EDUCATIONAL POLICIES AND PROGRESS

During British Rule in Ceylon (Sri Lanka) 1796 - 1948

J. E. Jayasuriya

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during

BRITISH RULE IN CEYLON
(Sri Lanka)

1796 - 1948

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JAY.

Dedicated

to

L. S. Jinasena

P. de S. Kularatne

W. J. F. La Brooy

P. H. Nonis

and

to all my teachers.

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Abbreviations

A.R.	:	Administration Report
D.E.	:	Director of Education
D.P.I.	:	Director of Public Instruction
L.C.	:	Legislative Council
S.C.	:	State Council

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INTRODUCTION

1. This book is divided into an introductory section entitled "The Background", and six other sections, numbered II, III, IV, V, VI and VII. The introductory section provides the background to an understanding of developments in education in Ceylon during the British period 1796-1948, and has chapters entitled

The Country and the People
The Indigenous Religious Traditions in Education
The Educational Establishments of the Dutch

Sections II to VI represent a chronological division of the period of British rule in Ceylon as follows:

Section	II.	:	1796	to	1832
Section	III.	:	1832	to	1869
Section	IV.	:	1869	to	1900
Section	V.	:	1900	to	1920
Section	VI.	:	1920	to	1948

2. Section II begins with the year 1796 when the British took over the control of the maritime provinces. It takes the story through the year 1815 when Britain became ruler of the whole island, until the year 1832. The year 1832 is only an approximate dividing line betw
two eras. It roughly represents the time when steps were t
implement the recommendations of the Colebrooke Co
which dealt with the civil and judicial establishments of
and suggested changes of a far-reaching nature that ha
on the social, political and economic life of the count

3. Section III deals with the period 1832 to 18
significance of the year 1869 lies firstly in th
recommendations of the Morgan Committee
of Public Instruction was established during
that on the recommendations of the same
system, with no restrictions on religious in

4. Section IV deals with the period 18
was selected partly because it marked the o
centuries. More importantly, the Census Repo
of 1900 drew public attention both in Ceylon an

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state of education in Ceylon, and emphasized the need for a more vigorous extension of education than before.

5. Section V takes the story of education from 1900 to the year 1920, when an Education Ordinance that considered education in the school-going years as somewhat of a totality was enacted. Previously, two ordinances dealt with the urban sector and the rural sector separately, and only with reference to vernacular education, but the Education Ordinance of 1920 attempted to take a consolidated view.

6. Section VI begins with the year 1920 and ends in 1948, when Ceylon won her independence from British rule and became a 'Dominion' enjoying an equal, or nearly equal, partnership with Britain in the British Commonwealth.

7. While, as indicated above, there is some political or educational justification for the above mentioned divisions into periods, apart from the convenience of splitting up a century and half into more manageable blocks of time, the divisions are not rigid and the story of educational developments in Ceylon is a continuous one in which one era merged into the next.

8. Section VII, entitled "Epilogue," attempts to make an assessment of educational developments in Ceylon during the British period in their totality.

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SECTION I

The Background

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CHAPTER 1

THE COUNTRY AND THE PEOPLE

1. CEYLON, or Lanka as it was known in the old days before European occupation, or Sri Lanka as it is known now, is a pear shaped island situated a little north of the equator and separated from the south-east coast of India a distance of about 40 miles at the nearest point, by the Palk Strait. The distance from the northernmost point in the island to the furthest point south is about 270 miles, and the distance from the west coast to the east coast is about 140 miles where the width is greatest. The south-west and north-east monsoons supply rain generally in May-June and November-December respectively. The variation in temperature is small, and seldom exceeds five or six degrees during the year on the coastal belt. The average temperature on the coastal belt is about 80°F, while in the hill country temperatures may fluctuate between 65°F and 75°F.

The Sinhalese

2. The Sinhalese form the major ethnic group in the island, and speak the language known by the same name. The Sinhalese regard themselves as the descendants of an Aryan prince, Vijaya, from North India and his 700 followers who, exiled from their homes in North India because of their marauding activities, landed in Ceylon by sea about the year 485 B.C. They appear to have made friends with the indigenous inhabitants and established themselves in the new country. Legend has it that Vijaya married an indigenous princess, becoming consort and king, but got rid of her later. He then married a daughter of the King of Mathura, who was a Pandyan, the Pandyans being a Kshatriya tribe of Aryans who had migrated southwards from Madhyadesa. Some of the wives of Vijaya's followers also came from Mathura, while his nephew and successor married a Sakya princess from North India. Thus, by and large, the early Sinhalese were descendants of Aryan immigrants from North India. The majority of the Sinhalese are Buddhists while the remainder are Christians.

The Ceylon Tamils

3. On account of the close proximity of Ceylon to South India, it is likely that even in the very earliest times small groups of Tamils

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came to Ceylon and made it their home, living peacefully among the Sinhalese. Ceylon also proved attractive for the expansionist ambitions of South Indian kings, and starting from about the latter half of the third century B.C., there was a series of invasions. Successive waves of invaders were driven back after varying periods of control over the northern part of the country, with an occasional pursuit by Sinhalese kings into India itself. From about the fifteenth century A.D., efforts to drive the South Indian invaders completely across the seas failed, and the Sinhalese accommodated themselves to letting the Tamils exercise sovereignty over the northern part of the island. There was no doubt much social contact and inter-marriage on the frontiers.

> "During a continuous period of centuries the Tamil influence was seriously felt not only in social and cultural spheres but in the racial mixture. During periods of peaceful settlement when the two races lived in amity as neighbours inter-marriages took place. This practice became very common during the later Kandyan kingdom."[1]

The majority of the Tamils are Hindus, while the remainder are Christians.

The Ceylon Muslims

4. Arab traders visited Ceylon regularly from about the eighth century A.D. for purposes of trade, and in course of time established pockets of settlements on the littoral. Later, they expanded their trading activities inland, too, and more settlements were established. The descendants of the Arab traders are known as the Ceylon Moors, and together with the Malays consisting largely of soldiers brought by the Dutch, constitute the Ceylon Muslims.

The Burghers

5. The Portuguese captured much of the littoral in 1505 and occupied it until 1656, when the Dutch became masters of the littoral holding it until the British dispossessed them in 1796. The British extended their rule to cover the entire country in 1815, when the Kandyan kingdom was ceded to them by chieftains who were dissatisfied with the King of Kandy. The descendants of Portuguese and Dutch parents, along with children of mixed marriages between

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Dutch or Portuguese men and Sinhalese or Tamil women constitute the Burgher community of Ceylon. With a handful of exceptions, the Burghers are Christians by religion.

The Indian Tamils

6. South Indian labourers imported by the British to work on the coffee and tea plantations from about the second half of the nineteenth century form the bulk of the Indian Tamils. Indian traders also belong to the same category. With very few exceptions, the Indian Tamils are Hindus by religion.

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CHAPTER 2

THE INDIGENOUS RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS IN EDUCATION

The Pre-Buddhist era

1. Before the acceptance of Buddhism as their religion by the king and the mass of people as a result of the mission undertaken towards the middle of the third century B.C. by the Venerable *Thera* Mahinda, there does not appear to have been any widely accepted religion by the king or the people of Ceylon. Some subscribed to animistic cults, some to ancestor worship, some were Hindus with their pantheism, some were Jains, and there may also have been a sprinkling of Buddhists (possibly, not monks) in the population. Considering that Vijaya, an Aryan prince and his followers came from North India, that his queen and the wives of some of his ministers came from Madhura (from among the Pandyans, a Kshatriya tribe of Aryans who had migrated from Madhyadesa), that his nephew and successor married a Sakya princess from North India, that some of Vijaya's successors in the throne consisted of Sakya princes from North India, and that there was occasional sea traffic with India, it is not surprising that the Vijayan colonisation of Ceylon and the centuries that followed it brought with them almost the whole range of religious beliefs in India, Buddhism itself not being completely excluded. Groups of ascetics, such as the *paribbajakas*, *ajivakas*, *pasandas* and *pabbajitas* also formed part of the population.

2. No evidence exists as to any literary activities, secular or religious, between the coming of Vijaya *circa* 485 B.C. and the introduction of Buddhism.[1] This is suggestive of the fact that no religious group was present in strength or had a determined missionary purpose.

3. The most popular occupations among the Vijayan colonists were undoubtedly those relating to the support of life, namely, agriculture, animal husbandry and hunting. The last named, apart from its usefulness as a source of food supply for the common man, became a sport for the king and the nobility. Providing food, clothing and shelter needed manpower as well as tools. These needs were supplied very early. The King of Madhura supplied Vijaya not only with his daughter as his queen, but also sent "elephants withal and horses and

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waggons, worthy of a king, and craftsmen and a thousand families of the eighteen guilds," thereby facilitating life in the country and balanced economic development.[2] Astrology also appears to have been practised. Some medicine was also most likely practised.

4. Educational activities to meet the needs of the people and of the economy went on. The kings or chieftains had Brahmin teachers. For example, King Pandukabhaya had a Brahmin teacher, well versed in the Vedas. "It was this Brahmana who trained Pandukabhaya in the arts and sciences necessary for a king, and ultimately gave him wealth sufficient to raise an army to fight his enemies."[3] The craftsmen needed for the economy were turned out through apprenticeship, the thousand families of the eighteen guilds, referred to in the preceding paragraph, serving as a nucleus. Some Sanskrit was perhaps learnt during apprenticeship for the practice of astrology or medicine.

The Buddhist tradition

5. The official introduction of Buddhism into Ceylon took place towards the middle of the third century B.C., when Emperor Asoka of India sent a mission of seven *Bhikkus* with a message to King Devanampiya-tissa of Ceylon, with whom he was in friendly contact through exchanges of occasional greetings. The mission was led by the Emperor's son himself (the Venerable Mahinda *Thera*) and among the six other *Bhikkus* was Sumana *Samanera*, the Emperor's grand son. The composition of the mission was evidence of the Emperor's seriousness of purpose as well as his affection for the King of Ceylon. The mission first met the King while he was out on a hunting expedition, and after the usual courtesies and a few questions by Mahinda *Thera* to King Devanampiya-tissa to assess the latter's intellectual capacity, Mahinda *Thera* preached a sermon to the King and his retinue. It was a brilliant exposition, setting out the basic principles of the *Buddha Dhamma*, and indicating the kind of life which a Buddhist layman or *Bhikku* should live in order to conform with the *Dhamma*. The King and his retinue were converted, and within a matter of days the King made arrangements for the provision of a monastery and facilities for the ordination of local devotees as *Bhikkus*. Among the fifty six *Bhikkus* ordained at the first ordination was the King's nephew Maha-arittha, who gave up a post of minister to become a *Bhikku*. A desire was expressed by sub-queen Anula, a number of royal ladies and other females to enter the *Bhikkuni* order, and as the ordination of *Bhikkunis*

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could be carried out only by a *Bhikkuni*, envoys were sent to Emperor Asoka asking for such a *Bhikkuni*. The Emperor sent his daughter, *Theri* Sanghamitta. Local ladies were thereafter ordained, and the *Bhikkuni* order was established in Ceylon.

6. The Venerable Mahinda *Thera* brought with him the triad of texts known as the *Tripitaka*, consisting of the *Sutra*, *Abhidhamma* and *Vinaya Pitakas*. Adhering to the scholastic tradition in which he had grown up, the same standards were naturally applied for the training of the new recruits to the *Sangha* (order of *Bhikkus*). The *Tripitaka* was in Pali. Exposition of the *Dhamma* was an activity undertaken several times a day, and the number of converts ran into thousands. It is recorded that "the interpretations of the discourses and disciplinary rules together with collections of religious legends were taught by Mahinda and the teachers that followed him in the languages of the people—the ancient Sinhalese."[4] This was facilitated by the close relationship that Sinhalese, being an Indo-Aryan language, had with Indian languages. E. W. Adikaram points out that "a comparison of the earliest inscriptions of Ceylon with those of North India in the corresponding age" leads one to the inference that there was a close affinity between Sinhalese and the languages of North India.[5]

7. The Mahavihara, a monastery established in the royal park Mahamega in Anuradhapura by King Devanampiya-tissa in a matter of days was the first training centre for *Bhikkus*, while it also provided instruction in the *Dhamma* for the laity. During the Venerable Mahinda *Thera's* lifetime it functioned under his care. The Sinhalese *Bhikkus* and *Bhikkunis* were quick to master the *Dhamma*. Sanghamitta *Theri* and her companions who came from India were no less active than Mahinda *Thera* and his team. It is recorded of the former that they also resided at the Mahavihara and "taught the local *theris* the five texts of the *Vinaya* and the seven texts of the *Abhidhamma*."[6] Among the *Bhikkunis* Arittha and Anula were the local counterparts of Mahinda *Thera* and Sanghamitta *Theri*. Of them, and of hundreds of other *Bhikkus* and *Bhikkunis*, it is said that they, "endowed with great learning and deep insight", expounded "the holy scripture of the Conqueror, the *vinaya* and the rest" to *Bhikkus*, *Bhikkunis* and laymen.[7] Elsewhere, the *Theris* are credited with "having taught the *Vinaya-pitaka*, the five *nikayas* and the seven books of the *Abhidhamma pitaka* at *Anuradhapura*."[8] There is little doubt that the *Bhikkunis* were not second to the *Bhikkus* in the mastery they acquired over the *Dhamma* and in their missionary zeal.

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8. With these exceedingly propititious beginnings, Buddhism became the national religion of the kings and the people of Ceylon. Possessing the dual characteristics of permitting a rudimentary comprehension at almost the first exposure, and yet demanding for comprehension in its fulness and profundity unending years of study and the living of the religious life, Buddhism led to an efflorescence of education in Ceylon, That religious understanding should have this dual characteristic is not so strange as it may seem at first, for even in a field such as physics one can acquire a rudimentary understanding after a few hours' exposure (even at the school level), while the grasp of the subject in its fulness requires a commitment throughout life, as each intellectual achievement opens fresh vistas for exploration.

9. The intellectual basis of the *Buddha Dhamma* required for its exposition on a nation-wide scale not only manpower but learned manpower. To become a *Bhikku* or *Bhikkuni* was to forsake all worldly ties and riches. The *Sangha* was the fraternity of *Bhikkus* and *Bhikkunis*, and the way in which kings ensured that the needs of the *Bhikkus* and *Bhikkunis* would be met was by making endowments to temples and monasteries for the use of the *Sangha*, so that the *Sangha* would be free to devote their time to religious pursuits, including those of a literary nature. Naturally, the small temple required less support than bigger temples. But the maximum amount of support was required for the monasteries that were the centres of higher learning, for it was to them that *Bhikkus* and *Bhikkunis* from far and near in search of a higher learning had to come. The grants that were made to monasteries sometimes consisted of grants of land—high land, paddy fields, forests, etc.; sometimes of tanks, water from which would be distributed to fields for a share of the produce; sometimes of revenue from entire villages. Grants of this sort helped educational institutions sometimes to engage distinguished lay scholars as teachers for payment when they had special expertise. For example, the Papiliyana inscription states, "Whenever a person who is well-versed in the *Tripitaka*, Logic, Grammar, etc., visits....he should be paid salaries," and students encouraged to pursue the study of these subjects.[9]

10. It is also of interest to note that stringent, but nevertheless objectively laid out criteria, specified the standards that *Bhikkus* should reach in order to be recognized as competent for certain of their duties. These criteria no doubt ensured that the *Bhikkus* of Ceylon would receive the same kind of training as was available in India.

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11. A novice entering the order of the *Sangha* was ordained in a temple as a *samanera*, under the tutelage of two senior *Bhikkus*. One of them was specially responsible for instructing him in the sacred texts, and the other for training him in his code of conduct. After the completion of this period to the satisfaction of his superiors, he underwent a second ordination known as the *upasampada*. Three higher stages of achievement were expected to be attained thereafter commencing five years after the *upasampada*.

In order to attain the first stage,

> "The monk..should know by heart (*vacuggata*) at least two *Matikas*, he should also know four *Bhanavaras* from the *Suttantas* for the purpose of preaching on *uposatha* days; some important *suttas* like *Andhakavinda*, *Maha-Rahulovada* and *Ambattha* for the purpose of talking to those who came to see him; three *anumodana* for the purpose of giving benedictory talks on special occasions; particulars about certain fundamental *Vinaya kammas* such as *uposatha* and *pavarana;* and also a topic of meditation (*kammatthana*) leading up to *arahantship*. All this he should learn, and then he is qualified to go about freely (*catuddiso*) and to live independently (*attano issariyena vasitum*)."[10]

Ten years after *upasampada*, he should aim at the second stage:

> "The monk of the second grade, known as *Parisupatthapaka* (Attendant of the Assembly),..should know by heart at least the two *Vibhangas* of the *Vinaya*, failing which, he should be able to recite these texts with three others. He should also know the *Vinaya-kammas* and the *Khandhakavatta*. If he was a *Majjhima-bhanaka*, he should know the *Mulapannasaka* (the first 50 *suttas*) of the *Majjhimanikaya;* if a *Digha-bhanaka*, the *Mahavagga* (10 *suttas* of the second *vagga*) of the *Digha-nikaya;* if a Samyutta-bhanaka, the first three sections of the *Mahavagga* of the *Samyutta-nikaya;* if an *Anguttara-bhanaka*, the first or the second half of the *Anguttara-nikaya*, failing which, he should learn from the beginning to the Third Section (*Tika-nipata*). A *Jataka-bhanaka* should learn the whole of the *Jataka* text with its Commentary—not less than that. If a monk was well-versed in these texts, he was considered well-read or well-educated (*bahussuta*) and was qualified to serve the assemblies. He was a "leader" (*disapamokkho*), going wherever he desired (*yenakamangamo*)."[11]

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For the third stage, the requirements were as follows:

"The monk of the highest grade, known as *Bhikkunovadaka* (Adviser to *Bhikkunis*), should learn the three *Pitakas* with their Commentaries, failing which, he should master the Commentary of one of the Four Collections (*Nikayas*). That would enable him to explain the other *Nikayas*. Among the seven *Abhidhamma* texts, he would master the commentaries of four, because that would enable him to explain the rest. But the whole of the *Vinaya Pitaka* should be mastered with its Commentary. If a monk learnt all this, then he would be qualified to be an "Adviser to *Bhikkhunis*."[12]

12. To be sure, not many *Bhikkus* might have attained the second or third stage, but at the same time it is likely that no *Bhikku* would have stopped short of attaining the first stage, for he would have commanded no respect.

13. As the number of persons receiving ordination as *Bhikkus* increased from hundreds to thousands, a three-tiered system of institutions rather than a single type institution took responsibility for training. There was first of all the village temple in which the novitiate could be spent, and in some cases the novitiate plus the requirements for the first stage mentioned in paragraph 11 could be attained. Then, there were moderately staffed centres of religious scholarship in which the first and second stages, and possibly the third stage could be reached. Finally, there was a handful of centres at which religious scholarship and learning were at their highest level.

14. The Mahavihara clearly belonged to the last named category, and the institution distinguished itself not only for religious scholarship but for even more, the monks having taken to Pali learning with great assiduity. A historical chronicle, called the *Dipavamsa* came out in Pali verse, giving the history of Ceylon from the arrival of Vijaya. Different parts had been written by different people, but the influence of a single editorial hand has been noted by some scholars.

15. The Abhayagiri in Anuradhapura was also an acknowledged centre of Buddhist scholarship and *Bhikku* training. Its interpretations of the doctrine were somewhat different from those of the Mahavihara tradition, and in fact in course of time tended more and more towards *Mahayanism*, while the Mahavihara was firmly rooted in the *Theravada* tradition. The existence of schisms was in several ways detrimental

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to the cause of Buddhism, but it was not without a modicum of good in the sense that arguments about doctrinal issues were sometimes based on refined standards of scholarship and tended now and then to illuminate points at issue for the good of all. This did not happen always, however, and at times the Abhayagiri group in particular showed much intolerance and used royalty in an attempt to suppress its rivals.

16. In the first century B.C., close upon the heels of a viciously successful rebellion by a usurper, Brahmanatissa, against the king, coupled with a Tamil invasion, there was a severe famine, known as the Brahmanatissa famine:

> "For twelve years there was a severe famine which has no parallel in the history of the island. The monasteries in Anuradhapura were abandoned and the bhikkus made their way either to India or to the hilly districts of Ceylon".[13]

Thousands of the laity and Bhikkus died of starvation. The story of the preservation of the teachings of the Buddha in these circumstances is worth relating:

> "It should be remembered that at this time the teachings of the Buddha were..handed down orally from teacher to pupil. Thus there remained always at this time the danger of some parts of the teachings being lost as the result of the death of those who had memorised them and of the inability of many, weakened by starvation, to proceed with their studies. Nor was there any guarantee of the returning of those bhikkus who went abroad as none could guess when the famine would end. Seeing this grave danger, those who knew the books by heart took all precautions not to allow the Texts to fall into oblivion. Sixty bhikkhus who had even gone so far as the coast to cross over to India returned to the southern Malaya district and lived there eating only roots and leaves. They never failed to recite the Texts lest they should forget them. When they had sufficient strength to sit down they recited the Texts, keeping themselves in that posture, and, when they could no longer keep their bodies erect, they laid their heads on mounds of sand and continued their recitations. In this wise they preserved in full for twelve years the Texts as well as the Commentaries. One book, however, was on the verge of being lost to the world. And that was

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the Mahaniddesa of the Sutta Pitaka. Only one bhikku could recite it. Mahatipitaka *thera*, the preceptor of Catunikayika Tissa, requested a bhikkhu named Maharakkhita, who had great powers of memory, to learn the Mahaniddesa; but the latter refused to do so on the ground that the person who knew it was known to be a man of impure life. Maharakkhita was at last persuaded, and, learning it day and night, he completed the task. The person from whom Maharakkhita learned the Text was afterwards proved to be a very immoral bhikkhu; yet the book was thus saved from being lost for ever. Many other *theras*, in turn, learned the Text from Maharakkhita."[14]

The famine had its lessons for the future:

"The primary concern of the Sangha during this tragic period was to preserve the teaching of the Buddha which they valued above all else. Therefore, far-seeing Mahatheras, under the patronage of a local chief, assembled at Aluvihara at Matale, and committed to writing the whole of the *Tripitaka* with the commentaries thereon for the first time in history 'in order that the true doctrine might endure' (*ciratthitattham dhammassa*)''.[15]

17. The task was accomplished by 500 monks assembled at Aluvihara. The following succinct summary is given by E. W. Adikaram of the causes that led to the writing down of the texts.

"(1) The island was in constant danger of being attacked by non-Buddhist foreigners and whenever they were successful, that period proved to be a very dark one for Buddhism. Wars and other forms of political unrest necessitated the abandoning of the chief centres of learning such as the Mahavihara. This, it is easy to imagine, often resulted in the separation of the pupils from the teachers—the living books.

(2) The Brahmanatissa famine, too, made the bhikkhus think of the dangers of leaving the Texts to oral tradition. We have already seen with what great difficulty the Texts were preserved during that troublous period.

(3) As time went on, irresponsible and irreligious people entered the Order, and, no doubt, the enthusiasm to hand down the Texts in their purity waned. The Mahavamsa gives this as the direct cause.

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(4) The last, but not the least, was the formation of a school at Abhayagiri, separate from the Mahavihara, and the king's partiality to this new school in preference to the Mahavihara fraternity. This is made evident by the fact that the bhikkhus decided to write the Texts at the Aloka-vihara, a place in the vicinity of Matale in the Central Province and remote from Anuradhapura, the capital of Vattagamani Abhaya."[16]

Adikaram goes on to say that this event "decided the future not only of the Theravada School of Buddhism but also of the whole field of Pali literature".[17]

18. Two other writers say of the same event:

"The preservation of the Theravada Canon in the Pali language, which had been lost in India at a comparatively early date, is the greatest contribution that the Sinhalese people had made to the intellectual heritage of mankind."[18]

19. Commentaries on the Pali text were also prepared in Sinhalese by Bhikkus at the Mahavihara as well as at other distinguished centres of religious learning. Foreign scholars attracted to the Mahavihara and other centres of learning were full of admiration for the quality of the exegetical literature produced in Sinhalese by the Bhikkus. Buddhadatta *Thera*, a scholar from South India, well-known for his digests of the *Vinaya* and the *Abhidhamma*, based some of his writing on the work of the Sinhalese commentators as a result of the period of study he spent at the Mahavihara.[19] The most distinguished of the foreign scholars attracted to the Mahavihara was the Venerable Buddhagosha, a native of Buddhagaya. He came to the Mahavihara, and was greatly impressed by the excellence of the exegetical works compiled in Sinhalese:

"As the Sinhalese language was not understood in other countries where the Theravada then flourished, these exegitical works, mainly those of the Mahavihara, were translated into Pali, in the form of commentaries to the *Vinaya* and the *Nikayas* of the *Suttapitaka*, by the great scholiast Buddhaghosa whose labours fall into the last years of the reign of Mahanama."[20]

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20. Some of the centres of higher learning became distinguished for specialised knowledge, and it was not uncommon for a learned *Bhikku* from one institution to go to another institution for a short period of time. Often, it was not the institution as a whole but the presence in it of a distinguished teacher that was the main attraction. For example, a distinguished *Thera* from the Mahavihara went to Tuladhara-pabbata in Rohana for studies under a famous teacher.[21] Another *Thera* at Tissamaharama received scholars from elsewhere and is reputed to have taught "eighteen great groups", some well-known commentators included, "day and night without much rest."[22]

21. Centres of learning, from the village temple to institutions as distinguished as the Mahavihara or Abhayagiri, were also open to the laity who required an education at an appropriate level. A few among the laity acquired great eminence for their mastery of the *Dhamma*, and even distinguished *Theras* did not hesitate to seek knowledge from them when necessary. As a matter of fact, on one occasion the judgement of a lay scholar prevailed in the decision about a textual and doctrinal point over which the Mahavihara and the Abhayagiri schools held conflicting views.[23]

22. The routine of a monastery, and more importantly, the facilities that the monastery made available to the public at large, are clearly indicated in the following passage:

> "In a monastery, classes were held generally three times a day: in the morning before going out for *pindapata* for mid-day meal, and again in the afternoon; the third lesson was held in the evening, most probably after the evening religious routine. Sometimes these classes resembled public lectures. When *Tripitaka* Culabhaya *Thera* of the Maha-vihara went with a large number of monks to study under Dhammarakkhita *Thera* of Tuladhara-pabbata in Rohana (mentioned above), the time-table was so arranged that the student would recite the texts before the teacher at night, and the teacher would explain them by day. The villagers built a big pavilion (*maha-mandapa*) before the *parivena* (residence), and they attended these lectures daily."[24]

23. Considering the time of history with which we are concerned, it is natural that the well-educated should have been spoken of, not as

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the well-read, but as those who have heard a great deal (*bahussuta*). As long as the art of writing involved the use of the palm leaf and no mechanical reproduction of a manuscript written on the palm leaf, books were a great scarcity, and often a single palm leaf manuscript served an entire nation's needs. Learning was passed down orally and retained through an arduous exercise of memory. What was communicated orally had to be heard and comprehended correctly and as recourse could not generally be had to a written record, the characteristic way of clarifying whether effective communication had taken place was through discussion. Hence discussion between the teacher and pupil was a popular teaching-learning device, and it was of special significance when the essence of the learning consisted not only of remembering a particular word or group of words but also of comprehending the substance of what was said. There is a reference to a *Bhikku* Tissa from Ceylon who pursued advanced studies under a celebrated *Thera* in India. "After completing his education there, on his way back to Ceylon, when he was about to embark on a ship, a doubt arose in his mind regarding a certain point. He postponed his trip at once, went back a hundred *yojanas* again to his teacher Dhammarakkhita and had his doubt cleared."[25]

24. When the ancient Buddhist texts stated that the education and guidance of the laity was a duty devolving upon the monks, the reference was undoubtedly to religious learning and moral behaviour.[26] In regard to Ceylon in particular, certain characteristic features of Buddhism, however, served to bridge the gulf between religious learning and secular learning, and between religious learning and moral behaviour. Religious learning was enshrined in a foreign language Pali, and required the intermediary of Sinhalese for effective communication. The act of repeating the first five precepts of Buddhism, conveying the simplest commitment to Buddhism as a way of life, included the recitation of a few lines in Pali, each successive line containing a few words that were in the earlier line and at the same time introducing one or two additional words, and when the recitation was accompanied by an interpretation in Sinhalese of the meaning of each line, the learner not only grasped some ideas or concepts but also successfully learned a first lesson in the new language. In this way, the more he heard (*bahussuta*), the more he was initiated into a new language. Furthermore, as the precept he learned was a guide to action, indicating either what he would do or what he would desist from doing, religious learning was either a positive commitment to a moral act or some sort

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of a disclaimer that he would refrain from certain acts that were not moral. In this way, the religious education and guidance of the laity was inseparable from lay education of a sort and lay morality of a sort. The seeking of clarification of the Pali messages and their meaning involved, in the case of the laymen, the development of a sensitivity to the nuances of the Sinhalese language, and in the case of the learner *Bhikku* a more sharpened sensitivity to the nuances of the Pali language. Through discussion, the transfer of wisdom was not always from the teacher to the pupil. It is recorded that on the interpretation of a term in the *Satipatthana-sutta* a distinguished *Thera* and another *Thera*, his pupil, had divergent views. The teacher, having given deep thought and ultimately agreed that the pupil's interpretation was right took the opportunity of making this known at a public gathering that had collected for a sermon by the latter.[27] As Mookerjie points out, "The constant and intimate association between teacher and taught is vital to education as conceived in this system".[28]

25. The progress of Buddhism in Ceylon was responsible for establishing a large number of international contacts. Apart from the uninterrupted maintenance from Asoka's time of "religious and cultural intercourse between the Buddhist establishments of Ceylon and those of northern, central and southern India", there were other contacts with South India.[29] The foundation of a monastery named Sinala-vihara and the dedication of a *cetiyagara* to fraternities from Ceylon have been recorded in inscriptions of the second/third century A.D. at Nagarjunakanda in South India.[30] A well-known Chinese traveller monk, Fa-Hsien, who travelled westwards in search of Buddhist scriptures came to Ceylon in A.D. 411 and spent two years.[31] An embassy with an image of the Buddha was sent by the King of Ceylon to a Chinese emperor, *circa* 415 A.D.[32] Sinhalese *Theris* also went to China in the fifth century and helped in the ordination of Chinese ladies as *Bhikkunis*.[33] A Chinese scholar monk who spent some years in South India but was unable to visit Ceylon has written about the reputation of the country in Buddhist circles. "..it was distinguished for its learned doctors belonging to the Sthavira School, and also for those able to explain the *yoga-sastra*."[34] Ceylon had very close relationships with Cambodia, Thailand and Burma also.

"Not only was there a regular exchange of scholars and scriptures, but the histories of these countries, since they were so much bound up with religion, became common knowledge. The language of this

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intercourse was Pali, and the works in Pali were a common heritage in these countries."[35]

26. It is recorded that shortly after the reign of Parakramabahu I, a communication entitled Ramanna-sandesa was sent from Ceylon to Burma "enjoining the Burmese *Sangha* to initiate a purification on the lines of the purification of the *Sangha* effected by Parakramabahu I".[36] During the reign of Vijayabahu I when as a result of destruction by Indian invaders (Cholas), "and the decay of temples and dimunition, by neglect or lapse, of temple revenues," the *Sangha* had suffered so severely in its membership, by natural loss and lack of new monks of quality to replace the loss, that it became impossible to assemble a full Chapter for the ceremony of ordination and other necessary acts, the king made a request to the King of Burma to send to Ceylon *Bhikkus* competent to carry out this ceremony. As a result of the favourable response from Burma, the necessary ordinations were carried out and the *Sangha* in Ceylon again "became competent, in numbers and learning to resume its position in the religious life of the people."[37] It has been conjectured that the *Bhikkus* who came from Burma to carry out the ordination were in fact Sinhala *Bhikkus* who had earlier fled to Burma during the persecution of Buddhism in Ceylon by the Cholas.[38] Towards the end of the fifteenth century, however, Burma needed to establish a proper ordination and *Bhikkus* from Ceylon were sent to conduct it.[39] King Vijayabahu is also credited with having established contacts with Indian centres that were flourishing at this time under rulers of Magadha.[40] During the reign of Vijayabahu or shortly afterwards, it is reported that a *Thera* from Ceylon was responsible for the introduction of Buddhism into Ligor in the Malay Peninsula.[41] A *Bhikku* from Thailand who came for studies in Ceylon during the fourteenth century is credited with having written in Pali a history of Buddhism with the title *Saddhammasamgaha*, during his stay in the country.[42] Another monk from Thailand, Ratanapanna Thera, wrote a book entitled *Jinakalamalini*, giving a history of Buddhism in Ceylon and Thailand. The book is of great value for the account it gives of the introduction into Thailand by Ceylon of the *upasampada* ordination.[43]

27. In the early days, the living quarters of Bhikkus were generally known by such names as *Vihara*, *Avasa* or *Pirivena*.[44] Over the years, however, a tradition developed by which these terms were distinguished from one another. The word *Vihara* was used to denote the building

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which housed the image of the Buddha, but as it was invariably a temple which had a *Vihara*, the word *Vihara* came to be used to indicate the temple as a whole, in which the building that contained the Buddha image was the *Viharage* or *Buduge*, *ge* meaning 'house'. *Avasa* came to denote a place where a very small number of Bhikkus resided. A *Pirivena* originally meant a cell or chamber for a *Bhikku*, and conceivably because a very large number of cells, running into dozens and even hundreds, usually characterized an institution that established itself as a place of higher learning, in course of time a *Pirivena* was identified with a large monastic college. Thus a *Vihara* with extensive teaching activities came to be known over the course of years as a *pirivena* to emphasize the specialized role it was playing.

28. The *pirivenas*, or monastic colleges, provided most of all religious education for the *Sangha*, but at the same time opened their doors to the laity, too. Moreover, the curriculum too was gradually expanded to include certain secular subjects. For other kinds of instruction, the laity naturally turned to other facilities, provided privately and through apprenticeship systems.

29. It is of interest to note to how widely the curriculum of a *pirivena* could range. The Vijayabahu *Pirivena*, for example, had the following curriculum in the fifteenth century and it was in many respects similar to that of other *pirivenas*: *Abhidhamma*, *Sutta*, *Vinaya* (including commentaries), Grammar, *Vedas*, Astronomy, Medicine, Metrics, Prosody, Poetry and Drama, Political Science, and languages such as Sinhalese, Pali, Sanskrit, Magadhi and Tamil.[45] The more distinguished *pirivenas* continued their tradition of attracting foreign scholars, and the name of the Brahmin Sri Ramachandra Bharati is mentioned in connection with this pirivena. Regarding a work on Pali grammar written by the Venerable Totagamuve Sri Rahula *Thera* of this *pirivena*, G. P. Malalasekera has made the following comment:

> "It is one of the most comprehensive works on Pali grammar extant in Ceylon, or anywhere else. . the conclusions he arrives at show a great deal of critical acumen unhampered by tradition, and free from prejudice."[46]

The output of literature, whether in Sinhalese, Pali or Sanskrit, from the *pirivenas* was quite considerable.

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30. An early attempt at an analysis of the learning process is also quite striking. It was classified into *adhyayanaya* (acquisition of knowledge), *grahana* (comprehension of what was learnt), *dharana* (retention in the mind of what was learnt), and last of all *adhyapanaya* (the capacity to communicate knowledge to others).[47] The special significance of the last named process lies in the fact that the task of communicating knowledge to others constitutes the high water mark of attainment and involved communicating to others what one has learned, comprehended, and retained in the mind. An early use of visual-aids is recorded in an account of "the astronomers who calculated the movement of stars, keeping shells to represent the constellations on a dark blanket which represented the sky".[48]

31. While Buddhism had a firm intellectual basis, the texts extant to this day running into thousands of pages, some of the essential principles were comprehensible to the simple minds of the masses. The masses, however, needed for their psychological satisfaction more tangible symbols to which to pay reverence as acts of gratitude to a great teacher, for the Buddha himself claimed no higher role. Thus the Bodhi tree, which provided the Buddha with shelter from sun and rain during the week of contemplation when he attained Buddhahood, became associated with the Buddha, the act of worship being essentially to the Buddha as a token of gratitude to a revered teacher, and with that act was associated the Bodhi tree to which the Buddha was grateful for the shelter it provided. To the devotee, it took the shape of a demonstration of graititude not necessarily to the particular Bodhi tree, which could not be replicated endlessly (the exercise being unnecessary, too), but to the generality of Bo-trees. To the Buddhist, the significance of seeing a Bo-tree is that it recalls to his mind and thoughts the Buddha Dhamma. *Sthupas*, or dome shaped structures, in which relics of the Buddha or *arahants* are enshrined, serve the same purpose. A similar purpose is served by the Buddha image or the image houses in which images of the Buddha are kept for public view and worship. The worship is essentially a demonstration of gratitude to a teacher and not a prayer for salvation; and more importantly, the image serves to turn one's thoughts to the teachings of the Buddha. In course of time, the image was supplemented by the painted picture. The symbols that have this generative power are undoubtedly more important for the religiously unsophisticated than the religiously sophisticated. The

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symbolic manifestations that became increasingly the focus of interest of the mass of the laity led to an interest in architecture, sculpture and painting.

