the school system.[1]

In the United Kingdom, for instance,

> The curriculum is to be thought of in terms of activity and experience rather than of knowledge to be acquired and facts to be stored. Its aim should be to develop in a child the fundamental human powers and to awaken him to the fundamental interests of civilized life.[2]

The primary school curriculum in the state of New South Wales in Australia has been recently revised. It is stipulated that the courses of study are to be broadened "with emphasis on experience". Great importance is to be placed upon making the school environment as vital and stimulating as possible in order to develop the total personality and character of the child.[3] In France, primary school instruction is designed to fulfil two aims- cultural and utilitarian. The primary school education must give the pupils

> First of all sufficient knowledge for their future needs; then, and above all, good moral habits, and open and awakened intelligence, clear ideas, judgement, reflection, order and precision in thought and in language.[4]

The school, therefore, must prepare the child for life and at the same time cultivate his mind. In Sudan, the curriculum of the primary school has been planned on the assumption that the

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[1] Report of the Third Session of the International Advisory Committee on the School Curriculum. Document Unesco / EB/165, 31st March,1959. P. 5.

[2] Board of Education, U.K. Report of the Consultative Committee on Primary Education (Hadow Report). London, HMSO, 1931. P. 75.

[3] Department of Education, New South Wales. Curriculum for Primary Schools. Sydney, Government Printer, 1952. P. 12.

[4] As quoted in Curriculum Revision and Research. Op.cit. P. 6.

pupils will continue their formal schooling no further - for the overwhelming majority it is terminal education. For this reason, it is of primary importance that during the short time that the children are at school, "the curriculum should be devised not merely to make them literate but to have the maximum energizing effect on their characters".[1]

The list could be extended to show the variety of trends in curriculum planning now developing throughout the world. The following points, in particular, may be noted:

1. There is an increasing tendency to make the primary school curriculum as complete a fulfilment as possible of the needs of the child at that stage of its growth without diminishing its value as preparation for further studies.
2. The concept of 'learning' now includes not only the acquisition of knowledge and skills - which are important - but also such other aspects as learning to learn, learning to behave, and learning to direct one's action with due regard for the welfare of others as well as for personal attainment.
3. Great importance continues to be attached to cultural, moral and spiritual values. At the same time, there is a growing recognition of the need for relating the curriculum to economic and social conditions.
4. Since it is recognized that overcrowding of the curriculum is a common evil resulting in overwork and fatigue on the part of both teachers and pupils, the need for revising the school curriculum so as to eliminate non-essentials is becoming increasingly evident.
5. There is a growing realization that the schools are being dominated by traditional examinations and that there is a need for more functional methods of evaluation which will take into consideration the full development of the personality of the child as well as his knowledge of the subject matter.
6. Alongside the fostering of national ideals provision is being made for studies and activities designed to promote international understanding and co-operation.

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[1] Loc.cit.

7. There is a growing realization of the need for ensuring the co-operation at least of the teacher, if not also the parents, as necessary first step in any major effort to revise and improve the school curriculum.

8. With modern progress in curriculum planning, there is an apparent need for continued improvement in the preparation of teachers and in the provision of adequate in-service teacher training programmes.[1]

We are now in a position to lay down in broad terms the primary school curriculum for Fiji. The primary education in Fiji, as in other countries, should aim: (1) at giving the child basic instruments of thought and action suited to his age, which will enable him to live his personal and civic life to the full and to understand the world in which he has to live; (2) not only at transmitting a heritage and a culture, but also at providing the means of enriching them; (3) at turning out free human beings, who are aware of their responsibilities, have self-respect and respect for others, and play an active and useful part in the life of the Colony. The curriculum for primary school should include three elements: knowledge to be assimilated, skills to be mastered, and means of satisfying physical, emotional, aesthetic and spiritual needs of an individual and a social nature.

The curriculum should consist of all that is selected from the ideas, the memories, the skills, the activities, and the culture of the community to form the world of the school. It is a synthetic world no doubt. The presentation of the curriculum should be made as interesting to the child as possible otherwise the child will not be contributing his best. The curriculum should challenge his intelligence and stimulate his curiosity. The child should be gradually led away from the home; the teacher's responsibility is to create a healthy atmosphere and not a substitute for home. In

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[1] Loc.cit.

living through it he should come to know himself and his peers; he should face his limitation and gain the courage of his ability so that he has the means for meeting new situations; he should also learn by it how to make good use of his leisure. The curriculum should require courage of every one; it should, finally discourage none.

In drawing the syllabuses for successive classes, children's capacity to understand and assimilate at various stages of growth should be taken into account in order to ensure that they receive a well organised intellectual education proceeding at a normal pace. In fixing the content of syllabuses regard should be had not only to children's mental processes, but also to their interests and needs and to the whole of their emotional life and their health.

Writing on "The Need for a Simpler Curriculum Adpated to to Life in Fiji", the 1926 Education Commission had this to say:

> We cannot emphasise too much, or repeat too often, the truth that what is wanted in a school system for this Colony is an education which shall be adequate and real - a training which is not confined to the learning of subjects in a school room, but which vitally affects the lives of the pupils, carries over from the school to the home and to the village, and shows itself in its influence upon character, improved health, efficient and willing industry, ability to use leisure time well and worthily, willingness to co-operate with others for common ends, a knowledge of and respect for the laws and conventions of society, and upon the cultivation of a spirit of goodwill and service. The day has gone for regarding school as a place where children learn subjects formally and mechanically, and where they satisfy examination tests by giving back more or less useful information, the application of which to human affairs is imperfectly, if at all, understood.[1]

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[1] Report of the Education Commission - 1926. Op.cit. Para.28.

The modern curriculum seeks to include only such subjects as can be made to bear directly and at once upon the lives of the pupils; in the details of the subjects it includes only what can be understood and applied; and the teacher, in his treatment of the work, keeps constantly in mind that knowledge in itself is not power, but that it is ability to apply knowledge to the facts of life, which is power. In order that greater reality may be brought into school life, there has been of recent years in all progressive school systems, a steady elimination of subjects and details of subjects which have little direct bearing upon the lives of the pupils. Those who do not know this are often puzzled to account for the reason why the modern child, unlike the "whining schoolboy" of an earlier day "creeping like snail unwilling to school", does in fact take delight in his school work. It is because his education is not a meaningless and wearisome iteration of facts and formulae for which he sees no necessity, but is rather an amplification and an interpretation of the interesting life he is leading outside the classroom.

The idea of "Basic Education" as evolved by Mahatma Gandhi for adoption in Indian schools is worth mentioning in this context. The programme of basic education seeks to relate learning to the process of craft activity and community living. In Mahatma's own words:

> The principal idea is to impart the whole education of the body and the mind and the soul through the handicraft that is taught to the children. You have to draw out all that is in the child through teaching all the processes of the handicraft, and all your lessons in history, geography, arithmetic will be related to the craft.[1]

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[1] M.K.Gandhi. Basic Education. Ahmedabad, Navjivan Publishing House, 1951. Pp. 9-10.

In such subjects as geography, history and civics, care must be taken to ensure reality. The children should begin the study of geography upon their own environment; they should study Fiji in relation to the world as a whole, and they need, in primary school, to be concerned with only such matters as affect life and trade in their Colony. There is room in all primary schools for a treatment of civics which shall carry over from the school to the life of the playground, and, beyond the school environment to the life of the village, and to the larger life of the community. It ought not to be concerned, as so many unreal and ineffective courses are, with the history and development of national institutions, but should deal simply and directly with the problem of how men can live effectively and happily in organised societies. The rights of the individual and the obligations which accompany these rights; consideration for the well-being of others; willingness to co-operate for community ends; the spirit of tolerance as between peoples of different races and religions; these are some of the matters to be stressed. They can be illustrated from and applied to the life of the school and of the playground; and a good teacher will soon find his work an influence in the home and village. Nor must the influence of organised games and competitive sports be omitted from the life of the school. The native Fijian takes naturally to such sports and it is desirable that the Indian boys and girls should also receive the discipline in character which a well-planned course of team games can give. To play a team game for the joy of the game, to set the game itself above the prize, to play it fairly and to scorn to take an unfair advantage, to subordinate self to the interests of the team, to respect one's opponents - these are influences which go for the formation of the characters of both boys and girls.

