

INTRODUCTION

NATURE, PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THIS THESIS

The main purpose of this study, "Educational Reorganisation in Fiji", consists in the working out and presentation of a comprehensive plan for the reconstruction of the educational system in the light both of past experience of its working and of the needs and conditions that are now to be anticipated. The proposals for reorganisation of the educational system aim at achieving the following objectives:

1. To provide education for as large a percentage of the school-age population as possible;
2. To improve its quality and adapt it more closely to the needs, aptitudes and circumstances of the learners;
3. To relate the purposes and curriculum of the school to the requirements of the modern society;
4. To improve the personal and professional qualifications and status of teachers of both primary and post-primary schools;
5. To provide opportunities for university education to those who are capable of benefitting from higher learning so that the Colony's needs for professional personnel to exploit her economic resources and to provide the necessary leadership in the political and social fields are met;
6. To eradicate illiteracy and ignorance among the adult population, so that they too lead clean, healthy, co-operative and satisfying lives; and
7. To increase democratic control of education so that the people are intimately involved in planning and executing educational programmes.

Chapter 1 gives general information about Fiji and points out its

main geographical features, its history, its economic resources, its administration and its people and their culture. These factors influence the establishment of an adequate system of education for Fiji. Chapter II outlines the history of the development of education in Fiji and the contributions made to it by the Christian Missions, Indian religious, cultural and philanthropic organisations and other voluntary bodies. Chapter III examines in detail the existing educational system and points out its main defects. Chapters IV-IX contain suggestions for reorganising the various branches of the educational system and its future developments. Chapter X deals with the administration of education and the need for its decentralization. And Chapter XI discusses ways and means of raising revenue to meet educational expenditure.

Education is not an end in itself. It is not sufficient merely to impart to the children or other subjects of an education system a knowledge of certain facts and then to assume that the recipient of that knowledge is educated. Education is fundamentally a training and preparation for life and in planning the education system for Fiji it has been necessary to consider the general social, economic and political structure and aims of Fiji. A system entirely suitable for one country may not necessarily be applicable to another country with a different culture or a different standard of economic development. A system of education suitable for New Zealand or Ceylon may be quite unsuitable for Fiji. This is not to say that we cannot learn from the experiences of other countries but a slavish adherence to the methods adopted elsewhere is definitely undesirable.

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Throughout this study two fundamental principles were kept in mind. The first one is that education is basic to the progressive acceptance of civic and social responsibilities. If the central purpose of the United Kingdom Government in the colonies is to help

forward their economic, social and political progress and, in so doing, to create the conditions in which their peoples can develop self-government on democratic foundations and, whenever possible, independence within the Commonwealth, then it is essential that an education system shall be devised which will minister to the furtherance of these ideals. Modern administration is essentially complex and cannot be successful in the long run unless it has the complete endorsement of the people governed. Among the other requisites to effective self-government is an enlightened democracy which, because of basic education, is able to appreciate the problems with which its administrators have to deal.

The second principle which is of universal validity is that education is a necessary precedent to the effective development of the economic resources, both human and material, of any particular country. Modern civilization abounds with instances of the truth of this proposition. He would be a bold man who would affirm that we have as yet reached the limit of material development; but such material development requires not only efficient scientists to advise on new methods of work, but also requires a working population who are able to appreciate and carry into effect the suggestions and schemes of the scientists. Such a principle has a peculiar validity in a relatively underdeveloped country such as Fiji. The per capita productivity in Fiji when compared with that of countries with western civilization is relatively low and can undoubtedly be considerably raised if the population is educated up to such a point as would enable it to appreciate any developments proposed.

A corollary to the above proposition is that an education system must take into account the absorptive capacity of industry in particular directions. It is futile to suggest that a separate institution for the training of say, lawyers, whatever phase of the legal profession we may consider, should be provided, particularly when we remember that Fiji can absorb at most probably not more than

three or four lawyers per year. Instances could be multiplied, but the proposition as stated will be accepted by all thinking people. The education system must take into account the avenues of employment open to those who pass through the schools.

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This study is intended primarily to present recommendations designed to improve education in Fiji, and the reasons for such recommendations. The recommendations are based on the study and analysis of the educational organisations, policies and practices of a number of countries. The main sources of information were:

1. Reports on education in Fiji.
2. Reports on education in the British Colonies, India, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States of America.
3. Reports of the Unesco Educational Missions to Burma, Korea and the Philippines.
4. Unesco-International Bureau of Education "Comparative Studies" such as: Organization of Pre-Primary Education, Primary Teacher Training, Secondary Teacher Training, Primary Teachers' Salaries, Secondary Teachers' Salaries, Financing of Education, School Inspection, etc.
5. Reports of the International Conferences on Public Education.
6. International Yearbooks of Education.
7. Unesco "Studies on Compulsory Education" in the following countries: Australia, England, India, Indonesia, Iraq, the Arab States, Pakistan, New Zealand, the Philippines, and South Asia and the Pacific.

A word as to the technique. Each educational problem is discussed and analysed and then in the light of experiences from other countries, that is, how a similar education problem was solved elsewhere and with what degree of success, a most feasible and acceptable remedy is suggested. But wherever a major development in the education system,

such as the introduction of compulsory education or the provision of university education in Fiji, is recommended, the study draws upon the experiences of those countries which have recently acquired their political independence or like Fiji are about to do so, rather than on the experiences of educationally advanced countries such as the United States of America or New Zealand. This was done so advisedly because Fiji and the other British colonies have somewhat similar social, economic and political problems and the experiences gained in these colonies would be of much more practical value to Fiji.

The value of this study lies not only in the fact that it provides for the first time a detailed and critical analysis of the confusion of purpose and practice implicit in the present education system in Fiji, but also in the fact that the suggestions for its improvement and future development are based on the experiences gained in other countries and in the light of modern knowledge and research and that many of the suggestions can be carried out with the present financial resources of the Colony, and, further, a realistic attempt has been made to relate education to the Colony's civic, social and economic needs. It is impossible to have an effective education system unless those responsible for its administration not only know how to work but are required to know what they are working for. This study provides for the first time a clear, thorough and authoritative plan for the future development of education in the Colony of Fiji.