"With the introduction of Buddhism there ensued a period of great artistic activity in which sculpture, architecture and painting played a worthy part, combining to facilitate the propagation of the new religion. Much of this art was Buddhist in spirit but Indian in appearance. It was also in part secular."[49]

Among the architectural achievements was the Lohapasada, a residence for Bhikkus built in the second century. It was a nine-storeyed building covered with copper and had nine hundred rooms to accommodate Bhikkus.[50] "It rested on sixteen monolithic columns of granite, and at present only these pillars remain to mark the spot where the once magnificent building stood."[51] The Jetavana Stupa, built in the third century, has a diameter of 367 feet at its base, "and still stands in its ruined condition to a height of 232 feet. Its original height is said to have been 160 cubits."[52]

32. The technical skill displayed by the Sinhalese was not confined to manifestations pertaining to the religious field. In the first century, they achieved success in building a dam across a river and constructing a canal of about thirty miles in length to irrigate a large area. "The construction of a canal of this considerable length meant that in the first century the Sinhalese had developed a high degree of instrumental accuracy in contouring and levelling."[53] In the third century, 4,670 acres of land were submerged to construct a tank, and it still provides irrigation for 4,000 acres.[54] In the fifth century, a reservoir of 10 square miles was constructed, and the impounded waters were carried along an articifial canal 54 miles in length. By the seventh century, 4 major river diversification schemes and 6 storage reservoir schemes were functioning.

"This achievement, accomplished by the seventh century, reveals the extraordinarily high technical ability of the Sinhalese engineers of ancient times who were responsible for the planning, design and construction of these works. Several of these projects, if put in hand today, would still be regarded as major undertakings. Nothing is known today of how these engineers of old and the technicians under them set about their work, what preliminary surveys and guag-

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ings they made, what mathematical formulae they employed in their calculations and what instruments they used; all this information must have been contained in text-books because it could not have been imparted orally. Surveys made in modern times for the restoration of ancient works have disclosed that the instruments they used were capable of the same precision as modern instruments. Their contour levelling was exceptionally accurate because the fall in ancient canals was generally one foot in a mile, though in some sections it was as little as six inches in a mile."[55]

The Hindu educational tradition in Ceylon

33. Information is scanty about the Hindu educational tradition in Ceylon. According to Arasaratnam,

"From an early date, education spread among the people, creating a literate community which remains so to this day. Temple schools and improvised classes on the outer verandah of the village schoolmaster's house spread basic education to the rural areas. Toward the end of the fifteenth century, an academy of Tamil literature was founded at Nallur by the king. This academy did useful work in collecting and preserving ancient classical Tamil works in manuscript form. Some historical literature was attempted in this period and some translations and adaptations from Sanskrit works."[56]

34. In so far as medicine and astrology are concerned, the view has been expressed that high standards were attained.[57] A system of eastern medicine, called Siddha Ayurveda, is held in great regard and has been practised in Jaffna coming down to this day, commanding even now the respect of the population.

35. Whatever educational institutions existed among the Hindus in the north undoubtedly suffered under Portuguese rule. King Sankili of Jaffna was captured by the Portuguese in 1621, and with his capture the Hindu system of education went underground, a little teaching being secretly imparted in some houses or *thinnai* by ardent Hindus who were determined not to let the torch of learning entirely die out. In so far as the Dutch period is concerned, while there is little doubt that there was the same kind of suppression of Hindu education by the Dutch as by the Portuguese, it has been claimed that "there was. . . . a good output of Hindu literature during this period."[58]

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The Muslim educational tradition in Ceylon

36. Very little information is available about the Muslim educational tradition in Ceylon. It is recorded that the Muslims of Ceylon were in touch "with Bagdad and all the countries under that caliphate, on the one side", and ". . . . with all the Mohammedan powers settled along the coasts of the Mediterranean, and of Spain on the other side," and that "they introduced from these countries to Ceylon many original works in Arabic on Mohammedan Law and many translations into Arabic of the most valuable of the Greek and Roman classics upon medicine, science and literature."[59] Obviously, these works in Arabic were intended for use in the Muslim educational institutions of Ceylon, and it is a reasonable inference that they corresponded to the kinds of institutions prevalent in the Arab world. There was the *maktab*, providing an elementary education. It has been defined as

> "a primary school often attached to a mosque, the chief business of which is to instruct boys (and girls) in those portions of the Koran which a Mohammedan is expected to know by heart in order to perform his devotions and other religious functions. Sometimes instruction in reading, writing and simple arithmetic was also included in the curriculum. Primary education was also carried on in private houses."[60]

It is also stated that the *maktab* became a "recognized institution for removing illiteracy and acquiring a preliminary knowledge of the Quran and some proficiency in the Arabic language."[61] Every Muslim community in Ceylon is likely to have had its own *maktab*, associated with the local mosque.

The *Madrasa* was the institution that provided secondary education.

> "These institutions were mostly state-supported; during many periods of Muslim history, the rulers concerned vied with one another in their quest for fame and name as the Chief Patron of Learning. Thus could the important capitals of the Muslim empires and kingdoms always boast of well endowed *madrasas* and specialised institutions for the training of physicians, chemists, astronomers, translators, etc.,"[62]

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In so far as the curriculum of the *madrasa* is concerned, it is considered to have comprised "Grammar, Literature, Logic, Islamic Law, Principles of Islamic Law (or Jurisprudence), Quranic Commentary, Hadith (or Apostolic Tradition), Mysticism and Religious Philosophy."[63]

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CHAPTER 3

THE EDUCATIONAL ESTABLISHMENTS OF THE DUTCH

1. The Dutch gained possession of the maritime provinces of Ceylon from the Portuguese in 1658, and in doing so inherited the educational establishments set up by the Portuguese, who began their occupation of some of these provinces in 1505 and later extended their control over most of the littoral. There is explicit mention of three colleges conducted by the Franciscans, two colleges conducted by the Jesuits, a college for the training of teachers conducted by the Franciscans, twenty one schools conducted by the Jesuits, and twenty schools conducted by the Franciscans. Authorities on the Portuguese period in Ceylon believe that, over and above these colleges and schools, many other schools existed in association with parish churches.[1]

2. The Dutch lost no time in recognizing that the schools could be used to convert the people to the Dutch Reformed Church and to destroy "the influence of Popery", primarily for the safety of the Dutch themselves by severing the religious bond with the Portuguese through Roman Catholicism.[2] They set about this task in a very systematic fashion, and "not a village or a hamlet within the dominion" appears to have been without a parish school run by the Dutch in association with the parish church.[3] The schoolmasters, and indeed all persons aspiring to public office, high or low, had to be Christians belonging to the Dutch Reformed Church. Many professed Christianity in order to become eligible to hold such posts, and the schools had to play a key role in the conversion of the people. The headmaster of the parish school was entrusted with the maintenance of various records relating to the residents of each parish. He registered births and solemnized marriages, and he wrote and attested deeds for transfer of property. Marriages had to be performed according to the rites of the Dutch Church in order to be legal, and only children of such a union could inherit property provided that they had been duly baptized in the Dutch Church.

3. The administrative structure set up for education by the Dutch was impressive. The schools in the Dutch occupied areas came under the control of three Scholarchal Commissions at Colombo, Galle and

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Jaffna. Each Scholarchal Commission consisted of a President (usually the chief Dutch officer representing the governor in the district), and had as its members all the clergymen in the district coming under the Commission, and several lay members nominated by the Governor from among the civil and military officers working in the district. The Scholarchal Commission at Colombo was regarded as having a superior authority extending in some respects over the other two Commissions, which sometimes referred vexed questions in them for decision by the Scholarchal Commission at Colombo. Two Inspectors, one of them a clergyman and the other a layman, were appointed to visit schools once a year and carry out an inspection.

4. Attendance at school was compulsory until the age of 15 years, and was enforced by means of fines. At 15 years, a student left school after satisfying the Inspector at the examination conducted annually. The school leaver was designated 'Nieuwe largerdeen' or the newly discharged, in which capacity he had to attend school about twice a week for two years to receive religious instruction. On completion of this, he became an 'Oude largerdeen', or the old discharged, with a requirement of occasional attendance for a period of two years. It was only at the end of this period that the liability for school attendance ceased. If any serious education was to be imparted until the age of 19, the parish school would have had to provide elementary instruction as well as secondary instruction. The teachers themselves had not had education of sufficient depth for the latter. Little else appears to have been taught besides religion, not even the Dutch language as the majority of the teachers were not competent in it. It would seem that, for the majority of the students for most of the period of compulsory attendance, school was no more than a reporting station to which the students came to testify to their adherence to the church and recapitulate some of the religious instruction they had received. This is borne out by the following description of the activities of the Inspectors on a visit to a school for an annual inspection.

> "In the forenoon, the school children were examined in reading and writing, in repeating their Catechism, the Ten Commandments, the creed, the Lord's prayer and other prayers; and further questions were put to ascertain whether the masters explained what had been committed to memory, which was generally concluded with religious instruction, exhortation and encouragement, in some cases by distribution of prizes. They then proceeded to examine and interro-

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gate the adults who had lately left the school, as well as the parents who brought their infants for baptism. With respect to the former, to know whether they retained and understood what they had learnt at school, whether they regularly attended the Divine Services on the Sabbath....with respect to the latter to know whether they understand the nature and obligations of Baptism, when pains were taken to impress on them the principal truths of the Christian religion.. The next business was the inspection of Church and school-books, lists and registers, roll of fines, placards and other documents in charge of the Master, to ascertain the state in which they were kept."[4]

5. In addition to the parish schools, the Dutch had a Seminary in Colombo to provide higher education for prospective preachers and teachers. The students were provided with a good knowledge of the Dutch language. The curriculum included Latin, Greek and Hebrew as well. It is on record that a few students who showed superior ability were sent to Holland to pursue further studies in universities, and employed as clergymen on their return to Ceylon.

6. However marginal the quality of the education imparted in them, the establishment by the Dutch of a network of parish schools provided employment as teachers for a number of local persons who thereby acquired a financial interest in the enterprise of education. During the early years of British rule in Ceylon, they constituted a powerful pressure group that was largely responsible for encouraging the initial revival of the parish school system by the British (see chapter 6 paragraph 1). It is also to be noted that the administrative structure for education consisting of Scholarchal Commissions must have largely influenced Colebrooke *circa* 1830 to recommend a similar set up for the administration of schools under the British (see chapter 12 paragraph 6).

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SECTION II

1796 - 1832

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CHAPTER 4

THE POLITICAL AND SOCIAL BACKGROUND
(1796 - 1832)

1. During the eighteenth century, Britain had contact of a limited nature with Ceylon. By arrangement with the Dutch, the British fleet used Trincomalee from time to time during the period 1750-1781 as a port that offered protection from the monsoons. In 1781, Britain went to war against Holland and in January 1782 Trincomalee was captured by the British. The British held it only for a few months as the French, who were also at war against the British, captured it from the British in August 1782. At the peace treaty that was signed in 1784, Trincomalee reverted to the Dutch. After a few years, the British were again allowed to use the port for the needs of her fleet from time to time.

2. The other contact which the British had was with the King of Kandy. On a request from the King of Kandy, who thought that he could use the help of the British to expel the Dutch from the maritime areas they held, a secret British mission visited Kandy in 1762 and conducted negotiations which were, however, inconclusive. In 1782, after capturing Trincomalee, the British took the initiative to send a mission to Kandy but nothing tangible came out of the negotiations. In 1795, consequent upon the occupation of Holland by the French revolutionary army, the Stadtholder of Holland took refuge in England, where he was persuaded to sign a document requiring the Dutch governors and commanders in the colonies to entrust the possessions under their control to the British. Wherever the Dutch put up any resistance and the British succeeded in overcoming them through the use of force, it was argued by the British that the Dutch resistance in violation of the agreement signed by the Stadtholder absolved the British from regarding the captured Dutch possessions as a trust, and that such possessions, obtained through the use of arms, would thereafter be British possessions by virtue of conquest. The Dutch in Ceylon did indeed put up a weak resistance which was swiftly put down, but it provided the British with an excuse for claiming territory by conquest. It was in this way that the maritime areas fell into British hands in 1796. The British were clear in their own minds about the value of Ceylon, and in fact it was declared in the British Parliament in 1801 that Trin-

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comalee, and therefore Ceylon, were vital for the security of British interests in the East. At the Peace of Amiens in 1802, one of the articles in the treaty related to a formal recognition that the Dutch possessions in Ceylon were thenceforth a British possession. William Pitt, Prime Minister of England, referred in the Parliament to the acquisition of Ceylon as follows: "....it is to us the most valuable colonial possession on the globe, as giving to our Indian empire a security which it had not enjoyed from its first establishment."[1] Governor Maitland of Ceylon later called it "the real key by possession of which alone you can hold the naval superiority of India."[2]

3. The maritime areas of Ceylon were at first administered by military governors appointed by the East India Company. The first civilian governor of Ceylon, Frederick North, took up duties in Ceylon in October 1798 under a system of dual control by which the British possessions in Ceylon were jointly administered by the East India Company and the British government. On 1 January 1802, Ceylon became a Crown Colony. The administration of the country was thereafter by the Colonial Office in London, and the responsibility of the East India Company in this respect came to an end.

4. The British in occupation of the maritime areas of Ceylon had a justifiable feeling that they were masters of the most valuable part of the island, and that the independent sovereignty of the King of Kandy was little more than a name. Governor North plotted with the Chief Minister of the King of Kandy to overthrow the King in what North hoped would be a short military expedition. It was undertaken in 1803 and ended in a disastrous defeat for the British.

5. Nothing of note happened during the next twelve years or so but meanwhile the King declined in popularity among the people. After assessing carefully overtures from Kandyan chieftains to undertake a military expedition to overthrow the King, Governor Brownrigg making more elaborate preparations than Governor North embarked on the invasion of Kandy in 1815. No fighting of any note took place, and the Kandyan kingdom was ceded to the British on 2 March 1815 by its leaders, consisting of members of the laity as well as the Buddhist clergy, with the signing of a Convention to which Governor Brownrigg and a number of Kandyan chieftains subscribed their signatures. The preamble to the Convention read as follows:

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"Led by the invitation of the chiefs, and welcomed by the acclamations of the people, the forces of His Brittanic Majesty have entered the Kandyan territory and penetrated to the capital.... Divine Providence has blessed their efforts with uniform and complete success. The ruler of the interior provinces has fallen into their hands, and the government remains at the disposal of His Majesty's representative."[3]

The powers and privileges of the Kandyan chiefs were recognized and maintained in the clauses of the Convention. Article 5 of the Convention related to religion and read as follows: "The religion of Boodhoo professed by the Chiefs and Inhabitants of these provinces is declared inviolable; and its rites, Ministers and Places of Worship are to be maintained and protected."[4] In the face of objections taken to this clause by the evangelicals led by William Wilberforce in England, Governor Brownrigg explained that the language was more emphatic than what he would have used if he had the choice, and that he had to consent to the clause in order to satisfy the Kandyan chiefs and the Buddhist clergy.

6. Disappointment with British rule led to a rebellion in the Kandyan areas in 1817—18 and caused some anxiety to the British, but their superior military power finally put it down. The end of the rebellion was marked by a Proclamation issued on 21 November 1818. Some provisions in it reduced the powers of the chiefs a little, and also toned down the guarantees given to Buddhism in the Convention of 1815 by extending protection to other religions as well, while reserving to Buddhism the respect promised in 1815.

7. The threats to the undisputed possession of the island by the British lay firstly in the strength of Buddhism as a unifying force and a canopy under which diverse national interests could find a meeting ground to muster opposition against a foreign ruler, secondly in the availability of a group of traditional leaders (in this case, the chieftains and headmen) who could sound the gong for such a muster and lead the forces so assembled in battle array, and thirdly in the absence of a network of roads that would make possible the quick movement of British forces and arms, and their disposition wherever they were needed for combat. The British were all too aware of these factors. A frontal attack on religion was fraught with danger—hence the efforts at an ostensible placation through Article 5 of the Convention of 1815.

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A determination to erode the religious base over a period of time was there all right. Governor Brownrigg, explaining the Article in the Convention to Wilberforce, wrote as follows: "I believe at present the most sanguine missionaries in India consider that instructing the native youth is the surest means of spreading the Gospel."[5] The mechanism of erosion consisted of education in a Christian milieu, the government parish school being indistinguishable from the missionary school in this regard, conversion as an essential condition for public office, not declared as a matter of policy but carried out in practice, conversion to ensure security of inheritance, and other privileges. For the removal of the second obstacle, namely the traditional leaders such as chieftains and headmen, a frontal attack was likewise impolitic. Hence, the effort to placate them through an Article in the Convention of 1815, with some reduction in their privileges after the excuse provided by the rebellion of 1818. Drawn as they were from the so-called high caste or castes, caste being a symbol of ascriptive status, an erosion of the institution of caste was clearly indicated as a political necessity. This could be achieved by creating new status positions and broadening the base of recruitment to them by making educational achievement the means of gaining the new status positions. Caste homogeniety in the traditional leadership was to be replaced by a caste heterogeneity in the new leadership, and although the latter was educationally homogeneous it was non-Buddhist rather than Buddhist because of the opportunities for education and conditions of recruitment to public office. Few would shed tears at the erosion of the institution of caste, but it has to be recognized that the motive force that sought to erode it sprang more from the political and strategic necessity for immobilizing the traditional leadership than from a moral revolt against the social iniquities of caste. Finally, the lack of roads for the rapid deployment of British forces and arms was remedied by the road construction programme carried out on the orders of Governor Barnes, *rajakariya*, or compulsory labour being used "contrary to custom and therefore oppressively" for the purpose.[6] The roads had an additional use in connection with the new interest in coffee plantations, an interest which Barnes himself shared.

8. Governor North, and his successors up to about the year 1832 had almost unlimited power. The role of the governor in these early years has been described as follows by one writer:

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"He was the chief military, executive and legislative authority in the island. He was the chief judicial head in all civil matters.. By the right of services due to the state he was able to compel people to work, regulate their wages and employ them with and without payment according to caste and custom. The system of trade monopolies gave him indefinite control over their resources. He was beyond the jurisdiction of the courts. He could imprison or banish any person without trial or assigning any reason and no court could question his right to take such action. The Secretary of State could control him little, as at this time a letter from England to Ceylon took four to six months and he could not do much more than laying down policy."[7]

The Colebrooke recommendations (see chapter 12) led to a slight dimunition of the powers of the governors (*circa* 1832).

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CHAPTER 5

THE INDIGENOUS RELIGIOUS SCHOOLS
(1796 - 1832)

1. The educational traditions of the indigenous religious groups have been described in chapter 2. Because of the strength of numbers and the royal patronage bestowed on the temples during the days of the Sinhalese kings, the Buddhists traditionally enjoyed better facilities for education than the Hindus and Muslims. The produce of temple lands, granted by royal charter, provided a source of support to Buddhist temples, but with European occupation this source was weakened, if not eliminated. The policies of the Portuguese and the Dutch were distinctly oppressive, those of the British subtly discouraging. There was, however, a certain resilience in the system that enabled it to survive, though greatly enervated.

2. Accounts of the work of the indigenous religious schools of this period are, however, hard to come by. Reliance has to be placed largely on the writings of Christian clergymen about the state of education in the country and the work of the indigenous religious schools. As these clergymen were by no means in sympathy with indigenous education and educational institutions, it may be assumed that the accounts of these clergymen probably understate rather than overstate conditions.

3. The Rev. James Cordiner, who travelled quite extensively over various parts of the island during the period 1798 to 1804 in his capacity as the superintendent of the government parish schools and examiner of candidates for appointments as school masters, states:

> "The greater part of the men can read and write; but these accomplishments are not communicated to the women. All their instruction is received, and their knowledge is expressed, *viva voce*."[1]

4. The writings of the Christian missionaries in Ceylon abound in references to the educational activities of the Buddhist monks. "At nearly all the *pansals* of the Buddhist priests a few boys are taught to read and write," wrote the Rev. Spence Hardy.[2] Of the Buddhist priests themselves, Hardy wrote as follows: "..the priests were greatly

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revered by the people as the expounders of their sacred books, and the instructors of their children."[3] And again: "..the numbers who attend at the temples to learn to read their religious books are proof of the great power they still possess over the general mind."[4] Hardy also referred to a Wesleyan school "which attracted the children of many heathen parents, until they were drawn away by two Buddhist priests who established themselves in the neighbourhood."[5] From this, it may be inferred that some Buddhist monks ventured out of their temples to establish themselves in new places in order to look after the educational needs of Buddhist children who did not have a temple in their neighbourhood.

5. It is also of interest to note that the Archdeacon in his reply to the questionnaire issued by the Colebrooke Commission compared the work of the government parish schools, of which he himself was the titular head, rather unfavourably with that of the traditional temple schools of the Buddhists in regard to the teaching of Sinhalese. "..the Buddhist children..were taught to read and write Sinhalese much better by the Buddhist priests."[6]

6. The government threw its full weight behind Christianization through its own schools and the missionary schools (see chapters 6, 8, 10). Moreover, some of these schools offered the added attraction of instruction in English, "the language of the government".[7] In spite of such unpropitious circumstances, the Buddhist monks carried on tenaciously, and to their credit it must be said that though, in the temple, the lamp of learning was often no more than a flicker, it was never allowed to die out.

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CHAPTER 6

THE GOVERNMENT PARISH SCHOOLS

(1796 - 1832)

1. The system of parish schools established, supported and controlled by the Dutch in the maritime areas of Ceylon that were in their hands has been described in chapter 3. With the fall of the Dutch possessions into British hands in 1796, the system of parish schools suffered an immediate collapse. The payment of salaries to teachers ceased and, moreover, the Dutch clergymen who supervised the work of the schools were imprisoned by the British.

> "The duties of public worship and the education of the youth, began either to be feebly discharged or entirely neglected, and memorials presented by the inhabitants on these subjects were considered by a military commander either as objects in which he had no concern, or matters which he had no power to redress."[1]

The reference to "memorials presented by the inhabitants" reveals that a local pressure group existed to invite the attention of the British masters to the need to support the Christian religion and education. The catechists and the teachers who no longer received the salaries they enjoyed under the Dutch presumably constituted the leading elements of the local pressure group. In fact, teachers were seen to be quite active in this role again later. See paragraph 14.

2. While the parish school system as such collapsed, a few schools nevertheless continued to function as isolated units in locations where the teachers, though not receiving salaries, were content to work in schools for the remuneration earned by serving as registrars of Christian marriages and by carrying out the notarial duties they were entitled to perform, with such supplementary assistance as was given by the parents of the pupils from time to time.

3. The neglect of education by the British during the period under review is hardly a matter for surprise. It was the British East India Company that administered the newly conquered territory, and a business concern could scarcely be expected to take an interest in the promotion of education. Moreover, in the aftermath of the military success, there were no doubt urgent problems of security that needed attention. It has also to be remembered that, at the time of history

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with which we are concerned, even in Britain herself the provision of education was not regarded as a function of the government. The fact that the British government was prepared to take on this function to some extent a couple of years later in Ceylon was a response to certain realities and needs of the local situation, as will be seen below.

The Government Parish Schools under Governor North.

4. Fredrick North became governor of Ceylon in 1798, on the establishment of a system of dual control by which the British territory in Ceylon was jointly administered by the East India Company and the British government. By this time, it was clear that the British intended to consolidate their hold on Ceylon and that their rule was to be more than temporary.

5. Britain was as yet mistress of only the maritime provinces. Account had to be taken of the King of Kandy who could at any time become a threat to British rule over the maritime provinces. That "the influence of Candy (sic) in these settlements is founded on Buddhism" was very much in the forefront of Governor North's thinking; and in his strategy not only for safeguarding British rule over the maritime provinces but also for extending it with a view to the eventual dethronement of the King of Kandy, the conversion of as many of the inhabitants as possible to Christianity undoubtedly occupied an important place.[2] Education was, *par excellence*, the means to this end. While North was not enamoured of the excessively intolerant aspect of Dutch rule, he was quick to see the rationale underlying the religious and educational activities of the Dutch, and he expressed the view that if the educational plans introduced by the Dutch "were quietly and steadily pursued," there was good reason to believe that the whole nation might in time be converted.[3] Following the example of the Dutch who had employed as ministers of religion local persons trained by them for the purpose, North sought to draw a distinction between previous experience and practice in the Indian situation, which had no such precedent, and the feasibility of such an arrangement in Ceylon.

> "..the constitution and habits of these Settlements differ materially from those of the continent of India. Under these circumstances, the employment..of the Natives exclusively in the church, appears to me a measure dictated by political necessity as well as by justice. The clergy born in this country and educated in England will form a body united to the natives by former ties and affection and to us by habits of education and professions."[4]

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This was an idea to which North reverted again and again, emphasizing the distinctive role to be performed by a handful of native young men selected and given a special education in Ceylon and in England.

> "..attached to their country by birth and relations, and to England by their education, being in a situation in which they will be respected and without envy, and enjoying influence without danger, as it must be personal, they would, I should hope, become the most effectual preservers of contentment, tranquillity and morality amongst their countrymen and a means of connection between them and us, which no other system of Government could offer."[5]

6. While the military governors had not heeded the appeals of the native memorialists who urged the re-establishment of the parish schools, Governor North was sensitive to the importance of satisfying the memorialists of his day, with a view to building up a citizenry loyal to British rule which was in a state of jeopardy because of the possibility of uprisings among the people though there was no longer any threat of a come back by the Dutch, and he naturally heeded the appeal of the memorialists for the re-establishment of the schools. North released from prison the Dutch clergymen who had been imprisoned by the military governors, and authorized them to visit and inspect the work of such parish schools as were functioning. The clergymen were paid salaries and travelling allowances. On their visits, they found that several school masters had defected from the church, "having performed pagan ceremonies and sacrifices."[6] North entrusted the clergymen with the duty of interviewing and recommending school masters, about whose knowledge of the faith they were satisfied. There were two constraints, however, on the re-establishment and expansion of the parish school system. The first was that the ten Dutch clergymen available in the country were not sufficient in number for the purpose. The second was that there was not a single English clergyman in the island, and while North did use the Dutch clergy they could not be given an official position as they did not owe allegiance to the British crown.

7. In allowing the Dutch clergymen to preach and teach, Governor North took care to safeguard the interests of the Roman Catholics, who had suffered a century and half of oppression by the Dutch, by forbidding the Dutch clergymen to compel children of any other form of Christianity to attend the services. Another measure, intended no

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doubt to woo the Roman Catholics most of all, took the form of a proclamation dated 23 September 1799 issued by Governor North. One clause permitted religious freedom. Another clause related to schools and read as follows:

> "And we do hereby command that no person shall be allowed to keep a school in any of the said settlements of the Island of Ceylon without our Licence first had and obtained, in granting which we shall pay the most particular attention to the morals, and proper qualification of the persons applying for the same."[7]

This clause appears to have made it possible in course of time for the Roman Catholics, out of all non-Protestant religious groups, to open schools. While the Buddhists, Hindus and Muslims indeed had schools in their temple, kovil or mosque premises, no school appears to have been established by these religious groups outside the premises of places of worship. There is no mention of permission having been refused under the clause requiring a licence, but there is little doubt that no applicant not professing the Christian religion would have been regarded as satisfying the condition relating to "morals", for essentially morals meant Christian morals. As far as the Roman Catholics were concerned, this clause permitted them to start schools. By the end of 1801, several schools for the children of Roman Catholics had been started. The status they enjoyed was that of private schools. Apart from the Roman Catholic schools, there were, of course, private schools of a secular character started by real or nominal Christian, including Roman Catholic, licensees. It may be noted that the proclamation of 1799 was in effect until 1835, when it was repealed by Ordinance No. 5 of 1835.

8. A little over two months after the above mentioned proclamation, a proclamation was issued calling for support for propagating the Christian religion and for promoting education. Dated 1 December 1799, the proclamation read as follows:

> "We Fredrick North, Governor of the Island of Ceylon etc., do inform all Native Headmen, Schoolmasters and Inhabitants within the Jurisdiction of Colombo, that it is our earnest desire that the Christian Religion should be continued and propagated as much as possible, and therefore do order all the aforementioned persons to assist, every one in their offices and situations, in order that the

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Christian Religion which has been planted with so much labour on this Island may be cultivated to the Glory of God and for the salvation of the Immortal soul. The Schoolmasters are most seriously ordered to fulfil their duties, the Native Headmen to afford the necessary assistance to the Schoolmasters and the inhabitants to send their children diligently to school, to the Glory of our most beloved Saviour and to spread forth his Kingdom."[8]

9. By this proclamation, the support of activities for promoting the Christian religion and Christian education was given a firm legal basis. This proclamation was in force even more than half a century later, on 1 January 1853 for example. Governor North also drew up plans for re-organizing education in Ceylon, and communicated them to the Court of Directors of the East India Company. The parish schools were to be reorganized. In them, the medium of instruction was Sinhalese or Tamil, according to the area in which each school was situated, and they essentially met the needs of the villages. A few schools of a superior nature "for the education of the children of Burghers and of those natives whose families are eligible to the office of Mudliar and to other dignities and charges given by Government to its native servants" were to be established.[9] These schools would place emphasis on the study of English. Apart from providing the local personnel necessary for subordinate positions in the civil establishments of the country, they would also provide the cadres required for the promotion of Christianity. It was also proposed that two of the more promising students from the Superior schools should be sent annually to England for training to enter the Church and return as parish priests. This recommendation was not accepted by the East India Company. North wanted English clergymen in sufficient strength to promote religion and Christian education, and asked without success for an English Archdeacon and forty episcopally ordained parish priests to be sent over.

10. To be sure, there was no great originality about North's proposals for the revival of education. A network of inferior schools in villages, a couple of select schools in Colombo to turn out native functionaries to serve the needs of the church and the state from the perspective of British colonial rule, opportunities of study in the metropolitan country for a few so that they could assimilate the quintessence of culture in it and return to their homeland exemplifying the ideal of the native who has absorbed the culture and learning of

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the colonial ruler—these were all elements of an old pattern to which Ceylon had not been unexposed during the periods of foreign rule, first by the Portuguese and then by the Dutch.

11. Governor North's great aide in the reorganization of education was the Rev. James Cordiner who arrived in Ceylon on the invitation of North to serve as Chaplain to the military garrison in Colombo. North entrusted him with the added responsibility of functioning as "Superintendent of all the Schools and Examiner of the candidates for the office of Schoolmaster."

12. Cordiner took great pains to visit the parish schools all over the island, and then to make recommendations based on his first hand experience of conditions in them. Cordiner pointed out to Governor North that it was not satisfactory that schoolmasters should depend on marriage fees for their living. The levy of a marriage fee was itself vexatious and caused hardships for the poor. North abolished the tax on marriages and provided a fixed salary for each schoolmaster. North was clearly anxious to please an influential group such as the schoolmasters, who were, "habitually respected in the country."[10] He had great expectations from them. "They will now that their situations are accompanied with an independent salary, by their zeal and influence recall many who have relapsed into paganism."[11] On Cordiner's visits to different parts of the country, he examined schoolmasters to assess their efficiency, and prospective schoolmasters and catechists to recommend them for appointment. Cordiner pointed out to North that the Joy tax (tax on the wearing of ornaments by both males and females) introduced by North in an attempt to increase the revenue of the country was a deterrent to school attendance. Apparently, parents were less reluctant to send sons than daughters to school without jewellery. This is clear from the fact that several of the petitions Cordiner received on his visits to schools were from females appealing to Cordiner to get the tax removed. "The young ladies here made the same request respecting their ornaments as in the other schools."[12] North, who had with a show of magnanimity abolished the tax on marriage on the ground that it tended "directly to vex and harass poor and distressed peasantry", declined to remove the Joy tax which was equally vexatious in so far as the people were concerned.[13] Clearly, the tax brought in good money, and North was not specially interested in promoting the education of females who were the

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category chiefly affected by the tax. It was some years later, namely in 1807, that the tax was abolished by Governor Maitland, North's successor.

13. The curriculum of parish schools consisted of reading the scriptures, and a little writing and arithmetic. The supervision of the schools was by preachers and catechists who were appointed for the purpose.

14. By making a payment to each school, by undertaking the appointment of teachers, by making arrangements for the supervision of the schools, and by meeting the cost of repairs of school buildings, the government took over almost full responsibility for the parish schools. This was quite unlike anything that prevailed in contemporary England or India. It did not mean that the public provision of education had been accepted as an ideal to be pursued. It was more in the nature of a pragmatic response to a local situation, two of its characteristics being the residual effects of the educational activities of the Dutch, and the need to promote the growth of a contented Christian populace with a sense of loyalty to the British in a newly conquered territory that was bounded on the inside by an independent native Kingdom. Schooling was, however, not compulsory as it had been under the Dutch. For the second time within a few years, schoolmasters were seen playing the role of a pressure group. In response to petitions by schoolmasters of the Colombo district requesting the Governor to order parents to send their children to school and to order the Headmen to enforce the attendance of children at school, North issued in 1802 a proclamation which read as follows:

> "Whereas the schoolmasters of this district have complained to us that notwithstanding their repeated admonitions, the parents of children neglect sending their children to school, we do hereby peremptorily order Protestant parents to send their children to the established schools, and the several modeliars and other headmen are required to see this order carried into effect."[14]

By confining compulsion to Protestant parents, North was observing the principle of not interfering with the practice of their respective religions by the non-Protestant sectors of the population. He was also admitting two realities; firstly, that the re-established parish schools were for the promotion of religion and education as exemplified by

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Protestantism, and secondly that the education of those who did not embrace Protestantism was not a concern of the government. This position was eminently reasonable considering the time of history at which it was taken.

15. As Cordiner set about his work, the activities of the Dutch clergymen, whose services had been used by Governor North, began to lose in importance. Increasing responsibilities were handed over to native preachers and catechists identified by Cordiner. The Dutch clergymen protested at the lack of competence of the new recruits, to be peremptorily told by North that this was none of their business. North in fact explained in a Dispatch to his superiors that on account of the refusal of the Dutch Clergy to pray for the King, he could not allow them authority in the country and that they were quite well replaced by native preachers. After a period during which they were in eclipse, the Dutch clergy took advantage of the formal cession of the Dutch possessions to England by the treaty of Amiens in 1802 to affirm their readiness to serve as British subjects. North was quick to accept their offer and entrust responsibilities to them, especially as there was no response to his request for more English clergymen to be sent to Ceylon.

16. By the year 1802, the number of parish schools exceeded 170. From about August 1802, however, the Secretary of State for the Colonies began to impress on North the need to cut down expenditure on education. North pointed out that though the parish schools were a charge on the public exchequer, they were run on so economical a basis that no saving was possible except at great loss of efficiency. In spite of North's protest, the axe descended, slowly but surely. North made an effort to save the schools by introducing in November 1802 a new scheme by which inheritance of land among the local population had to be supported by notarial documents to be drawn up by schoolmasters on the payment of a fee. The idea behind it was to provide schoolmasters with an opportunity of receiving an income, as North knew that much against his wishes he had to withdraw the payment of salaries to the schoolmasters. The new scheme also helped North, at the time of reporting the complete withdrawal of salaries (and the virtual demise of the schools) to advance a plea for the revival of some of them at least; "..the schoolmasters were in fact the village notaries, and to that extent they must to a certain number be re-established."[15] A year later, he again pleaded without success for the re-establishment of the schools.

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17. Mention may be made here of the arrival in 1805 of four missionaries of the London Missionary Society. They were all of Dutch nationality, and were apparently selected for a mission to Ceylon on account of the co-operative relationship that existed between the London Missionary Society and the Netherland Missionary Society. On their arrival, they were welcomed by Governor North and put in charge of churches in Colombo and three other towns which had Dutch congregations, and paid fixed allowances by the government for their duties which included the supervision of the government schools (possibly the few schools that survived because the teachers continued to serve in them relying on notarial fees for their living) that existed in them. Clearly, these missionaries served the needs of an existing religious and educational set up. They did not play a pioneering role in establishing missionary schools, and in this respect they differed from missionaries who arrived later (see chapter 7). The nationality of the missionaries of the London Missionary Society, the fact that on account of the government allowances they were relatively independent of the parent body in London, and the lack of enthusiasm on the part of the parent body may have been some of the reasons for the relatively passive role played by these missionaries. The missionaries who came from other societies later arrived at more propitious times, with a more aggressive evangelism explicitly announced by their parent bodies, and found in Governor Brownrigg an evangelically minded Governor to receive and assist them (chapter 7).