Simple lessons in health and hygiene should form an integral part of the curriculum. The teaching of hygiene should be entirely practical, and it should be closely related to the circumstances of life in Fiji. The hygiene that is useful will relate directly to foods and cooking, to water supplies and latrines, to houses and house equipment, to flies and mosquitoes, and to diseases, with special references to conditions in Fiji.

The work in natural science should be largely determined by the school's environment. Actual objects and living specimens should be studied where possible at first hand, and as far as practicable in their natural setting. In the lower classes much of the work should consist of oral discussion and description by the children of what they themselves have observed. In the upper classes, the pupils may be required to keep note books in which to record briefly their own observations. The object should be not merely the imparting of knowledge but the training of pupils to observe carefully and accurately.

Provision should also be made in the curriculum for the teaching of aesthetic subjects and for developing creative interests and abilities. It is suggested that there should be regular lessons in music, singing, dancing and acting and drawing, painting and handicraft. The importance given to handicraft in primary school curriculum is clear from the following extracts from the 1961 International Yearbook of Education:

> New Subjects introduced. Most of the countries (86) do not enumerate the subjects affected by the changes in curricula. Information given by a few countries, however, enables us to discern the general direction of evolution in this field. Among the new subjects introduced, handicrafts (under various names) take first place. Then come, in order of importance, foreign languages, art education,

> traffic regulations, physical education, moral education and international understanding.
> Subjects which have been given greater emphasis ... Here again, it is handicrafts which hold the first place, followed far behind by physical education, art education, science, languages, ethics, civics and hygiene.[1]

Robert Dottrens in his book "The Primary School Curriculum" comments on the introduction of new subjects in the primary schools thus:

> The subjects and school activities most frequently introduced or given more prominence in recent years have been handwork, practical work, polytechnical education, drawing and civic education, the mother tongue and physical education; after them come arithmetic and science.
> There is undoubtedly a tendency towards a more practical and less intellectual type of education; the emphasis is coming to be placed on the acquisition of skill and ability rather than on the acquisition of knowledge.[2]

So far we have discussed the general subjects of the primary school curriculum. We shall now discuss reading, writing and arithmetic, the traditional 3R's. These three subjects still form the main dish offered to primary school pupils even though, with the passage of time, their menu has become remarkably and dangerously copious.

Reading. Learning to read is today an aim identical with that of half a century ago when printed matter had little effect on either children or adults, whereas now-a-days the daily or periodical press, whether illustrated or not, irresistibly attracts children from the earliest age.

Learning to read in Fiji means no more than the capacity to read a few lines aloud and reasonably well for the "visiting teacher" or the Education Officer. One of the common complaints of

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[1] International Yearbook of Education 1961. Op.cit. P. xxxiv.

[2] Robert Dottrens. The Primary School Curriculum. Paris, Unesco, 1962. P. 108.

secondary teachers is that the primary schools do not give sufficient attention to the teaching of reading because the children when they join Form 111 can hardly read. There may be several reasons why children in primary school are not taught properly how to read. The teaching method may be at fault; children may have been asked to read what is either beyond their power to grasp or the reading matter may not have been sufficiently interesting; not sufficient time and attention given to reading; or inadequate library facilities. Much more attention therefore should be given to reading in primary schools.

Nowadays, learning to read means the capacity to understand what is written or printed - newspapers, magazines, letters, posters, various notices - and that means time, application and adequate methods. The still general use of methods aimed at the speedy acquisition of mechanical skills in reading raises a doubt as to the attention given during the learning period to the understanding of what is read. What does learning to read and understand mean? Robert Dottrens in his book "The Primary School Curriculum" answers this question thus:

> Learning to read and understand what is read also means being able to use a dictionary and library catalogues and the various sorts of filing systems which have spread everywhere with the evolution of work methods.
>
> Learning to read means acquiring the capacity to extract at a glance the gist of a page, a text or any printed material so as to see whether it is worth reading in detail.
>
> Learning to read, above all, means acquiring a taste for reading good books in prose or verse; it means acquiring that need, that hunger for culture which enables those who possess it to complete their professional knowledge and their general information.
>
> Learning to read, knowing how to read, finally, means having a permanently active critical sense ready to appraise the value or truth of what is read in order to resist the

> lure of insidious propaganda, to judge soundly and to maintain intellectual independence.[1]

Once seen in these functional and educative terms and no longer limited to academic bonds and traditions, learning to read assumes a very different character from that generally ascribed to it in Fiji primary schools. All other forms of education depend on its success and efficiency. How many children are unable to solve problems because they have not read the terms correctly or have not understood them, because they are written in a language which they have not yet acquired.

Reading is therefore not a technique which is limited in its immediate objective; it is the indispensable basis for all intellectual education. The primary school can do a lot in stimulating good reading habits. As Menon and Patel in their book "The Teaching of English as a Foreign Language" say:

> Good reading habits which keep a student reading regularly for both pleasure and profit are the most valuable single stimulant for growth that the school has to impart. If he lacks the stimulus of contact with well-informed minds, his knowledge of science, history, politics, social and economic problems, religion and literature, will grow antiquated and get stunted.[2]

We will not attempt to deal with the problem of methods but will confine ourselves to quoting the discerning comments of W.S. Gray whose book, "The Teaching of Reading and Writing", should be constantly read by all teachers in Fiji.

> In teaching children or adults to read, the acquisition of basic attitudes or skills is generally considered an end in itself. Attention is too rarely paid to the motives which might lead the beginner to read with an aim or to the interest inherent in new knowledge and new attitudes which could or

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[1] Ibid. P. 204.

[2] T.K.N.Menon and M.S.Patel. The Teaching of English as a Foreign Language. Baroda, Acharya Book Depot, 1960. P. 94.

should be acquired. This practice flagrantly contradicts the results of research which reveal: first, that pupils learn to read faster and better if the texts used are of interest to them and if they have been inspired with the desire to learn; secondly, that the attitudes and skills implicit in reading vary to a greater or lesser extent according to the nature of the texts and the aim of reading; thirdly, that the best method of achieving good results is to carefully adapt teaching to the pupils' concerns, needs, experience and degree of maturity.

In planning any reading programme the specific aims to be attained are of major importance, since they influence not only its nature and scopes but also the content and methods of teaching. As a help in ascertaining current aims of teaching reading in primary schools, three sources of information were reviewed - first, discussion of the development needs of young children and the role of reading in providing for them; second, reports of the reading demands made on children as they assume their role in community life; and third, primary school reading programmes recently developed in different parts of the world. With the help of the sources, two types of aims were identified which are closely inter-related.

The first group is concerned with the values to be secured through reading. Every lesson should contribute to pupil development through emphasis on one or more of the following aims:

1. To extend the experiences of children concerning things within the range of their environment.
2. To make their lives more meanigful through an understanding of the experiences of others.
3. To extend their knowledge of things, events and activities to other places, countries, peoples, times.
4. To deepen interest in their expanding world.
5. To develop improved attitudes, ideals and behaviour patterns.
6. To enable pupils to find the solution of personal and group problems.
7. To enrich their cultural background.
8. To provide pleasure and enjoyment through reading.
9. To develop improved ways of thinking and expressing ideas.
10. To help them become more familiar with the interests, activities and problems of the community.

The second group of aims is concerned with the development of the reading attitudes and skills needed to attain the various values listed above:

1. To develop keen interest in learning to read.
2. To stimulate the development of an inquiring mind and a demand for meaning in reading.
3. To develop accuracy in word recognition.
4. To promote efficiency in solving simple personal or group problems as one reads.
5. To develop habits of effective oral reading.
6. To increase the speed of silent reading.
7. To cultivate interest in reading and the habit of regular reading for information and pleasure.