The Government Parish Schools under Governor Maitland

18. It was noted in paragraph 16 that the withdrawal of the salaries of teachers, for reasons of economy, was a great blow to the parish schools. A few schools managed to survive, largely because of the financial incentive of notarial functions for the teachers. Governor Maitland extended the notarial functions of the teachers, and recognizing them as "Agents of Government" gave them the right to sell stamps, on a commission basis.[16]. This was no doubt a popular measure with the teachers. Maitland was conscious of the fact that teachers had "a considerable though not a preponderating weight with the government," and was keen to gain their favour hoping to obtain from them "a more thorough knowledge of the real state of the interior of the possessions than we at present possess."[17] There was a clear political motivation behind Maitland's patronage of the teachers, but

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one of its undoubtedly beneficial effects was that the income that came to the teachers helped them to continue working in the schools without salaries.

19. An event of great importance was the proclamation issued by Governor Maitland in May 1806, on the instructions of the Secretary of State, removing the disabilities that had been placed on the Roman Catholics during the period of Dutch rule.[18] There was an estimated population of 80,000 Roman Catholics in Ceylon, and they were permitted freedom of conscience and worship by this proclamation. Reference to this measure is relevant in connection with the history of parish schools for two reasons. In the first place, the grant of religious freedom enabled the Roman Catholics to open schools that were later to become a rival to the parish schools. Secondly, as will be seen later, the establishment of Roman Catholic schools and their success served as a reminder to the British Government of its own neglect of schools and consequent failure to advance Protestantism sufficiently vigorously through them.

20. A measure that helped in the promotion of the education of females was the removal by Governor Maitland of the Joy tax on the wearing of ornaments by the native population. It had been imposed by North in 1800, and schoolmasters, parents and especially girl pupils had petitioned Governor North without success for the abolition of the tax. Maitland considered the tax to be oppressive and removed it in 1807.[19] It is likely to have had a beneficial effect on the attendance of girls at school as they were greatly affected by the tax.

21. Some little financial support was extended by Maitland to four or five schools for teaching English.[20] This was no doubt done with a view to ensuring the supply of a small number of English educated persons from among the local population to fill subordinate positions in government service.

Criticism in England of the neglect of education in Ceylon

22. Governor North and Rev. Cordiner, after their return to England, made representations to the Secretary of State pointing out that the withdrawal of the salaries of teachers had led to the decline of education in Ceylon. The Secretary of State informed Governor Maitland that he was prepared to consider some increase of expenditure if it was considered indispensable.[21] Maitland, however, was under

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great pressure from the Secretary of State for economy in expenditure, and he does not appear to have made any proposals for increasing expenditure on education.

23. Rev. Claudius Buchanan was Chaplain to the British forces at a garrison near Calcutta in India. In 1806 and 1808 he toured Ceylon, and on his return to England in 1808 he drew the attention of the British public to the state of Christianity in the British colonies in the East including Ceylon. The quotations which follow are from publications dated 1812 and 1813, but it is almost certain that these views were given publicity by him from the time of his return to England, and that the books only reiterated what he had been saying earlier.

> "..It will be scarcely believed in England that there are here Protestant Churches under the King's Government which are without ministers..only Protestant preacher in the town of Jaffna is Christian David, a Tamil Catechist. The whole district is now in the hands of the Romish priests from the college of Goa who perceiving the indifference of the English nation to their own religion have assumed quiet and undisturbed possession of the land..There are but two English clergymen in the whole island..the religion of Christ has never been so disgraced in any age of the Church, as it has been lately by our official neglect of the Protestant Church in Ceylon."[22]

Again, in a second publication: "From want of Protestant Instructions the secession to the Romish communion, and to the idolatry of the idol Boodha is, as might be expected, very great."[23]

24. Great concern about the neglect of education in Ceylon was also shown by William Wilberforce, a leading light of the evangelical movement in England. Information about education in Ceylon probably came to him from North, Cordiner or Buchanan, or indeed from more than one of them. He expressed concern about the action of the government in breaking up nearly all the schools in Ceylon for the purpose of saving about £1,500, and that as a result, the activities of nearly 200 schoolmasters who acted as catechists and instructed over 20,000 learners had ceased.[24] Wilberforce's diary contained an entry dated 11 September 1808 in which he referred to the moral and religious ruin of the island resulting from a saving of £1,500, and made mention of an interview with Lord Castlereagh, the Secretary of State, about it.[25] The reaction of Castlereagh was immediate. The day after the interview, Castlereagh sent a letter to Governor Maitland

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(copied to Wilberforce), laying the blame on him for suppressing the salaries of the schoolmasters.[26] Clearly, the letter had been sent in a hurry without consulting the office files. Had the office files been consulted, Castlereagh would have realised that the salaries were withdrawn not by Maitland but by his predecessor in office. Castlereagh wrote to Maitland that information had been received that measures taken by him had tended to the suppression of native schoolmasters and lessened the means of instructing the inhabitants in the Christian religion, and that he was even encouraging the natives who had been converted earlier into Christianity to relapse into paganism. Maitland naturally replied that the salaries had been stopped before he became governor, and that the action had been taken by his predecessor in compliance with orders to that effect.[27]

Revival of the Government Parish Schools

25. It may be that Governor Maitland had received advance information about the great concern shown in England regarding the neglect of Christian education in Ceylon, for by a letter dated 4 January 1809 (this was before Castlereagh's letter of 12 September 1808 could have reached him) the Dutch clergy were requested to suggest a plan for supporting the parish schools within the district of Colombo.[23] Maitland was clearly turning to the Dutch clergy who were available in sufficient number to see if they would help in the revival of the parish schools. The proposals of the Dutch clergy were not without great advantage to themselves. While school buildings had to be repaired and restored by the government and the teachers were to be paid monthly allowances by the government, there were to be annual visitations to schools by the ministers of the Reformed Church in order to examine the children and the teachers. Facilities for higher education were to be provided only for European children (most of them were of Dutch descent). European children competent in the Dutch language were to be recruited as teachers. Maitland had no hesitation in rejecting the proposals. He felt that they aimed "more at throwing the power over the schools into the hands of the Dutch Consistory than to any other good end."[29] In regard to the annual visitations to examine pupils and teachers, and also in regard to the management of the schools, Maitland doubted whether it would not be more expedient to make such examinations and the general management of the schools more immediately connected with the government than entrust them to the Dutch clergy. Maitland's conclusion about the proposals of

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the Dutch clergy was that the line of action indicated in them was not to add to what existed but "to divert the weight and influence in the country that arises out of the schools into the hands of the Dutch Consistory."[30] The attempt to enlist the services of the Dutch clergy had therefore to be abandoned.

26. Governor Maitland, while he did point out to Castlereagh in reply to his letter of 12 September 1808 that the withdrawal of salaries and the consequent closure of the schools had taken place during his predecessor's regime, gave thought to the prospects for reviving the schools. He, however, viewed with great cynicism the enterprise of propagating religion though education. "..as far as nominal Christianity, therecan be no doubt we can push it to any extent..it would be a matter of no difficulty whatsoever to set up any nominal establishment of school masters and scholars."[31] He became critical of the provision of education itself, doubting whether "schoolmasters because they were paid by Government would have performed the functions of the office or the scholars because they attended at such schools were either deriving the benefits of education."[23] In spite of these reservations, Maitland set up in October 1809 a Committee, consisting of the Church of England clergyman the Rev. T. W. Twisleton and two others, for superintending the schools. The committee carried out a survey and made recommendations. Buildings, temporary or permanent, were to be put up, permitting schools to be started. Teachers were to be paid not concurrently with the starting of a school but after an official inspection carried out later, the payment itself being retrospective from the date of commencement of the school, if the official inspection resulted in approval. The salaries were to be no higher than those paid during Governor North's regime.[33] Proposals were also made for the training of teachers and catechists (see chapter 8 paragraph 10). The catechisms in use in schools were those prepared by the Dutch, and it was proposed that they should be replaced by a new catechism more in accordance with the point of view of the Church of England. It was also proposed to publish in Sinhalese and circulate for reading certain religious tracts. The proposal clearly gave primacy to the religious objective in education. This is not a matter for surprise, considering that the pressures for the support of education came from strong evangelical sources in England. In making them Maitland was prepared to forget his own scepticism. The proposal, along with those relating to the Academy and the provision of higher education in England for a few selected young men, were costed and brought to

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the notice of the Secretary of State, who readily authorized the expenditure. "His Majesty is pleased highly to approve of the Establishment made by you of public schools for the improvement of Education and the extension of the knowledge of Christian Religion."[34] Thus, after a period of seven years during which governmental support for education had been reduced to a niggardly scale, namely £ 95 in 1808 out of which £62 represented the salary of Rev. Twisleton (Principal of Schools and Chaplain to the Government), thanks to the efforts of the evangelical movement the Government undertook to support education to the tune of about £ 200 a year as from 1809. Twisleton was able to report that the schools "were re-established and the Christian religion allowed to revive" among the Sinhalese.[35]

The Government Parish Schools under Governor Brownrigg

27. Governor Maitland left Ceylon in July 1811 and was succeeded as governor in March 1812 by Robert Brownrigg. No one leaving England at about that time to assume the topmost administrative position in a British colony in the East could have been insensitive to the discussions in the House of Commons and among the public in England regarding the role that Britain should play in the moral development of her colonial subjects. In this regard, the Indian situation was the central concern, but it was not without its implications for the other colonies, whether they specifically figured in the discussions or not. The evangelists, led by William Wilberforce, had failed in 1792 to make it a function of the East India Company to assume financial responsibility for sending missionaries to India, although they tried hard to incorporate a clause to this effect when the charter of the company came up for renewal and consideration in the British parliament. The struggle was not, however, given up and the stage was set for another effort in 1812 when the charter was again to be renewed. These events could not have failed to make an impact on Governor Brownrigg's mind. Brownrigg did not share any of his predecessor's cynicism about the use of education as an instrument for religious conversion, and showed great evangelical zeal right from the beginning. He summed up his views neatly when, on the eve of his departure from Ceylon eight years later, he stated in a letter:

"From the first moment of my entering upon the government of this island I considered the religious improvement of the people to

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be of paramount importance..I felt the full obligation of propagating, for its own sake, the Divine truth of that religion which has been throughout life the source of my consolation and hope."[36]

He received every encouragement from the Secretary of State, whose statement of intention had the following sentence, "His Majesty's government are most anxious to afford means of education and religious instructions."[37] Brownrigg's strong support and patronage of the educational activities of Christian missionary societies are described elsewhere (see chapter 7). In so far as the parish schools were concerned, he took a number of measures to improve their position, with a view to affording to the "persons of the poorest conditions, desirable facilities in obtaining the immediate blessing of Christian Instruction."[38] School buildings were repaired and a few new buildings put up. Considering that adequate supervision of the schools was critical, Brownrigg made it the duty of all government officers working in the various parts of the country to "aid, encourage and stimulate" the schoolmasters and catechists to carry out their duties. Government officers were also informed "to promote by exhortation, example and authority" the attendance of children at schools and places of worship.[39] After the arrival in Ceylon of missionaries of the Wesleyan Missionary Society and the Church Missionary Society, a certain amount of supervision of the government parish schools was entrusted to them. An allowance was paid for this work. On the whole, Brownrigg managed to get some of the government parish schools functioning again, and received commendation from the Secretary of State for the efforts he had made "to improve the character and the principles of the poor classes."[40] The Secretary of State went on to say, "The establishment of new schools among them, the increase of the number of schoolmasters and religious instruction attest at once the correctness of your judgment."[41]

28. One of the proposals that Governor Brownrigg made in November 1813 for providing to "persons of the poorest conditions, desirable facilities in obtaining the immediate blessing of Christian Instructions" dealt with an increase in the number of native proponents. Brownrigg was of the view that in order to "disseminate moral and religious instruction amongst the natives" it was important to have the services of persons "who could instruct the natives in their own language and who will live amongst the natives."[42] Moreover, the proposal had a great deal to commend it on grounds of economy, and

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Brownrigg pointed out that he could engage six native ministers for a salary that would scarcely be sufficient to pay one English clergyman. The Secretary of State agreed to Brownrigg's proposal but recruitment was not easy, for most of those who passed out of the Academy (see chapter 8 paragraph 10) preferred "temporal honours and emoluments" to the service of the Church.[43] Brownrigg felt that there was also another good reason for the difficulty in the recruitment of proponents. No proper ordination as priests of the Church of England was possible in Ceylon, and the proponent's status was a marginal one that did not attract persons to the calling. Brownrigg thought that he should work towards a state of affairs that would make ordination in Ceylon possible. He also thought it advantageous to have in the country a symbol of ecclesiastical authority recognized by the proponents and priests. Considering that it would be too expensive to have a Bishop in Ceylon, he urged that the Bishop of Calcutta might include Ceylon in his diocese, appointing an Archdeacon to take charge of ecclesiastical affairs, with occasional visits by the Bishop for the purpose of carrying out ordinations. The Bishop of Calcutta was strongly in favour of the suggestion, pointing out also the desirability of bringing the schools under an established church organization, ending the state of affairs in which the fate of schools depended to some extent on the predilections of the governors, resulting sometimes in the abolition by one governor of a school established by one of his predecessors in office. With the agreement of the Secretary of State and the East India Company (which was responsible for paying the salary of the Bishop of Calcutta), Ceylon was made part of the Bishopric of Calcutta in 1817, and the Rev. Twisleton was appointed Archdeacon. Under him, the Rev. George Bisset became Senior Chaplain and Principal of government schools. This was an important event from the point of view of educational developments in Ceylon, for it made the Church of England the governing body of the government schools in the country.

29. Governor Brownrigg also showed great interest in promoting the study of English. This interest may, at least in part, have been stimulated by the campaign that Charles Grant carried out in England at about this time on the importance of providing instruction in English to the population of India.[44] In a letter in 1813 to the Dutch Consistory, Brownrigg wrote as follows: "..the cultivation of the English language must necessarily be a principal object of any system of education to which I can in a public capacity give my concurrence."[45]

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By the year 1817, about eight or ten government English schools had been established in different parts of the country, and English schools were "engrafted" on two of the parish schools.[46] In a sermon in 1817 by the Rev. Bisset, it was stated that "the turn of the native is very much for the learning of the English language", and that "the most obvious and striking amendment (with regard to education) is the number of schools where English is taught."[47] Undoubtedly, the reason for the interest in English on the part of the population was that it was a qualification for employment under the government. Six or seven more English schools appear to have been established between 1817 and 1820, bringing the total number to about fifteen by the end of 1820. Brownrigg also promoted the study of English in the "superior" schools. It may be noted that, in 1815, the British who were until then masters of only the maritime provinces of Ceylon established their rule over the entire country. This event greatly expanded employment opportunities in middle level governmental positions for young persons who knew English.

30. Governor Brownrigg is also credited with having introduced into the parish schools, as well as into the Academy, the so-called monitorial system of using students in the higher classes to instruct the students in the lower classes. This system had its origins in the traditional indigenous schools in India and Ceylon, was introduced by Andrew Bell into non-traditional schools in Madras, and thereafter put into practice in England.

The Government Parish Schools under Governor Barnes

31. Edward Barnes succeeded Robert Brownrigg as governor of Ceylon in 1820. He was very much of a pragmatist who looked at costs and benefits in the context of this world rather than the next. In contrast to Brownrigg, he had no use for evangelization and expresed himself in no uncertain terms about it. Soon after his arrival, he made his position clear when he disagreed with the principle of teaching children the leading tenets of Christianity. "..all experience shows us that, whenever we attempt to force religious tenets on others we thwart our own views."[48] He was even more forthright ten years later.

"In England the population is Christian and therefore it is natural that all schools and colleges should be Christian establishments, but we have, I think very absurdly, carried the same system into the

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schools here where the people are generally Buddhists or Hindoos, and one of the greatest defects of our school system is, in my opinion, that it has got too much in the hands of the clergy. It has been considered more as an instrument for the conversion of the people to Christianity than of general improvement in civilization."[49]

32. Not being convinced about the usefulness of conversion, Governor Barnes used more mundane criteria to assess the schools. He felt that the government parish school system was "loaded with vast expense and attended with little, if any, comparative advantage", and answered with a firm "decidedly not" when the Archdeacon enquired from him whether he would sanction additional money for the schools.[50] In his view, schoolmasters were neglectful of their duties, "never assembling their scholars except when they are in expectation of a visit from some superior officer of government."[51] The government had in its employ proponents and catechists. Their main duties were to conduct church services and supervise the work of schoolmasters. Barnes ordered the Archdeacon to serve all of them with notice and to re-employ them only after their qualifications had been looked into.[52] Barnes was of the view that catechists did not have the competence for conducting church services, and in so far as the supervision of schools by catechists was concerned, Barnes thought that they would not be necessary "if greater discrimination were exercised in the choice of schoolmasters."[53] The category of catechists was dropped from government service. Barnes sought to fill the void caused thereby in the supervision of schools by making "the Collectors of districts (except Colombo) responsible to government for the efficiency and good conduct of schoolmasters."[54] The Wesleyan Mission, which had hitherto received an allowance for supervising the schools in the Galle district, lost this allowance in 1820 as a result of the decision that the supervision of the schools should be carried out by the Collectors.[55] A year later, in 1821, it was found that the arrangements for supervision in the Southern Province, inclusive of Galle, were inadequate, and the supervision was entrusted to a missionary of the Church Mission.[56]

33. An event of some importance in 1820 was the resignation of the Archdeacon from the position of Principal of Schools on the ground that the Bishop thought that the Archdeacon should not hold any office. The Rev. J. M. S. Glenie of the Church Mission was there

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upon appointed as Principal of Schools, and he held this position until he became Archdeacon.[57]

34. Several parish schools had a staff of two schoolmasters. Governor Barnes thought that one should suffice, and in 1824 he abolished the post of second schoolmaster promising to use the savings to set up a teacher training school.[58] No such training school was, however, established. The number of schools came down from 109 in 1824 to 77 in 1825.[59] Some appear to have been revived later. In a letter dated 11 March 1829 to the Secretary of State, Barnes mentioned that 94 schools were "supported by government and placed under the superintendence of the Senior Colonial Chaplains at Colombo and Galle who have eleven proponents to assist them in conducting the schools and whose business it is to marry and baptize the native Christian population."[60]

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CHAPTER 7

THE PROTESTANT MISSIONARY SCHOOLS
(1796 - 1832)

1. It has been seen (chapter 6 paragraph 16) that very few of the government parish schools survived the economies effected in 1802-03. During a visit to London in 1809 by Alexander Johnston (Chief Justice of Ceylon from 1805 to 1819), he met William Wilberforce and expressed to him his desire to see a Protestant mission undertake religious and educational activities in Ceylon. Wilberforce thought that the Wesleyans would be able to assist in this regard and made representations to the Wesleyan Conference. It expressed interest, but there were difficulties in undertaking a mission immediately, and it was not until 1813, one year after a Baptist mission had started work, that a Wesleyan mission was able to come. The period 1812 to 1820 or so was in fact an exceedingly propitious one for the commencement of missionary activities in Ceylon. Public agitation in England for the support of missionary activities in India reached a peak about the year 1812, and it was not without its implications for Ceylon. Moreover, Ceylon had as its governor Robert Brownrigg who showed every readiness, by strong personal conviction (as evidenced by his keenness to accept American missionaries not allowed entry into India by the Governor General of India—see paragraph 8), and as a response to public interest and official opinion in England to lend unqualified support, in his official capacity as well as in his personal capacity, to missionary activities in the country. Johnston was himself a tower of strength to missionaries and had the following reminiscences in 1815 of the role he had played.

> "A very long residence in this island, and a very attentive consideration of the different prejudices which prevail among the people, convinced me many years ago, that the surest method which His Majesty's Government could adopt for improving the moral character of the inhabitants would be to encourage a sufficient number of zealous missionaries to establish themselves in different parts of the island, whose object it should be instruct the natives in the real principles of Christianity and to superintend their religious conduct."[1]

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Some details regarding the nature and magnitude of the official support are given later in this chapter, and in chapter 10 paragraphs 13 to 18.

2. The avowed aim of the educational activities of the missions that operated in Ceylon was religious conversion. The missionary literature is replete with statements that set out this intention in the most explicit terms. It is unnecessary to quote them, for they are not a matter for surprise. The missionaries believed that they possessed the key to the salvation of all human beings. To achieve the conversion of the people, they toiled unceasingly and with great dedication amidst the hardships of working in a strange land. If the means they sometimes used appear questionable as we look back on them, it would be well for us to remember that they served an end that was so important in the eyes of the missionaries that it justified the means, considering the time of history in which they lived and worked, What is less understandable is the strife, sometimes of a deadly character, that existed among the various missionary sects themselves. See under "missionary rivalry" later in this chapter for some of this story.

The Baptist Mission

3. The Baptist Mission in Ceylon began with the arrival in 1812 of the Rev. James Chater, who opened a mission school in Colombo soon after his arrival. It was an English school, the first students being European children. Later, the composition of the student body changed, and the school provided instruction in Sinhalese, while English was taught as a subject. In course of time more schools were opened, but as the size of the Mission was not large its activities were never extensive. By the year 1833 it had only 15 schools. Sinhalese was the medium of instruction in all the schools, but the children were taught to read and write English as well. Following the example of the Wesleyan Mission (see paragraph 6), the Baptist Mission established two Sunday Schools, providing an opportunity for the study of Christianity and English, the latter being the great attraction.

The Wesleyan Mission

4. The role played by Alexander Johnston, through Wilberforce, in interesting the Wesleyan Missionary Society to undertake a mission to Ceylon has been described earlier (paragraph 1). The Secretary of State gave his blessings to the Mission, and asked Governor Brownrigg

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to provide every facility to the Mission. The Mission, consisting of five missionaries, arrived in Ceylon in 1814. One of Brownrigg's first actions to help the missionaries was to offer them a monthly payment, "if they could undertake the educational work of superintending the schools and the teaching of English at some of the more important centres in addition to their missionary work."[2] In course of time, the Wesleyans were not satisfied with merely supervising schools and teaching English, and drew up plans "for the establishment of a regular chain of native mission schools."[3]

The Mission grew in strength, enjoying great official patronage, Brownrigg having gone on record as saying, "..be persuaded that I shall always listen with a lively interest to such propositions as may be rationally expected to produce an amendment in the religion and morals of every class of people under this government."[4] The establishment of English schools was limited by the number of mission stations manned by the missionaries, and it is unlikely that more than seven or eight English schools were established during the period under review. Realizing the great potential for religious conversion that lay through the quick establishment of schools in which the medium of instruction was Sinhalese or Tamil so that the children did not have to be taught by the small number of English missionaries available, the Wesleyan Mission established a large number of "Native Schools" as they were called. They belonged to three categories. The Native Schools of the First Class were for the mass of the ordinary children and provided instruction in Sinhalese and Tamil only. The Native Schools of the Second Class were for the children of relatively prosperous parents, generally living within close proximity of mission stations, and provided instruction during part of the day in Sinhalese or Tamil, and part of the day in English. The Native Schools of the Third Class provided education for girls.

5. Archdeacon Twisleton did not view with favour the great expansion in the number of schools established by the Wesleyan Mission, and pointed out to the Governor that if the government appointed English teachers at some future date to its schools, rival schools might produce great inconvenience. Governor Brownrigg's answer, conveyed by his secretary, was forthright:

"His Excellency very much approves of the missionaries devoting their attention to the establishment of schools. His Excellency is persuaded that the missionaries cannot be employed in any manner

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so well calculated to produce extensive and permanent good as in the management or superintendence of schools in which the said English language and the principles of religion are taught. Whatever seminaries for public education are founded hereafter, His Excellency does not think it justifiable upon any ground of enlightened policy to forego the present advantage to be derived from the zeal and activity of the Wesleyan missionaries lest at a distant period some contingent evil may follow. The moderate and prudent conduct of the Wesleyan missionaries hitherto is no light security for their future propriety of behaviour."[5]

6. The Wesleyan Mission pioneered the Sunday School movement in Ceylon, establishing Sunday schools in which Christianity and English were taught, the latter serving as a magnet to draw the children to them. The following announcement appeared in *The Ceylon Government Gazette* regarding the opening of the first Sunday School:

> "The Wesleyan Missionaries have the pleasure to inform the inhabitants of the Pettah, and its neighbourhood, that they intend to open a Sunday School, for the instruction of poor children in the English language, and in the principles of Christianity on sunday next..And they will gladly teach all who come, without any kind of payment."[6]

In 1824 the Wesleyan Mission started an institution for higher education, called the Wesleyan Mission Academy. With great prominence given to the study of English, it was intended for the more well-to-do students who could pay for their higher education, as well as for able students with no economic standing provided they agreed to commit themselves to the service of the Wesleyan Mission. The institution, however, had a chequered career, largely because of difficulties in staffing it.

7. According to the Return of Schools for 1833, published in the *Ceylon Calendar and Almanac*, 1835, the number of Wesleyan Mission Schools in 1833 was 86.

The American Mission

8. In 1812, missionaries from an organization called the American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Missions, with its headquarters at Boston, Massachusetts undertook a mission to India. On their arrival in India, they were informed by the Governor-General that they could

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not be accepted and that they should leave the country. The missionaries then embarked for Ceylon, arriving in 1813. They were welcomed by Governor Brownrigg and encouraged to establish themselves in the Jaffna district. Brownrigg admitted the foreign missionaries on his own responsibility, and did not have the authority of the British government to do so. More missionaries came from the United States in 1816 to join the Mission, and were admitted by Brownrigg. The Secretary of State then informed Brownrigg that it was not considered necessary or expedient to encourage or admit missionaries proceeding from foreign states, as it was not desirable to admit subjects of foreign states "to situations in the British Colonies, in which they must necessarily acquire considerable authority and influence over the inhabitants."[7]

9. Brownrigg's successor, Governor Barnes, was quite unsympathetic in his early years to the American Mission. He refused permission to a lay member, by the name of James Garrett, invited by the Mission to operate the printing press that was being put up by the Mission, to come to the country, stating in a letter to the Secretary of State, "I should not have hesitated to remove them from the island at once, as at present I have disallowed the introduction of an additional member of the Mission in the capacity of a printer."[8] Representations were made by the Mission to the Secretary of State, who while generally endorsing Barnes' point of view with the comment:

> "I am far from being surprised that you should view with extreme jealousy any establishment, calculated under any pretence to give to subjects of a foreign State an influence over the reputation of a British colony..Had the question indeed been now to be decided whether an establishment of foreign missionaries should be formed in the island, I should have had no difficulty in withholding my consent. But..permission to these gentlemen to reside originally having been given without the previous sanction of His Majesty's government, and has been some years enjoyed.."

decided that Garrett should be allowed to stay on two conditions, firstly that there ought to be no further additions to the Mission and secondly that there should be "vigilant control over the press under Garrett's directions."[9]

10. The area selected by the American Mission for its work was a quite compact one, with a population that was linguistically homogeneous in that it was wholly Tamil speaking. These advantages,

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together with the fact that the Mission was present in strength with financial support to back it, enabled it to organize its educational activities in such a way that it had great impact on the population. The largest number of schools established by the American Mission were Village or Native schools (85 by 1833). They provided instruction in reading and writing Tamil, a little arithmetic, and the leading truths of Christianity. The Mission also established three Central Day Schools for very able students from the Village or Native schools. English was taught as a subject in these schools, and the curriculum was in general broader than that of the Village or Native schools. The Mission also established two Charity Boarding schools, one for boys and the other for girls. Students, selected for their outstanding ability from the Village or Native schools, were fed, clothed and educated in them at the expense of the Mission. The curriculum in those schools was much the same as in the Central Day Schools. These two categories of schools appear to have been complementary to each other, the Boarding schools providing for the needs of those unable to travel from their homes daily to attend the Central Day schools. From the point of view of the Mission, while the Boarding schools cost more, their advantage was that a greater commitment to religion was more likely on the part of the students who spent all their time in a Christian atmosphere under the vigilant eyes of the missionaries (and their wives) uncontaminated, except during holidays, by parental beliefs. The teaching of English in the three Central Day schools and the two Boarding schools appears to have been outstanding both in the number of students reached and the quality of the instruction in comparison with what was available in the other parts of the island, and evoked commendation from the Colebrooke Commission (see chapter 12 paragraph 8). It was hoped that the products of these schools would become the future teachers needed for the Village or Native schools. It is likely that while some became teachers, others found their knowledge of English useful in employment under the government or in the commercial sector.

11. The American Mission also drew up plans for establishing an institution of higher education, a Mission College, as it was to be called, and sought approval and financial aid from the Government to set it up. Governor Barnes refused giving three reasons, firstly that the country did not have the financial resources, secondly that students from Ceylon could attend an institution in Calcutta, and thirdly that the ban on getting down additional personnel for the Mission from the

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United States was unlikely to be lifted. There was no substance in the first two reasons, for the Secretary of State replying to an appeal from the American Board of Commissioners stated as follows:

> "The formation of a Seminary of a higher description has been recommended by the Governor of Ceylon, and is under consideration, but it is essential that such an establishment ought to be British, and placed under the special care and protection of the Governor. Under these circumstances you will, I hope, excuse my declining to give encouragement to the establishment which you propose."[10]

The Mission abandoned its idea of establishing a Mission College with assistance from the government, but established in 1827 with its own finances an institution called the Batticotta Seminary, for the further education of promising youths who had completed their courses of study in the Mission's Central Day and Boarding schools. The Seminary was a boarding establishment and had on its roll in 1833 nearly 150 students, all but a handful of them being provided with free board, lodging and education at the expense of the Mission. While the American Mission had perforce to respect the institution of caste, entrenched as it was in Hindu society and incapable of being changed except by a slow process of erosion over the years, and confined its choice of students for higher education, at least in the beginning, to those belonging to the so-called higher castes, it opened the doors of English learning to the intellectually able but economically disadvantaged by the provision of free education in the Central Day schools, and free board and lodging as well as free education in the Charity Boarding schools and the Batticotta Seminary. The Church Mission, as will be seen later, also followed suit on a small scale, but it was the American Mission that pioneered this kind of egalitarianism.

12. By 1829, Governor Barnes had formed a favourable opinion of the American Mission. In a letter to the Secretary of State, he wrote about its missionaries as follows:

> "They are very well informed, indefatigable and painstaking men, have had much success among the Malabars, and have very flourishing schools with an institution at Batticotta for the further education of the most promising youth who have made considerable progress into the higher branches of education. Their annual examinations have always given the greatest satisfaction to all present...."[11]

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Clearly, any fears that Governor Barnes (and the British Government) had that the American missionaries would engage in political subversion (memories of the American War of Independence were still green among the British) had been allayed by conduct of the highest rectitude on the part of the American mission.

The Church Mission

13. The Church Missionary Society was the missionary wing of the Church of England. Missionaries of the Church Missionary Society arrived in Ceylon in 1818, and were welcomed by Governor Brownrigg who assigned stations to them. A request in January 1820 by the Church Mission to be allowed to open a school in the Kandyan provinces (which had been ceded to the British in 1815) was not allowed immediately, the governor considering it inadvisable to do so, but towards the end of the year a mission station was permitted and a school was started later. Brownrigg treated all missions with equal favour, but his successors, Edward Barnes and Wilmot Horton, appear to have extended to the Church Mission, it being the Mission of the established church (the Church of England) in the country, favours such as the loan of a printing press, exemption from customs duty of printing paper used by the Mission, and free grants of land.

14. The Church Mission established four mission stations, and started a number of village schools in or within easy reach of the mission stations. Instruction was provided in the mother tongue—Sinhalese or Tamil—and Christianity. The chief task in the village schools was "the daily committing to memory portions of the Holy Scriptures and Catechism".[12] The number of Village schools in 1832 was 51. At each mission station there was established a Central school, in which emphasis was placed on the study of English, in addition to the study of Christianity. Two Boarding schools, providing more or less the same curriculum as the Central schools, were also established, and the students selected for admission to them were provided with free board, lodging and education. A third boarding establishment, called the Christian Institute at Kotte, provided free board, lodging and higher education to male students selected for admission on grounds of their ability as well as their piety from the Boarding schools. Its objectives were much the same as those of the Seminary established by the American Mission, and in this respect the Church Mission acted considerably in advance of educational practice in Britain, which at this time of history was rigidly class bound in

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providiug access to higher education. It should be noted, however, that the Church Mission supported a much smaller number of students than the American Mission.

Missionary rivalry

15. Under the heading 'missionary rivalry' are considered rivalries not only between one missionary society and another but also those between missionary societies and the Roman Catholic presence in Ceylon. It may be noted that the period under review was relatively peaceful, and that it was after about 1840 that matters really came to a head.

16. As far as the Baptist Mission and the Wesleyan Mission were concerned, they appear to have got on amicably with each other. One reason for this amity may have been the fact that the Baptist Mission was a small one and did not show an inclination to expand its school establishment to any great extent.

17. Feelings between the Church Mission and the Wesleyan Mission showed some ambivalence. While the Rev. G. Bisset stated in a letter, "Attached as I am to the Established Church, I must regard the Wesleyan Missionaries as by far the most efficient instruments in propagating the Gospel in Ceylon. As such I cannot but rate them highly in point of utility", the Rev. Twisleton did not favour the great expansion in the number of schools established by the Wesleyan Mission (see paragraph 4).[13] Five years later, however, a Wesleyan missionary emphasized "the oneness of sentiment and design which subsists among all the gentlemen of the Church Mission Society, the American Missionaries and ourselves."[14]

18. Feelings were strained between the Wesleyan Mission and the Roman Catholics. The Wesleyan Mission started in 1815 a school in a town where there was a considerable Roman Catholic presence in education. According to the account of a Wesleyan missionary, the Roman Catholic priests "were sorry that they could not drive the missionaries away from the town, as they had predicted that they would do; but their agents did all they could do to accomplish their wish. Several schoolmasters, on returning from a prayer meeting, were waylaid and severely burned.. The priests then denied confession to those parents who sent their children to be taught by Protestants."[15]

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Female education

19. The missionary societies are generally credited with having been responsible for the promotion of female education in Ceylon. This is generally true in so far as the northern province is concerned, where the American Mission and Church Mission played a pioneering role in providing educational facilities for Tamil girls and persuading the parents to send them to school. In the western province a similar effort was unnecessary. By the time the missionaries came, schooling was quite common among girls. Reference has already been made (chapter 6 paragraph 12) to the appeals made by girls for removing the tax on the wearing of jewellery.

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CHAPTER 8

THE GOVERNMENT SUPERIOR SCHOOLS
(1796 - 1832)

Under Governor North

1. Governor North's plans for the reorganisation of education in Ceylon included, apart from the revival of the parish schools established by the Dutch and the provision of instruction in Sinhalese and Tamil in them, the establishment of so-called Superior Schools "for the education of the children of Burghers, and of those natives, whose families are eligible to the office of Mudaliars and to other dignities and charges given by government to the native servants."[1] Apart from providing the local personnel necessary for subordinate positions in the civil establishments of the country, they would also provide the cadres required for the promotion of Christianity. In as much as the purpose of the schools was to provide manpower for the civil and religious establishments, admission to the schools was confined to boys. The Superior schools belonged to two categories. At the lower end of the hierarchy were the Preparatory schools, three in number all established in Colombo, and at the upper end was the Academy (the Seminary, as it was sometimes called), consisting of three separate and parallel institutions, all in Colombo.

2. Of the three Preparatory schools, one was for children of European descent, one for Sinhalese children and the remaining one for Tamil children. The schools were intended to take in boys at the age of eight, and provide a six-year course of study with emphasis on Christianity and English. "The Bible being the chief model of their compositions, furnished them with abundance of excellent expressions. These young men are well acquainted with the principles of Christianity; and sincerely attached to its divine author . ."[2] The national languages, Sinhalese and Tamil, were also taught. Caste was an essential criterion of selection in the case of Sinhalese and Tamil boys, and while the initial admissions were confined to one caste only, later admissions included boys from two or three other castes as well. The schools were "preparatory" in the sense that one of the purposes of the schools was to prepare and identify boys for admission to the Academy. Boys who showed "extraordinary application and abilities" were admitted to the Academy and educated at the expense of the Govern-

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ment. In the case of those who did not gain admission to the Academy, the knowledge of English gained in the Preparatory school enabled them to get employment in the middle and lower-middle ranks of the civil establishments of the country.

3. The Academy, of which Rev. Cordiner was the Head in his capacity as Principal of Schools, consisted of separate and parallel institutions based, in the same way as the Preparatory schools, on the ethnic identity of the students. The primary function of the Academy was to provide the manpower for the middle and upper-middle ranks of the civil establishment. It was also Governor North's intention that exceptionally able students selected from the Academy should be sent to England for their higher education, a mechanism through which he planned to have in a position in Ceylon in due course "respectable individuals connected with England by education and by office; and connected by ties of blood with the principal native families in the country."[3] Hoping that they would become "the most effectual preservers of contentment, tranquillity and morality amongst their countrymen and prove a means of connection between them" and the government, North considered his proposal "highly advisable not in a religious but in a political point of view."[4] The Directors of the East India Company, however, doubted "the propriety" of the plan and it was not implemented during North's regime as governor.[5] The curriculum of the Academy placed strong emphasis on Christianity and English, and included such other subjects as were "common in the English seminaries", but a noteworthy feature was that the curriculum included the advanced study by each ethnic group (Sinhalese, Tamil) of its own native language, and an elementary study by each ethnic group of the language of the other. It is likely that many of the boys also knew Portuguese, as it is reported that explanations were sometimes offered in Portuguese when they could not understand English.[6] Apart from English, the study of Portuguese was compulsory in the school for boys of European descent, while Sinhalese and Tamil appear to have been optional. Dutch was apparently not taught in the Academy, but as petitions written in the Dutch language were translated into English at the Academy (see paragraph 4), it is likely that most of the students of European descent, and some Sinhalese and Tamil students as well, were already proficient in Dutch. Of course, all students received instruction in the Christian religion. The Rev. J. Cordiner made the following comment about them:

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"These young men are well acquainted with the principles of Christianity; and severely attached to its divine author, and there is every reason to hope that when dispersed abroad amongst their countrymen their influence will produce the most happy consequences."[7]

4. The Academy began in October 1799 as a boarding school in which the government met all the expenses of board, lodging, clothing and education, but within a matter of months it opened its doors to a limited number of fee-paying day scholars also. The high level of expenditure on the Academy caused North some concern, and he sought to open up a source of income for the Academy by announcing in November 1801 that he would receive petitions from the public only in English, and that petitions in Sinhalese, Tamil or Dutch could be taken by the petitioners for translation into English by the students in the Academy on payment to the Academy of a fee fixed by the government, an exception being made in the case of petitions addressed to the Committee of Charitable Institutions which would be translated without a fee. The responsibility was placed on the teachers of the schools to ensure that translations were accurate. The Dutch clergyman Rev. D. Schroter, who was in charge of the European school and apparently had responsibility for seeing that petitions in Dutch were translated accurately by his students or by those in the Sinhalese or Tamil school, complained to the Secretary to the Governor of the great expenditure of his time on translating "the greater part."[8] Of course, practice in translation was a useful experience for the students, some of whom later got appointments in the Translation Office. By March 1802, some of the students of the Academy had succeeded in getting appointments as Interpreters to the courts of the judiciary. Thus, from the point of view of providing native manpower for the civil establishments, the Academy lived up to expectations, and in a letter sent by North to Lord Wellesley in England, North expressed the hope that through the Superior Schools that had been established he would soon have a supply of manpower "for all the purposes of the government."[9]

5. As pointed out in chapter 6 paragraph 16, from about 1802 the Secretary of State began to ask for reductions to be made in educational expenditure. One of Governor North's arguments in favour of continuing the expenditure on the Academy was that the economies he had effected in the Translation Office of the government by entrusting translations to the Academy should be set off against the expenses of the

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Academy. The argument proved to be of no avail. however, and acting in accordance with instructions from the Secretary of State, North communicated to Cordiner a revised budget that reduced the expenditure from £1,320 to £85. There was no financial provision for the payment of rent for the building which housed the Academy in the form of a boarding school. This ended the life of the Academy as a boarding school, but its total demise was prevented by North's offer on a rent-free basis of three rooms in a government building elsewhere in the city. The Academy was thereby enabled to function as a day school with staff greatly retrenched. The Sinhalese and Tamil schools were amalgamated into one, and called the Native School at Hulftsdorp. The European school, however, continued as a separate school. The reduced status of the institution and the lack of financial support (the expenditure on the school had come down from £1,803 in 1800 to £85 in 1804) were a great blow to Cordiner and the teachers associated with it. Cordiner left Ceylon in 1804, a greatly disappointed man. Shortly afterwards, on the death of the Headmaster of the European school, it was amalgamated with the Native School, and the combined schools were called the United Schools.

Under Governor Maitland

6. Further economies were effected during the next few years, and by 1808 the United Schools cost the government only £27 a year, comprising the salaries of six teachers. In 1809, however, at the same time as parish school teachers were again placed on the roll of the Government as a result of the campaign of the evangelical movement in England, the teachers in the Academy (the name United Schools was never popular) got an increase in salary which brought up the annual expenditure on the institution to £170.

7. Reference has already been made (chapter 6 paragraph 26) to the Committee appointed in 1809 by Maitland for superintending the schools. The Rev. Twisleton was the chairman of this committee, and in one of his reports on the survey of schools, he made reference to the role which the Academy could play in this connection. "The great desideratum is a body of able native teachers in spiritual matters.. I have great hopes by the assistance of government of training a certain number of the natives at the High Seminary at Colombo, where English is taught, to become themselves the instruments of instructing their countrymen in the knowledge of the Christian Religion."[10] He went on to add: "A certain number of well disposed youths may be easily

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led to the study of that profession if Your Excellency will hold out to them rank and moderate salary."[11] Maitland readily agreed, going even further than Twisleton by proposing to extend the same kind of inducement to those who would qualify as catechists. Twisleton was asked to make, in consultation with the schoolmasters of the Academy, a selection of scholars to be encouraged to qualify as teachers and catechists with an assurance of employment.

8. With the British government disposed to take an interest in educational *cum* evangelical activities, Maitland renewed his predecessor's proposal (see paragraph 3) that a few selected young men should be sent to Britain for higher education at the expense of the government. The Secretary of State agreed, saying that he could conceive much advantage accruing "from the plan you suggest of sending home a certain number of the children of the most powerful natives to be educated and ordained" in Britain.[12] The first two to be selected left for England in 1811. Only one of them lived up to promise, and received his ordination after completing his education at the University of Cambridge. He joined the ecclesiastical department after his return to Ceylon.

Under Governor Brownrigg

9. The practice introduced by Governor North (see paragraph 4) that petitions to the government should be translated at the Academy on the payment of a fee had been abandoned after some time. Brownrigg revived it, issuing a gazette notification that no petitions in Sinhalese and Tamil would be considered unless they were accompanied by a translation in English done at the Academy. This action was taken partly for improving the knowledge of English of the pupils, and partly for increasing funds for the support of the Academy.[13]

10. In 1814, in order to supply the teachers needed for the government parish schools, a dozen youths were admitted from the villages to the Academy and taught English and Theology.[14] The hope that the Academy would supply young men for the service of the church as teachers or proponents was not entirely realized. Many of the alumni preferred "temporal honours and emoluments," and from the point of view of temporal honours it was more attractive to find employment as a court interpreter under the government than as a proponent or a teacher.[15]

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Under Governor Barnes

11. Governor Barnes had this to say in 1829 about the Academy. "This is a very useful establishment which has been the means of disseminating greatly the knowledge of English, writing and arithmetic. The native languages are also taught here. Many if not the greater part of the young men who have been educated here have been employed by government as they were found the fittest for filling vacant situations. Two youths are educating at Bishop's College, Calcutta, but not at the expense of government."[16]

Although reading the Bible and learning the Catechism were major activities in the Academy, Barnes makes no mention of them, probably because he had on occasion expressed his disagreement with the principle of teaching the doctrines of Christianity to non-Christian children saying "all experience shows us that, whenever we attempt to force religious tenets on others, we thwart our own views."[17] He was, however, for the promotion of Christianity, possibly in a non-school setting, for when granting a loan to the Bible Society and recommending to the Secretary of State that the amount of the loan or even a larger sum be given as a grant, he expressed that view that the translation of the Scriptures into Sinhalese was "an object highly worthy of the patronage of government."[18]

12. In 1833, the Academy ceased to provide any instruction at all in Sinhalese or Tamil and became an English school, known as the Hulftsdorp school. The total concentration on English was in keeping with the recommendations of the Colebrooke Commission (see chapter 12 paragraph 7).

The Orphan Houses

13. The Dutch had established in Colombo and in three other towns Orphan Houses in which the sons and daughters of the poorer Burghers and the illegitimate children born of unions between Dutch men and local women could be educated. Governor North saw to it that the government took on the expenditure on the Orphan Houses, and provided an education that included vocational training so that the country could have "a supply of useful artisans distributed throughout the Settlements, instead of a set of profligate, uneducated vagrants."[19] The Orphan Houses were also provided with money to hire teachers of English. Attempts were made to make the Orphan Houses self-supporting by bringing to the notice of the public through advertisements

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in the newspapers that the Orphan Houses would undertake sewing, knitting, etc., for payment. When calls for economy in educational expenditure came from England (chapter 6 paragraph 16), North introduced a rule that fees should be paid by European inhabitants who wished to send their illegitimate children to the Orphan Houses. At the same time, he informed the Secretary of State that the male Orphan Houses had not produced such immediate benefit as the female Orphan House, but that boys trained in them were serving usefully as apprentices. Later, however, as the need for greater economies arose, North greatly reduced financial support to all the Orphan Houses. They managed to survive for a few uneventful years and then faded out.

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CHAPTER 9

EDUCATIONAL FINANCE (1796 - 1832)

1. With the payment of a monthly salary to the teachers of the government parish schools and the establishment of the superior schools in 1799, the expenses of the ecclesiastical and school establishments in Ceylon are shown to have been approximately £5,000. About one fourth of this money (£1,320) was spent on the Academy and the remainder on the salaries of the Principal of schools, the teachers in the government parish schools, the salaries and the other expenses of the orphan schools, and on preachers and catechists.[1] Expenditure of this magnitude was borne only for a few years. Governor North was informed by letter from the Secretary of State dated 8 February 1803 that not more than £1,500 should be spent, and that the expenses of the Academy should be reduced to £85.[2] Support to the Academy was adequate only to meet the salaries of a reduced staff, and not even the rent of the buildings occupied by the Academy. By the end of 1804, the salaries of the government parish school teachers were almost wholly withdrawn. In other words, the expenses of the school establishment were reduced to a little over £85. It is not clear how much the ecclesiastical establishment cost, but it is clear that the school and ecclesiastical establishments together would not have cost as much as £1,500, the permitted amount. The indications are that the economies effected were more radical than the Secretary of State expected. By 1808, further economies at the Academy brought down its annual expenditure to £27.[3] After the decision in 1808 to revive the parish schools, and once again pay salaries, the expenditure on the parish schools amounted to about £130, while the expenditure on the Academy was about £95. In other words, the so-called revival was on a very modest scale as is seen by the fact that the total expenditure on the parish schools and the Academy was £225.[4]

2. Throughout the period with which we are concerned, the country operated on a budgetary deficit, made up by loans from England and India, but this deficit was caused by the size of the military establishment that was set up in Ceylon to meet Britain's security needs in the East. In 1803, the estimated revenue of the country was £216,000. The military expenditure was £226,720. The expenditure on the civil establishment, which included also the ecclesiastical and the school establishments, was only £70,468. The deficit was created by

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the magnitude of the military expenditure, of dimensions "capable of supplying the exigencies of continental warfare" in the interests of British trading and colonial enterprises, but the call for economy was in the school establishment.

3. Over the years, the same pattern persisted. The expenditure on a military establishment, intended to serve imperial needs and interests, was a charge against the revenue of Ceylon, with loans from Britain and India to make up deficits, while the existence of deficits made educational expansion impossible. A part of the loans had eventually to be written off, for it was impossible for the country to pay up everything. The extent of the military force kept in Ceylon was decided not by local necessity but by imperial strategic reasons. It is on record that Governors Maitland, Barnes and Horton pointed out from time to time that the island should not be charged with the entire expense of a military force not designed for its needs, but their views did not prevail. The following comment in a book by Major Forbes, who spent eleven years in Ceylon, is also of interest in this connection: "The wretched parismony of the British government, in reducing the funds necessary and previously given for education, at the same time that so many situations for Europeans were invented and such lavish expenditure in salaries was sanctioned, apparently admits of no justification."[5]

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CHAPTER 10

THE STATE, RELIGION AND EDUCATION
(1796 - 1832)

1. The rule by the Dutch of the maritime areas of Ceylon from 1658 to 1796 was characterized by a determined oppression of the religions—Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam and Roman Catholicism—professed by the people.

2. The capture of the Dutch possessions in Ceylon by the British was followed by a period of three years, 1796—1798, during which the maritime areas in the hands of the British were under rule by military governors. With the appointment in 1798 of Frederick North as the first civilian governor, measures were taken by the British to remove the oppressive measures taken by the Dutch in regard to religion. While all the oppressed religious groups (Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims and Roman Catholics) benefited by these measures, the greatest beneficiaries were undoubtedly the Roman Catholics. To woo them more than the major religious group, the Buddhists, was of undoubted political importance, for while they would be full of gratitude to the British for being spared the kind of oppression they experienced under the Dutch, they would at the same time be unattached by any religious tie to the Buddhist king who reigned over all but the maritime areas and constituted a potential threat to British rule.

3. Reference has been made (chapter 6 paragraph 7) to Governor North's release in 1799 of Dutch clergymen to preach and teach, and the fact that while doing so North took care to protect the Roman Catholics by forbidding these clergymen from compelling children, belonging to forms of Christianity other than the Dutch, to attend church services.

4. An event of great significance was the issue by Governor North of a proclamation dated 23 September 1799. One clause permitted religious freedom and read as follows: "And we do hereby permit liberty of Conscience and the free exercise of religious worship to all persons who inhabit. . . ."[1] The effect of this clause was to enable the non-Protestant population to practise their religions openly, and not in clandestine fashion as had been the case under the Dutch. As a result of the religious liberty granted by this proclamation, there was

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a great revival of religious activity on the part of those who had been oppressed by the Dutch. The clause was welcomed most of all by the Roman Catholics. When, in what was essentially an assessment of the state of Protestantism in Ceylon, the Rev. Claudius Buchanan pointed out some years later.

> "That the old Protestant Churches of which there were formerly thirty two in one province alone, have mostly fallen into ruins; and that those which stand, are occupied, at pleasure, by Romish priests from Goa, who are assuming undisputed possession of the island; and that, from want of Protestant instruction, the secession to the Romish communion, and to the idolatry of the Idol Buddha is, as might be expected, very great every successive year,"

he was really summarizing the combined effects of the neglet of Protestant education after 1803 for reasons of economy (chapter 6 paragraph 16) and the principle of religious toleration proclaimed in 1799.[2]

5. According to another clause in the proclamation no school was permitted without a licence from the government, in granting which the most particular attention was to be paid "to the morals and proper qualifications of the persons applying for the same."[3] As has been noted earlier, (chapter 6 paragraph 7) there is a little doubt that no applicant not professing the Christian religion would have been regarded as satisfying the condition relating to "morals", for essentially morals meant Christian morals. The clause was a boon to the Roman Catholics. By 1828 the number of schools run by the Roman Catholics was 63.[4] The status they enjoyed was that of private schools. It may be noted that the proclamation was in effect until 1835, when it was repealed by Ordinance No. 5 of 1835.

6. The proclamation of 1799 did not go sufficiently far to set the minds of the Roman Catholics completely at ease. They succeeded in persuading the British Government, largely through the good offices of Alexander Johnston, the Chief Justice, to promulgate in 1806 a regulation abolishing the disabilities suffered by the Roman Catholics. This regulation, entitled "Regulation Abolishing Roman Catholic Disabilities", read as follows:

> "A Regulation for taking off the restraints which were imposed upon the Roman Catholics of this island by the late Dutch Government, passed by the Governor in Council on the 27th of May, 1806.

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It being His Majesty's most gracious intention that all persons who inhabit the British settlements on this island shall be permitted liberty of conscience and the free exercise of religious worship, provided they can be contented with a quiet and peaceable enjoyment of the same, without giving offence to Government; and it appearing that the Roman Catholics, who are a numerous and peaceable body of His Majesty's subjects, are, by several laws passed under the late Dutch Government, rigorously excluded from many important privileges and capacities and that, although these laws have not been acted upon in all cases by His Majesty's Government, yet that they are still unrepealed, and a cause of anxiety to those who profess the Catholic religion—

The Governor in Council enacts as follows:—

First:—The Roman Catholics shall be allowed the unmolested profession and exercise of their religion in every part of the British settlements in the island of Ceylon.

Second:—They shall be admitted to all civil privileges and capacities.

Third:—All marriages between Roman Catholics which have taken place within the said settlements since the 26th August, 1795, according to the rites of the Roman Catholic Church, shall be deemed valid in law, although the forms appointed by the late Dutch Government have not been observed.

Fourth:—This regulation shall take effect on the 4th day of June next, that being His Majesty's birthday.

Fifth:—Every part of any law, proclamation, or order, which contradicts this regulation, is hereby repealed."[5]

7. A comment by Buchanan is of interest in this connection: "..the English Government justly preferring the Romish superstition to the worship of the idol Boodha, thinks right to countenance the Catholic religion in Ceylon."[6] Buchanan was not slow to perceive that the Roman Catholic church was well on the way to gaining a march over the Protestant churches; and in course of time events made it clear that the magnanimity of the British towards Roman Catholics resulted in the achievement of a position of dominance by the Roman Catholics with the Protestant denominations trailing far behind. Of

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course, it was politically important to win over the Roman Catholics, and Governor Maitland was able to say "..the Roman Catholics by removing their disqualifications instead of being hostile are now become the strongest supporters of Government."[7]

8. To the credit of the British it must be said that the grant of religious freedom by them after a century and half of oppression by the Dutch made it possible for the Roman Catholics to build churches, and for the indigenous religious groups in the maritime areas to give expression to their religious needs by building temples. "In the time of the Dutch government the different places of worship dedicated to Buddha and inferior deities of Sinhalese superstition were between 3 and 400. In the year 1807 they amounted to 1200."[8]

9. In 1815, the British, who up till then controlled only the maritime areas while the entire interior which indeed constituted the greater part of the island was ruled by the King of Kandy, marched against the-King of Kandy having been instigated to do so by a number of Kandyan chieftains, some of whom had already defected to the British while others were in a state of readiness to do so.

> "It was a conspiracy hatched by the aristocracy against a ruler whose government was a threat to their interests as a social group; but the conspiracy achieved its purpose only because the British saw in it an opportunity to further their own interests..On March 2, 1815 the Kandyan Kingdom was formally ceded to the British by its leaders, secular and religious."[9]

A convention was signed on that day by Governor Brownrigg on behalf of the British Government, and by certain chiefs on behalf of the people of the Kandyan Kingdom. One clause in the convention was to the effect that "the religion of Buddhoo professed by the chiefs and inhabitants of these provinces is declared inviolable; and its rites, ministers and places of worship are to be maintained and protected".[10] In sending a copy ot the Convention to the Colonial Office, Brownrigg confessed that the language of the clause was more emphatical than it would have been if he had his choice, and that he had been compelled by the needs of the situation to agree to an article of guarantee couched in the most unqualified terms. Later, replying to criticism by William Wilberforce against this clause in the Convention, Brownrigg explained that "the term inviolable was certainly wrong", though nothing more was meant by it than "a complete security from any kind of violence

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to the Buddha worship, and a full protection to their religious property." He went on to assure Wilberforce of his own record of achievement as Governor of Ceylon: "I have been here now more than four years, and I may venture to assert without fear of contradiction that the chief objects of my government have been the religious and moral improvement of the people, and the propagation of the Gospel," and of his long-term intentions to convert the Kandyan peoples to Christianity through the use of education: "I look forward with anxious hope to the time when after a mutual confidence has been commenced between the British government and our Kandyan subjects a better system of education and an effectual introduction of the Gospel will produce the downfall of the Buddhist superstition."[12] So, on the one hand, Buddhism is declared "inviolable" and, on the other hand, its "downfall" is devoutly to be pursued.

10. In 1818, after the unsuccessful rebellion in Kandy and the assertion of the supremacy of British arms, Brownrigg made use of the opportunity to issue a Proclamation on 21 November 1818 toning down the letter and spirit of the clause relating to Buddhism in the Convention and extending protection to other religions also:

> "As well as the priests as all the Ceremonies and Processions of Buddho Religion shall receive the respect which in former times was shown to them: at the same time it is no wise to be understood that the protection of the government is to be denied to the peaceable exercise by all other persons of the Religions which they respectively profess or the erection under due licence from His Excellency of places of worship in proper situation."[13]

This removed all possibility of construing the assurance in the Convention of inviolability to Buddhism in such a way that the incursion of any other religion into the Kandyan provinces could be regarded as a violation of the Convention.

11. The Secretary of State had expressed concern about this in 1815,

> "If the term inviolable. . . ., as I do not conceive it, can have been understood as precluding the efforts which we are making to disseminate Christianity in Ceylon, it could be very much at variance with the principle upon which His Majesty's Government have uniformly acted."[14]

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After the Proclamation of 1818 the Colonial office could rest in peace on this count. In effect, the practice of other religions was given as much legal status as the practice of Buddhism in the Kandyan provinces. Protestant missions were eager to make use of the new opportunity but until towards the end of 1820 Brownrigg held them in check, not wanting to give any provocation until conditions were sufficiently stabilized in the Kandyan provinces.

12. Specific legislative measures were only one aspect, albeit an important one, of the relationship between religion and the state. Administrative steps were equally important, and in some respects their influence was even more pervasive.

13. The Dutch had made public announcements that only Protestants were eligible for appointments under the government and that all others were excluded. Although Governor North made the following statement about the Dutch policies in this regard, "The most sacrilegious hypocrisy was encouraged by the exclusive appropriation of offices to nominal Christians", his policy, too, was to appoint Christians only.[15] When his successor, Governor Maitland, was asked by the Secretary of State whether he had introduced regulations "dispensing with such a qualification", Maitland denied having taken such a measure, stating "I have correctly throughout followed the line my predecessor did in appointing to office persons uniformly believed to be of the Christian Religion," the only change from his predecessor's practice being that after the Regulation of 1806 abolishing Roman Catholic disabilities, Roman Catholics were treated on a par with Protestants.[16] There was general understanding that the old Dutch regulation was "in effect" with this difference.[17] Maitland, however, stressed the fact that neither his predecessor nor he ever forced persons so appointed "to make any Test of their Faith or Religious Persuasion previous to their appointment."[18] The Secretary of State was for the rejection of "the notion of excluding from employment and confidence all persons not professing the Christian faith," and Maitland while concurring with the general principle upon which the Secretary of State did not wish the power of the state to be employed for the purpose of forcing the natives to adopt any religion assured the Secretary of State that "every man nominated to an office is distinctly understood to be a Christian."[19] When this tangled web of statements of policy and practice in regard to appointments is straightened out to the extent that it is possible to do so, a few strands stand out. The British had made no policy statement that appointees to public office

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should be Christians or that non-Christians are excluded. As no declaration was made, there was no announced statement about excluding non-Christians from employment, or of forcing the people to adopt the Christian religion. Moreover, appointees were not subjected to tests of their religious persuasions. The people, however, believed that the old Dutch rule was in effect. They were allowed to remain in that belief, with the exception that Roman Catholics were no longer excluded. Because of this belief, aspirants to office professed or claimed to profess Christianity. In fact, as "every man nominated to an office is distinctly understood to be a Christian" the perception of this fact naturally fortified the belief of the people that the Dutch requirements regarding religion were in effect, subject to the exception noted above. In the pragmatic manner so characteristic of the British, there was thus a perpetuation of religious discrimination under a facade that was non-discriminatory by virtue of the absence of a public declaration of policy. In course of time, with Christianity becoming firmly entrenched as a requirement for the pursuit of education with any chance of success, a state of affairs developed in which discrimination at the point of recruitment to public office became unnecessary as nearly all the aspirants to office had accepted Christianization as the price of access to an education that was the pre-condition of eligibility for office.

14. Another mechanism of indirect coercion to embrace Christianity was in operation in connection with the inheritance of property. To quote from a letter dated 8 January 1810 from the Rev. T. J. Twisleton (Chaplain to Government and Principal of Schools—later Archdeacon) to Governor Maitland: "According to the Dutch law as it existed and *still exists here*, no Sinhalese whatsoever can claim inheritance in a court of Justice with success, unless the parents had been married according to the Christian mode. If the parents were married according to what is called the Sinhalese, he is in the eye of the law a bastard. It is natural therefore for the Sinhalese who have or are likely to have any property so far as to embrace Christianity, as to attend to those ordinances which ensure secular advantages."[20] The establishment of missionary schools was welcome for the facility they provided in this respect. A Wesleyan missionary had this comment to make about one of the schools of the mission. "The establishment of the school ensured baptism and marriage; and these ordinances were universally sought after, on account of their value in the thombo registry."[21]

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15. Governmental funds were used in several ways for the propagation of Christianity. Several churches were built or repaired at government expense by North, Maitland and Brownrigg.[22] North met the expenses of visits by Dutch clergy.[23] He also supported the deacons of Colombo with money from the Treasury.[24] Allowances to missionaries of the London Missionary Society were also paid out of government funds by North.[25] At least eight clergymen of the Church of England were in the pay of the government during the time of Barnes.[26] It is recorded that the first and second interpreters of the Supreme Court, both government employees, took turns in accompanying the Wesleyan Missionary, the Rev. Harvard, in his evangelical excursions to villages.[27] The expenditure on the ecclesiastical establishment was all along much greater than the expenditure on the school establishment. For example, in the year 1831, the governmental expenditure on the Ecclesiastical Department, comprising payments to the Archdeacon and his staff, the Chaplains and supporting staff of churches in Colombo and Jaffna, the assistant chaplains in Trincomalee and Kandy, and the clergymen and supporting staff for the Dutch congregations at Colombo and Galle amounted to a total of £5,923, while the expenditure on government schools, over 90 in number, was only £1,957.[28] In other words, the ecclesiastical establishment cost three times as much as the school establishment. Considering that the focus in the schools was also on Christianization (see next paragraph), the total expenditure on both the ecclesiastical and the school establishments was tantamount to a state investment for the promotion of Christianity.

16. Reading the scriptures, and a little writing and arithmetic constituted the curriculum of most of the government schools. Where history was added as a subject, it meant no more than reading and repeating abridgements of the histories of the Old and New Testaments. The examination of pupils was conducted by clergymen or their assistants, and the following are typical of the reports of the examinations: "All the scholars present repeated the Catechism and prayers with great facility and correctness"; "The children repeated their Catechism and prayers extremely well. Ten boys can read and write and the girls now begin to learn"; "All the scholars present were examined in the Catechism, repeated the Lord's prayer and the ten commandments and acquitted themselves exceedingly well, fifteen boys can read and write."[29] The government parish schools, and even more so the mission schools, were no more than nurseries of Christianity, and

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Governor Brownrigg put this fact succinctly when he made the following statement: "The first and last object of human learning is the knowledge of salvation, attainable through the Holy Scriptures."[30] Divine Service was held on Sundays in government schools, and the view was expressed that "the knowledge that the services were held with the sanction of government" caused large numbers to be present.[31] The few schools which taught English besides Christianity had a special appeal for the people. Brownrigg summed up the attractions of the schools in the following words.

> "..and it is remarkable that however the Buddhists or Hindus may themselves revolt from the pious attempts of missionary conversion, so desirous are they of improving their young families, that they gladly send them to the Wesleyan schools, and freely permit them to learn the first rudiments of Christianity. The prevailing wish also to have their sons acquire the English language as a means of advancement stimulates this general disposition with the powerful excitement of personal interest. This favourable state of opinion upon the subject of education, gives among all castes of natives a fair opening of which the Wesleyan Mission has taken full advantage; and from their numerous schools it is but reasonable to expect the most beneficial results."[32]

Specific reference to the Wesleyan schools was made in this passage as Brownrigg was replying to a communication received from the Wesleyan mission. *Mutatis mutandis*, the statement was applicable in respect of all schools, whether they were run by the government or by missionary bodies. It was the desire of the people "that their children should learn the language of the government", and wherever this wish was met it was accompanied by the desire of the government and of the missionaries for bringing the light of Christianity to the people.[33]

17. State assistance was provided for the production and dissemination of Christian literature in Sinhalese and Tamil. The catechism and several religious tracts were printed at the expense of government and circulated in various districts by North.[34] Brownrigg became the patron of the Bible Society when it was established.[35] He saw to it that until the Society acquired its own printing press, the printing of the Society's literature was carried out by the government printing press.[36] Barnes supported the Bible Society through a loan, at the same time recommending to the Secretary of State that the

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amount of the loan or even a larger sum should be given as a grant, as the translation of the Scriptures into Sinhalese was "an object highly worthy of the patronage of government."[37] Some of the religious tracts were not confined to expounding Christianity. For example, a tract entitled "Touchstone" contained "forty seven questions designed to point out the absurdities of the Buddhist religion."[38] It was indeed a militant Christianity that, with governmental support which included secular rewards, sought the conquest of the "heathen" mind. "Throughout the district Christianity stands boldly out, wherever the mission's operations are carried out, as uncompromisingly militant," was how one missionary described his mission's activities.[39]

18. The conversion into Christianity and the baptism in 1814 of the chief priest of a Buddhist temple was an event of such great importance that an account was published on Governor Brownrigg's orders in the *Ceylon Goverement Gazette* with an introduction by the Governor.[40]

19. All in all, the Christianization of the people was part of the policy of the government, and it was one of the important objectives towards which the entire machinery of the government was directed. It was also one of the ends served by the enterprise of education, as much in the government schools as in the mission schools.

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CHAPTER 11

REVIEW OF EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS (1796 - 1832)

1. The Dutch had a network of parish schools in the maritime areas controlled by them, with teachers paid by the Dutch government. When the Dutch possessions fell into British hands in 1796, the payments to teachers ceased. Most of the schools closed down, but a few continued to function in locations where parents were willing to support the teachers or where the teachers were willing to serve without remuneration. The teachers who lost their employment and salaries became a strong pressure group urging the British to continue the schools. Their early appeals, addressed to the military governors administering the newly acquired territory on behalf of the British East India Company, did not meet with a positive response.

2. With the establishment in 1798 of a system of dual control over the territory jointly by the East India Company and the British government, and the appointment of Frederick North as the Governor, the appeals of teachers and parents for the re-establishment of parish schools received favourable consideration. North was sensitive to the importance of satisfying these appeals, and began re-opening the schools. The medium of instruction in the parish schools was the vernacular. This was not the result of a conscious decision, but the continuation of a practice that characterized the parish schools during the period of Dutch rule. Governor North also established a 'superior' school (really, three schools in one) for the sons of influential parents with a view to teaching them English and enabling them to qualify as translators and interpreters. He also planned to send a few young men to England for their education, expecting them to return as loyalists "attached to their country by birth and relations, and to England by their education."[1] This plan was, however, not approved by the Court of Directors. North's support of education was short-lived. After his expensive but unsuccessful military adventure against the King of Kandy and the consequent financial deficit, he was ordered in 1802 to curtail educational expenditure severely. The school system became very nearly defunct.

3. Governor Maitland who succeeded North as Governor in 1805 was content to let education continue in the neglected state in

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which it was until the pressures of the British evangelical movement, which was alarmed by reports regarding the extent of the Roman Catholic resurgence and the losses of its own flock by the Protestants in Ceylon, moved him to action. Steps were taken to re-establish some of the schools and also to send a couple of youngsters to England for university education. The government school system made limited progress during the regimes of Governor Brownrigg (1815-1820) and Governor Barnes (1820—1832).

4. Education in the government parish schools was in the vernacular, but English was used extensively in the 'superior' schools to enable the sons of influential parents to qualify for appointments in middle and lower positions, including those of translators and interpreters, in the civil establishment. In other words, there came into being a class-based education system in which a superior education in English was available to a small privileged minority, and an inferior vernacular education was available to a fair, but by no means large, number of those who were not privileged. Social class distinction in the provision of education was, of course, a predominant feature of education in contemporary England, and there was nothing unusual in the transfer of the pattern to a colony. Curiously enough, while social class distinctions based on status and wealth were taken as natural and inevitable, distinctions based on caste caused uneasiness to the British administrators. There was an ambivalence in their attitude towards them. There was accommodation upto a point, and an avoidance of any confrontation on this issue. On a more subtle plane, however, the British did much to undermine the institution of caste. Though the predominant motivation for this came from a perceived need to take power away from traditionally privileged groups lest that power if perpetuated should prove to be a potential threat against the British themselves, a part of the motivation came from the fact that while the existence of rich and poor stations in life was understood as God given, divisions arising from the institution of caste, not being God given and not understood, were therefore considered repugnant and to be done away with.

5. It should be noted that the government school system (parish and superior) was in reality a system of Protestant schools with pride of place given to the teaching of Protestant Christianity. Governor Maitland to a small extent, and Governor Barnes to a very large extent expressed reservations about the religious motive behind education, the latter in particular deploring that education had got "too

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much into the hands of the clergy. and was more "an instrument for the conversion of the people to Christianity than of general improvement in civilization".[2] Governor Brownrigg was an evangelist by persuasion and bestowed every privilege on the missionary societies which sent missions to Ceylon. Under his benevolent patronage, and that of Alexander Johnston (the Chief Justice), the Baptist, the Wesleyan, the Church and the American missions established themselves firmly in the field of education. The American Mission, however, had a lean time during the time of Governor Barnes as it was considered an alien mission. The Christianization of the population was the avowed aim of the mission schools, as indeed it was the aim of the government parish schools which were all under Anglican management. The aim was pursued with single mindedness, and if the means used were sometimes of a dubious nature, they have to be condoned because of the sincerity of the ends that the means were expected to serve. Under the British, gentle coercion and blandishment took the place of the oppression under their immediate predecessors, the Dutch. Liberty of conscience and freedom of worship, priceless gifts in their own right, were allowed by the British. The Roman Catholics profited most of all and then the Buddhists. The Rev. C. Buchanan, after visiting Ceylon about the year 1808, lamented that an entire district "was in the hands of the Romish priests."[3] It was estimated by the Rev. Spence Hardy who came out to Ceylon in 1825 that in the first ten years of British rule the number of Buddhist temples increased from between two and three hundred to twelve hundred.[4]

6. Educational expenditure was not a priority in Britain or elsewhere at the time of history with which we are concerned, and it was not different in Ceylon. The British were forced into the government parish school system by the Dutch heritage and local pressures, until the state of the finances more or less destroyed it. Later, it was partly revived under evangelist pressure. The interest in superior education, which also meant education through English, came from the manpower needs of the British in Ceylon, and was also strengthened by the civilizing role ascribed to English education. It is also to be noted that superior education "played an important part not only in supplying qualified men to the different departments, but in winning for the administration the active goodwill of the upper classes."[5] The interest in Christianization came from evangelical pressures, expectations of greater loyalty to colonial rulers from those of the indigenous population who embraced Christianity than from those who remained attached

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to their traditional religions, and from the humanizing influence that Christianity was thought to have. The missionaries were first entrusted with the supervision of government schools, but later encouraged to establish schools for nearly all these reasons. As it turned out, because of the simultaneous operation of these factors, the British government played a more active role in education in Ceylon than it did in Britain itself during the period under review. Nevertheless, ecclesiastical expenditure in support of the Established Church and military expenditure to assist British power reign supreme in the East in general as well as in Ceylon in particular were greater priorities on the finances of the government of Ceylon than the education of the children of Ceylon.

7. The return of schools for 1831 gave the following statistics[6]:

Management	*Number of Schools*
Government	99
Church Mission	56
Wesleyan Mission	86
American Mission	100
Baptist Mission	16
Private	649

Among the schools designated private, 63 schools were under Roman Catholic management. Indigenous religious schools were not recognized as schools and were not included in the return. The private schools were by and large quite small schools run by entrepreneurs. They taught English and levied fees.

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CHAPTER 12

THE COLEBROOKE RECOMMENDATIONS, 1832

1. In 1822, Robert Wilmot, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, proposed in the British Parliament that a Commission of Inquiry should be appointed to report on three British Colonies, namely the Cape of Good Hope, Mauritius and Ceylon.[1] While saying that such a Commission might be less necessary in Ceylon than in the other two colonies (Governor Barnes in fact thought that it was quite unnecessary to have a Commission to report on Ceylon), Wilmot, sensitive to the concern expressed by the British Treasury over the recurrent financial deficits, declared that the British government had no hesitation in extending the Commission's inquiry into Ceylon as well "in order to satisfy the public regarding the manner in which its resources were managed."[2] The Commision commenced work in the Cape and Mauritius, and by the year 1829 when the Commission turned its attention to Ceylon, only one of the three original Commissioners, namely W. M. G. Colebrooke, was able to visit the country, followed nearly a year later by another Commissioner, C. H. Cameron. Colebrooke concentrated on administration and revenue, while Cameron directed his attention to the judiciary. Some of the terms of reference of the Commission were common to all three colonies. One clause among them related specially to religion and education.