The foregoing statement of aims differs in at least three ways from many which appear in recent reports. It focuses attention, first, on the values to be secured through reading rather than on the skills to be developed. It assumes that most, if not all, reading lessons should help to enrich the experiences of children, clarify their thinking, or further their development in one form or another. In the second place, the development of the various attitudes and skills involved in efficient reading is recognized as a means to broader end. Indeed, the nature and variety of the attitudes and skills that should be emphasized during any reading lesson are determined in large measure by the values sought. Finally, a broader range of attitudes and skills has been listed than has been usual in the past. Reading can be used in achieving a much larger number of purposes in primary schools than has previously been thought feasible. This, however, requires the early development of many reading attitudes and skills that have usually been developed during later school years, if at all. Whereas it may not be appropriate or possible in some communities to achieve at present all the aims above, those responsible for developing programmes for immediate use should, nevertheless, have a clear understanding of the broader aims which may sooner or later become desirable.[1]

Writing. What does writing mean? To spend a given period of time drawing pot-hooks and hangers to make an attractive exercise book an "inspector's exercise book"?

The same problem arises as the one we have just considered with respect to reading. Does one learn to read for the school or for life? What is the use of learning a stereotyped handwriting at

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[1] William S. Gray. The Teaching of Reading and Writing: an International Survey. Paris, Unesco, 1956. Pp. 145-146.

school, identical with that of all the other pupils, which will be kept as long as the teacher's supervision continues, whereas in the natural course of things we write in the manner that suits us best, that is, we adopt the handwriting which expresses our personality, which results from our biological and intellectual resources and which will then be an irremediably distorted handwriting? The primary school should help each child to develop his own distinctive handwriting. The only criterion that the school has a right to insist is that the handwriting should be legible.

Beyond the physiological and muscular act of transferring the writer's thoughts to paper, knowing how to write means being capable of much more than merely scribbling on paper. It means first and foremost mastering the rules of the written language - grammar, spelling and style - and, for this reason, writing and study of language are combined in many schools. The ability to write means first the ability to express onself.

In written work it is essential that children understand basic work before continuing to advanced exercises. Thus no composition must be done until pupils have had many years of careful practice in the construction of the sentence; the neglect of this sentence work is, perhaps, the main cause of the present low standard of written composition.

Arithmetic. Finally, arithmetic. This means knowing the four fundamental operations, the addition table, the multiplication table, solving simple problems and the resolution of simple operations by the acquisition of skills.

Arithmetic is the basis of all human activities that involve any form of quantitative measurement, and as such is second in importance in the curriculum only to language. In arithmetic

accuracy is the prime essential. Speed, too, is important, but the speed to be expected from the individual child should be decided by the teacher's knowledge of the pupil. The object of teaching arithmetic in primary schools is, as Robert Dottrens says:

> To develop the pupils' concepts of number, quantity and numerical relationships, to enable them to acquire understanding and the practice of fundamental operations, to make them capable of reasoning about questions within their grasp, to help develop logical thinking and to equip them with the basic skills - all of which they must fully possess and master if they are to be capable of mathematical studies beyond the primary level.[1]

The present curriculum is over-ambitious and makes no allowance for the child's mental development and capacity. All too often this results in sacrificing a large number of capable children - capable to the extent that the instruction is within their grasp and is given at the time when they can benefit from it - to those rare birds that are considered to possess special gifts. (How often do we hear such comments: "I simply can't do maths." "I am not cut out for maths.")

If it is desired to increase the number of those children who can continue mathematical studies, then the present primary school syllabus in arithmetic needs reform, and the method of teaching arithmetic must also be changed. The syllabus in arithmetic must be lightened so that there is sufficient time devoted to fundamental ideas to be thoroughly assimilated, reviewed, worked on and thoroughly acquired. Methods must be changed through a substantial introduction of experience, experimentation and operations and by proceeding cautiously from the concrete to the abstract.

The following two quotations whose importance, because of both the ideas they express and their origins, will be readily appreciated:

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[1] Robert Dottrens. Op.cit. P. 212.

> Allowing for the general objectives of primary education and relying on the children's experience in regard to the qantitative analysis of the phenomena and facts of reality, the teaching of arithmetic from the first to fourth year of schooling aims at developing the children's concepts of qauntity and space, giving them the rudiments of arithmetic and inculcating in them solid calculating and measuring skills and the capacity to solve arithmetical problems within their grasp. The study of arithmetic should also contribute to developing their quickness of mind, logical thinking and (what is closely connected) precise, clear and succinct expression. The teaching of arithmetic should also teach children to apply the knowledge and skills acquired in their day-to-day school activities and in their work.[1]

In the modern curriculum, the arithmetic course is characterized by obvious links between the knowledge and skills acquired and life. Furthermore, there is a greater range of theoretical knowledge which is presented on the basis of the generalization of concrete facts.

> Changes which have long been recommended by mathematics teachers are currently being introduced into the teaching of elementary mathematics (in the United States of America). One of the most important of these is the use of reasoning by induction rather than by deduction with a view to stimulating originality and initiative while simultaneously enabling pupils to become familiar with figures and the metric system, with measurement and form. It is regarded as important to confront children with objects and experiences which can be used to stimulate the development of ideas and which can form the basis for skill in handling figures.
>
> To enable children to understand the necessity for mathematics and to make the study of it practical, teachers emphasize the development of ideas which can be widely applied to actual experiences rather than limiting themselves to precise but aimless operations with figures measurements or forms. Teachers seek to develop mathematical reasoning and appreciation in

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[1] Ministerstvo prosvescenija RSFSR, Draft Curricula for Eight-Year Primary Schools. Moskva, Ucpedgiz, 1959. As quoted in Robert Dottrens. Op.cit. Pp. 212-213.

their pupils. Instruction is often given in small groups in order to make allowance for individual differences in regard to interest.[1]

Agricultural Education. In his Report on Education in Fiji, the Director of Education states:

> Fiji is primarily an agricultural country. The majority of children will start and complete their education in a primary school in a rural area and will thereafter live on, and by the land. It is only a minority who will proceed to further technical, agricultural, modern or academic education... Primary schools must provide general teaching with a simple knowledge of gardening and handcraft or home-craft... so that the ordinary pupil will become a useful member of the rural community.[2]

It is indisputable that most of the educational facilities in the Colony of Fiji will need to be ruralised. Everything depends upon the produce of the land. The better their quality the more assured of foreign markets will Fiji become. Moreover, the better a man is able to overcome noxious pests, feed his land and produce better sugar-cane, obtain two quarts of milk instead of one, and enjoy fruits and vegetables where there are none, the more contented and prosperous the cultivator will become.

The way in which a child at a primary school may acquire an interest in the land is neither through the teaching of nature study, nor through demonstration gardens showing the right and the wrong ways of planting, the effect of manuring or watering and the like, but is through seeing at his school day after day, week after week, year after year, a well tended school garden with a variety of fruit and vegetables. The school garden must be

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[1] United States of America. Progress in Public Education in 1959-1960. As quoted in Rober Dottrens. Op.cit. P. 213.

[2] Report on Education in Fiji - 1955. Op.cit. Para. 30.

the best in the village. As he grows older and reaches the higher classes, he will take his share in gardening and he must simply be taught that there is only one way to garden - the right way.

Primary education is not a specialist education and it is not a function of a primary school to produce skilled agriculturalists or technicians. The Committee on Agricultural Education in Fiji had this to say:

> We are convinced that, while teaching in primary schools should be given rural bias, no attempt should be made at the primary stage to impart instruction in the techniques of agriculture. The latter should, however, find an important place in the post-primary educational structure.[1]

Even the Burns Commission held that no formal instruction in agriculture should be given in primary schools. The Commission goes on to say:

> Our view is that primary schools should, first and foremost, aim at providing a general form of education into which should be injected the creation and stimulation of an interest in nature study and growing things. With this should be linked a small school garden for demonstrating the common crops of the district, including a few fruit trees and other tree crops such as cocoa and coffee. Anything more technical or advanced, or any attempt to introduce "Agriculture" in the curriculum, will usually result in the subject becoming a drudgery.[2]

In intermediate schools, particularly those situated in rural areas, however, there should be a strong agricultural bias. Here also no attempt should be made to confuse children with the "techniques of agriculture" and "laboratory" experiments. The urgent problem of agricultural education is how best to give the Fijians and Indians an intelligent knowledge of the practical operations carried out on a good farm, including ploughing, harrowing, and

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[1] Report of the Committee on Agricultural Education. C.P.No.18 of 1956. Suva, Government Printer, 1956. Para. 8.