> "You will not fail to direct your attention to the state of religion, to the support afforded to the Church of England—and to other religious institutions; and as concerned with this subject to all public Establishments for Education, (for Charitable purposes in particular) and you will report whether and in what manner the national system of Instruction may be advantageously introduced."[3]

It is also relevant to note that among the issues to which the inquiry in Ceylon was to be directed, specific mention was made of the "effects of the present system of the Civil Service with regard to Pensions and Superannuation, and future alterations and regulations to be adopted upon this point."[4]

2. A national system of instruction was understood essentially to mean a system of instruction that met the administrative, financial and political needs of the country. Colebrooke was quick to perceive that from the point of view of the administration and the finances of

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the country, the large number of British nationals in the civil service drawing high salaries was a main cause of the high expenditure on the civil establishment. Colebrooke recommended that certain ranks of the civil service should be thrown open to local persons. The financial advantage was obvious and lay in the fact that the salary payable to a local recruit was only a fraction of what was payable to a person recruited from England. There was another advantage, too, for in Colebrooke's view such employees would "constitute a more permanent bond by connexion with Great Britain than any which has hitherto subsisted." While Colebrooke saw the advantages of Ceylonization in relation to the civil service, his colleague Cameron saw and emphasized the economic and political advantages in relation to the judiciary. By appointing a suitable native as a judge, four-fifths of the salary of an English judge would be saved.

> "But independently of the economic questions, it is of the utmost importance with a view to the political stability of our dominion in the East and the improvement of our native subjects in general that the higher classes among them should be rendered morally and intellectually competent to fill offices of trust."[5]

Such action would also mean that

> "The honourable ambition of the upper classes of natives will be safely gratified, and the great mass of the people will be bound by ties of affection to a Government which ceases to withhold offices of power and emolument from its Native subjects, as soon as they become qualified to fill them with advantage to the native community."[6]

3. The reference to "higher classes" and "upper classes" did not mean that a hereditary basis of selection was to be followed. It meant a great deal more broadening of the ranks of the eligible than had existed before with the possible exclusion of the very lowest in caste or rank. The abolition of the hereditary principle was important especially in the Kandyan areas, for the hereditary nobility wielded a power that could be politically dangerous, and the emergence of other elite groups as a foil to them was an objective that commended itself for political sagacity, not to speak of the overtones of egalitarianism and liberalism that could be superimposed upon it. The policy in its essential nakedness had been admirably conceived and implemented by early Governors going back to Governor Maitland. "..The tradition of making appoint-

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ments from specific caste groups and from particular families was consciously ignored at times in the hope of exciting jealousies and thereby weakening the position of the office."[7] The new elements that Colebrooke added were to clothe it in a sanctimonious garb, and to mention education specifically as one criterion for selection.

4. These very pragmatic considerations led to the enunciation of some quite unexceptionable principles. "The exclusive principle of the civil service" was to be relaxed; the public service was to "be freely open to all classes of persons according to their qualifications", and it was necessary to make provision for the means of education "to the natives whereby they may in time qualify themselves for holding some of the higher appointments."[8] In other words, education was to be the mechanism for the creation of a local elite which would firstly enable the business of government to be carried out at a lower cost than would have been possible with a civil service manned exclusively by recruits from England, secondly be bound by feelings of loyalty and gratitude to the British for the favour and recognition bestowed upon them, and thirdly bring about a slow erosion of the power and influence of groups that had hereditarily enjoyed them. Colebrooke went on specifically to consider what support from the government would be required for aiding "the disposition already evinced by the natives to cultivate European attainments."[9] The prospect that a sufficient number of Ceylonese should go to England for education either at their own expense or at the expense of the State was ruled out as being too costly. Colebrooke was impressed by the proficiency of several of the young men who had been educated in the seminaries "formed in Ceylon by the Christian societies" and thought they testified to "the superior advantages to be derived from local instruction, the expenses of which are inconsiderable."[10] Colebrooke recommended establishing a college at Colombo and went so far as to suggest a site for the purpose. He pointed out that such an institution "is much desired by the principal native inhabitants throughout the island."[11] A "competent knowledge of the English language acquired in any of the elementary schools" should be the qualification for admission.[12] Future appointments to government jobs should depend upon their having availed themselves "of these opportunities of instruction", hopefully ridding themselves of "the prejudices of the people", possibly a euphemism for giving up the ancestral religions and embracing Christianity.[13] Colebrooke thought that the students in the College would be willing to pay a small fee when "the prospect

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of preferment for employment was held out.[14] In regard to the staff of the college, the only suggestion he made was that an English professorship should be maintained by the government. This, of course, was a measure entailing a certain amount of expenditure on the part of the government, but Colebrooke no doubt estimated that the returns from it would be worthwhile. It was also his opinion that the college would encourage the growth of elementary education, when the perception developed among the people that after completion of elementary education, a college education could provide youth with "a means of qualifying themselves for different branches of the public service."[15]

5. Colebrooke's opinion of the government parish schools was that they were "extremely defective and inefficient."[16] The schoolmasters were "often extremely unfit for their situations."[17] The schoolmasters had not been required to have a knowledge of English, and nothing was taught in the schools except reading and writing in the native languages. The supervision exercised over the schools was "insufficient to secure the attendance either of the masters or of the scholars", government schools in several instances existing "only in name", the children, many of whom were receiving instruction in missionary schools, "being assembled occasionally for inspection."[18]

6. In order to reform the government school system, Colebrooke recommended that the government schools should be placed "under the immediate direction of a commission composed of the Archdeacon and clergy of the island, the agents of government in the districts, and some of the principal civil and judicial functionaries at the seat of government."[19] The basic principle of a Commission was undoubtedly derived from the organizational set up of education under the Scholarchal Commission during Dutch rule in Ceylon (see chapter 3 paragraph 3). The transfer of the control of education exclusively from the Anglican church (in the person of the Archdeacon), subject to such influence as the Governor chose to exercise, to a multi-member Commission set in action, as will be seen when the history of education during the remainder of the nineteenth century is considered, a slow erosion of the foundations of Anglican clerical control over education, notwithstanding the fact that the Anglican church was firmly entrenched in the Commission when it was set up.

7. Schoolmasters were to be appointed on the recommendation of the Commission and "should in all instances be required to possess

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a competent knowledge of English to enable them to give instruction in that language."[20] In regard to the supply of teachers, Colebrooke had the following recommendation to make:

> "If the national system of instruction should be introduced into the government seminary at Colombo, it would hereafter afford the means of providing competent teachers for the country schools; and in the meantime some respectable teachers might be selected from the retired clerks in the public offices which may be reduced, or from other descendants of Europeans who are candidates for employment."[21]

It is clear that what Colebrooke meant by "national system of instruction" was that the medium of instruction should be English. In fact, therefore, his idea was that all instruction at the seminary should be in English, that instruction in Sinhalese or Tamil should be given up, and that when students receiving instruction in Sinhalese or Tamil transferred to English there would be an adequate supply of teachers in course of time. In view of "the prevailing desire among the natives to study the English language", and the prospects of employment held out by the policy of Ceylonization recommended by him, Colebrooke thought that the concurrence of chiefs and priests could be obtained for the appropriation "of a part of the temple revenue to the maintenance of an English seminary", this arrangement being considered advantageous not only for its potential for finding money for English education, but also as an attractive alternative with which to reconcile the chiefs and the priests to an acceptance of a change in the method of disposal of the revenue from temple lands.[22]

8. Colebrooke commended the American mission for having appreciated "the importance of rendering the English language the general medium of instruction."[23] He thought that the "English missionaries have not very generally appreciated the importance of diffusing a knowledge of the English language through the medium of these schools", but entertained no doubt that they would "cooperate in the object."[24] The distinction between the American and the English missionaries seems to have lain in the fact that the American missionaries taught English in a relatively large number of schools. The English missionaries did not entirely neglect English, but it was only in a few schools that English was taught. This interpretation is substantiated by the fact that Colebrooke went on to say that "it would

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be unnecessary to retain the government schools in situations where English instruction may already be afforded" through the schools of the English missionary societies.[25] • Colebrooke had a special interest in the Colombo Seminary, as an intermediate institution between the schools and the College he wanted to see established. Colebrooke's interest in the Seminary as a possible source for the supply of teachers, and his idea of financing it out of the revenue of the temple lands have already been referred to, It may also be noted that he wanted "due encouragement" to be given to the Seminaries founded by the missionary societies.[26]

9. Considering that education had to be in English in order to subserve the purposes Colebrooke had in mind for education, the strictures he passed on the Buddhist temple schools which used Sinhalese as the medium of instruction cause no surprise.

> "The education afforded by the native priests in their temples and colleges scarcely merits any notice. In the interior the Buddhist priests have evinced some jealousy of the Christian missionaries but the people in general are desirous of instruction, in whatever way afforded to them, and are especially anxious to acquire the English language."[27]

Colebrooke would not have passed this judgement if it had ever occurred to him that education could be imparted in a language other than English, for the Archdeacon had stated in reply to one of the questions in Colebrooke's questionnaire, "..Heathens are taught to read and write Sinhalese much better by the Buddhist priests."[28] The Archdeacon was comparing here the teaching in the government parish schools, which used Sinhalese for the most part, and the teaching in the temple schools.

10. Colebrooke did not pay any heed to the criticism that Governor Barnes made of the situation that had arisen in regard to education in Ceylon as a result of its getting into the hands of the clergy. Barnes had written to the Colebrooke Commission as follows:

> "In England the population is Christian and therefore it is natural that all the schools and colleges should be Christian establishments, but we have, I think very absurdly carried the same system into the schools here, where the people are generally Buddhists or Hindus and one of the greatest defects of our school system is in my opinion that

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it has got too much into the hands of the clergy. It has been considered more as an instrument of conversion of the people to Christianity than of general improvement in civilization."[29]

The school system was in the hands of the clergy in so far as the government schools were concerned, and in the hands of Protestant missionaries (Anglican, Baptist, Wesleyan and American) in so far as the missionary schools were concerned. In recommending that the government schools should be placed "under the immediate direction of a commission, composed of the Archdeacon and the clergy of the island, the agents of governments in the districts, and some of the principal civil and judicial functionaries at the seat of government", Colebrooke introduced an element of secularization into the control of government schools, possibly to ensure that the needs and interests of the government would be borne in mind, in addition to the motive of conversion.[30] That he was not averse to the perpetuation of the conversion motive is clear from his unqualified support for missionary schools. He was of opninion that it was unnecessary to retain the government's own schools in areas "where English instruction may already be afforded" by the missionaries, thereby giving the latter a completely free hand.[31] He also wanted "due encouragement" given to the Seminaries founded by the missionary societies.[32] He ensured that the American mission would be treated with the same consideration as other missions by recommending that "they should receive all encouragement from the government to which their exertions and exemplary conduct have entitled them."[33]

11. Colebrooke made no mention of the private schools, of which there were well over 600, in his report. They were fee-levying and provided instruction in English. The size of each school was, however, small. They fitted well into Colebrooke's scheme of education, and this was perhaps why he thought it unnecessary to make any comment about them.

12. Colebrooke's recommendations, covering various aspects of the administration, ran into heavy weather. The opposition was triggered off chiefly by the recommendation that the Governor should be excluded from the deliberations of the proposed Legislative Council. Robert Wilmot Horton, who succeeded Edward Barnes in 1831 as Governor of Ceylon, minced no words in criticizing Colebrooke for "crude and impractical views."[34] It is therefore to be understood

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that there would have been some lack of warmth in implementing recommendations that the Governor and chief executive himself did not strongly endorse.

13. Governor Horton strongly endorsed the view that government schools should provide instruction in English, and that every teacher should possess a competent knowledge of English. Instructions were issued by Horton in February 1832 to the Archdeacon, in his capacity as the King's Visitor, to discontinue schoolmasters who had no knowledge of English, and the result was that the 97 government parish schools came down to 5. Horton was able to report to the Secretary of State the good tidings that "considerable expenditure has been saved by the reduction of government schools, which it would appear have some inherent defect in them, which rendered them comparatively, if not absolutely useless."[35] The inherent defect in most cases was, of course, that the schools did not have teachers who could provide instruction in English. In a few cases, government schools which provided instruction in English were nevertheless closed down as there existed missionary schools providing such instruction. The tottering edifice of the government parish school system thus crumbled to dust. In line with the new policy of providing instruction only in English, the Archdeacon was informed, also in February 1832, that it was "the Governor's wish that a school to be established on the most efficient footing should be placed under each of the Colonial Chaplains."[36] Two such schools are reported to have been started during the year, and four more the following year.

14. A letter dated 14 September 1832, from the Secretary of State to Governor Horton dealt, *inter alia*, with Colebrooke's recommendations regarding education. The Secretary of State declared that he was unwilling to accept Colebrooke's recommendation that the desire expressed by the people "to become acquainted with the English language should be promoted by obtaining the concurrence of the chiefs and priests to the appropriation of a part of these Revenues to the maintenance of an English Seminary."[37]

15. In the same letter Horton was asked to give his earliest attention to the deficiency of the government schools in the Jaffna district, and to the absence of any institutions of that nature in the Kandyan provinces. Horton was asked to report also on the placing of all schools under the direction of a Commission, securing the appointment of fit persons as schoolmasters, and the establishment of a

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college at Colombo with the object of giving encouragement to the elementary schools, and affording to native youths a means of qualifying themselves for the different branches of the public service. On receipt of this letter, Horton wrote to the Archdeacon for his views.

16. The views of the Archdeacon were contained in a letter dated 30 March, 1833 sent to Horton. Before going on to deal with the specific questions about the setting up of a government college and the establishment of a Commission, the Archdeacon endeavoured to define the role which he envisaged for the government in regard to education. It was his conviction, "after an experience of upwards of eighteen years", that "no plan of general education, supported by government will be attended with success, however great the sum expended."[38] He thought that "the less the government interfere by establishing schools of their own the better."[39] He expressed his satisfaction at the abolition of the "old system."[40] By this remark, he was referring to Horton's discontinuance of schoolmasters who did not know English and the closure of the schools which could not provide instruction in English. The few schools that remained, either away from missionary stations or under the superintendence of Colonial Chaplains, deserved liberal support and could be maintained at a modest expense. But to do more than that, to set up an "efficient school establishment for this island in which English was to be taught on the plan recommended by the Commissioners" would require the expenditure of fifteen to twenty thousand pounds a year.[41] In other words, the Archdeacon envisaged a very limited role for the government in the field of education, and expected this task to be left to the missionary societies and the established Church.

17. In regard to Colebrooke's recommendation to place the government schools under a Commission, with the Archdeacon as a member, the Archdeacon stressed that he entirely differed from Colebrooke as to the good likely to result from such an arrangement. He went on to say:

"..my local knowledge would induce me at once to relinquish the honour of acting in so multitudinous a Commission as is recommended by them consisting of all the principal government servants in the colony which would in my opinion only lead to disagreement, confusion and mismanagement."[42]

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18. The Archdeacon was not in favour of the establishment of a Government College. He pointed out its probable expense, and also argued that "like most government establishments of the kind it will gradually sink below mediocrity," on account of the difficulty in selecting a Headmaster and assistants as and when vacancies arise. He thought that missionary institutions were immune from this problem. He also argued that from the Anglican Colleges in Jaffna and Kotte, "there will in a few years be more well educated men" amongst the Tamils and the Sinhalese than the government could employ. He went on to say,

"If, however, government wishes to encourage the natives by educating some of the children of the most deserving public servants, the most efficient and least expensive in my opinion would be to support a given number of Malabar and Sinhalese at the Church Mission College. This will ensure them not only a good education in point of knowledge but, what is of more consequence to the happiness of the people and the security of government, a moral and religious education—moral and religious principle being at present I fear much scarcer than knowledge. If government only perseveres in withholding situations from all natives not knowing English it will do more towards the spread of the English language than any schools it can establish."[43]

19. Horton for his part forwarded the Archdeacon's letter to the Secretary of State saying, "In the opinions expressed in that letter I generally coincide, and cordially concur,"[44] Horton went on to express his own doubts about the policy of establishing a College at an expense of £2.000 or even £1,500 per annum. He expressed the view that if the Governor and the Council were given

"the powers to appropriate £1,000 per annum (consulting of course the Archdeacon as to such appropriation) among the various missionary societies, which are prosecuting their labours in so admirable and useful a manner. . I am of opinion that an infinitely greater sum of practical good will be accomplished than if £4,000 per annum were applied for the establishment and maintenance of a College."[45]

20. Governor Horton and the Archdeacon did not succeed in dissuading the Secretary of State from issuing instructions for the establishment of a School Commission (see chapter 16) but they succeeded in dissuading the Secretary of State from authorizing the es-

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tablishment of a College. "..important as this object certainly is, I do not feel at liberty to sanction any undertaking of this nature at present", stated the Secretary of State in a letter to Governor Horton dated 23 March, 1833.[46] It is of interest to note that this letter also conveyed to Horton the instruction that no native, who did not have "a competent knowledge of English", should be appointed to the civil administration.

Notes and References

1. Robert Wilmot later became Governor of Ceylon under the name Wilmot Horton.
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3. Instructions dated 18 January 1823 from the Secretary of State for Colonial and War Departments to the Commissions of Inquiry. Mendis, *op. cit.*, p. 6.
4. Mendis, G. C., *op. cit.*, p. 8.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 374.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 375.
7. Samaraweera, Vijaya. "The Development of the Administration System from 1802-1832," University of Ceylon, *History of Ceylon*, Vol. 3, Colombo, 1973, p. 43.
8. Mendis, G. C., *op. cit.*, p. 68.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 71.
10. *Loc. cit.*
11. Mendis, G. C. *op. cit.*, p. 74.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 215.
13. *Loc. cit.*
14. Mendis, G. C., *op. cit.*, p. 216.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 74.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 72.
17. *Loc. cit.*
18. *Loc. cit.*
19. Mendis, G. C., *op. cit.*, p. 73.
20. *Loc. cit.*
21. *Loc. cit.*
22. Mendis, G. C., *op. cit.*, pp. 36, 37.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 74.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 73.
25. *Loc. cit.*
26. Mendis, G. C., *op. cit.*, *p.* 216.
27. *Ibid.*, pp. 74, 75.
28. Reply dated 15 February 1828 by the Archdeacon to the questionnaire issued by the Colebrooke Commission. C. O. 416/6. Cited by Godage, C., *The Development of Public Education in Ceylon*, 1832-1869. M. A. Thesis, University of London, 1961, p. 28.
29. Mendis, G. C., *The Colebrooke-Cameron Papers.* Volume II, London, 1956 pp. 31, 32.

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30. Mendis, G. C., Vol. I., p. 73.
31. *Loc. cit.*
32. *Ibid.*, p. 216.
33. *Ibid.*, p. 74.
34. Mendis, G. C., Vol. II., p. 40.
35. Gratiaen, L. J. *The End of the Parish Schools.*
36. Gratiaen, L. J., *The First School Commission.* Colombo Historical Association Pamphlet.
37. Letter from the Secretary of State to Governor Horton, 14 September 1832. C. O. 55/74.
38. Letter from the Archdeacon to Governor Horton, 30 March 1833. Reproduced by Vimalananda, T., *Buddhism in Ceylon under the Christian Powers*, Colombo, 1963, p. 163.
39. *Ibid.*, p. 164.
40. *Loc. cit.*
41. *Loc. cit.*
42. *Loc. cit.*
43. *Loc. cit.*
44. Letter from Governor Horton to the Secretary of State, 1 April 1833. Reproduced by Vimalananda, T., *op. cit.*, p. 162.
45. *Loc. cit.*
46. Letter from the Secretary of State to Governor Horton, 24 March 1833. C. O. 55/74.

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SECTION III

1832 - 1869

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CHAPTER 13

THE POLITICAL AND SOCIAL BACKGROUND
(1832 - 1869)

1. Following upon the Colebrooke recommendations, (see chapter 12) the separate administration of the maritime provinces and the former kingdom of Kandy was given up, and a uniform administration for the whole island was established. It is of interest to note that as a result of this step, the whole of Ceylon came under a single administration, a situation that had last existed in the thirteenth century, when a single monarch reigned over the entire island. Thereafter the country had broken up into several kingdoms. In 1505, the Portuguese took the greater part of the littoral under their control, while the rest of the country was shared among several kings or chieftains. The Dutch succeeded to the littoral in 1658, and the British in 1796, the latter extending their power over the rest of the country in 1815, but administering the littoral and the interior as distinct units. In the administrative reforms undertaken in 1832 to establish a uniform administration, the former kingdom of Kandy was dismembered and parts of it were joined with parts of the littoral to constitute new administrative divisions called provinces. To weaken old bonds and to establish new linkages were considered advisable from the point of view of the security of British rule. In connection with the creation of a new province in 1845, this principle found explicit mention in an official document which spoke of "the expediency, on political grounds of separating the old Kandyan provinces from one another and breaking up their political unity."[1] *Divide et impera* was undoubtedly the golden rule of imperial policy.

2. The establishment of an Executive Council and a Legislative Council in 1832 was important. It was the first step in the transfer to Ceylon of political institutions adapted from the metropolitan country. The reins were, however, firmly in the Governor's hands. The Executive Council consisted of the Governor and five government officials. The Legislative Council consisted of the Governor, nine government officials, and six unofficial members (three Europeans and three natives) nominated by the Governor. In the selection of the three native members, "the Governor had recourse to racial representation, nominating one low country Sinhalese, one Burgher, and one Tamil. In this way at this early date was introduced, with unfortunate results to

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Ceylon politics, the problem of communal representation, which for many years checked constitutional advancement and embittered political relationships between the communities."[2] The Governor alone could initiate legislation, and, no question could be debated without his approval. However, in 1860, the Governor's power "to select measures and subjects for debate was taken away, and any member was allowed to put down a motion; but it was carefully provided that no motion to dispose of or charge any part of the revenue could be introduced unless proposed or authorized by the Governor."[3] In 1848, in terms of a directive issued by the Secretary of State, the officials were required to vote with the Governor or remain neutral, although in the discussion in the Council they were entitled to express a view different from the Governor's. In other words, the officials could have their say but having done so they had either to toe the line or to refrain from voting. This state of affairs did not entirely satisfy the Governor. Governor Anderson complained in the following terms about the official members: "In theory they are bound to support the government, but....they can always offer..the tacit resistance of not voting, and the Governor must then often be in a minority and the measures of Government be lost."[4] Anderson's successor, Governor Ward, arrived at a solution of a sort in 1859 by an understanding with the five officials members who belonged to both the Executive Council and the Legislative Council that, having had their say in the Executive Council, they should support in the Legislative Council any measure approved by the Executive Council. In the case of the four official members belonging to the Legislative Council only, they were given the freedom to vote with the government or not. Governor Ward was also responsible for introducing in 1855 a form of election in regard to the three European unofficial members to be nominated to the Legislative Council. He allowed the Chamber of Commerce and the Planters' Association, both of which were composed wholly of Europeans, to select nominees who were thereupon formally nominated by the Governor to the Legislative Council. The three other unofficial members, representatives of the Sinhalese, the Tamils and the Burghers, continued to be nominated by the Governor without any intermediate elective or selective process.

3. The creation of a centrally constituted assembly at which opinions could be expressed was entirely new to Ceylon. Outside the Councils as well as within them, the Governor was all-powerful, but as his actions, planned for the future or already taken, could be openly

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discussed in the Councils, with due publicity in Ceylon, and the records of the discussions transmitted to the Secretary of State in England, the chances were that he would be more circumspect than he might otherwise have been. Basically, the Legislative Council provided a forum for the expression of opinions and ventilation of grievances by the unofficial members. To their credit, it must be said that though they were nominated by the Governor, they were generally reasonably outspoken. Agitation against the export tax on cinnamon, the grain tax, and military expenditure, and agitation for an improved network of roads to serve agricultural and commercial interests were some of the ways in which the unofficial members asserted themselves. Planting and commercial interests, which thought that there would be greater sensitivity to their needs if their representatives had more power in the legislature through an increase in the number of representatives as well as through greater attention to their views, were behind the agitation for reforms.

4. A constitutional crisis developed in 1864 when the Governor, helped by the votes of the official members of the Legislative Council, succeeded in passing an Ordinance providing out of the revenue of the country a sum of £135,000 for military expenditure, against the opposition of all the unofficial members. This led to a block resignation by all the unofficial members. After the heat of the controversy died down, the Legislative Council had once again its quota of unofficial members. The revenue of the country recorded great increases within the next few years as a result of the coffee boom, and in 1868 the Governor succeeded in getting the Legislative Council to approve a military contribution of £160,000.

5. In the economic sphere, state monopolies over trade were abolished. Free enterprise was encouraged in trade and agriculture. As no enterpreneur would invest in the development of land unless security of tenure could be achieved, laws were formulated to make alienation of land irreversible. *Rajakariya* was abolished. A welcome side-effect of the abolition of *rajakariya* was the weakening of the institution of caste, for the nature of the service that had to be tendered was partly based on caste.

6. Commercial and agricultural undertakings gave rise to a capitalist class, initially consisting of Europeans but later including a few from among the ranks of the Ceylonese. The alienation of land on an extensive scale by the government, coupled with sales effected

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by the peasants themselves for immediate advantage, paved the way for landlessness among the peasantry. The needs of the plantations led to the importation of labour from South India, culminating in the creation of pockets of nationals of Indian origin with little or no contact with the Sinhalese peasantry living around them. Cash crops for export became the priority of the day with entrepreneurs, while the cultivation of basic food crops was left to the peasantry. Coffee occupied pride of place among the cash crops, while cinnamon, cinchona and coconut were also grown on a somewhat smaller scale. Economic conditions fluctuated with market prices and the state of the plantations.

7. The economic depression of 1847 made the British impose a number of new taxes, namely a shop tax, a gun tax and a dog tax, all of which caused hardship. A call to armed revolt against the British was initiated on a small scale but gathered momentum, the rallying points consisting partly of the specific grievance of oppressive taxation, partly of a generalized grievance that Buddhism was endangered, and partly of a nostalgia for the old order of things, complete with a monarch in the person of a pretender who made claims to the Kandyan throne. A few among the Kandyan aristocracy who had gained no ostensible advantages from British rule joined hands with the leadership of the rebellion. The British had little trouble in putting down the rebellion with a ruthlessness that went beyond legitimate needs with the result that not long afterwards Governor Torrington was put on the mat by his superiors in England for his excesses. A Select Committee of the British Parliament held an inquiry into the rebellion in Ceylon. Officials from Ceylon were summoned to give evidence before it. While J. E. Tennent, the Colonial Secretary, was of the view that one of the reasons behind the insurrection was that the Kandyans, in comparison with the people of the low country "were less prepared for the liberality with which they had been treated", in the evidence given by H. C. Selby, Queen's Advocate, it came out that a number of taxes, known as the gun tax, the stamp duty, the dog tax, the tax on palanquins and carriages, and the road tax had been imposed at the end of 1847 or early in 1848.[5] It was also mentioned that a number of other returns regarding the quantity of cattle owned, and quantity of paddy sown had been requested leading to the inference that they were also required for purposes of new taxation.[6] Anthony Oliphant, the Chief Justice of Ceylon, also spoke of the annoyances caused to the Kandyan peasants.

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"The contiguity of coffee estates to their lands and houses has necessarily circumscribed the boundaries within which their cattle used to graze before, and the wide range of patnas to which their cattle had free access had become, from the same cause, appropriated to other purposes, and their buffaloes and bullocks, upon straying into coffee estates, happened to be seized and pounded".[7]

8. The arm of the government service that occupied administrative positions was known as the Civil Service. The earliest method of selection was by means of nomination, either by the Secretary of State or by the Governor. As from 1845, the candidates nominated by the Secretary of State sat for a competitive examination on the basis of which the final selection was made, but an examination was not introduced for the candidates nominated by the Governor until 1863 when a non-competitive examination was introduced for them so that their attainments could be assessed. Many of the Civil Servants, making use of concessions given to them, were found to be more concerned about their coffee plantations than about their official duties, and as from 1844 they were given notice that their entrepreneurial activities should be curtailed.

9. The government bore the entire cost of building churches for the Anglicans. This evoked protests from other Christian denominations. In response to them, by an Ordinance of 1845, government aid was made available for church building to Protestant groups connected with church organizations in England and Scotland, and also to the Roman Catholics. The aid was, however, limited to a part of the cost. By this measure, the Anglicans lost their privileged position, but the Christians as a whole gained. In 1847, the Anglicans lost a further privilege when other Christian churches were permitted to solemnize and register marriages.

10. The British government, as successor to the King of Kandy and signatory to the Kandyan Convention of 1815, carried out some of the traditional responsibilities of the King in relation to Buddhism. They included custody of the tooth relic of Lord Buddha, and giving letters of appointment to the principal Buddhist monks as well as to certain laymen occupying key positions connected with certain temples. A grant was also given for the performance of the traditional religious pageant at Kandy associated with the tooth relic. In the 1840's, missionary groups in Ceylon, supported by the evangelical movement

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in England, campaigned for severing the connection of the British government with Buddhism. In response to these pressures, the British government decided that the time had come for it "without risk to the tranquility of the Colony" to relieve itself "from all connection with idolatry".[8] This policy could not be implemented wholesale, and working arrangements were evolved in course of time to fill a small part of the void that was created by the severance of the connection.

References

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7. *Ibid.*, p. lix.
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CHAPTER 14

THE INDIGENOUS RELIGIOUS SCHOOLS
(1832 - 1869)

1. Very little information is available about the indigenous religious schools. Receiving no state patronage, their fortunes depended on the enthusiasm of the Buddhist monks and Muslim Imams who controlled them.

2. The Central School Commission Report for 1853 made two references to them. An Inspector of Schools wrote about a small town in the Kandyan region in which the government had a vernacular school: "..in the neighbouring *Pansalas*, children are not only taught but fed and clothed."[1] In regard to government vernacular schools in the Southern Province, the Inspector of Schools explained their lack of success as follows: "One reason is that the Masters really know very little of Sinhalese. The children can learn their own language much better in the temples than in our schools."[2]

3. References to the indigenous religious schools were also made in some of the memoranda submitted to the Morgan Committee. The Bishop of Colombo wrote about them as follows: "The best existing vernacular schools are perhaps those conducted by the native priests, but they are very inconsiderable in number and some of them wholly inferior."[3] G. S. Steward, Master of Queen's College and Colombo Academy, made the following comment about them: "I think vernacular education may very well be left to the Buddhist priests and the natives themselves, and the money spent by government upon it is money wasted."[4] Steele, Police Magistrate, Anuradhapura, referred to the teaching of Sinhalese by Buddhist monks in the following terms: "What I have seen of the method of vernacular teaching by Buddhist priests has often appeared very praiseworthy."[5] J. W. W. Birch, Assistant Government Agent, Kurunegala made the following comment:

> "The vernacular schools as kept up by government are generally next to useless, and will ever be so under such masters as you in general find in them. In the Sinhalese districts I think the vernacular is sufficiently well taught at the *pansalas*."[6]

G. F. Nell, Deputy Queen's Advocate, Kurunegala wrote as follows:

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"I am acquainted with the Temple schools in this province, and I consider that they are very efficient for vernacular instruction as regards the Sinhalese languages..The Temple schools educate only in Sinhalese Buddhist literature, and in doing so perpetuate old traditions and superstitions."[7]

4. In 1839, the Venerable Walane Sri Siddhartha *Thero* founded an educational institution known as Ratmalane Paramadhammachetiya. It produced a number of distinguished scholars, and among them were the Venerable Hikkaduwe Sri Sumangala *Thero*, who founded the Vidyodaya *Pirivena* in 1873, and the Venerable Ratmalane Sri Dharmaloka *Thero* who founded the Vidyalankara *Pirivena* in 1875.

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2. *Loc. cit.*
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4. *Ibid.*, p. 76.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 76.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 97
7. *Ibid.*, p. 118.

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CHAPTER 15

THE SCHOOL COMMISSION (1832 - 1841)

1. Reference was made in chapter 12 paragraph 17 to the Archdeacon's opposition, backed by Governor Horton, to the appointment of a Commission to superintend the work of the schools. The Secretary of State was, however, not persuaded and expressed himself in favour of the appointment of such a Commission.

> "The appointment of a Commission to be composed of the highest Civil, Judicial and Ecclesiastical Functionaries, with whom some respectable natives may be associated, will afford that efficient means of superintendence which is so much required. Since the dissemination of the English language is an object, which I cannot but estem of the greatest importance, as a medium of Instruction, and as a bond of union with this Country, no Schoolmaster should be, in future, employed who does not possess a knowledge of English. The appointment should be made on the recommendation of the Commission, and the Government Agents in the Provinces should consider it to be a special part of their duty to visit the Schools, established by the Missionary Societies. It will be proper that the Commission should inform themselves of the nature of these Establishments, and of the progress made by them as a part of the general means applicable to the education and moral improvement of the people."[1]

2. Governor Horton took very long to act and it was only on 19 May 1834 that he issued a Minute setting up the Commission.

> "The Right Honourable the Governor has been pleased to constitute the undermentioned Public Servants to form a Commission for the general superintendence of Education in this Colony, viz, President of the Commission: The Archdeacon; Ex-officio members: The Treasurer, the Auditor-General, the Government Agent for Colombo, and the Clergy resident in Colombo. To this Committee, His Excellency will from time to time add such honorary members not exceeding half the number of official members as may appear expedient. Subordinate Committees will be established at the four principal outstations to consist of the Government Agent for the Province, the District Judge, and the Clergy resident at the station.

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It will be the duty of the principal Commission at Colombo to superintend the School Establishments generally throughout the Island and to submit to the Government the measures they consider it expedient to adopt for the establishment of efficient Schools and for extension of education. The Committee at outstations will inspect the schools in the several divisions and report to the Central Committee upon their efficiency and management. To the Commission will be entrusted also the duty of fixing the proportion in which the funds which Government may be entitled to appropriate for purposes of education should be distributed in the several provinces. The schoolmasters will be appointed on the recommendation of the Commission and will in all cases be required to possess a competent knowledge of English."[2]

3. Colebrooke had wanted the Archdeacon included in the School Commission but had not gone into details as to who should be the President of the Commission. The instructions given by the Secretary of State to Governor Horton to set up the Commission left him with a free hand in this regard. The Archdeacon's opposition to the setting up of government schools and the establishment of a Commission to superintend the schools was well known, and it was an act of gubernatorial sabotage for Horton to appoint the Archdeacon as the President. Horton had himself cordially concurred (see chapter 12 paragraph 19) in the Archdeacon's views, and by appointing the Archdeacon as the president he rendered ineffective and useless the Commission that he was compelled to set up under pressure from the Secretary of State. The Archdeacon for his part did not live up to the threat that his "local knowledge" would induce him "to relinquish the honour of acting in so multitudinous a Commission", and accepted the office of president, determined no doubt to prove the accuracy of his statement that the Commission would "only lead to disagreement, confusion and mismanagement".[3] Disagreement, confusion and mismanagement did indeed follow, with the Archdeacon and his son as the principal contributors.

4. Little efficiency could be expected from a Commission established in such inauspicious circumstances. For the first three years, it did no more than establish a few schools and did not address itself to the task of submitting to the government "the measures they consider it expedient to adopt for the establishment of efficient schools and for extension of education." Its major achievement in the early years

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was the issue in March 1837 of the "Prospectus of General Rules and Suggestions intended to promote uniformity in the management of the government schools in the island of Ceylon." Credit for it is owed to the Rev. J. Marsh who became the Secretary of the Commission in August 1835. The Prospectus consisted of six sections as follows:

1. Introductory Observations;
2. Superintendence of Schools;
3. Establishment of New Schools;
4. Selection of Schoolmasters;
5. Admission and Expulsion of Scholars;
6. General Suggestions to the Schoolmasters.[4]

According to it, "all government schools were under the control of the School Commission, but it was desirable that all Chaplains should be regarded as invested ex-officio with the control and supervision of schools in their neighbourhood."[5] Where there was no Chaplain, the Assistant Government Agent or the District Judge was to be the superintendent.[6] New schools were to be established by the government, if there was a request for them and an assurance of the attendance of forty to fifty children, and if there was a government official residing close enough to the school to be able to superintend the school. The School Commission, or one of its Sub-Committees in the case of provinces other than the Western Province, would examine school masters before appointment. Among the qualifications stipulated was "such a knowledge of the English Language as would be sufficient to qualify him to instruct his pupils in the elements of English Grammar, Reading and Composition."[7]

5. The Prospectus was undoubtedly a carefully prepared document, but soon after it came out antagonisms that had been developing between the Archdeacon and the Rev. Marsh came to a head, and the latter tendered his resignation from the post of Secretary. The history of the antagonisms was that the Archdeacon's son and the Rev. Marsh had been rival candidates for the post of Headmaster of the Colombo Academy. The immediate reason behind Marsh's resignation was that the Archdeacon had complained to the Commission that Rev. Marsh, in his capacity as Secretary of Commission, had failed to send notices to the Archdeacon regarding the meetings of the Commission. Marsh's explanation was not considered satisfactory by the Commission and Marsh thereupon submitted his resignation.