[2] Burns Commission Report - 1959. Op.cit. Para. 472.

the general preparation of the ground for seed; the sowing of crops and tending them through the growing season; the harvesting and marketing of produce and the method of keeping farm accounts. Side by side with these, he should learn the practical methods of managing and caring for the animals usually found on a farm, such as, horses, bullocks, cows, pigs, goats, fowls, etc. The instruction should be of the very simplest and most practical kind. Opportunities exist in rural schools for giving very simple training in agriculture based upon nature study.

Manual and Vocational Training. Manual and vocational training should be included in the intermediate school course. For many years to come, a large majority of children would leave schooling at the end of eight years' of primary school course. It is, therefore, of paramount importance to see that their education must not tend to divorce the pupils from their own people, but should fit and equip them to return to their own villages and koros; to live there among their own people a better and more economically useful life, to take their rightful place in the civil life of the community and to raise the standard of life generally. In order to realise this every pupil must be helped to choose an occupation in which he can take pride and satisfaction, as a "workman that needeth not to be ashamed". Any aptitudes he possesses should be developed to the full, so that either at work or in his leisure he may have an occupation which will bring lasting satisfaction all his life.

In our mad rush to gain specialised knowledge in various fields of science and technology we are at times inclined to overlook the importance of the simple and ordinary activities of life. For instance, how often do we come across people who betray the elementary knowledge of the correct use of simple everyday tools

such as a hammer, saw, chisel, knife, spade, fork, spanner, scissors or brush. It is important that pupils in the workshops become thoroughly proficient in the various tool operations. They should then be introduced to various types of things that they can make using these simple tools. The important point is that whatever the material the pupils are using, they should be engaged in a genuine craft. Optional courses for various handicrafts - such as weaving, carpentry, basket-making, book-binding, toy-making, pottery, and various other articles of everyday use - should be open to the pupils. Girls may take up a few of these handicrafts but should get training in cooking, mothercraft and general house duties.

The Medium of Instruction

As regards the place of the vernacular and of English in the curriculum, the 1926 Education Commission recommended as follows:-

1. The vernacular (Fijian or Hindi respectively) to be taught in all primary schools, so that all children may be given ability to read it and speak it fluently.
2. A carefully planned and very simple course of reading and speaking English to be introduced as early as practicable.
3. The medium of instruction in the subjects of general education, e.g., geography, nature study, health, &c., to be in the vernacular until such time as the children have an adequate knowledge of English.
4. In schools where the non-European teacher is a competent teacher of English, and in Mission schools taught by European teachers, English will become the medium of instruction at an early stage.[1]

Ever since the 1926 Commission the question of the language which the child should be taught has been a live one. The present position is that the Fijian and Indian children are taught in

[1] Report of the Education Commission - 1926. Op.cit. Para.64.

their own vernaculars until at least Class 4. In the lower classes a certain amount of time is spent on English conversation. The present aim is to make the child literate in his own language, and only in the higher classes to make him literate in the English language. The problem looms larger among the Indian community than among the Fijian community, but the basic questions are the same in each. As far as the Fijians are concerned the discussion proceeds along the following lines: Fijian culture is worth retaining, and this culture can only be retained if the Fijian is able to speak his own language. Up to this point there would be no difference of opinion but the value of literacy in any language is to enable the recipient to read and appreciate the written language of his race. The actual facts are, however, that apart from the Bible and a small periodical newspaper and one or two well-known books, there is practically no literature in his own language available to the Fijian and as a consequence he is unable to take advantage of such abilities in the Fijian language as he may possess. On the other hand there is a great deal of literature in the English language, most official correspondence is carried on in the English language and in his contacts with European people he is required generally to know the English language.[1] One can say without hesitation that as the country develops English will become ligua franca of Fiji.

On the Indian side the problem is much more difficult. There are in Fiji quite a number of Indian languages. Hindi is spoken by the majority of the people, but there are others who speak Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, Gujrati or Gurmukhi. The present position is that in the schools in which there are at least 15 children having the same mother tongue, arrangements can be made

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[1] Ibid. Para. 61.

for the teaching of the language of this group. Consequently, throughout the group all the languages are taught in some places. In some schools two Indian languages are taught as well as English. The Muslims demand Urdu, South Indians demand Tamil or Telugu or Malayalam. Practically all are taught Hindustani. To all intents or purposes, those who argue in favour of the retaining of the teaching of Hindustani do so on the grounds that it is the mother tongue of the Indians. It may as well be mentioned that the Hindustani spoken in Fiji is as different from Indian Hindustani as Anglo-Saxon is from modern English, and as a consequence the children are in effect learning a foreign language which they do not speak. Further, in examinations they usually get lower marks in Hindustani than in English. The teaching of the Persian script for Urdu which is desired by the Muslims is for cultural and religious purposes; the spoken language is Hindustani. The teaching of the other Indian languages is purely because the parents happen to come from the areas in India where these languages are spoken. Actually in the homes only the local dialect of Hindustani is spoken, but this is not taught in the schools, Further, very little of the literature in this language comes to the Colony on account of a lack of demand on the part of the Indians themselves.

"The Commonwealth Conference on the Teaching of English as a Second Language" held at Makerere College, Uganda from 1st to 13th January, 1961, has this to say on this particular issue:

> English is introduced as a medium of instruction for a variety of reasons and at different stages of educational systems. Where it is considered that the language of a child's own country can continue to widen the range of his experience, there may be no need to introduce English as a medium until a later stage of his development. But in certain situations (e.g. when it has no written script) the language of the country may

> not be an apt medium, and in this situation an early introduction of English as a language of learning and teaching may be called for.[1]

For similar reasons to those discussed in connection with the Fijians, it is desirable that the Indian population should be literate in English. The fact that there are at least three major groups of languages in the Colony, (English, Fijian and Indian) makes social cooperation as between the races extremely difficult. There are tending to grow up in the Colony three distinct races, and one of the greatest barriers to the creation of a Fiji point of view is the fact that inter-communication is very difficult. If local government is to become a reality then the attainment of such inter-communication is absolutely essential. There is certainly little doubt that the teaching of English should commence at the school stage if the next generation is to be literate in English.

A large proportion of the Indian community have stressed the necessity for this literacy in English.[2] A small proportion have suggested that right from the commencement of schooling the medium of instruction should be in English. It has been argued against this that it is impossible to take children out of homes where only Hindustani is spoken and instruct them in English. On the other hand there are some outstanding instances in the work carried on by the missions, of instructing all Indian children wholly in the English language. None of the European instructors in the Catholic Church, for instance, is able to speak Hindustani yet in quite a number of cases children are taught right from Class 1 in the English language. It is the writer's opinion, an opinion reinforced

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[1] Report of the Commonwealth Conference on the Teaching of English as a Second Language. Uganda, Government Printer, 1961. Para. 57.

[2] Hansard. Sessions of 1954. Op.cit. Pp. 306-307-

by the investigations and observations of many other secondary school teachers, that children thus instructed have a better command of the English language than those who begin English as a foreign language in Class V. This is not to say, of course, that the Hindustani or any other language should not be taught. They should be taught as a language and not used as the medium of instruction. There can be hardly any justification for teaching the large number of Indian languages merely because the parents of a few pupils happen to come from a particular part of India. Urdu, for instance, is a method of writing valuable only for Islamic purposes, and the responsibility for teaching Urdu can be placed on the Muslim people (and similarly with other people), and not dealt with in schools except as an optional subject to be taught after school hours.