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6. In so far as the establishment of schools was concerned, the School Commission had increased the number of English schools to 35 by 1839. The government college in Colombo known as Colombo Academy also came under the School Commission. It will be recalled that Colebrooke's recommendations for the establishment of a government college providing education at a somewhat higher level than the generality of schools did not find favour with the Archdeacon, the Governor and the Secretary of State. In 1835 the Rev. Marsh had established a private Academy for Burgher students and provided them with an advanced education in English. The Academy proved a success, and the parents of the students thereupon pressed the Governor to sponsor the Academy as a government institution and to continue the Rev. Marsh in service. The Governor agreed and thus the Colombo Academy was established in January 1836, at the request of "seventy-four respectable citizens who sought the assistance of government in the formation of a permanent institution for affording their children the means of a liberal education."[8] It was in connection with the Headmastership of the Academy that differences arose between the Archdeacon and Rev. Marsh.

7. The Archdeacon who had administered the funds sanctioned for education in his capacity as the King's visitor and Principal of Schools did not give up the control of funds after the School Commission was set up, partly because of the rights he claimed as the King's visitor and partly because he was the President of the School Commission. In 1836, friction between the Archdeacon and the School Commission arose over the administration of funds and the maintenance of accounts.[9]

8. Although Governor Horton expressed dissatisfaction with the working of the Commission, he made no recommendations for changing its structure or functions. This task was left to his successor, Governor Stewart Mackenzie.

9. In the Royal Instructions to Governor Mackenzie issued in October 1837, he was required to report whether the government schools could be increased in number and made more efficient and, if that were not practicable, to consider whether a special grant should not be made to Christian missionary societies annually to enable them to extend their schools. He was also authorised to seek the approval

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of the Legislative Council for the disbursement of an annual grant of £1,000 to the missionary societies, apportioning the money suitably.[10]

10. Governor Mackenzie had his share of differences with the Anglican clergy, and the Archdeacon's son, the Rev. Owen Glenie, was involved in two of them. One was in connection with two schools begun in 1837 by the Rev. Glenie. They were intended for Protestant Christians only, and were specially recognized as "parochial schools" on a prospectus adopted by the Commission and approved by the government.[11] Among the students attending the school were a few Baptists, who attended a Baptist Sunday School on Sundays. In order to compel their attendance at the Anglican church on Sundays, the Rev. Glenie ordered that Sunday should be considered a school day. The Baptist students failed to comply with this requirement, and were expelled from the school by the Rev. Glenie. On representations made to Governor Mackenzie, the students were ordered to be re-admitted, and the special rules under which the two schools had been set up as parochial schools were abrogated. The Rev. Glenie revived the issue a year later by presenting a petition to the Legislative Council for financial assistance to two schools providing secular and religious instruction according to the principles of the Church of England.[12] The motion was, however, lost. The experiences with the Rev. Glenie made Governor Mackenzie quite unsympathetic to the idea of a parochial school that restricted admission to a particular religious sect. He emphasized this in making his recommendations for the reorganization of the School Commission and the reform of education in Ceylon.[13]

11. The second occasion, when there occurred an important difference of opinion between Governor Mackenzie and the Rev. Glenie, was concerned with the religion of teachers in government schools. The School Commission accepted a proposal made by the Rev. Glenie that all teachers in government schools should be Christians preferably belonging to the Anglican church.[14] Mackenzie refused to approve the proposal. It was indeed a matter of practice though disclaimed in principle that teachers in government schools should be Christians. That they should preferably belong to the Anglican church savoured so much of sectarianism that Mackenzie was unwilling to approve the proposal.

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12. In summary, then, it may be said the Anglican clergy did not acquit themselves creditably in matters pertaining to education. There was friction between the Archdeacon (and his clerical son) on the one hand and the Governor (and the government officials in the Commission) on the other hand, over the appointment of a head to the Colombo Academy, over the accounting of the money allocated for education, over the proposal to restrict the recruitment of teachers to a particular religious group, and over the dismissal of students from the Chaplain's school in Colombo. At the same time, the Anglican clergy were themselves not in complete harmony among themselves, as evidenced by the enmity between the Archdeacon and the Rev. Marsh. In fact, a contemporary newspaper had this biting comment to make:

> "With the clergy as usual it's war to the knife,
> A general diffusion of malice and strife."[15]

13. Governor Mackenzie in his Address of 15 December 1839 to the Legislative Council pointed out that "the machinery set in motion under the School Commission" was inadequate for the promotion of education.[16] "I could not, however, without the sanction of Her Majesty's Government, recommend the abolition of the present School Commission, without being prepared to offer a substitute or an auxiliary . ."[17] Mackenzie also said that he had received instructions from the Secretary of State "to communicate with the Bishop of Madras generally upon the question of Church Establishment and Education", and as the Bishop wanted time to acquaint himself with the details, Mackenzie would keep the existing system going until a more efficient scheme was prepared.[18]

14. The following were among the more important points Mackenzie made regarding the reorganization of education in his communication to the Bishop:

1. Schools receiving financial aid from the government to be under the superintendence of a School Commission consisting of clergymen belonging to various Christian denominations and laymen;

2. Schools receiving financial aid from the government to be open to children of all denominations;

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3. With a view to promoting education in general and religious education in particular, the system of instruction to be based on the Holy Scriptures using the extracts put out by the British and Foreign Bible Society; no catechisms or books of peculiar religious tenets to be used in schools; children to be encouraged to attend regularly the places of worship belonging to their religious denominations;

4. A number of Normal Schools to be established for training teachers;

5. A common examination to be held for selection to Bishop's College, Calcutta and to the Normal Schools to be established;

6. Children to be taught in their native language before instruction is given in English;

7. Books in English to be translated into the native languages;

8. Inspectors of Schools to be appointed for supervising the work of teachers in Sinhalese areas and Tamil areas;

9. No teachers to be appointed without satisfactory recommendation as to character, religion and competence.[19]

15. On 26 December 1839, Mackenzie adverted to the funds needed if "indeed we really do intend to impart instruction to the whole or the greater part of the ..population."[20] Specific needs mentioned were for building schools, appointing a Visiting Superintendent "whose duty it would be to report regularly upon the instruction afforded, the number of scholars, and the state of the books, furniture etc. in each school.."[21] Mackenzie also went on to point out that:

> "assuming that before English shall be taught each scholar should learn to read in his native language, the preparation of works, by means of a Translation Committee, would be equally indispensable: such works to embrace from the most elementary books to those suited to the highest education within the Colony."[22]

He regretted that the requisite funds for "these great boons" were not available.

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16. In his Address of 17 November 1840 to the Legislative Council Mackenzie stated that the "three most important points on which the Bishop of Madras was consentient" with his suggestions were

> "First—The establishment of a Translation Committee of educational and elementary works in Sinhalese and Tamil. Similar means have been successfully employed at home in the north of Scotland, in Wales and in Ireland, and have opened to the natives in each case stores of information conveyed in their vernacular tongue. Much has been done also at and near Jaffna, by a similar process, where elementary works in Tamil have been disseminated to a considerable extent.
>
> Second—the establishment of Normal Schools for training native teachers, one for Sinhalese and the other for Tamil.
>
> Third—the appointment of a Superintendent to inspect the schools under the School Commission and to assist the Commission to select places for new schools."[23]

Mackenzie also said that he hoped to implement these measures, if sanctioned by the British Government.

17. There were, of course, certain issues on which the Bishop of Madras did not see eye to eye with Mackenzie. Mackenzie's diagnosis of the shortcomings of the School Commission left him in no doubt that the exclusive representation of the Anglican church should come to an end. In his opinion, Christian partnership in education needed as a pre-condition the representation of non-Anglican clergy on the School Commission. Mackenzie's idea of broadening the basis of the Commission received qualified acceptance from the Bishop of Madras but drew heavy fire from the Anglican clergy who disapproved it as "Whig confusion in education," and argued that to make the Anglican church and Dissenters sit together in a Commission would be to cause strife and bitterness.[24] Mackenzie also came to the conclusion that it was not in the interests of education to have a Commission headed by the Archdeacon as the President.[25] Such a change could, of course, not be effected unless the Secretary of State agreed to reconstitute the Commission. The Bishop, however, was of the view that the Archdeacon should be the President.[26]

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18. Mackenzie did not contemplate a privileged position for the Anglican church in any of his recommendations. The promotion of religious education was to be through non-sectarian Christianity in so far as the schools were concerned, the venue of sectarian teaching being the places of worship which children were at liberty to attend.

19. In regard to religion, it was the view of the Bishop that theoretical Christianity should be compulsorily taught even to non-Christians. "In speaking of education I wish to be distinctly understood as speaking of it in strict and indissoluble connection with at the least such an acquaintance with theoretical Christianity that the youth of the Island may be trained up in a knowledge of the Revelation".[27] The one proviso that the Bishop was most keen about was that the Holy Scriptures should be "read and historically explained in every school in the colony. I would moreover especially propose that the following facts be taught as facts in all the schools: the time, character and attributes of God, the immortality of the soul.."[28] Mackenzie was strongly opposed to the idea of requiring non-Christians to study "theoretical Christianity".[29] He argued that other religious groups, most of all the Muslim population, would be dissuaded from sending children to school if they were compelled to study theoretical Christianity.

20. Instructions came from the Secretary of State for the dissolution of the School Commission and for setting up a new Commission, to be called the Central School Commission. The Minutes pertaining to the setting up of the Central School Commission, and the work of the new Commission are described in Chapter 16.

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CHAPTER 16

THE CENTRAL SCHOOL COMMISSION

(1841 - 1869)

1. Governor Mackenzie issued on 27 March 1841 a Minute, dissolving the School Commission constituted by the Minute of 19 May 1834, and setting up a new Commission to be called the Central School Commission.

> "The new Commission shall be denominated 'The Central School Commission for the instruction of the population of Ceylon', and shall consist of not exceeding nine members, three of whom when practicable shall be a Clergyman of the Church of England, a Presbyterian Minister and a Roman Catholic priest or layman. To this Commission will be attached a paid officer who shall act as Secretary to the Commission and Inspector of Schools under their orders."[1]

2. The composition of the Central School Commission may be contrasted with that of the former School Commission. According to the Minute creating the School Commission, the School Commission had as its president the Archdeacon who was the head of the established church (Church of England) in Ceylon. The Minute creating the Central School Commission did not name anyone as president. The Governor appointed the Colonial Secretary as the first president. Later, in 1846 after an Anglican Bishopric had been created in Ceylon, Bishop Chapman was nominated president but he resigned the following year (see paragraph 11). After a short period when Emerson Tennent, the Colonial Secretary, was president, the Governor announced that thereafter the Colonial Secretary or the Acting Colonial Secretary would be the president. In effect, an important feature of the new Commission in the way it was set up was that the office of president was taken away from the established church, except for the short tenure by the Bishop, and invested in a government official. In the former Commission, the clergy of the established church resident in Colombo were ex-officio members of the Commission. The Central School Commission, however, provided that, apart from a clergyman of the Church of England, other Christian interests would be represented by a Presbyterian Minister and a Roman Catholic priest or

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layman. While three government officials, namely the Treasurer to the government, the Auditor General and the Government Agent were ex-officio members of the School Commission, no such provision was made for the Central School Commission by the Minute of March 1841. It was explained in a later Minute (26 May 1841) that the Central School Commission was to be generally composed of persons "selected, not with reference to their official position, but to their disposition to exert themselves in promoting the highly important object confided to them."[2] The next sentence, however, went on to specify that the Government Agent of the Western Province would be a member because it would be through him that financial transactions would be carried out. Sub-Committees, in the provinces, of the former School Commission consisted of the Government Agent of the province as president, with the District Judge and the resident clergy of the established church as members. In the case of the sub-committees of the Central School Commission, while the Government Agent of the province was a member as he would handle finances, the other members were to be selected by the members of the Central School Commission "on the same principles upon which they have themselves been appointed."[3] In other words, Christian interests other than those of the Church of England would be represented on the sub-committees.

3. The powers and duties of the Central School Commission were set out in the Minute of 26 May 1841 as follows:

> "The Committee will understand, that it is their duty, by every means in their power, to promote the education, in the English language, of their fellow subjects of all religious opinions, in the Colony.
>
> They will therefore be particularly careful to introduce into their schools no books or system of instruction, which might have the effect of excluding scholars of any religious belief whatever.
>
> Whatever may have been the defects of the late Commission, it will be found that, in their schools, the Scriptures are read without objection by all. It will be the especial care of the Central Commission, to exercise such caution as to raise no religious scruples on the part of any.
>
> But, though the general education of the whole population is the duty of the Commission, it will also be a most important portion of

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their duty, to promote the religious education of such of the community as belong to the Christian faith; and the funds under their management will therefore be equally applicable to this purpose. It is highly desirable that Sunday Schools should be established, and, perhaps, that an hour daily should be set apart for religious instruction; and such instruction may be conducted by the Schoolmasters of the Establishment, provided it is most clearly and distinctly made known, that it is not obligatory upon those Scholars (who bring forward conscientious objections) to attend the Sunday School, or at the hour set apart for religious instruction, which should be arranged so as not to interfere with secular education. The Commission would also do well to consider, whether an attempt might not be made to establish Infant Schools.

Subject to these observations, the Commission will undertake the administration of the funds voted by the Legislative Council for the purpose of education. The appointment of all Schoolmasters—the fixing of their salaries—the purchase of school books, furniture etc.—will be vested in them; but they are not to incur any charge for erecting or repairing buildings, without the usual sanction of Government. Besides the establishment of Government Schools, the Commission will be at liberty to grant sums in aid of any Private Schools which they may consider deserving of encouragement; but always on condition that they shall have full right of inspection and examination, without interfering in any way in the management.

Referring to the Circular Letter of 1 March 1838, of which a copy is annexed the Commission should endeavour, as far as possible, to maintain a friendly communication with all Educational Institutions throughout the Colony, and obtain permission to inspect their Schools, as well as any Private Schools which may be established from time to time, in the manner therein proposed, but without exercising the smallest right of interference.[4]

4. The first members of the Central School Commission were

Mr. Philip Anstruther	(Colonial Secretary) — Chairman
Rev. J. P. Horsford	(Colonial Chaplain)
Rev. G. G. MacVicar	(Presbyterian Chaplain)
Rev. C. Antonio	(Roman Catholic Priest)
Rev. D. J. Gogerly	(Wesleyan Missionary)

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Rev. Joseph Bailey	(Church Missionary)
Mr. John Armitage	(Unofficial member of the Legislative Council)
Sir A. Oliphant	(Chief Justice)
Mr. P. E. Woodhouse	(Government Agent of the Western Province).

George Lee, the Post Master-General, was appointed Inspector of Schools and Secretary of the Commission in addition to his own duties.[5]

5. The Chaplain's schools established in 1831 and 1832 functioned as government schools under the School Commission, after the Commission was set up in 1834, and the superintendence over the schools was exercised by the Colonial Chaplains. With the setting up of the Central School Commission in 1841, the Colonial Chaplains were asked by the Commission to continue their work of superintendence. They refused as a gesture of protest, partly against the inclusion of non-Anglican clergy as members of the Central School Commission, and partly against the rule that religious instruction should be confined to non-sectarian Christianity. They asked the Commission to be allowed to conduct the schools as Chaplain's schools under their superintendence with financial aid from the Commission, exempted from the Commission's rules and in no way answerable to it. The Minute of May 1841 setting up the Central School Commission did not permit such aid. The Commission, however, unwilling to displease the clergy of the established church decided on 17 August 1841 to give aid.

> "..It is the opinion of this Commission that wherever there is a Colonial Chaplain there ought to be a Boys' school and a Girls' school attached to his Church, and that the religious instruction of these schools should be kept under the uncontrolled direction of the Chaplain, but that the secular education should remain under the general direction of the Central School Commission."[6]

6. Regulations were framed in 1842 setting out, *inter alia*, the grants that were payable. Strong objections were raised by the Anglican clergy to the possibility that ministers of other Christian denominations might visit Anglican schools for purposes of inspection, in their capacity as members of the Central School Commission or its provincial Sub-Committees. They expressed horror at "the indecent

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spectacle of a Romanist Priest or Dissenting Preacher interfering with or visiting a clergyman's Parochial School."[7] As it turned out, while Chaplain's schools established before 1841 continued to function, no new Chaplain's schools were established under the regulations framed in 1842.

7. By a resolution passed by the Central School Commission on 1 September 1843, provision was made for financial assistance to new schools established by any Minister or Missionary for providing education through the medium of English. The approval of the Commission had to be sought before establishing the school.[8] The provincial Sub-Committee of the Commission was required to "inspect and examine the school with respect to both secular and religious instruction", and if the school did not continue "to give satisfaction" to the Commission the allowance for the support of the school could be withdrawn.[9] It was also provided that the Minister or Missionary establishing the school would be the Superintendent of the school, and in that capacity be a member of the Sub-Committee. The school was not subject to any restrictions regarding religious instruction. According to the Sixth Report of the Central School Commission, the Commission had retained over the Minister's schools a fuller supervision than had been the case with reference to Chaplain's schools, but "they were left so free as to convey an assurance to any zealous Minister or Missionary that his own educational views both secular and religious. . would not be interfered with."[10] Only a small number of schools, mainly of the Wesleyan mission, sought financial aid as Minister's schools.

8. Yet another category of schools was recognized by the Commission for grants. The Fourth Report of the Commission said this with reference to the Jaffna grant schools.

> "It was resolved to assign to the Missionaries of Jaffna, in proportion to the expenditure of each, a sum by which they might either increase the number of their English Schools, or, when this was not practicable, have their own funds disengaged and free to be employed to defray the charge of instructing large classes of females in the Vernacular language."[11]

The reason for which the Commission came to adopt this principle was, in its own words, "that the ground was pre-occupied by the Missionary Schools."[12]

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"Accordingly, sums which were supposed to be in proportion to the expenditure made by each Mission, were allotted in 1843, to each of the Protestant Missions in Jaffna, and subsequently, through the influence, I am assured, of Sir Charles MacCarthy, our present Governor, to the Catholic Mission also."[13]

The Ninth Report of the Commission referred to them as follows:

"Education by the Commission is carried on in this Province, on a system which is an exception to the general rule of procedure. In 1842, the Government Schools in Jaffna were found to be so inefficient, that they were all closed; and although some of them were afterwards re-established, they did not give satisfaction. Under these circumstances, the Commission proposed to the educational bodies in the Province, that they should become their agents and administer such funds as could be assigned for schools in the Province. They also proposed that where new English Schools could not be established the Government should receive schools hitherto supported by the Missions, on condition that the amount thus saved to the Mission funds should be expended in enlarged vernacular education, especially in female education. The Missionaries acceded to the proposition, and £200 per annum were placed at the disposal of the American Missionaries, £150 at that of the Church Missionaries and £150 were entrusted to the Wesleyans. These sums were not regarded as educational grants made to the Missions, but as funds to be administered by them on account of the Commission; the schools being Government Schools, and the Ministers of the Mission bodies forming sub-Committees with extended powers. The arrangement has been found exceedingly beneficial to the cause of education in the Province, the schools being under constant and careful supervision."[14]

It will be noted that the circumstances which rendered the arrangement necessary are given differently in the two reports. Furthermore, the tenor of the Fourth Report is that the funds given were grants, while according to the Ninth Report the funds given

"were not to be regarded as educational grants made to the Mission but as funds to be administered by them on account of the Commission, the schools being Government Schools and the Ministers of the Mission bodies forming Sub-Committees with extended powers."[15]

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The statement that the schools were Government schools is not convincing as the rules applicable to Government schools did not apply to them. This was most evident in relation to religious instruction. Rev. Fr. Bonjean pointed out some years later that they were regarded as denominational schools and went on to say that had they been regarded as government schools "we should certainly have raised the strongest objections about different little practices which were notoriously employed, at both the Wesleyan and Church Mission establishments, to proselytize Catholic boys, some of whom have in consequence turned Protestants."[16] It is recorded that by the year 1847 there were 30 Jaffna grant Schools.

9. Other developments of note in the educational activities of the Central School Commission were the establishment of Central schools, Normal schools, superior schools for girls and vernacular schools. The inspiration for Central schools and Normal schools came from educational thinking and practice in Britain, where emphasis was placed on the teaching of practical subjects and on the training of teachers through courses at the newly established Normal Seminary at Glasgow.[17] The Central School Commission accepted the idea of providing education of a practical nature through the introduction of such subjects as mensuration, surveying, navigation, drawing and chemistry. Central schools, as these new type schools were called, were established in Colombo (1843), Galle (1844) and Kandy (1845) under the headmastership of British teachers who had been trained at the Normal Seminary at Glasgow. A normal class for training teachers was started at the Colombo Academy in 1842, but it was transferred to the Central School at Colombo in 1843. Normal classes were similarly attached to the Central schools at Galle and Kandy. In 1846, when the Headmaster of the Colombo Central School resigned, the normal class was transferred back to the Colombo Academy. A normal institution for training Sinhalese teachers was established in 1845. For the education of girls, the Central School Commission established in Colombo in 1843 two girls'schools under lady principals recruited from England. They were considered a great success, and two more schools were opened at Galle and Matara. In 1847, the Commission established 8 vernacular schools (see chapter 20 paragraph 13).

10. In 1845, an Anglican Bishopric was created in Ceylon, and Bishop Chapman was appointed as the first Bishop. Philip Ans-

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truther, Colonial Secretary and President of the Central School Commission, left Ceylon on retirement, and Governor Campbell took the opportunity of offering to Bishop Chapman the office of president of the Central School Commission. The Bishop accepted the office, and the new Colonial Secretary, J. E. Tennent, became an ordinary member of the Commission in contrast to his predecessor who had been the president.

11. In 1847, when the post of Headmaster of the Colombo Central School fell vacant, Governor Torrington appointed a Methodist clergyman, the Rev. Dr. Kessen, to the vacancy. In doing so, Torrington arrogated to himself a power that was vested in the Commission, for, by the Minute of 26 May 1841 the appointment of all schoolmasters was a matter for the Commission. When Torrington's attention was drawn to this irregularity, he issued a new Minute, claiming it to be "more in accordance with the spirit of the Regulations..and more consistent with the direct responsibility which rests upon me as Head of the Executive in the Colony."[18] According to the amended Minute,

> "the administration of the funds voted by the Legislative Council for purposes of Education, the fixing of salaries, and in general all proceedings of the Central School Commission which involve an expenditure of money, will be subject to the approval of the Governor, since by the Rules and Regulations issued for the guidance of Governors of Colonies all appointments of whatever description are directed to be made by the Governor and reported to the Secretary of State, and all those to which a salary exceeding £200 per annum is attached, are to be subject to confirmation from home. It is clearly to be understood that all appointments of Schoolmasters and other officers are in future to be made by the Governor."[19]

The Bishop resigned in protest against the appointment of Dr. Kessen and the issue of the new Minute, pointing out that by the new Minute the constitution of the Commission had been fundamentally changed, and that the withdrawal from the Commission of a power that had been delegated to it was tantamount to a lack of confidence. The Bishop was mistaken in the belief that the other members of the Commission would support him in the stand he took against the Governor. The Commission as such did not raise any objections against the actions of the Governor. The Colonial Secretary, J. E. Tennent, was appointed

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as the new president of the Commission, on the Bishop's resignation from the post.

12. Soon afterwards, the Bishop again came into conflict with the Commission over the allocation among mission schools of teachers passing out of the Normal Training Institution. The Commission invited applications from the clergy and missionaries who desired to employ these teachers in schools under their superintendence. After receiving applications, four teachers were allocated to the Church Mission, eighteen to the Wesleyan Mission, one to the Presbyterians and one to the Roman Catholics. The Bishop protested against the allocation, with reasonable justification as the Wesleyan Mission had only about twice as many schools and pupils as the Church Mission.[20]

13. The Bishop was greatly angered by the lack of support from the non-Anglican clergymen of the Commission in his confrontation with the Governor and also over the influence exercised in the Commission by the Wesleyan clergyman, the Rev. Gogerly. He made up his mind to see the Commission reconstituted, leaving the clergy out of the Commission. On 31 January 1848, a Memorial was addressed to the Secretary of State by the Bishop, the Archdeacon, eleven Colonial Chaplains, eleven missionaries of the Church Mission, and three missionaries of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel urging him to remodel the Central School Commission in such a way as to hand over the control of the school establishment to a Board of lay members. The Anglican church promised its support "if influential members of the Government or of either Council, be alone entrusted with the distribution of its funds, and the Commission be served by able officers, unconnected professionally with any religious system and unencumbered with any other duties."[21] The Bishop followed up the Memorial with a personal letter expressing his conviction that in a lay commission there would be a "total absence of religious jealousies and discord."[22] Governor Torrington did not recommend the scheme, and it was not accepted by the Secretary of State.

14. Soon afterwards, the Commission revoked the financial assistance that was being given to Chaplain's schools and Minister's schools.[23] Some of these schools became government schools on the withdrawal of the assistance and were thereafter fully supported by the government.

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15. An important reason for the relatively greater development of education during the first few years (1841 to 1847) of the Central School Commission was that the revenue of the country showed a great increase upto 1845. By the end of 1847, the Central School Commission had under its management the Colombo Academy, three Central Schools for boys, three superior schools for girls, 53 elementary English schools, and 24 vernacular schools.[24] There were also two normal classes for English teachers and a native normal institution. In addition, the Commission supported with grants three Missions conducting 28 English schools in Jaffna. Educational expenditure was readily sanctioned by the government, and increased from £3,398 in 1841 to £9,558 in 1847.[25] In the revenue year 1846-47, however, there was an excess of expenditure over income in the finances of the country, and the necessity for retrenchment measures was announced by the government. In September 1848, the Government informed the Central School Commission that for the following year the expenditure on schools would have to be reduced from £10,684 to £6,000.[26] The Commission was asked to propose a scheme of retrenchment. The Commission looked into the financing of the schools and suggested a scheme, the main elements in which were the levy of higher school fees than before where school fees had been levied, and the levy of a school fee where no fee had been levied earlier. Boys' schools were divided into five categories, with a graduated scale of fees ranging from £1 a month for category A to 3d for category E.

A — The Colombo Academy.

B — Central schools.

C — Elementary English schools, in which instruction was imparted exclusively through English.

D — Mixed schools, in which instruction was given in the vernacular at first and later in English.

E — Vernacular schools.

Girls' schools were divided into three categories, and fees were levied only in category A. No fees were to be levied in the others with a view to encouraging girls to receive education.

A — Dutch Consistorial Girls' School and Female Seminary.

B — Girls' English Schools.

C — Girls' Vernacular schools.

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A list of schools to be recognized in each category was compiled, and schools not included in the list were discontinued. In order to achieve economy, teachers were retrenched and several teachers from England had to go back. Through these measures, the government succeeded in reducing educational expenditure from £10,684 in 1848 to £7,281 in 1850, and at the same time increasing the revenue from school fees from £658 in 1848 to £1,096 in 1850.[27] Many schools were adversely affected as a result of these measures. The Colombo Academy lost numbers and came very near extinction, and it was by a reduction in school fees that it barely survived. The Central schools in Kandy and Galle lost teachers, students and their special character. The Central school in Colombo became part of the Colombo Academy. The normal classes for training English teachers were abandoned. The native normal institution continued, however, until 1858.

16. The Jaffna missions aided by the Commission continued to receive the same grants as before, and in June 1851 yet another mission, namely the Roman Catholic Mission, was included in the list of Jaffna missions entitled to annual grants. Meanwhile retrenchment continued to hit hard at government schools, and there was a tendency to close them on one pretext or another. It was possible to find the right argument for the right case. For example, when it was decided to discontinue an English school, the argument that English education had been extended as far as there was "a legitimate demand for it", and that the government should "direct its efforts towards the extension of education in the vernacular languages" stood in good stead.[28] But, when it came to expanding vernacular education, it was stated that the extension of vernacular education by the government was "rendered somewhat delicate in consequence of the field being to a considerable extent occupied by missionary schools."[29] Moreover it was also pointed out that government schools "though conducted at a much greater expense cannot compete successfully with missionary schools in the same field."[30] In 1853 a Committee of the Legislative Council recommended the abolition of vernacular schools. The recommendation was not carried out, and later another Committee recommended that free vernacular education should be encouraged where no education could otherwise be obtained.[31]

17. In 1852, the school fee introduced in boys' vernacular schools was abolished. The school fees in boys' English schools and Mixed schools were also reduced with effect from the same year.

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18. A Select Committee of the Legislative Council appointed to report on the Fixed Establishments recommended in 1854 that the Central School Commission should be remodelled and that the management of government schools should be entrusted to a Board consisting of five lay members, three official and two unofficial.[32] No action was taken on this recommendation but in 1855 the Government vested all administrative power in the President of the Commission.[33] Thereafter, the Secretary took orders from the President, and the Commission became a purely advisory body to which the President referred only such matters as he considered fit.

19. The years 1855 to 1868 were marked by a bitter controversy, especially between the Anglicans and the Roman Catholics, on the issue of grants-in-aid. A separate chapter (chapter 17) is devoted to the controversy over grants-in-aid.

20. An interesting development in 1862 was the introduction of a local examination, conducted by the Central School Commission at the request of the government, for students in the top form of the government Central, Elementary and Mixed schools. It was also open to students in non-government schools. The main purpose of the examination was to identify candidates for appointment to junior positions in government service. Later, the examination was also used for the award of scholarships tenable at the Colombo Academy. Through this means, a number of talented students, who would ordinarily not have had the chance, got the opportunity of continuing their education at the Colombo Academy.[34]

21. The decision to abolish the Central School Commission was made on the recommendation of the Morgan Committee of 1867. A separate chapter (chapter 25) is devoted to a discussion of the recommendations of this Committee.

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CHAPTER 17

THE CONTROVERSY OVER GRANTS-IN-AID

(1832 - 1869)

1. The Minute of 26 May 1841 setting out the powers and duties of the Central School Commission specified that the Commission would be "at liberty to grant sums in aid of any Private Schools which they may consider deserving of encouragement."[1] The Minute did not contemplate aid to schools established by missionary societies or other organizations. The Central School Commission, however, decided to ignore the Minute, no doubt with the approval of the Governor and the Colonial Office, and gave grants as from the years 1841-3 first to the small number of Chaplain's schools, then to the small number of English schools (Minister's schools, so called) run by the Wesleyan Mission, and finally to the small number of mission schools in Jaffna. The circumstances leading to the grant of financial aid to the Chaplain's schools and Minister's schools have been described in chapter 16 paragraphs 5 to 7. The case of the Jaffna schools was also described in chapter 16 paragraph 8 but it is discussed again in paragraph 10 below. The Chaplain's schools and the Minister's schools did not survive the retrenchment measures of 1848, but the Jaffna grant schools were not affected. Moreover, the government decided in 1851 that the Roman Catholic mission in Jaffna should also be given a grant of £150 for its schools. It should be noted that the Chaplain's and Minister's schools, while they existed as such, were not subject to any restriction regarding the teaching of religion. Nor were the Jaffna grant schools, until 1861 (see paragraph 25 below). In other words, all these schools enjoyed a special status.

2. In 1852, the Hindus in Jaffna, noting that the government had extended aid even to Roman Catholic schools "where religious opinions and observances are inculcated notoriously at variance with the views and sentiments entertained by the principal members of the government," appealed for a grant to a school established by them.[2] They pointed out that after the abolition in 1843 of the government schools in Jaffna, which gave students the right of seeking exemption from Christian religious instruction, Hindu parents had to send their children to the missionary schools (aided by government grants) where no such right of exemption existed. Many parents were reluctant to

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send their children to these schools as the education "needed to qualify their children for both a useful and profitable career in life should not involve their alienation from and reverence of the religious and moral requirements amongst their countrymen".[3] The Central School Commission refused to grant any financial assistance to the Hindu organization, the Jaffna Native Education Society, which made the request, as the "education proposed to be given by that body was of a character not consistent with the objects of their institution."[4] The government thus made it clear that it would assist only Christian, including Roman Catholic, education and not Buddhist, Hindu or Muslim education. These religious groups were so disheartened as not to make any further request during the next twenty years or so.

3. The principal actors in the bitter controversy over grants-in-aid during the decade beginning 1857 were the Anglicans, the Wesleyans and the Roman Catholics. While they battled with fury, the non-Christian religious groups—Buddhists, Hindus and Muslims—watched the fray from the sidelines, not daring to hope that even a crumb would fall their way.

4. On 3 December 1857, the Anglican Bishop of Colombo and Head of the Established Church in Ceylon addressed to the Governor and the Legislative Council a petition pointing out that the funds allocated for the purpose of education could be "more equitably and effectively distributed than they are."[5] A specific suggestion was couched in the following terms:

"Your petitioner therefore humbly prays that your Hon'ble Council may be pleased to take this subject into consideration, and to accompany your annual vote with an instruction to the Central School Commission, to whom the responsibility of distributing the fund is entrusted, to apportion Grants-in-aid to all schools of Christian instruction, that may apply for such help, either in equal proportions with the amount raised and expended for the purpose or according to the number of scholars under regular daily instruction, subject always to the inspection of the Officers of the Commission, and to such other reasonable conditions (without interfering with the management of any school) as may appear best calculated to effect the greatest amount of good to the colony, and of improvement and blessings to the young."[6]

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On 4 December 1857, the Legislative Council passed a resolution deciding to give financial aid "irrespective of their religious profession and without interference with their religious instruction."[7] The letter of the Bishop was referred on the same day to the Commission, which agreed to "recognize the principle suggested by the Bishop as being in accordance with the Supplementary Minute of its Constitution, as dated 26 May 1841", and to "take into consideration any application that may be made for such assistance".[8] A sub-committee of the Commission was also appointed to draw up the rules under which such grants should be made. It was hoped that it would be possible to submit, within a very short period of time, rules for approval by the Governor. The Supplementary Minute in question read as follows: "Besides the establishment of Government Schools, the Commission will be at liberty to grant sums in aid of any Private Schools which they may consider deserving of encouragement."[9] In fact, the Supplementary Minute did not permit the aid sought by the Bishop. The Commission accepted this position later (see paragraph 6).

5. Bishop Bravi, the Roman Catholic member of the Commission, then circulated to his colleagues in the Commission a memorandum opposing the distribution of such grants.

> "..the business of the Commission was carried on until now with great unanimity and concord by members of all different persuasions composing it, and that unanimity was preserved by refusing any grant whatever that was solicited by parties at the head of educational establishments of any religious denominations. Such grants were unconditionally refused, on the inward conviction of all the gentlemen sitting at the board, that they would be an aid to one peculiar religious creed in preference to another. Our watchward was 'the Commission is prepared to open schools in whatever place, and whenever required.' This plan has preserved an admirable union among the different religious communities in this island, and there never came, to my knowledge, any reasonable conscientious objection to sending children to government schools, which I, for my part, have always recommended and encouraged. In the newly proposed system of Grants-in-aid, not only do I see an alteration of our fundamental rules but really a mine cleverly prepared to blow up entirely our present educational system, for once we have made a grant to a school of one religious denomination, the Commission,

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willingly or not, will be forced to make as many as are applied for. Thus, in a few years, its very existence will be useless, and the Board will be ranged among the records of things passed away, leaving behind it only the scandals and consequences of religious acrimony..."[10]

Bishop Bravi also referred to the problems that had already arisen in connection with Grants-in-aid to Chaplain's and Minister's schools, and pointed out that when representations were made to the Governor, the rules were changed in order to strengthen "liberty of conscience".[11] Bishop Bravi was against any extension of the system, except on the basis of distributing to each Protestant or Roman Catholic community a grant having regard to the number of tax payers belonging to that community, so that it could run schools for its own flock. Bishop Bravi pointed out that the inspection of Grant-in-aid schools by an officer of the Commission gave no guarantee with regard to the faithful observation of "the Rules on liberty of conscience, and the non-interference of the teachers in the religion of the pupils, because the liberal concession was made to those who wished for grants that in the inspection, religious education should be excluded."[12] Bishop Bravi also went on to point out that the educated and conscientious gentlemen who were at the head of educational institutions could hardly be expected to impart to their pupils any religious feelings other than what they themselves possessed. Bishop Bravi was in favour of more schools being opened by the Commission, rather than an extension of the proposed system of grants. He also emphasized the fact that a measure of the kind proposed would agitate the Roman Catholic community.