It is agreed that a knowledge of English is essential in everyday life of the community, and that, as English is the language of the government, every citizen will be better for knowing how to speak it, write it and listen to it. It is also agreed, that in the best interests of the future development of the Colony, the speaking of English should be made general. In no better way can the diverse elements in the population be consolidated. As Burns Commission wisely points out:

> In order further to break down racial exclusiveness, we consider that English should begin to be taught, and used as the medium of instruction, from the beginning of a child's school life and not, as now in some schools, in the fifth year.[1]

Fiji is an important Colony in the Pacific - an ocean which has become the centre of world interest. With the great North American continent on the one border, and with Australia and New Zealand along the other, it is certain that English is fast becoming

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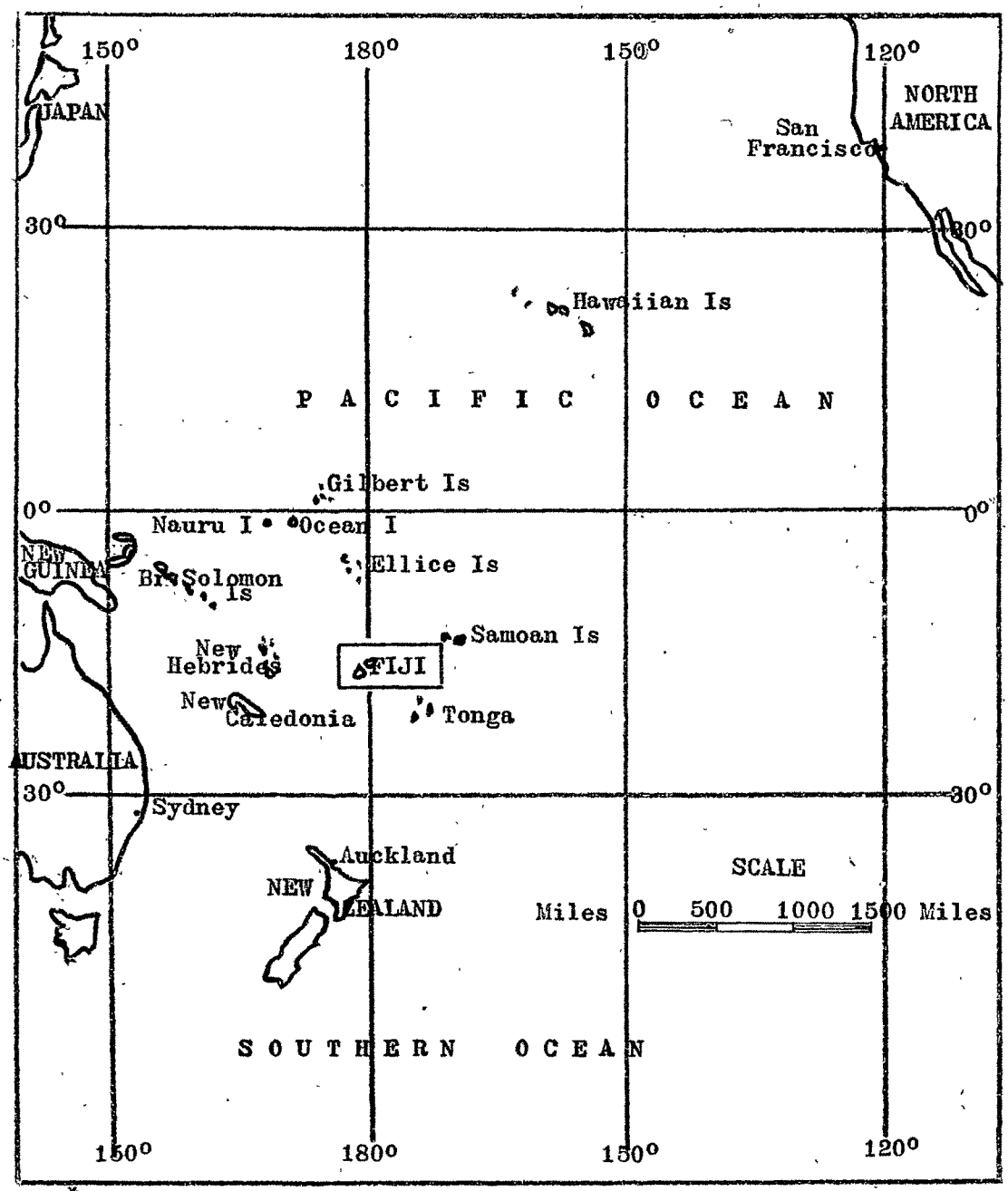
[1] Burns Commission Report - 1959. Op.cit. Para. 669.

MAP III

FIJI IN RELATION TO THE PACIFIC AREA*



* Burns Commission Report - 1959. Op.cit P. 3.

the language of the Pacific. Moreover, Fiji's trade is closely tied up with Australia and New Zealand, both English speaking countries. Therefore, it is important, to spread, as soon as possible, amongst Fijians and Indians a knowledge of English.

When is it best to begin English as the Medium of instruction? The government has stated its views on this matter as follows:

> The present policy of progressively reducing the level at which English becomes the medium of instruction should be upheld, with the proviso that the aim should be to make English the medium of instruction from Class 1 in all subjects except the non-English vernaculars.[1]

The Commonwealth Conference on the Teaching of English as a Second Language gives two reasons - and they are equally pertinent to conditions obtaining in Fiji - why English should become the medium of instruction from the **beginning** of a child's school life:

> By far the most important consideration lies outside the realm of education. Linguistic policy in the school is only a part of a broad governmental decision. Where a community has decided to participate as speedily as possible in the technological and other advantages of a wider society, a decision to use English as a medium is likely to be inevitable, and the pressure to introduce it fairly early may well be heavy. A society which lays more stress on the preservation of a traditional way of life will not introduce English as a medium until later in the school life of the child.[2]
>
> Although the young child will best find the stable environment and sense of security that he needs in the language of his home, in certain circumstances the language used at school (where this is different from the home language) will have a greater influence on his development, e.g. where the school intake is muti-lingual or where educational advancement can only be obtained through a second language. Then, if English is likely in any case to be introduced fairly early, it may be advisable to introduce it right from the beginning.[3]

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[1] Department of Education. Annual Report for the year 1960. Op.cit. Para. 61.

[2] Report of the Commonwealth Conference on the Teaching of English as a Second Language. Op.cit. Para. 61.

[3] Ibid. Para. 62.

This study suggests that the class at which English should be introduced as the medium of instruction should be progressively lowered. More time should be spent in the lower classes in English conversation and reading, particular attention being paid to pronunciation. The possibility of ultimately making English the medium of instruction for the whole school life is largely tied up with the possibility of producing teachers who are really fluent in English. This may take some time but it should be the aim. When this aim has been achieved then in all schools in Fiji English should be the medium of instruction and in the course of two generations the whole of the community will be literate in English. This will have important sociological repercussions and will at least form a basis for the development of a Fiji point of view.

It may be argued that the conclusions reached above are somewhat different from those reached by the 1926 Education Commission and Mayhew in 1936. F.B.Stephens' findings (Report on Education in the Colony of Fiji), however, lend support to the views expressed in this section. The change which this study advocates is due to the fact that the point of view of the Indian community itself is changing. To quote the words of F.B.Stephens:

> The older section of the community who were born and still have their roots in India are desirous, for sentimental reasons, to retain their connection therewith. The proportion of the Indian population born in Fiji who have never been out of the country is steadily growing and a very strong movement has developed among this section of the Indian community for a complete grasp of the English language. This sentimental attachment of Indians to the Indian language is largely absent in the Fiji-born Indian.[1]

This was the position in 1944 when F.B.Stephens submitted his Report on Education in the Colony of Fiji. If this tendency continues, and there is no reason to suppose it will not, then the feeling

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[1] F.B.Stephens. Op.cit. P. 17.

in favour of English will tend to grow. If no sudden change is made, that is to say if the development of English as the medium of instruction is proceeded with gradually but nevertheless regularly, there will be little friction and the point of view of the younger members of the Indian community will be satisfied.

It is of interest to note that definite attempts are being made in other British colonies to introduce English at an early stage in the primary school course and in some colonies, the local inhabitants demand that English be made the medium of instruction from the beginning of primary education. We shall illustrate this point by referring to Hong Kong, Sarawak, Tonga and North Borneo, all British dependencies.

Hong Kong. Although the population of Hong Kong is predominently Chinese, English is given a prominent place in the curriculum of all primary schools. As the official report on Hong Kong says: "The majority of primary schools are Chinese schools where the medium of instruction is Cantonese. English is studied as a second language beginning in the third year, although some schools start earlier."[1]

Tonga. The Tonga High School where Tongans and Europeans are taught together, has a primary and secondary department. It is staffed by New Zealand teachers and by New Zealand-trained Tongan teachers and prepares students for the New Zealand School Certificate Examination. The report on Tonga says: "All instruction is in English."[2]

Sarawak. Most primary schools in Sarawak are managed by local authorities, by Chinese school boards, or by christian

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[1] Hong Kong - Report for the year 1961. Op.cit. P. 113.

[2] Tonga - Report for the years 1958 and 1959. Op.cit. P. 30.

missions. In 1960, there were 850 primary schools in the country; 579 used English as the medium of instruction, "with some use of the vernacular in the lower primary classes"; 271 schools under Chinese boards, used Kuo-yu as the medium of instruction. The official report on Sarawak for the year 1960 says:

> The difference in the medium of instruction, however, and the fact that the Chinese schools are in effect confined to pupils of one race makes a cleavage between the two systems which is especially marked at the secondary stage. It remains a principal part of the Education Department's policy to bring the different types of schools into a uniform national system with the aim of developing among all the peoples a sense of common citizenship, brotherhood and loyalty.[1]

With a view to creating a national system of education, the government in 1957 established a number of schools, "using English as the medium of instruction and catering for pupils of all races".[2]

In most rural schools under local authorities the medium of instruction is partly the vernacular and partly English; frequently the vernacular is used in Primary One and Two, with English taught as a subject, and English begins to be used to some extent as the medium of instruction in Primary Three. The report adds:

> In some areas, amongst mixed rural communities, multi-racial schools catering for Native and Chinese pupils have been established, using English as the medium of instruction from Primary One. The demand for English among the Native peoples is very strong and where the teacher has a good command of the language, English is increasingly used as the medium from the beginning of the course.[3]

North Borneo. Government primary schools for the Natives of North Borneo used Malay as a medium of instruction, for some years Native Chiefs and other local leaders have been critical of this as

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[1] Sarawak - Annual Report 1960. Op.cit. P. 95.

[2] Ibid. P. 94.

[3] Ibid. P. 96.

there is no secondary or higher education in Malay, The demand had been for English as a medium of instruction in the native schools. The 1960 Annual Report on North Borneo says:

> In 1960, the first phase of the scheme for using English as the medium of instruction in native education was put into operation. This scheme is in direct response to a request by Native Chiefs and has the approval of the Board of Education. In 1960, seventeen specialist teachers of English, recruited from neighbouring countries, started work in ten Government Primary Schools, most of which are in the Interior Residency where the need is greatest. These specialists teach English in Government Primary Schools, and also run evening, week-end and holiday classes for both native and Chinese teachers within reach of their centres.[1]

The Report adds:

> It is hpped that when the standard of English of both teachers and pupils reaches a satisfactory level, English will be introduced to replace Malay as the Medium of instruction in Government Primary Schools. Malay will be taught as a second language when so desired.[2]

Classification of Schools

Writing on this subject the 1926 Education Commission wrote as follows:

> The paramount aim of its education system.... should be to train for effective citizenship in a community in which by far the great majority are, and must be, rural workers getting their living directly from the soil. There is ample scope for a fine system of primary, middle and secondary schools with this definite objective.... A good system of primary education for rural workers, with provision for selected students, either Indian or Fijian, to pass on to advanced schools (technical, agricultural or clerical and professional) should be the aim; but the immediate emphasis

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[1] Colony of North Borneo - Annual Report, 1960. North Borneo, Government Printer, 1961. P. 80.

[2] Loc.cit.

should be on the primary school.... A more complex system for Fiji will undoubtedly come in the fulness of time, but the time is not yet.[1]

The Commission, however, anticipated a development in the education system "in the comparatively near future" when increased educational facilities for the various races must be provided and with this view it recommended that the schools be brought gradually into the following scheme of classification:-

A. Primary Schools -
   1. Urban schools;
   2. Rural schools;
      a. Grouped schools, in which children from several villages in the vicinity should be collected. In certain instances a grouped school might maintain a boarding establishment, as is the case at existing provincial schools;
      b. Village schools, where grouped schools are impracticable. Such schools to be of equal standard with grouped schools, and to emphasis kindergarten methods for the infant children of the villages.

B. Central Schools to which admission should as a rule be by educational qualification gained in Primary schools. Types of such schools are ———
   1. Government provincial schools;
   2. Mission schools, centrally situated, at a Mission station or such suitable location;
   3. Such middle schools as may be established for Indian boys or Indian girls or Fijian girls.

C. Advanced Schools (Secondary, Technical, Agricultural or Domestic) to which admission should as a rule be by educational qualification. Types of such schools are———
   1. Queen Victoria School for Fijian youths;
   2. Davuilevu: a. Training school for teachers;
      b. Manual and technical school;
   3. Navuso Agricultural school;
   4. Central Girls' school.[2]

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[1] Report of the Education Commission 1926. Op.cit. Para.40,42.

[2] Ibid. Para. 54.

The scheme was implemented in so far as it affected the education of the Fijian children. Six government-maintained provincial schools each with a boarding establishment, were consolidated. Each provincial school had a European headmaster and a small native staff. The total enrolment of the six provincial schools in 1935 was 450 pupils. Only Fijian boys were enrolled at the provincial schools.[1] In his 1935 Annual Report, the Director of Education wrote:—

> All these schools are residential. Every effort is made to ensure that the pupils are fitted for life in the villages. Woodwork and agriculture are taught and every pupil takes part in the activities of the school farm, the produce of which is used in the boarding establishment. Pupils are given a certain amount of instruction in native customs and are encouraged to perform native ceremonies properly.[2]

Selected students from these provincial schools entered the Queen Victoria School-a secondary school for Fijian children.

For the Fijian girls the government maintains an intermediate school (Adi Cakabou School) with secondary section in Suva. The headmistress is a European lady.

No attempt was made by the government to organise schools for Indian children. As pointed out earlier, schools for the Indian children sprang up on the initiative of the Indians themselves. Two or three schools exist in a village where one would be sufficient to meet the need.

The typical primary school for Indian children is an eight-year institution taking children between the ages of 6 and 13 or 14. There is no intermediate school for the Indian children.

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[1] C.W.Mann. Objective Tests in Fiji. Suva, Government Printer, 1937. P. 37.

[2] As quoted in C.W.Mann. Op.cit. Loc.cit.

The existing school system in Fiji is shown in the figure below:

Figure 1

Structure of the Educational System*

Year	Primary Indian & Fijian		Primary European
1	Class 1		Primers 1-2
2	Class 2		Primers 3-4
3	Class 3		Standard 1
4	Class 4		Standard 2
5	Class 5	Intermediate (Fijian)	Standard 3
6	Class 6	Class 6	Standard 4
7	Class 7	Class 7	Form 1
8	Class 8	Class 8	Form 2
		Secondary	
9		Form 3	
10		Form 4	
11		Form 5B	
12		Form 5A	
13		Form 6	
14		Higher Education Course	

Notes

1. The Intermediate Examination selects students for Fijian Intermediate Schools at the end of Class 5.
2. The Secondary Schools Entrance Examination is taken in Class 8.
3. The Fiji Junior Certificate Examination is taken in Form 4.
4. The N.Z. School Certificate Ex. is taken in Form 5B.
5. The Cambridge O.School Certificate Ex. is taken in Form5A.
6. The N.Z. University Entrance Ex, is taken in Form 6.
7. Qualification for entry to the Higher Education Course is a pass in the NZ University Entrance Examination.

* Department of Education. Report for the year 1959. P. 8.

In Fiji the majority of children start and complete their education in a primary school in a rural area and this will be the position in the foreseeable future. It is therefore in the fitness of things that primary education be given the importance that it deserves.