6. Bishop Bravi's remarks appear to have been taken to heart by the Commission. In February 1858, the Commission announced a set of Rules for Grants-in-aid. The first two rules and the sixth rule were as follows:

"1. With reference to Paragraph 8 of the Minute by the Governor of 26 May 1841 the School Commission give notice, that they are prepared to receive applications for Grants-in-aid of any Private Schools which they may consider deserving of encouragement. By Private Schools the Commission understands such schools as are not supported wholly or in part by any Religious Society or Missionary body of any denomination whatsoever.

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2. These grants will be made with a special view to the extension and improvement of the secular education of the people and will be given impartially to all schools, whether Male or Female, Anglo-Vernacular or Vernacular (so far as the funds at the disposal of the Commission may render it practicable) which impart a sound secular education and the managers of which may consent to submit to the conditions mentioned below.

6. All applications for Grants-in-aid must be accompanied by a declaration that applicants are prepared to subject the school, on behalf of which the application is made, to the General Rules of the Commission, and to the inspection of the Government Inspector. The applicants must further declare their willingness to conform to the conditions hereafter specified for the regulation of such grants."[13]

7. In a letter dated 9 July 1858 sent to the Governor, the Anglican Bishop of Colombo pointed out that the rules of February, 1858 went against the decision made by the Commission on 4 December 1857.[14] The Bishop was right about this inconsistency, for the very first rule forbade aid to be given to any school "supported wholly or in part by any Religious Society or Missionary body of any denomination whatsoever."[15] This was precisely the kind of school for which the Bishop had stated a case in his letter of 3 December 1857. Of course, for its part the Commission was right in correcting through its Rules of February, 1858 the erroneous interpretation it had given on 4 December 1857 of the Governor's Minute of May, 1841. The Bishop also pointed out that in his memorial he had urged assistance to all Christian schools "irrespectively of their religious profession" and "without interference with their religious instruction," but that Rule 6 above required compliance with the General Rules of the Commission one of which required the reading of Scripture alone without any distinctive teaching to be grounded upon it.[16] The Bishop pointed out that the effect of this rule would be to exclude many who are most zealous in their labour, and deserving of every help, and to defeat the liberal intentions of the Governor and the Council. The Bishop added that the effect of the rules was "the very opposite system to that which the School Commission itself had applied in the Northern Province, where large aid is given unconditionally to Episcopalians, Wesleyans and Romanists alike" and asked that the Governor request the Commission to reconsider the rules.[17] The Bishop's letter was referred to the

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School Commission by the Colonial Secretary with a covering letter dated 13 August 1858 asking for a report on it. On 13 September 1858, the Bishop addressed another letter to the Governor about a school in Mannar started by his Chaplain there and which received no assistance from the Commission. He urged that "if help is given anywhere by Government for education", the Chaplain should get government aid for his work.[18] In this letter, he did not refer to Jaffna but presumably he had Jaffna in mind. In any case, this letter of the Bishop was referred to the Commission by the Assistant Colonial Secretary with a covering letter, dated 22 September 1858 which stated that "under the circumstances represented by His Lordship, it appears to the Government that on the same principle on which Grants-in-aid to Missionary and other Educational Societies have been made in Jaffna, they might also be made in Mannar."[19]

8. Meanwhile, the Bishop had gone on visitation to Jaffna and from there sent the following letter dated 14 September 1858 to the Governor.

"It is with extreme regret that I feel compelled, before leaving Jaffna, in behalf of the members of the Church of England, to request the attention of Your Excellency to the State of Education, in this capital of the Northern Province. The system adopted by the School commission compels them all to send their sons for education, either to Romish or Wesleyan Schools. No other Boys' School in which English is taught exists within a mile of Jaffna. The result is (as the Chaplain explained the fact which I have myself just witnessed) that very few of the youth present themselves for admission to the Holy Ordinances of the Church.

Five or six years ago I examined when on visitation a good school of 60 or 70 boys which the Chaplain maintained from fees, and such other resources as he could procure, but with such large assistance granted to both Romanists and Wesleyans on each side of him (£150 a year), he was unable to maintain his ground. He struggled on for two or three years unaided, but was obliged at last to close his school. He petitioned, but it was in vain. The parents unanimously petitioned on behalf of their children, and with a like result. The Commission rejected both. It did not harmonize with their system: and though £50 annually had been since added to the Wesleyan grant,

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and another £50 for a school three miles away, the Chaplain is still without aid for the education of the sons of his own congregation. These are the facts, such is the result. In the South of the Island aid is refused to the clergy of the Church of England, because it would, the commission argue, make the education sectarian. In the North they refuse it and themselves make it so; for at the present time no son of Church parents can be educated in any Government School at Jaffna except by Romish or Wesleyan teachers within their own precincts.

Your Excellency will allow me to ask, if this is the impartial, even-handed justice with which you expect the Government funds to be distributed by those to whom you entrust them for the common good of all? Is it fair to accept arbitrarily different systems in different parts of the Colony; or, when adopted, to act so partially upon them? Can the system itself be good, however theoretically equal, of which the practical results are so unequal. I am unable to reconcile with the common notions either of good sense or good feeling, the so stigmatizing any clergyman holding a responsible position (unless proved unworthy) as to grant within the limits of his charge large aids for education to Romish Priests and Wesleyan Missionaries and withhold all assistance from the Chaplain, the only servant of Government invested with sacred duties in the town and therefore accountable both to the Government and to the Bishop, for his discharge of those duties."[20]

9. This letter was referred to the School Commission by the Assistant Colonial Secretary with a covering letter dated 25 September 1858 stating that the Bishop's letter

"appears to the Governor to be eminently entitled to the attention of the Central School Commission, for without expressing any opinion as to the principle by which Grants-in-aid of Education may most conveniently be regulated, His Excellency considers that it is clear that whatever principle be adopted, it should fairly and impartially be applied. If, therefore, the School Commission for reasons satisfactory to itself considers the position of the Northern Province to be such as to warrant an exception from the general rule against making grants to any Religious Society, it should not make the Church of England an exception to its own rule by refusing it that assistance which is granted to Roman Catholics and Wesleyans

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in their school Establishments and was granted to the American Missionaries so long as they chose to accept it. The consequences of this system are clearly stated in the Bishop's letter. A similar application from Mannar was forwarded a few days ago, which must be dealt with on its own merits. But it seems to the Governor self evident that what is done at Jaffna for other Religious Communities, ought to be done for the Church of England too, and that to withhold it, in distributing a public grant, would be in fact to evince a leaning not towards, but against, the Church of England."[21]

10. The School Commission, replying on 19 October 1858 to the Colonial Secretary's three letters of 13 August, 22 September and 25 September, drew attention to the fact that while the Governor's Minute of 26 May 1841 gave the Commission "liberty to grant sums in aid of any private Schools which they may consider deserving of encouragement", the following rule had also been included in the Minute for the Commission's guidance:

"The Commission will understand that it is their duty, by every means in their power, to promote the education in the English language of their fellow subjects of all religious opinions in the Colony. They will, therefore, be particularly careful to introduce in to their schools no books or system of instruction, which might have the effect of excluding scholars of any religious belief whatever."[22]

The Commission had at an early meeting

"acting on this wise and liberal injunction, and yet desirous that the education imparted in the Government Schools should be of a character not wholly secular..passed a Resolution by which they directed that the first hour daily in every Government School should be devoted to Religious Instruction, and that the Masters should be practically enjoined not to require the attendance of those boys whose parents objected to their attendance during that hour..During the first hour of the day, the Bible is read, the Lord's Prayer taught, the Commandments impressed on the minds of the scholars who voluntarily receive such instruction. While the Commission pursues this policy with regard to the Government scholars, they deem it equally their duty not to be instrumental in the establishment or support of Schools conducted on different principles."[23]

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It was also pointed out that in view of the fact that the Commission had among its membership gentlemen connected with Missionary bodies in the island the rules laid down by the Commission cannot have the intention of impeding the efforts of these bodies. But, feeling as they do, that

> "it is the very essence of the institution of Missionary Bodies of whatever creed or denomination, to do their utmost to proselytize the natives of the island to that particular creed or denomination, the Commission feel that they would only effect a double mischief and perpetuate a double wrong, by granting to these bodies any portion of the funds, confided under special instructions and for special purposes, to themselves."[24]

The letter set out the position regarding the Jaffna schools as stated in the Commission's Report for 1843:

> "The attention of the Commission had been long directed towards the schools in the Northern Province of this Island. Their general deficiency had been so evident, that it had been thought advisable in 1842 to close them entirely, with a view to re-opening them under better masters, and more effective superintendence. The Commission's last Report mentioned that new schools were being opened at Caradivoe, Mannar, Chundicully, Oodoopilly, and Wanarponne. They were commenced at the beginning of last year and appeared at first to be well attended; but the number of the scholars very speedily fell so far below the standard which marks the necessity of keeping up a Government school that the Commission was induced, in October last, to apply to the Reverend Gentlemen of the Several Missions at Jaffna, for their opinion as to the cause of the falling off of the Government schools, and as to the means by which the diffusion of English education in the Northern Province might best be promoted. The result of this enquiry did not leave room to doubt but that the ground was pre-occupied by the Missionary schools and that the object of the Commission, and the interests of education, would be more fully forwarded by a certain portion of their funds being applied to aid the endeavours of the Missionary bodies, rather than by establishing rival schools to compete with theirs. The salaries paid by the Commission to the masters of their own schools far exceed the allowances given by the Missionaries and yet fail to

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secure equally efficient labourers—an unhealthy system was introduced, not a rivalry producing good effects on the schools but a competition having a larger amount of salary for its object, and thus impeding the truly meritorious and universally acknowledged exertions of the Missionaries of all denominations, by whom the cause of Religion and Education is attentively and laboriously promoted in the Northern District of this Island. With the conviction on their minds, the Members of the Commission could have no hesitation as to the course to be pursued. Taking into consideration that it was laid down by the Governor's Minute of 26 May 1841 as their duty to promote education in the English language more especially they resolved to assign to the Missions at Jaffna in proportion to the expenditure of each, a sum by which they might either increase the number of their English Schools, or, when this was not practicable, have their own funds disengaged, and free to be employed to defray the charge of instructing large classes of females in the Vernacular language."[25]

The letter also added that the Bishop's statement in his letter of 14 September 1858 was not in accordance with the facts. Referring to the Bishop's statement that there was no other school within a mile, the letter pointed out that an annual grant of £200 is made to a Society in Jaffna in connection with the Church of England (the Church Missionary Society), being a grant equal in amount to that made to the Roman Catholic Mission.

"..coupling the very remarkable expression of the Bishop of Colombo, that no Church of England school exists within a mile of Jaffna with the notorious fact of the existence of such a school within a mile and a quarter, and considering the impression evidently left on His Excellency's mind, that no such school was in existence at all, the Commission is compelled to come to the conclusion, first, that the Bishop's letter was calculated to mislead and deceive the Governor: and secondly that His Excellency the Governor was, for the time at least, so misled and deceived."[26]

With reference to Mannar, the Commission had recently appointed a teacher for the government school and did not think there was room for two schools at Mannar.

11. It can be said that the correspondence scarcely redounds to the credit of the Bishop of Colombo. Nevertheless, the Legislative

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Council was determined to extend grants to missionary schools, and passed the following resolution on 24 November 1858.

"That this Council is of opinion that Grants-in-aid of education (as already sanctioned by them) be given to schools, whether connected with the missionary bodies or not, but subject to the Departmental Minute of 6 July 1841."[27]

12. Supplementary rules were adopted by the Commission on 26 November, 1858 for implementing the resolution of the Legislative Council.

"The Central School Commission is prepared to make Grants-in-aid of schools conducted by Missionary Societies on the following conditions, supplementary to the existing rules for Grants-in-aid.

1. In every school aided by a grant the first hour of tuition in each day shall be devoted to Religious Instruction, which shall be confined to that hour;

2. If any parent or guardian object to the attendance of the child during that hour, he shall intimate such objection to the teacher, and the attendance of the child shall not be insisted upon;

3. The Religious Instruction shall be confined to the truths received by Christians of every denomination and shall comprise the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, and the Apostles' Creed, together with the daily reading of the Bible;

4. Grants shall not be made to Groups of Schools;

5. No school shall be aided which is established in the neighbourhood of a previously existing school of the same class;

6. Every school aided by a grant shall be periodically visited by the Inspector of Government Schools, who shall report to the School Commission the state of the school."[28]

13. By a letter dated 30 March 1859, the Rev. Fr. L. M. Keating, the Catholic missionary at Trincomalee, enquired from the Commission "Which Bible is to be daily read in the schools as a condition *sine qua non*, no Grants-in-aid will be made?"[29] He also enquired what division and interpretation of the "Ten Commandments" had to be

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followed. By letter dated 16 May 1859, the Rev. Keating was informed by the Commission that in schools receiving Grants-in-aid "the English Authorized Version of the Scriptures and the ordinary division of the Ten Commandments are to be used."[30] This reply having been brought to the notice of Governor Ward, he expressed his concern about the position that had been taken.

"..it appears to His Excellency that by the new rules in regard to Grants-in-aid of education, a condition has been introduced, which denies the whole Catholic population of the island from benefiting by them; for they cannot be expected to adopt a Bible which they cannot use and Version of the Commandments repudiated by the Church. The Governor regrets that he did not see that the rules admitted of such an interpretation before he allowed them to be promulgated— and he would propose to the Commission that they should now be re-cast so as to admit the Catholics to their full share in the benefits intended to be conferred upon all Christian sects."[31]

14. The Rev. Fr. Keating, in his letter of 30 March 1859, also drew the Commission's attention to the hardships caused by the rule regarding distance. Asking for a grant for a Roman Catholic school, debarred from grant by the rule regarding distance, the Rev. Fr. Keating stated as follows. "..there are at present four Protestant Schools at Trincomalee, supported entirely by Government aid: and not one Catholic school receives a shilling from the Government."[32] In his reply of 16 May 1859 to the Rev. Fr. Keating, the Secretary to the Commission indulged in an amazing piece of quibbling.

"..Mr. Keating appears to be under a misapprehension as to the present position of educational matters at Trincomalee. The schools at the station are not Protestant schools, but open to children of all religious persuasions and the strictest observance of the Commission's rules with regard to religious instruction has been guaranteed. Nor has Grant-in-aid been made to the Protestant Military Chaplain there: Mr. Glennie is merely the Agent of the Commission, and the Superintendent of their schools, which are in every respect conducted on the same principles as all other government schools."[33]

15. In response to the Governor's request that the rules regarding Grants-in-aid should be re-cast "so as to admit the Catholics to their full share in the benefits intended to be conferred upon all Christian

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sects," the Commission had a meeting on 2 July 1859.[34] At this meeting, C. A. Lorenz, who, as a member of the Legislative Council had moved the motion that had led to the passing of the new rules, urged in his capacity as a member of the School Commission that the Commission should revert

> "to the wording of the old rule of 1841, which had been in force for 18 years and had been fully tested and found to be perfectly satisfactory, the great feature of the rule being that perfect neutrality was secured in respect of religious instruction, without giving rise to any of those complications which must result from the peculiar view which particular teachers might have on particular questions, and to which the introduction of the Ten Commandments and the Apostles' Creed could but give ample scope."[35]

In other words, Lorenz's suggestion was that religious instruction should be confined only to reading the Bible. On a vote being taken on Lorenz's suggestion there was a tie. The Commission then decided by a majority that the third rule which read as follows:

> "The Religion Instruction shall be confined to the truths received by Christians of every denomination, and shall comprise the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, and the Apostles' Creed, together with the daily reading of the Bible,"

should be abrogated.[36] In other words, there was to be no restriction on religious instruction in so far as Christian denominations were concerned. While deleting the rule, however, the Commission added the word 'Christian' before 'schools' in the preamble (see paragraph 12), thus making it clear that Grants-in-aid would be made only to Christian Schools. In a letter dated 4 July 1859 sent by Lorenz to the Governor, Lorenz expressed concern about the removal of restrictions on religious instruction. He wrote of the Commission

> "..they propose to perpetuate discord and dissension amongst all classes of the community by allowing Missionary bodies to be under no restriction. So that we have now constituted ourselves a Society for the advancement of all sorts of Missions and all sorts of religions."[37]

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He went on to say,

> "..the Government which is interested in the subject of secular education alone and professes to insist upon Christian instruction only when the pupils are willing to receive it, should not countenance an unrestricted system of grants which will involve us in difficulties and complications of no ordinary gravity, and will without answering any practical purposes, only tend to perpetuate dissensions between various denominations."[38]

Lorenz's letter was sent by the Colonial Secretary on 13 August 1859 to the Commission with a covering letter stating that "it is impossible to lay down more clearly or convincingly the principles upon which it is desirable that the Legislature and the School Commission should act in dealing with this delicate question."[39]

16. The response of the Commission, however, took the form of a decision to restrict grants to private schools. It was communicated by letter dated 3 October 1859 from the Secretary of the School Commission to the Colonial Secretary:

> "Finding after a year's experience that, with the exception of one grant, only one Missionary Society has felt itself at liberty to accept Grants-in-aid of Education under the Rules framed by the Commission and sanctioned by the Legislative Council and feeling assured that it would not have been the wish, either of His Excellency the Governor or of the Legislative Council, that a benefit intended for all should be practically confined to a portion only of the native population, the Commission considers it desirable to revert to the original Minute of May, 1841 (which limits Grants-in-aid to private schools) as explained by the Rules sanctioned by the Legislative Council in February, 1858."[40]

17. On 7 December 1859, Rev. John Wise (Chaplain), six Church Missionary Society missionaries, and two Wesleyan missionaries addressed a petition to the Legislative Council. They began by quoting a passage dealing with grants from the last available report of the School Commission,

> "The subject is beset with so many difficulties, of which the impossibility of exercising the requisite supervision over the teachers

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themselves is by no means the least, that the Commission entertains serious thoughts of discontinuing it altogether. They feel that their chief duty is establishing efficient schools in the principal towns and villages where an English education is mainly sought after, and where neither private individuals nor missionary societies are in a position to make due provision for the instruction of the people."[41]

The petitioners went on to say that they would

> "deprecate the abandonment of the bulk of the population..to hopeless ignorance or to the science, defective morality and atheistic teaching of the Native schools, being fully convinced, that the education derived from this source is practically worse than useless and is in itself a great barrier to the cause of civilization."[42]

The petitioners pointed out that there were agencies which were prepared to help, and commended for the consideration of the government the grants-in-aid system in operation in India. The following revised rules regulating grants-in-aid schools in the Madras Presidency were cited by the petitioners.

> "1. Grants-in-aid of schools and other educational institutions will be made with the special object of extending and improving the secular education of the people, and will be given impartially to all schools (so far as the funds at the disposal by government may admit) which impart a sound secular education upon the conditions hereinafter specified. It will be essential to the consideration of applications for aid that the schools on behalf of which they are preferred shall be under the management of one or more persons, who in the capacity of proprietors, trustees, or members of a committee selected by the Society or Association by which the school may have been established will be prepared to undertake the general superintendence of the school and to be answerable for its performance for some given time.
>
> 2. Every application for a grant must be accompanied by a declaration that the applicants are prepared to subject the school.. to the inspection of a Government Inspector; such inspection and examination relating only to the general management and to the secular instruction, and having no reference to any religious instruction which may be imparted in the school."[43]

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The petitioners pointed out that the grants-in-aid sanctioned by the Legislative Council and offered to Mission schools by the Central School Commission were subject to restrictions upon religious teaching which prevented their acceptance. They urged the introduction of a scheme of grants-in-aid, such as the Madras Presidency scheme, leaving the Missionary societies "unfettered as to their religious teaching but reserving to Government the rights of inspection and of fixing the standard of secular instruction required in different classes whether English or vernacular."[44]

18. At a meeting of the Commission held on 19 July 1860, the following decision was taken:

> "The Commission decline to make provision in their estimates for the continuance of Grants-in-aid to schools claiming the grant under the Supplementary Rules for Grants-in-aid, no less on the grounds laid down in the following Resolution, than because it is now brought to their notice, that the applicants for the Grants did not come from any Missionary Society, but from private individuals, and consequently the schools in question would not appear to come under the designation of schools conducted by Missionary Societies;
>
> 2. Resolved:—That the Commission adhere to the Resolution recorded in their Minutes of 20 September 1859, (wherein they recommend that the Rules for Grants-in-aid of May, 1841, limiting the Grants to Private Schools, be reverted to), and consequently decline to recommend the continuance of the Grants to schools conducted by Missionary Societies; but should the Government decline to sanction this proposal, the Commission would recommend the removal of the restrictions relating to the time and nature of Religious Instruction as far as regards schools conducted by Missionary societies; in as much as they do not deem it right for the Public money to be so applied as to benefit only one section of the Community."[45]

It will be noted that apart from reiterating its position, as decided on 20 September 1859 and set out in its letter of 3 October 1859, the Commission also added that should the government decline to sanction this proposal, the Commission would recommend the removal of the restrictions relating to the time and nature of Religious Instruction, as far as schools conducted by Missionary societies were concerned.

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19. A sub-committee of the Legislative Council on the Supply Bill of 1861 adverted to the question of grants in a report adopted by the Legislative Council in December 1860.

"An application for a grant-in-aid to a school conducted by a missionary body at Batticaloa having been made, the Committee fully considered the whole question, and the majority resolved that the rule of the Central School Commission, relating to religious instruction be retained with this modification, 'that on such days as the Visitor (Missionary or otherwise) attends to examine the School, the religious instruction should be restricted to the first hour of examination; and that any boy shall be at liberty to stand out during such examination'. It is hoped that this express provision that the rule should not be construed as applicable to the periodical examination of Superintending Missionaries, will meet all reasonable objections hitherto entertained to the principle on which Grants-in-aid have been made by the School Commission."[46]

20. At this stage, the Rev. Fr. Bonjean entered the grants-in-aid controversy with a series of letters to the *Ceylon Examiner*. On the issue of the observance of the Commission's rules with regard to religious instruction, he had this to say,

"Whatever may abstractly be said, I believe it is a well established fact, that under one pretext or another, Protestant missionaries ever strive to bring, and almost in all cases, succeed in bringing, the children who frequent their schools, not only to receive the religious instruction they impart in the school room, but also to attend Divine Worship on Sundays in churches of their connection. How they continue to conciliate this practice with their pledge to government, they could best explain. But I do not think they see in it any 'fraud' or any offence whatever against their 'common honesty'. Why they have only to work a little upon the fears of any reluctant parent to threaten e.g. the dismissal of his child from the school, to wring from him a consent, which although certainly not spontaneous, could not, without difficulty be proven to have been extorted."[47]

In the same letter, the Rev. Fr. Bonjean made the point that a missionary

"who had accepted a Government grant under the restrictions of the Commission's Rules could yet carry out his proselytizing views

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> in a thousand other little ways, which the silence of the Rules on many points, would allow him to do, without violating, (at least, literally) the compact with the Government under which the grant was given and accepted."[48]

One of the "other little ways" was the use of text-books. The Rev. Fr. Bonjean pointed out the Protestant bias in the books used in the schools run by the Commission itself, thereby hinting at the much greater Protestant bias that would be reflected in the textbooks used in Protestant missionary schools.

21. The Roman Catholic position as set out by Rev. Fr. Bonjean was that even the restrictions were not a safeguard against prosyletization by the Protestants, and it was to demonstrate this that many of the letters quoted earlier were written. And, as the restrictions were not an adequate safeguard, they should not be relaxed. Furthermore, he argued that restrictions could not be devised as to remove abuses and that the only fair way in which the government could assist private enterprise in education was by allowing every Protestant denomination and the Roman Catholics to run denominational schools, each becoming entitled to a grant in proportion to the number of the adherents to it. He was, however, not prepared to see the government extend the same kind of facility to Buddhists, Muslims and Hindus. Rev. Fr. Bonjean argued at great length the case against extending the facility of denominational schools to Buddhists, Hindus and Muslims:

> "....the question is, can a Christian Government, can a Government administered by Christians, extend the Hindus, Buddhists, Mohomedians etc., the same toleration which it does to the different Christian communities? Does the same reason exist in both cases? I will not undertake to say. But, I think everyone will agree thus far, that any system of toleration which implied the actual support and maintenance of any one of the above named religions, would be quite unworthy, I shall not say of a Christian, but of an enlightened European Government. Hence, every system of Education under which public money was applied to the teaching of the religious doctrines of either Brahamanism, Buddhism or Mohamedanism would be deprecated and most justly so, by even the warmest advocates of religious equality. To tolerate the existence, under certain necessary limitations, the public worship of these religions, would be considered by every one an extreme bound beyond which toleration

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should be designated by some other less honourable term, and no man having any respect for public opinion would dare contend that toleration should ever be strained to the point of giving countenance of any sort, to any system of Paganism. I go a step further yet, and assume that no friend of religious freedom would have the heart to blame Government for resorting to repression and coercion with regard to such religions, in the two following instances. 1st when their teaching was atheistical and contrary to natural Religion. 2nd when either in their teaching, or their practices, they disregarded the rules of morality, or endangered social order, or the safety of the state. From all these, I conclude, that were the system of Denominational Schools admitted in Ceylon as a general rule, its application to the followers of Pagan or non-Christian systems of religion should be somewhat modified, and the modification should consist in this that the positive teaching of Pagan or Infidel doctrines should, on no account be allowed in such of their Schools as received the assistance of public money. Of course, whatever in those religions is morally good, whatever is conformable with natural religion, whatever is conducive to order, peace, and the general welfare and development of the people, could and should be retained. But in the absence of any serious guarantee to that effect, the determination of what had that moral tendency and what had not, should be left with Government.

So, the words religious toleration, religious equality, religious non-interference and the like, must when applied to non-Christian communities be taken *cum grano salis*, and in an acceptance somewhat different from what is their ordinary meaning, when applied to Christians. This difference is in the nature of both cases. For, if you prevent the Christian from teaching his children the religious tenets of the church he belongs to, he will feel this interference as an invasion of his conscience, because, whether right or wrong, in his religious views, he considers himself morally bound to hold them for himself and to teach them to his children; and so, mere interference with that teaching annihilates his religious freedom. With the Hindoo and other such like religionists, the case stands quite differently. If you interfere with the Hindoo to prevent him from inculcating on his children the existence e.g. of the Hindoo Triad or the reality of the 10 Incarnations of Vishnu, you do not come into, collision with his conscience; you do not abridge his religious liberty

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for the quite obvious reason that these and other doctrines, (I use the word for want of a more precise one, as merely designating a set of opinions or statements, having neither scientific value, nor dogmatic authority) are not for the Hindoo the object of any conscientious, or obligatory belief. As you said, Sir, in a late article of yours, which has pleased me very much, the Pagans, whether Ancient or Modern, had, and have, no dogmas, no teaching, no Creed, no Faith, and, as for religious principles, if they have any, these do not bear on the peculiar form of their Paganism but are entirely derived from and mainly depend upon, Natural Religion. Hence, to ask whether they have religious scruples, and whether they have religious objections on the precise score of their Paganism is simply ridiculous. The intimation of our entertaining the merest misgivings of the existence in them of such scruples, would only elicit the smiles of all sensible men amongst them."[49]

It was, of course, typical of the time that such sentiments should have been expressed about oriental religions.

22. Coming back to the Rev. Fr. Bonjean's trenchant criticism of the educational activities of the Protestant missionaries, through the medium of the Commission's (Government) schools as well as the missionary schools, it must be said that however well founded the criticism was, he was less than fair to them in failing to concede that imbued as they were with evangelical zeal to convert to their faith and thereby save all unbelievers, this end—the *summum bonum*, to the best of their convictions—justified in their eyes all means that could be used to achieve it. If the Rev. Father did not himself live in a glass house, at least his successors in Ceylon did after they accepted grants-in-aid and increasingly admitted to Roman Catholics schools large numbers of non-Roman Catholic children. Little distinction lay in the methods used by the Protestants and the Roman Catholics to proselytize children of each other's persuasions as well as Buddhist, Hindu and Muslim children, and what the Rev. Father said of Protestant missionary educators was equally true, *mutatis mutandis*, of his co-religionists of a later day.

23. The Rev. Fr. Bonjean was quick to protest against the changes in the Grants-in-aid system decided upon by the Legislative Council in December, 1860.

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"The water gate has been lifted, through which proselytism may henceforth flow without hindrance and without it being even possible to stem its over flooding concern..the drift of this modification is to remove the objection hitherto entertained by some Protestant missionary societies against the restrictions on religious instruction, which it had been the very object of the new modified Rules to impose. According to the Rules, as they stood before, the religious instruction in all Government Grant Schools (those in Jaffna excepted) was limited to the first hour of the day, and attendance at the hour was not compulsory. But now, the restriction holds good only on such days as the Visitor (Missionary or otherwise) attends, and is expressly declared not to be applicable to the periodical examination of the Superintending Missionary. Who that Visitor is, I do not precisely know; I suppose he must be the Inspector, or any member of the Sub-Committee. But what is plain enough is that the restriction rule does bind no longer the Superintending Missionary nor, should I think either the Master himself, both of whom will, in future, be at full liberty to enforce the attendance at the hour of Religious Instruction of all the pupils, and even to dispense entirely with the rule limiting that instruction to any given portion of the day."[50]

24. The Commission adopted on 12 February 1861 a new set of rules and sent a circular to "gentlemen interested in Grants-in-aid of Education."[51] A covering letter stated as follows:

"These Rules embody, without any substantial alteration, those under which Grants-in-aid have hitherto been administered, namely the rules of February, 1858 and the special Rules of November that year. Effect is given in Rule VII Section 5 to the views expressed in the Report of the Sub-Committee of the Legislative Council on the Supply Bill of 1861."

Rules 1, III and VII were as follows:

1. "The School Commission will entertain applications for grants-in-aid of any Private or Missionary schools, and will (so far as their funds will permit) make such grants impartially to all schools which impart a sound secular education.

11. Grants will be restricted to those schools only, in which some fee is exacted from the scholars, and no grant will be made to groups

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of schools or to a school established in the neighbourhood of an existing school of the same class.

VII. No grants will be made except on the following conditions to which the applicant for grant will be expected to subscribe before he can receive the grant.

1. That only the first hour of tuition on each day shall be devoted to the Religious Instruction.

2. That the Religious Instruction shall be confined to a simple explanation of the Bible and the leading tenets of Christianity and shall be conducted in such a spirit as to avoid if possible the exclusion of any scholars, on grounds of denominational teaching.

3. That no books other than those approved by the Commission shall be used in the school.

4. That any child, whose parent or guardian shall object to his receiving Religious Instruction, shall be permitted to stand out of the class during the first hour.

5. Provided, however, that it shall be competent for the visitor or superintendent of any school to examine the classes on religious subjects, on the occasion of any periodical visits it being understood, howsoever, that such examination shall be confined to the first hour of the visit, and shall be conducted subject to the above restrictions.

6. That a copy in English, Sinhalese and Tamil of the foregoing conditions shall be hung up in some conspicuous part of the school room."[52]

These new rules made no distinction between private schools and missionary schools, and were equally applicable to both categories of schools. Certain comparisons may be made between the rules adopted in November, 1858 and those adopted in February, 1861. According to the first rule of November, 1858, it was obligatory that the first hour of each day should be devoted to Religious Instruction; rule VII (1) of February 1861 did not make Religious Instruction obligatory. Rev. Fr. Bonjean made the following comment, however:

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"The rules have declared that Religious Instruction was to be limited to the first hour—very well. But would you consider that a Master overstepped the limits of, and infringed the Rules, who on occasion of the history lesson expatiated, with the Section of the History of the Middle Ages by Mr. Tyler in his hands, upon the errors and corruptions of Popery and gave no history of the nursery tales which some Protestant historians have consigned in their works."[53]

Rule VII (2) of 1861 limited the scope of the Religious Instruction to a greater extent than the corresponding rule of 1858. In that sense, it was a concession to Roman Catholic opinion and was considered by Rev. Fr. Bonjean to be a slight improvement upon the old rule. It is also recorded by Fr. Bonjean that in response to a query by him the Commission explained that either the Douai Version of the Bible or the Protestant authorized version of the Bible could be used.[54] This, too, was a concession to Roman Catholic opinion. Rule VII (3) of 1861 did not have any parallel in the rules of 1858. According to an explanation made to Fr. Bonjean by the Commission the purpose of the rule was to reserve to the Commission "the power of placing a veto on the use in any aided school of any book which is of a purely denominational character."[55] This too, was a concession to Roman Catholic opinion, and Rev. Fr. Bonjean expressed the hope that "it may be found always practicable to reject any book (whether in History, Geography, Philosophy or any other subject) the style of, or the statements in which, were of a nature to wound the feelings of Catholics,"[56] Rule VII (4) of 1861 made exemption from attendance at religious instruction a little easier than the corresponding rule of 1858. According to the old rule, the parents of the child had to intimate such objection to the teacher, and then the attendance of the child was not to be insisted upon. According to the new rule, if the parents objected, the intimation was less of a formality, and the child was to be permitted to stand out of the class. Rule 5 of 1861 did not have a parallel in 1858, as it had been included to accommodate the views expressed by the Committee on the Supply Bill for 1861. Fr. Bonjean pointed out that the rule as formulated was less objectionable in its present form than in the form suggested by the Committee, which excluded operation of the rule on certain days.[57]

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25. The Commission made it clear that its rules of February, 1861 relating to Religious Instruction "have with obvious propriety been extended to all schools receiving Grants-in-aid, including those which have been long conducted on behalf of the Commission by the Mission bodies of Jaffna."[58] The Roman Catholic and Wesleyan missionaries in Jaffna agreed to conform to the new rules, but the Church mission protested against extending the new rules to its schools. In a letter dated 9 September, 1861 sent by the Rev. L. Spaulding and ten other missionaries to the Commission, they stated as follows: "It never has been, and it can never be expected, that we, as Christian missionaries, can identify ourselves with a system of education from which Christian instruction may be altogether excluded. We say, may be, for the rule on this point makes the attendance optional."[59] The missionaries went on to argue that the observance of such a proviso would be "to sacrifice those great and holy principles which we hold, and for the spread and maintenance of which we stand solemnly pledged."[60] The Commission, however, refused to relax its rules in respect of the schools in queation and pointed out that the grants would have to be withdrawn unless the rules were "fully and unreservedly accepted."[61] The Church Mission declined to abide by the rules and the grants to eleven schools were withdrawn. In regard to the two schools conducted on behalf of the Commission by the Catholic mission, and the five schools conducted on behalf of the Commission by the Wesleyan mission, the Commission decided that "in order to obviate as far as possible all misconception with respect to the character of these schools and to prevent the possibility of their being regarded as in any way denominational....they shall be known as Government Grant Schools and they shall be distinguished by local or other names not of a demoninational character."[62]

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CHAPTER 18

SUPERIOR EDUCATION (1832 - 1869)

Superior Schools — The Colombo Academy

1. The so-called Superior Schools, consisting of an Academy or Seminary and Preparatory Schools, established by Governor North in 1798 in order to provide an education of a somewhat higher sort than that available in the government parish schools, had a chequered existence after the year 1803. The Academy or Seminary alone survived, becoming in 1832 the Hulftsdorf School, providing education in English but at a lower level than that provided during the heyday of the Academy or Seminary, which in fact was limited to the first two to three years of its existence.

2. Colebrooke's enthusiastic recommendation for the establishment of a College did not receive much support either from the Colonial office in London or from the Archdeacon who was the head of the educational and ecclesiastical establishments in Ceylon. The Secretary of State agreed that the subject was important, but did not "feel at liberty to sanction an undertaking of this nature at present."[1] The general position that the Archdeacon took up was that education should be in the hands of the Church rather than in the hands of the government.[2] When Governor Horton wrote to the Archdeacon to ascertain his views regarding the establishment of a college, the Archdeacon pointed out that through the institutions at Jaffna and Cotta (both missionary institutions) there would be "more well educated young men..than government can employ".[3] With such lack of support for a College, it was not a matter for surprise that no action was taken to establish one.

3. The Rev. J. Marsh, who had served for a time on the staff of the C.M.S. institution at Cotta, established in Colombo in 1835 a private academy which was attended by the children of Burghers, who had readily accepted English as their mother tongue, for an education of an advanced nature. The parents urged the Governor to take the academy over and run it as a government institution with the Rev. Marsh as its head. The Governor agreed, and the Colombo Academy was established in January, 1836.

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4. In 1839, Governor Mackenzie suggested to the Secretary of State that the Academy should be developed to provide training for the professions of law and medicine, but his suggestion did not find favour with the Secretary of State.[4] A primary school, called the Model School, was added to the Academy in 1842.