Assuming that in the immediate future there must necessarily be a consistent policy of increasing educational facilities, and that new schools must be established, it is suggested that the existing schools as well as the new schools be brought into the following pattern of structure:

Figure 2

Proposed Structure of the Educational System

Year	ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS Fijian, Indian, European and others			
1	Class 1			
2	Class 2			
3	Class 3			
4	Class 4			
5	Class 5			
6	Class 6			
	INTERMEDIATE SCHOOLS			
7	Form 1			
8	Form 2			
	POST-PRIMARY SCHOOLS			
9	Form 3	Form 3	Form 3	Form 3
10	Form 4	Form 4	Form 4	Form 4
11	Form 5B	Form 5B	Form 5B	Form 5B
12	Form 5A	Form 5A	Form 5A	Form 5A
13	Form 6	Form 6	Form 6	Form 6
	P	Q	R	S

P = Secondary Academic
Q = Multipurpose
R = Technical
S = Agricultural

It will be noted that an important and a fundamental change is contemplated in regard to primary schools. (In this section we shall confine our discussion to primary schools only.) The eight-year primary school course is to be broken up into two stages: Elementary School - a six-year course Classes 1-6, and Intermediate School - a two-year course Forms 1-2.

Elementary Schools. Children of the age-group 6-11 will attend elementary schools. The elementary school programme will include English, vernacular (Hindi or Fijian), social studies (history, geography, civics), handwork (including needlework for girls), arithmetic, elementary science, nature study, music, drawing, physical instruction, health education and moral instruction. The characteristic feature of the elementary school programme should be to enrich the experiences of children through an increase in the variety of activities.

No external examination is to be taken in the elementary school. Pupils who have satisfactorily completed Class 6 work should automatically join the intermediate school. Freed from the rigid syllabuses of the external examination requirements, the elementary schools would be able to provide a rich and balanced programme of activities that would cater to the all-round needs of the pupils. The principal aim of the elementary school should be to rouse pupils' interest and tickle their curiosity in whatever activity they are engaged in.

The tool subjects must be stripped of unessentials and then taught with complete thoroughness and hard work cannot and should not be eliminated from true education, but it should be on tasks that have a meaning for the child. As regards methods of teaching various subjects, this study whole-heartedly approves the recommendation of the Karachi Seminar on Primary-School

Curriculum for South Asia:

> Subjects taught in isolation from one another tended to lose some of their meaning for children. Some delegates strongly favoured, at least as an ideal, integration of a large part of the curriculum around three major centres: craft; physical environment; and the social environment. Others were not prepared to go so far, or in any case, considered that the immediate practical objective should be to put more meaning into the learning of subjects, and to work towards correlation and a measure of unification (as in the combination of history, geography and civics into social studies).[1]

Intermediate Schools. How will the creation of intermediate schools help in improving the standard and quality of primary education?

Small schools are generally inefficient. Much better work can be done in an intermadiate school to which children are brought in buses everyday. For many years to come the problem of the supply of adequately trained teachers will be a difficult problem to solve, as also will be the problem of effective inspection, supervision and guidance. A system of consolidation of schools should produce better results, by allowing a more effective use of the trained teachers available. Because of it size, the intermediate school can classify its pupils according to ability, organise a variety of courses, and provide specialist teaching. It can also be equipped with facilities adapted to the needs of its age-group - workshops, library, a model flat, a science laboratory, gymnasium, typewriting rooms, and special rooms for art, craftwork, sewing and homecraft - which could not be supplied economically on a comparable scale for the few score Class 7 and 8 pupils in the ordinary primary school.

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[1] Regional Seminar on Primary School Curriculum for South Asia. Report and Recommendations. Convened by the Ministry of Education, Pakistan in collaboration with Unesco. Karachi, 14-29 May,1956. Unpublished. P. 15.

The General Aim of the Intermediate School. The intermediate school is a school for pupils of the "between ages" - pupils from 11 to 13 or 14 years of age. It should offer a distinctive programme of studies and activities specially suited to pupils who have attained the status of early adolescence. Like the elementary school, it should represent an attempt to adjust the school programme and environment to the needs of an age-group. Like the post-primary school, it should offer a programme of liberal-cultural studies, but with the difference that its programme is not primarily concerned with preparation for advanced post-primary education.

It is a difficult matter for most adolescents to make a wise choice from the adult occupations. Majority of them will go to the farm; some will go into the trades; some into business; some will find clerical or civil service positions; and some will enter the professions. But the intermediate school cannot segregate those groups. It must offer a sound "core" of instruction that is of value to all pupils, and, by way of enriching the programme, make provision for individual interests and aptitudes through elective and more or less "exploratory" courses. The Intermediate school must be a preparatory school for pupils who will proceed to post-primary schools; but at the same time it must serve as a "finishing school" for pupils, who for one reason or another, are unable to proceed for further education.

The "middle schools" of India are designed to serve very similar purposes as discussed above. The Secondary Education Commission of India held that the 'function of the middle school curriculum is to introduce the pupils in a general way to certain broad fields of human knowledge and interest".[1] The Commission goes on to say:

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[1] Ministry of Education, India. Report of the Secondary Education Commission. Op.cit. P. 88.

> It is in the middle stage that the special abilities and interests of the individual child tend to crystalise and take shape. In view of this, the middle school curriculum has to be of an exploratory character. By providing a broad-based and general curriculum and an appropriate environment in the school, we can help the child to discover his own tastes and talents.[1]

Intermediate Schools in New Zealand. The intermediate school movement in New Zealand dates from 1922. In 1955, there were 40 intermediate schools catering for 17,000 children between the ages of 11 and 14 years. The schools are a direct descendent of the American junior high schools, but have tended to fluctuate between the American policy of a vocational try-out in workshops and classrooms, and the English central school policy with its underlying idea of a finishing course for those who will not continue with further schooling after the age of 14. The main object, however, was to obtain the advantages of consolidation, as Professor Wood, in his book "This New Zealand", writes:

> In effect, however, the intermediate school has proved an admirable field for experiment. One of its major projects was consolidation: the drawing together of pupils of roughly the same age and needs. This made possible more specialized staffing, the grouping of pupils according to abilities, and a comparative generosity in equipment: workshops, libraries, projectors, facilities for domestic science teaching, and, even, on occasion, aprinting press. In the last two years of primary school course, over a quarter of the school population now attend intermediate schools.[2]

In 1944 the school leaving age in New Zealand was raised to 15, consequently all now go on to post-primary schooling, so that the original idea of providing a "rounding off" course for some pupils is no longer appropriate. According to the present policy of the

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[1] Loc.cit.

[2] F.L.Wood. This New Zealand. London, Hammond, Hammond & Co., 1958. Pp. 145-146.

Education Department, the chief functions of the intermediate school in New Zealand are:

> (a) to provide a period of expansive, realistic, and socially integrative education that will give all future citizens a common basis of experience and knowledge; (b) to introduce all children gradually and sympathetically to the world of industry, commerce, and the professions; (c) to help each child to a rational choice of future school course or occupation based on knowledge of his own aptitudes and interests and on the nature of the work involved.[1]

Many pupils who have no aptitude for academic training, as now obtains in the existing primary schools in Fiji, as pointed out earlier, drop out after Class 7 or 8 with a sense of inadequacy and failure, when they could still profit from further education if it were of a kind suited to their needs and abilities. It is the proper function of the intermediate school to offer a programme that will appeal to all pupils of the adolescent group, a programme that will, in effect, enable pupils who leave school to do so with a sense of accomplishment.

The intermediate school must accept responsibility for completing the education of many young citizens. It should, therefore, inclucate loyalty to the democratic ideal and exemplify in its programme and government, the value and efficacy of that ideal. It should continue the programme, begun in the elementary school, of teaching the pupils, how to examine both sides of a question, how and where to find facts, and how to use the evidence of the authorities in reaching a conclusion. It should preserve and foster personal freedom, evoked in the elementary school.

It is necessary that these intermediate schools should be located in the larger centres. Some convenient location central to the area to be covered could be chosen and arrangements could

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[1] Compulsory Education in New Zealand. Op.cit. Pp. 39-40.

be made for motor buses to bring the children from the surrounding villages. By this means an area of approximately 15 miles from the school in all directions could conveniently be covered. The strength of the school should not exceed 270 pupils, and each Form to have a maximum of 30 pupils. All rural and urban intermediate schools must be multi-racial co-educational institutions; but, if two intermediate schools are required in a thickly populated area, as in Suva or Lautoka, separate intermediate schools for boys and girls may be maintained. Besides the headmaster, the staff should consist of 10 teachers (or 1 teacher more than the number of forms in the school).

The teaching procedures, methods of discipline, and administrative control in the intermediate school must be adapted to the peculiar mental, emotional and physical needs of adolescent pupils. The teachers should know something about the psychology of adolescence, but the headmaster should be an expert in this field. Teaching procedures should also be adjusted to the differences in mentality, special aptitudes, personality and physique. Dull pupils do not profit from sustained instruction. They require short and simple "units" of work with an obvious goal in evidence. Attention should also be given to differences in personality and physique. Sound methods of diagnosis should be employed, leading to appropriate remedial measures and educational and vocational guidance.

The intermediate school will have a distinctive programme that combines a diversified curriculum with some of the social activities of daily life. The curriculum will consist of a "core", supplemented with elective or optional subjects.

Perhaps, the school could offer, as is the practice in some junior high schools in America,[1] "general" or "survey" courses -

[1] T.W.Gruhn and H.R.Douglas. The Modern Junior High School. New York, The Ronald Press Co., 1956. Pp. 61- 232.

attenuated or diluted courses for pupils going no further in school than Form 2, and enriched courses for those proceeding to post-primary schools. On the one hand, many schools have reduced the number of core subjects to three, namely: English, Social Studies and Health Education. It is conceded, however, that most adolescent pupils can profit from instruction in the traditional subjects if the material is properly selected for their instructional level, and is organised in short, simple units, presented in a practical setting. In any event, the core should include a sound training in the fundamentals of oral and written English, vernacular (Hindi/Fijian), a more or less comprehensive view of the world of today, through social studies; and the rudiments of science in everyday life, together with the foundation in science for health rules and physical recreation. As an enrichment, there may be added the practical application of useful concepts in mathematics, and some knowledge of the technique of science and the great scientific discoveries.

The elective and optional courses will be of three kinds:

1. Those designed to develop cultural appreciation, and to train for leisure-time hobbies and avocational pursuits. Amongst these will be courses in music, art, craftwork and dramatics, involving participation in clubs, plays and the school band.

2. Exploratory courses; such as courses in general workshop, commercial art, homecraft, typewriting and book-keeping. These courses will explore the personal resources of the pupils through suitable and adequate activation, intelligent selection and experimental direction.

3. Pre-vocational courses; similar to those listed in the preceding paragraph but more intensive and extensive. These courses can be specially adapted to the needs of pupils whose academic limit will be reached at or below the level of Form 2.

The programme should include, besides the curriculum, a full list of avocational, social, recreational, sports and pupil government activities; such as will develop social co-operation and wholesome social attitudes. For a 40-period week the scheme of subjects and time allotment is gievn in the following table:

TABLE 20

Scheme of Subjects and Time Allotment

Forms 1 and 2

Compulsory Subjects	Periods per Week
English	5
Social Studies	5
Health and Physical Education	3
Mathematics	4
General Science	3
Hindi/Fijian	3
Additional requirements	
Library or Remedial English	3
Supervised Study	3
Periods per week required	31
Optional Subjects (three to be chosen)	
Art	3
Dramatics	3
Music	3
Typewriting	3
Workshop	3
Farm and Home Accounting	3
Handicraft	3
Homecraft	3
Periods per week available for optional subjects	9

Note: A school day comprises 8 class periods, of which one must be a study period.

External Examination and Selection for Post-Primary Schools.

Until such time as the intermediate schools have been able to find a settled position in the education system and evolved reliable and valid methods of ascertaining post-primary schools'

entrance requirements and that they have won absolute confidence and esteem of the general public, selection for the various kinds of post-primary schools will undoubtedly present considerable difficulties. At present there is only one type of post-primary schools - the academic secondary schools - and the pupils desiring post-primary education have nothing to choose from. But when there are post-primary schools offering different courses, and the pupils have choice, it will present the educational administrator with some subtle and difficult problems, for who can wield the magic wand and say "you go to the academic secondary, you to the technical, you to the agricultural and you to the multipurpose?"

As stated earlier, the present Secondary Schools Entrance Examination is unsatisfactory because it only caters to the needs of the bookish type of pupils and that it is not a reliable test and that all secondary schools do not attach much importance to it when selecting entrants. Moreover, the rigid requirements of this examination (English, arithmetic and general knowledge) unduly dominate the school curriculum.

For the immediate future, however, it is suggested that the Secondary Schools Entrance Examination conducted by the Department of Education be continued with this important modification: that besides the core subjects, practical and aesthetic subjects in the optional group be brought within the scheme of the examination and that importance be attached to the school's considered estimates of its own pupils (i.e. cumulative records of the pupils' performances in the school tests). Moreover, a wisely directed external examination may be a potent instrument for good particularly in shaping and steadying the function of the intermediate schools during the formative period. Its defined syllabuses, its proper balance of emphasis, the consistency of its level - all these will exert a steadying influence and a salutory stimulus on the teachers while

at the same time it will help to protect the children against the mistakes of ignorance and the vagaries of individual temperament, within a system that is still in its infancy.

But when the intermediate schools have evolved a satisfactory system of ascertaining the post-primary schools' entrance requirements and that the post-primary schools are satisfied that the standard of education in the intermediate schools is sufficiently high and that their progonstic evaluation is reliable and valid, the external examination must be abandoned.

Conclusion

Primary education which is usually regarded as the irreducible minimum for effective citizenship, should be the responsibility of the government. The implementation of the policy of universal primary education should be given high priority, even under existing conditions, and that the government, from tax sources, must find ways and means to defray the full expense of primary education.

Division of control of primary schools has led to duplication of educational effort, low standard of education, waste of public money and development of education on racial basis. To bring order out of the present chaotic conditions and to evolve a unified, integrative system which would be efficient, the government should take over complete control of all independently managed primary schools.

The mixed schools in existence at the present time are proving satisfactory and the principle should be developed. Mixed schools will help in developing healthy friendly relations amongst the various races. In urban areas where the races are mixed, mixed schools should be provided.

Compulsory education must be instituted in those areas which are adequately covered, and ultimately for the whole Colony. The

ages suggested are 6-11, but when facilities are available compulsory education should be extended to cover the age-group 6-14 years. An immediate attack should be made on the problem of irregularity of attendance and once enrolled the child should be compelled to attend unless for causes beyond his control.

The primary school curriculum must be revised immediately. The content and organisation of the curriculum should be in harmony with the principle that what children are asked to learn should have clear meaning for them and be related to purposes they can accept and understand; that the curriculum meets the needs and maturity levels of the children in different classes; and that the curriculum is balanced in that it provides for the all round development of the children (mental, physical, emotional, aesthetic and creative).

At the present time the vernacular (Hindi/Fijian) is the medium of instruction in Indian and Fijian schools until Class 4. In the fifth and succeeding years English is the medium of instruction. English is fast becoming the lingua franca of Fiji. Practically all Fiji-born Indians desire that English should be the medium of instruction. The present policy of the government aims at making English as the medium of instruction from Class 1. More attention should be paid to the teaching of English and progressively the stage at which English becomes the medium of instruction should be lowered until ultimately it is the medium of instruction right through the school.

In order to raise the standard of education at the primary level, it is suggested that a series of intermediate schools be established to which children who have completed Classes 1-6 in elementary school be admitted. A system of consolidation

of schools should produce better results, by allowing a more effective use of trained teachers available. Because of its size, the intermediate school can classify its pupils according to ability, offer a variety of courses, and provide specialist teaching. It can also be equipped economically with a variety of educational plants. The intermediate school will offer courses for those who would leave schooling after Form 2 and at the same time cater to the needs of those students who would proceed to post-primary education.

The Secondary Schools Entrance Examination with the modifications suggested be continued. When the intermediate schools are properly established and their standard of education is sufficiently high, this examination should be discontinued.