5. The number of students in the Academy increased rapidly, reaching 254 in 1847. By 1849, however, the number of students came down to 20 on account of two retrenchment measures that were taken. Firstly, there was a trebling of tuition fees in an attempt to make the institution less of a financial burden on the government, and secondly the Model School was abolished. The depletion in numbers made the government give serious thought to doing away with the Academy. It was also thought that the functions served by the Academy would be served by the establishment in 1851 of S. Thomas' College by the Bishop of Colombo. Parents and old boys of the Academy, however, petitioned the Governor against the proposal to abolish the Academy, arguing that an institution established under denominational auspices would not be free from sectarian influence. In response to the petition, a decision was made in 1852 to halve the fees in order to attract more students. The reduction in fees helped to send up numbers again. In 1857, in accordance with the recommendation of a Select Committee of the Legislative Council, the Colombo Central School was amalgamated with the Academy thereby giving it a Lower School. As from 1857, the Academy developed a collegiate division, Queen's College by name. It was affiliated to the University of Calcutta and prepared students for the entrance examination of the University of Calcutta, achieving quite conspicuous success in so far as the performance of the candidates presented for examinations was concerned. It was, however, pointed out in a memorandum submitted to the Morgan Committee (chapter 25) that in consequence of the

> "affiliation to the Calcutta University the whole curriculum of study is sacrificed to the subjects required for the University Entrance Examination. The effect of this is felt even in the Lower School, in which it was intended that a practical commercial education should be imparted, without the necessity of advancement to the Upper School. But the real fact is that, for the small percentage of boys who wish to pass up into the Upper School, the whole of the pupils are obliged to prepare for the curriculum of the University; and thus the object of both schools to a certain extent frustrated."[5]

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6. In 1869, the Legislative Council decided that the connection between the Calcutta University and the Queen's College of the Colombo Academy should be severed. The Academy was reorganized, resulting in the abolition of Queen's College. A scholarship tenable at a British University, Cambridge or Oxford, was established in lieu of the exhibitions previously founded in connection with the Calcutta University.

Superior Schools — The Central Schools

7. The Central School Commission expressed in 1842 its concern that "the system of education in Ceylon was by no means practical" and established three Central Schools.[6] It was hoped that through these schools "such an impetus will be given to practical education in the island that the Ceylonese youths will in future avail themselves of it to qualify themselves for agriculture and other lucrative employments."[7] The curriculum prescribed by the Central School Commission for the Central Schools was as follows:

1. General Geography and History;
2. Commercial Arithmetic;
3. Mathematics, including its applications to Mensuration, Guaging, Surveying, Navigation and Drawing;
4. The Outlines of Natural Philosophy and Chemistry, and their application to Mechanics and Agriculture.

The lack of economic rewards for qualifications in practical subjects led, however, in a very short time to their neglect and to the inclusion of Latin as a subject.

8. In the course of the retrenchment measures taken in 1848, the Central Schools in Kandy and Galle lost their special character, namely the little practical education they provided, and the Central School in Colombo became part of the Colombo Academy.

Superior Girls' Schools

9. In 1843, the Central School Commission established two girls' schools in Colombo, under lady principals recruited from England, to provide 'superior' education for girls. These schools were considered a great success, and two more schools were opened at Galle and Matara.

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CHAPTER 19

THE TRAINING OF TEACHERS (1832 - 1869)

1. In so far as mission schools were concerned, a rudimentary kind of training was provided for a small number of prospective mission school teachers at the Kotte Seminary of the Church Mission and the Baticotta Seminary of the American Mission.

2. One of the proposals that Governor Mackenzie made for the reorganization of education in Ceylon envisaged the establishment of Normal Schools for training teachers.[1] The proposal found favour with the Bishop of Madras but not with the Colonial Office. The government did not have vernacular schools, but the missions did, and Mackenzie was sensitive to the need to improve their quality. Mackenzie may also have been concerned by the fact that the institutions at Kotte and Baticotta did not provide a sufficient number of teachers and moreover that some missions (the Wesleyan Mission, for example) did not have comparable facilities for obtaining trained teachers for their schools.

3. In 1841, the Central School Commission started at the Colombo Academy a Normal Class for training English teachers. One of the requirements for admission was that the prospective student should have been a regular attendant at a Christian place of worship. It was clearly the intention of the government of the time that only Christian education should be encouraged.

4. In 1845, the Rev. Gogerly urged the setting up of a normal school for training vernacular teachers. In spite of the opposition on the part of the Anglican Church to the proposal, Governor Campbell gave his approval and in June 1845 the government established a native normal institution, with the Rev. A. Kessen of the Wesleyan Mission as the Principal. The Bishop opposed the appointment of the Rev. Kessen to the post, and differences between the Bishop and the Governor developed over it (chapter 16 paragraph 11). At this time, the government did not have vernacular schools and the intention was that the teachers trained at the native normal institution should take up posts in mission schools. In 1847, the Central School Commission, after inviting applications from missionary societies in order to allo–

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cate to them the teachers passing out of the native normal institution assigned four teachers to the Anglicans, eighteen to the Wesleyans and two to other missionary groups. The Bishop was dissatisfied with the number of teachers allocated to the Anglicans, and protested to the Governor.[2] The Governor, however, thought that the distribution was equitable and did not uphold the Bishop's objections.[3]

5. In the course of the retrenchment measures taken in 1848, the normal classes for English teachers were discontinued. The native normal institution survived the retrenchment measures, but not for very long, however, as it was closed down in 1858.

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CHAPTER 20

LANGUAGE IN EDUCATION (1832 - 1869)

1. Colebrooke's recommendations regarding the language medium for education have been described in chapter 12 paragraphs 4, 7 and 8. In brief, they were to the effect that state support should be extended only for education in English, and that a knowledge of English should be required for all teachers. As pointed out in chapter 12 paragraph 13, the ninety seven government parish schools that existed in 1831 came down to five in 1832 on the discontinuance of the teachers who did not have a knowledge of English. The budget for education was thereby reduced, and Governor Horton conveyed the important and undoubtedly welcome information to the Secretary of State. Moreover, a seal was set on whatever hopes had been entertained by the native population that the parish school system which provided education in Sinhalese would expand in response to the needs of the population. It was a matter of governmental policy that the government should provide education for a few through the medium of English so that they would be able to take up posts in government service. The parish schools had by and large provided education in Sinhalese in the rural areas, and with their closing down the government completely withdrew from providing education for the rural folk and began to confine its attention to a few towns.

2. After the closing down of the government parish school system which provided education in Sinhalese, and the consequent abandonment of hopes that the native population had of a wider diffusion of education through the establishment of more such schools, the government showed itself to be less than serious in regard to its language policy in education as long as it involved no more than a minimal financial commitment. In response to protests that the government was doing nothing for education in the northern province, the government established in 1832 four Tamil medium schools, as English education in this province was already well looked after by the missions. In Colombo, too, the government established a Tamil school for girls. By the year 1839, the government had under its management 35 English schools and 5 vernacular schools, all the latter being Tamil medium schools. In other words, there existed the anomalous situation that the government, which had completely withdrawn from providing education in Sinhalese, was nevertheless providing education in Tamil,

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though on a very limited scale, while the officially declared policy was one of providing education in English.

3. The first evidence of some realistic thinking on the part of officialdom in regard to the role of language in education came from Governor Mackenzie. He had had experience of education in Britain and in his view the use of English as the medium of instruction with children who had another language as their mother tongue did not succeed unless the use of the English medium was preceded by the ability to read in the mother tongue. He thought that on account of the error in trying to educate Gaelic children in English before they had received the beginnings of their education in Gaelic, the highest attainment of the student was generally "to read by rote and understand the meaning of little that he did read."[1] As a result of the recognition of this error, the principle had been accepted in Scotland, Wales and Ireland that a student should learn to read in his mother tongue before being taught English.[2] Mackenzie did not stand for the curtailment of the facilities to learn English. All he wanted to do was to make sure that education in English would follow upon a firm foundation of education in the mother tongue. In fact, he thought that support for the native languages, far from leading to the neglect of English, would make instruction in English even more popular in the sense that the large numbers who would receive the beginnings of their education in the native languages would go on to acquire a knowledge of English. In his address to the Legislative Council on 26 December 1839, Mackenzie pointed out that

> "assuming that before English shall be taught each scholar should learn to read in his native tongue, the preparation of works, by means of a Translation Committee, would be equally indispensable; such works to embrace from the most elementary books to those suited to the highest attainments in education within the Colony."[3]

Although many books for promoting literacy existed in Sinhalese, Mackenzie did not consider them suitable for use. The reason was no doubt the fact that they were Buddhistic in content and/or spirit and unsuited for the kind of education that Mackenzie was interested in.

4. On account of the position of responsibility that the Bishop of Madras occupied in regard to educational matters in Ceylon, Governor Mackenzie conveyed his views on language to the Bishop.

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One of the arguments in Mackenzie's letter to the Bishop urged, no doubt with a view to making his suggestion regarding the use of the mother tongue as the medium of instruction before introducing English attractive to the Bishop from the point of view of the Bishop's evangelical interests, that education in the mother tongue would be a prelude to conversion to Christianity.[4] This possibility lay in the fact that much of the material that would be presented in the mother tongue would have a Christian bias, and exposure to such material could lead to an appreciation of Christianity, and hence result in conversion. The Bishop enthusiastically supported Mackenzie.

> "I would suggest that in the first place ample provision be made for communicating instruction to them in their own languages, as preparatory and subsidiary to their requiring an adequate knowledge of, and prosecuting their studies in ours,"

stated the Bishop in his reply to Mackenzie.[5] The Bishop also supported the idea of a Translation Committee, and expressed his enthusiasm for the translation of the Holy Scriptures into the local languages and the possibilities it would open up for the wide diffusion of Christianity among the mass of people. Mackenzie's idea of establishing two Normal Schools for training Sinhalese and Tamil teachers was also favourably received by the Bishop.

5. Mackenzie's views regarding education in the native languages and the Translation Committee were known to the Colonial Office in London through its reading of the Governor's address of December, 1839 to the Legislative Council. Before Mackenzie's letter to the Secretary of State, containing his own views, the Bishop's observations, and Mackenzie's comments on the Bishop's observations reached the Secretary of State, the latter sent instructions to Mackenzie conveying his decisions on the reforms to be carried out in education. In regard to language policy, the decisions went completely against Mackenzie's expectations.[6] The Colonial Office was not prepared to sanction the expenditure of public funds for promoting education in the native languages or for undertaking translations from English into them. Mackenzie then decided to make representations to the Secretary of State setting out the justification for his language proposals in as strong terms as possible. As enclosures to his letter, Mackenzie sent the reply

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he had received from the Bishop endorsing his suggestions regarding the place that should be given to instruction in Sinhalese and Tamil and to translations into these languages. A memorandum from the Wesleyan missionary, the Rev. D. J. Gogerly, in support of the language proposals was also enclosed. Governor Mackenzie had found in him a very ardent advocate of the use of the native languages, based no doubt on the extensive experience which the Wesleyan mission had in conducting a large number of schools in which the medium was Sinhalese. The Rev. Gogerly supported the establishment of a Translation Committee, too, and emphasized "the absolute destitution of books" in Sinhalese "calculated to inform and improve the mind."[7]

6. Governor Mackenzie's reiteration of the case for the native languages did not find favour with the Colonial Office in London. James Stephen, the Permanent Under-Secretary at the Colonial Office, made an adverse minute regarding Mackenzie's proposal. He minuted that it was

> "unnecessary for the Government to direct its attention to devote the funds available for education to instruction in the native languages, and that the preferable plan would be to encourage the acquirement of the English Language by conveying instruction in that language to the scholars both male and female in all the schools conducted by the government."[8]

Philip Anstruther, the Colonial Secretary from Ceylon spending his leave in England and often consulted regarding Ceylon by the Colonial Office, also poured cold water on the translation project in a Minute dated 27 November 1840. In the light of the Minutes made by Stephen and Anstruther, the Secretary of State reaffirmed his earlier decision not to support the Translation Committee and instructed Mackenzie to pursue the policy of providing education through the medium of English.[9]

7. Governor Mackenzie left Ceylon soon after the issue of his Minute of 27 March 1841 dissolving the School Commission and announcing the setting up of a new Commission, to be called the Central School Commission. Among the persons nominated to the Central School Commission by Mackenzie's successor, Governor Colin Campbell, was the Rev. Gogerly. As a member of the new Commission,

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the Rev. Gogerly was able to persuade it to take a number of positive steps for the promotion of education in the native languages.

8. Mackenzie's Minute of 27 March 1841 setting up the Central School Commission did not contain any reference to the language policy to be followed by the Commission. On 26 May 1841, Governor Campbell issued a Minute in which it was stated, *inter alia*, that it was the duty of the Commission "by every means in their power, to promote the education in the English language, of their fellow subjects of all religious opinions."[10]

9. Among the Minister's schools recognized for financial aid in 1843 under a scheme sponsored in the Commission by the Rev. Gogerly, a few non-English medium schools of the Wesleyan mission were included on the initiative of the Rev. Gogerly, in spite of the fact that the resolution of the Commission which dealt with assistance to Minister's schools referred specifically to English schools, as indeed the Minute of 26 May 1841 did. The truth of the situation was that notwithstanding Colebrooke's recommendation for exclusive support of English schools and the reluctance of the Colonial Office to sanction expenditure for education through any other medium, the practical experience of educators on the scene, such as the members of the School Commission, was that there was a pressing need for the promotion of education in the native languages, as a stepping stone to instruction through the medium of English. In September 1843, the Commission passed on the Rev. Gogerly's initiative a resolution to the effect that there should be "supplied to every elementary school, when necessary, the means of giving instruction in the native languages, so as to afford the necessary preparation for English education."[11] This went contrary to Governor Campbell's Minute of 26 May 1841, but he was obviously the mouth piece of the Colonial Office in making it and did not subscribe to it, at least in 1843, even if he did two years earlier.

10. The Rev. Gogerly persuaded the Commission of the need to establish a Normal School for training Sinhalese and Tamil teachers, a Translating and Printing Department for school books and general literature, and a system of vernacular schools to begin in 1847.[12] The contemporaneous development in Bengal of the establishment by the British government of schools providing instruction in the native

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languages appears to have weighed both with the Commission and Governor Campbell, who showed readiness to deviate from his own Minute of 26 May 1841. The Commission urged that even if it was the policy of the government to provide instruction in English in government schools, the proposed Normal School would be useful for turning out the teachers needed by missionary schools and private schools providing instruction in Sinhalese and Tamil. The Governor agreed to the establishment of the institution, and the Native Normal School was set up in 1845. The Rev. Gogerly urged before the Commission that education in the native languages was the responsibility of the government. Of course, this did not mean that the Central School Commission should itself establish vernacular schools. The Commission could extend grants-in-aid to vernacular schools established by missions, if the government accepted the principle that education in the native languages was the responsibility of the government. Needless to say, missionary societies stood to gain if grants-in-aid were made generally available to mission schools.

11. The School Commission, with its exclusively Christian composition, could not find any book in Sinhalese, other than the Bible and religious tracts brought out by the missionaries, suited for instructional uses. This was because Sinhalese literary works were Buddhistic in their content to a greater or less degree, and the use of such literature for instructional purposes was quite unacceptable to the Commission. The Commission set up a translation committee and commissioned the translation into Sinhalese of a number of books written in English. It is recorded, for example, that between 1850 and 1853 the Commission had translated and printed an ancient history, a modern history, a history of Ceylon, a scripture history and a historical reader dealing with the British Empire, and that the Rev. Gogerly was responsible for most of them.[13]

12. By 1847, Governor Campbell, sensitive to the impracticability of providing education on a large scale through the medium of English, came out strongly in favour of the national languages: "His Excellency attaches the highest importance to the Native Normal Institution and the success of its labours for preparing the means of imparting education gradually but widely and profoundly through the medium of the vernacular dialects of the Island."[14]

13. It was a short step thence to setting up vernacular schools, the last in the triad of activities proposed by the Rev. Gogerly in his

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representations to the Commission on the promotion of vernacular education. A number of vernacular schools were established during the year 1847. During succeeding years, too, while some new schools were established yet others were discontinued. As at 31 December 1860, the number of government vernacular schools was 45, and the breakdown of the schools according to the year of establishment is as follows:[15]

Year of establishment	*No. of Schools*
1847	8
1848	2
1850	3
1851	2
1852	2
1854	3
1856	10
1857	5
1858	3
1859	3
1860	4
	45

14. As at 31 December 1860, there were also 42 Mixed or Anglo-Vernacular schools, of which 4 were established during the years 1836-1840, 17 during the years of 1841-1850, and 21 during the years 1851-1860. They were established as a response to the demand for English motivated by an awareness of the economic value of a knowledge of English. In these schools, the native languages were used for the teaching of English in the lower classes, and to that extent the vernacular had a place in them.

15. It is worthy of note that the vernacular schools begun in 1847 did not at first charge school fees. As part of the retrenchment measures taken in 1848, a fee was introduced in boys' schools but not in girls' schools with effect from that year. In 1849, a Sub-Committee of the School Commission expressed in unambiguous language the view that it was the responsibility of the government to provide elementary education.[16] The fee was abolished in 1852. In 1853, a Committee of the Legislative Council recommended the abolition of

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vernacular schools, but later another Committee recommended that free vernacular education should be encouraged where no education could otherwise be obtained.[17] The vernacular normal Institution suffered no set-back during the retrenchment of 1848, but no students were admitted after 1856 and the institution ceased functioning in 1858.

16. The Morgan Committee of a later day (1865) reviewing the educational developments of the previous three decades recalled the fact that in 1840 Earl Russell, the Secretary of State, had by his Despatch of 20 December, in reply to an application for authority to disburse money for translating books into the vernacular, "discountenanced all vernacular education and interdicted the government from devoting the funds available for education to such a purpose", and that the Governor had by his Minute of 26 May 1841 informed the School Commission that it was "the duty of the Commission to promote education in the English language."[18] The Committee went on to say,

> "These injunctions have fortunately not been complied with strictly, and great credit is due to the School Commission for having initiated a different educational policy; though in the face of such instructions, they could not have given that extension to vernacular education which the importance of the subject fully deserved."[19]

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CHAPTER 21

RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION (1832 - 1869)

1. In regard to both government and missionary schools, it has to be noted that by religious instruction is meant the instruction in religion given during a period set apart in the school time table for this purpose. In fact, however, religion was the basis of all instruction with the possible exception of arithmetic, in the sense that in the reading lesson the text read was the Bible, in the writing lesson the material transcribed or the material written to dictation was biblical or scriptural, the history lesson was devoted to scriptural history, and so on. Even after the principle was accepted that religious instruction in government schools had to be confined to non-sectarian Christianity, the bias in the textbooks used for some subjects was so patently Protestant and anti-Roman Catholic that the Roman Catholics protested against the use of certain books. For example, the Central School Commission report for 1849-50 made reference to the fact that the Roman Catholic Bishop Bravi objected to the use of Tyler's *General History*, Watts' *Scripture History* and the seventh volume of the *Instructor* as not being in accordance with the Governor's Minute of 1841 which laid down that "no books or system of instruction, which might have the effect of excluding scholars of any religious belief whatever" should be introduced.[1] Rev. Fr. Bravi said about Watts' *Scripture History*,"..I may urge that while it is continued in the school it nullifies in a great measure the object of the Commission to confine religious instruction to a certain hour."[2] He objected to Tyler's *Elements of History* "on account of its very unjust tone against Catholics", and has gone on record as having said about this book,

> "..its evil effects are not solely confined to members of my Faith.. it is injurious also to those of persuasions different from that of the Catholics, for it inculcates as facts matters essentially untrue; and creates and fosters a spirit of intolerance and bigotry which, I hardly conceive, the guardians of youth should seek to eradicate rather than implant."[3]

The School Commission's response to Rev. Fr. Bravi's objections was to state that the books would continue to be used until books less open to the objections urged were available. Neither the character of the

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government schools nor the books changed. Twelve years later, Rev. Fr. Bonjean made the following comment: "..these schools, in their constitution, in their textbooks, in almost every one of their elements and features, have been, to all practical purposes, purely Protestant."[4] And, about the books:

> "..we are here speaking of books which are to be constantly in the hands of children; of books intended for a close study; which are to form for many years the theme of daily oral lessons and are to be committed (partly at least) to memory, and which therefore bid fair to assimilate themselves to the mind as effectually as food to the body."[5]

The textbooks in history, taught outside the hours of religious instruction, continued to be either *Scripture History* by Watts or *Elements of History* by Tyler. In regard to the books used in vernacular schools, Rev. Fr. Bonjean, being unable to read them himself as he did not know the languages, quoted the following opinion expressed about them by a highly esteemed and quite well informed correspondent:

> "..I can decidedly say that a better course for religious education (Protestant) could hardly be imagined. Every second, third or fourth lesson in these books is upon a purely religious or religio-moral subject, with a sprinkling of parables and stories showing forth in very plain language the absurdities of Buddhism, and the sinfulness of image worship, including by sophistry, the Catholic practice towards images."[6]

It is perfectly clear that the caution, embodied in the Minute of May 1841, that the Committee should "be particularly careful to introduce into their schools no books..which might have the effect of excluding scholars of any religious belief whatever" was a dead letter before the ink could dry on the paper on which it was written.[7]

2. Recognizing as indicated above, that nearly all the instruction in government and Protestant missionary schools was of a religious character, namely that of Protestantism, the specific arrangements made for the special period in the time table set apart for religious instruction may now be examined, separately for government schools and missionary schools.

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Government schools

3. A knowledge of reading and a knowledge of Protestant Christianity were the two outcomes expected from schooling, according to the Royal Instructions of 1831 to Governor Horton asking him to "recommend proper measures for erecting and maintaining schools in order to the training of youth to reading and to a necessary knowledge of the Principles of Religion", for the principles of religion in this context were no more than the principles of Protestant Christianity.[8] The above Instructions marked a continuance of the official sanction for teaching Protestant Christianity to all children attending government schools. There was perhaps the possibility that if the parents of any child objected to the teaching of Protestant Christianity, the child would be exempted from receiving such instruction, but the first explicit statement of such a possibility was made only in the Prospectus of the Colombo Academy issued in January 1837.[9] The Prospectus also added that boys of every form of religion would be admitted without any discrimination.

4. One of the points made by Governor Mackenzie in his letter of 2 March 1840 to the Bishop of Madras setting out his views on the reorganization of education was that with a view to promoting education in general and religious instruction in particular, the system of instruction should be based on the Holy Scriptures using the extracts put out by the British and Foreign Bible Society.[10] No catechisms or books of peculiar religious tenets were to be used in schools. The Bishop concurred in these views, but no doubt concerned about the fact that children could be withdrawn from religious instruction if the parents objected, urged that theoretical Christianity should be compulsorily taught even to non-Christians.

> "In speaking of education I wish to be distinctly understood as speaking of it in strict and indissoluble connection with at least such an acquaintance with theoretical Christianity that the youth of the island may be trained up in a knowledge of the Revelation."[11]

The Bishop was keen that the Holy Scriptures should be read and historically explained in every school.

> "I would moreover especially propose that the following facts be taught as facts in all the schools: the time, character and attributes of God, the immortality of the soul.."[12]

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Governor Mackenzie was, however, opposed to the idea of making it compulsory for non-Christians to study "theoretical Christianity." He thought that other religious groups, most of all the Muslim population, would be dissuaded from sending children to school if they were compelled to study theoretical Christianity.[13]

5. According to the Minute of 26 May 1841 which defined the powers and duties of the Central School Commission set up earlier that year, the Commission was to "promote the education..of their fellow subjects of all religious opinion" in the country.[14] The Minute went on further to say:

> "They will therefore be particularly careful to introduce into their schools no books or system of instruction, which might have the effect of excluding scholars of any religious belief whatever. Whatever may have been the defects of the late Commission, it will be found that, in their schools, the Scriptures are read without objection by all. It will be the especial care of the Central Commission, to exercise such caution as to raise no religious scruples on the part of any."[15]

Specifically in regard to religious instruction, the Minute pointed out that it was a most important duty to promote the religious education of the Christian community,

> "perhaps,..an hour daily should be set apart for religious instruction; and such instruction may be conducted by the Schoolmasters of the Establishment, provided it is most clearly and distinctly made known that it is not obligatory upon those Scholars (who bring forward conscientious objections) to attend..at the hour set apart for Religious Instruction, which should be arranged so as not to interfere with secular education."[16]

6. The somewhat tentative instruction "perhaps ..an hour daily should be set apart for religious instruction" in the Minute of May 1841 was changed to a definite order by the School Commission in a decision made on 6 July 1841. Furthermore, while the precise manner in which students could "bring forward conscientious objections" was not indicated in the Minute of May 1841, it was specified on 6 July 1841. The Commission ordered as follows:

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"That the first hour daily in every government school be devoted to religious instruction and that the master be particularly informed not to require the attendance of those boys whose parents object to their attendance during that hour. The parents of such boys are required, either personally or in writing, to inform the teachers of their objections."[17]

It is only a very daring parent who would have raised objections, and in any event he would have been talked into acquiescing in the receiving of religious instruction by his child or children. In regard to the Colombo Academy, for example, the following statement appeared in a local journal:

"..not more than two cases have occurred during the last twelve years, in which any objection has been expressed to the attendance of pupils during the hour of religious instruction; and, in each of those instances, the objection was explained to the objector."[18]

7. On 4 September 1850, the Commission issued the following supplementary hints regarding religious instruction:

"On considering the form in which the religious instruction should be conveyed, the Committee have determined upon recommending that a portion of the Bible be read daily, and explained by simple questions naturally arising out of the passages; and that a text of scripture, to be given out the previous day, be committed to memory and repeated by the whole school. Under the impression that in this manner the whole hour assigned to religious instruction will be most profitably employed, the use of Catechisms being considered unnecessary, and in the hope that by this means, less opportunity being afforded for dwelling upon denominational distinctions, there will be the less objection among parents to send their children to school during the hour of religious instruction."[19]

8. By a decision made in February 1861, it was sought to achieve uniformity between the rules applicable to grant-in-aid schools and those applicable to government schools. Consequently, it was ordered that the supplementary hints of September 1850 should no longer be applicable, and that the rule regarding religious instruction should be as laid down on 6 July 1841 with the addition of the proviso:

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"The Religious Instruction shall be confined to a simple explanation of the Bible and the leading tenets of Christianity, and shall be conducted in such a spirit as to avoid, if possible the exclusion of any scholar, on grounds of denominational teaching."[20]

9. W. J. Sendall, Inspector of Schools, in his submissions to the Morgan Committee of 1865, referred to the question of religion in schools, quoting from an earlier report of his. First of all, he pointed out the extent to which the non-religious subjects of the curriculum contained religious content.

"In the vernacular schools and in those portions of the Mixed Schools which are taught through the vernacular. . a large number of the books in use are exclusively religious. Out of the five maps, three are designed to illustrate portions of Scripture; the only geography, besides that of Ceylon, is a scripture geography; and of 16 reading and question books, 6 consist of portions of Scripture and Catechisms."[21]

Secondly, in regard to religious instruction as such, Sendall favoured the rules obtaining in the Madras Presidency. In the Madras Presidency, teachers were "strictly prohibited from giving any religious instruction during school hours." Outside school hours, however, teachers were free

"to afford instruction and explanations in the Holy Scriptures, and upon the subject of the Christian Religion to those pupils who, of their own free will, and without the exercise of any influence from persons connected with the school, may seek such information from the masters."[22]

Sendall recommended to the Morgan Committee "that this sensible and straightforward rule of action might with the greatest advantage be applied" to schools in Ceylon.[23]

10. The Acting Colonial Secretary, J. F. Dickson, was also critical of the government's policy of Christian religious instruction in government schools. "I am aware", he wrote to the Morgan Committee, that a few Moors and many Roman Catholics even now attend the government schools; but many do not, who would gladly go to a

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government school, if it were not in reality a missionary i.e. a Protestant-proselytising school."[24] He also quoted with approval from a Dispatch, dated 24 March 1865 relating to India, by the Secretary of State, Sir Charles Wood: "It appears to me that we are not acting honestly, as guardians of the purse of a non-Christian people, if we use their own funds, directly or indirectly, for the conversion to our own faith."[25]

11. The Very Rev. Fr. G. Salarin, Roman Catholic Missionary Apostolic, wrote as follows about the religious atmosphere of the government schools:

> "..We Catholics have been in those schools, and we found there no secular education worth the name, but only one, intellectually unsound, and at the same time, so deeply Protestant that neither in obedience to the dictates of our conscience or the laws of our Church, nor in safety to the souls, we can avail.."[26]

12. While resenting the exposure of Roman Catholic students to Protestantism in the government schools, some Roman Catholic dignitaries did not mind the exposure of pagans (that is, the Buddhists, Hindus and Muslims) to Protestantism. Their position was that if the pagans did not want to be civilized through Christianity, they need not be educated at all. The submission of a group of Roman Catholic missionaries to the Morgan Committee was as follows:

> "The mere teaching of a religion which is admittedly the foundation of civilization (when no undue means is resorted to, to convert) cannot be said to be an interference with their religion but the affording them of the means of being civilized, if they choose. If they do not choose it (i.e. being civilized) the Government is clearly not bound to waste money in giving them such an education as would make them worse than what they are. Secular education, not hallowed by the principles of Christianity, it is proved by experience, tends rather to make a pagan vain, haughty, impertinent and insubordinate..."[27]

13. The Rev. Fr. L. M. Keating also wrote of the extent to which Protestantism was embedded in the government schools:

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"The fact of all, or almost all the teachers and books employed and used at present in the government schools in this colony, being Protestant or tinged with Protestantism, while only a small section of the people is Protestant offends the population of the whole island, and renders the government schools odious to the people in general. In order that a governmental system of education be popular, permanent and successful, it would be based on strict justice and impartiality towards every section of the population; which is not the case, in the minds of the people, as long as all, or almost all the teachers employed, and the books used, are Protestant, or quasi-Protestant, i.e. of one section only, and that the smallest section of the population."[28]

Missionary schools

14. Missionary schools that did not receive any grants from the government were quite free to provide religious instruction as it pleased them and also to require the attendance of pupils. Three other categories of missionary schools, namely Chaplain's schools (chapter 16 paragraph 5), Minister's schools (chapter 16 paragraph 7), and the Jaffna grant schools (chapter 8 paragraph 8) also enjoyed a similar right, although they received grant, as there were special circumstances associated with their establishment or recognition for aid.

15. The generality of mission schools did not receive any grant until February 1858, when a set of rules for schools interested in grants was announced by the Central School Commission. One of these rules required compliance with the general rules of the Commission, one of which required the reading of Scripture without any distinctive teaching based on it. Moreover, exemption from religious instruction could also be requested by parents. This did not please the Anglicans and they asked to be allowed to enjoy the same privileges as the Jaffna grant schools. In November 1858, the Commission adopted the following rules relating to religious instruction in grant-in-aid schools:

1. In every school aided by a grant the first hour of tuition in each day shall be devoted to Religious Instruction, which shall be confined to that hour;

2. If any parent or guardian object to the attendance of the child during that hour, he shall intimate such objection to the teacher, and the attendance of the child shall not be insisted upon;

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3. The Religious Instruction shall be confined to the truths received by Christians of every denomination and shall comprise the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, and the Apostle's Creed, together with the daily reading of the Bible.[29]

16. The Roman Catholics sought clarification from the Commission as to which Bible was to be read, and which division of the "Ten Commandments" should be used. The Commission replied that "the English Authorized Version of the Scriptures and the ordinary division of the Ten Commandments are to be used."[39] Representations were made by the Roman Catholics to Governor Ward to the effect that they would not be able to avail themselves of grants as these versions of the scriptures were unacceptable to them. Thereupon, the Governor requested the Commission to modify its rules so that the Roman Catholics, too, could avail themselves of grants. The Commission then decided to abrogate rule 3 quoted above, thus leaving it open for missionaries to determine the nature of the Christian religious instruction to be provided in them.[31] By an amendment to the preamble it was also laid down that grants would be given only to Christian schools. C. A. Lorenz, who was a member both of the Commission and the Legislative Council, protested to the Governor against the abrogation of the rule relating to the nature of the religious instruction. His letter was referred to the Commission with a covering letter from the Colonial Secretary expressing the Governor's agreement with Lorenz's point of view. The Commission reacted by deciding to exclude missionary societies from receiving grants. The Legislative Council, however, did not agree to this, and in February 1861 the Commission adopted the following rules regarding religious instruction in grant-in-aid schools:

1. That only the first hour of tuition on each day shall be devoted to Religious Instruction;

2. That the Religious Instruction shall be confined to a simple explanation of the Bible and the leading tenets of Christianity and shall be conducted in such a spirit as to avoid if possible the exclusion of any scholars, on grounds of denominational teaching;

3. That no books other than those approved by the Commission shall be used in the school;

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4. That any child, whose parents or guardian shall object to his receiving Religious Instruction, shall be permitted to stand out of the class during the first hour;

5. Provided, however, that it shall be competent for the visitor or superintendent of any school to examine the classes on religious subjects, on the occasion of any periodical visits it being understood, however, that such examination shall be confined to the first hour of the visit, and shall be conducted subject to the above restrictions.[32]

Furthermore, the Commission decided that these rules should apply even to the three categories of grant aided schools mentioned in paragraph 14 above. The Roman Catholic and Wesleyan missionaries agreed to conform, but the Church Mission decided to withdraw from the grant-in-aid scheme. A review of the situation in regard to religious instruction in grant-in-aid schools was made by the Morgan Committee (see Chapter 25).

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CHAPTER 22

THE STATE, RELIGION AND EDUCATION
(1832 - 1869)

1. The Royal Instructions of 30 April 1831 to Governor Horton read as follows:

> "It is Our future Will and Pleasure that you recommend proper measures for erecting and maintaining schools in order to the training of youth to reading and to a necessary knowledge of the Principles of Religion. And we do hereby direct that no Person shall be allowed to keep a School in Our said Island without your Licence first had and obtained in granting which you are to pay the most particular attention to the morals and qualifications of the persons applying for the same."[1]

The Principles of Religion in this context were the principles of Protestant Christianity. A knowledge of reading and a knowledge of Protestant Christianity were the two outcomes expected from schooling. The requirement of a licence to set up a school, as has been discussed in chapter 6 paragraph 7, was apparently a mechanism to prevent non-Christians from establishing schools, for the morals of such persons would essentially be defective in the eyes of Christians.

2. Colebrooke for his part consolidated the position of the Protestant Christians in education. He recommended that the school establishment should be placed under the immediate direction of a Commission composed of the Archdeacon and clergy of the island, together with a number of top government officials. In other words, responsibility for the government schools was placed in the hands of the Archdeacon and the Anglican clergy. The missionary societies were given their share. Discontinuance of teachers who did not know English meant the closure of a large number of Government schools, the almost complete withdrawal of the government from providing education in the vernacular, and entrusting this task to the missionaries. Knowing that the American Mission had suffered a certain amount of discrimination earlier (see chapter 7 paragraph 9), Colebrooke took special care to recommend that it "should receive all the encouragement from the government which their exertions and exemplary conduct have entitled" the Mission.[2]

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3. While Colebrooke's recommendations strengthened the position of Protestant Christian groups in education, they did not completely liquidate the state sector in education. The failure to do so received sharp comment from the Archdeacon, with the full agreement of Governor Horton. The Archdeacon stated in no uncertain terms that "the less the Government interfere by establishing schools of their own the better", opposed the setting up of a Commission to superintend government schools, and opposed the establishment of a College.[3] Governor Horton made full use of the language policy that was enunciated to liquidate the government schools except for five of them, and also added the weight of his own opinion to the Archdeacon's to dissuade the Secretary of State from deciding on the establishment of a government College. When instructed by the Secretary of State to set up the Commission in spite of the opposition expressed by the Archdeacon and himself, Horton delayed unduly to set it up, and when he finally established it rendered it ineffective by appointing the Archdeacon as the President. Acts of omission and commission on the part of the Archdeacon were largely responsible for the controversies and the lethargy that reduced the Commission to a farce. It should also be noted that in the Commission as set up by Horton no religious group other than the Anglicans had a place. According to the *Prospectus of General Rules and Suggestions issued to promote uniformity in the management of the government schools in the island of Ceylon* issued by the Commission in March 1837, all Anglican chaplains were regarded as "invested ex-officio with the control and supervision of schools in their neighbourhood."[4] Though not announced as a principle, recruits to teaching positions in government schools had to profess Protestant Christianity. "The first schoolmasters," in the new schools established by the Commission "were generally men holding office in the church."[5] A resolution to the effect that only Christians, preferably Anglicans, should be appointed to teaching positions in government schools was passed by the Commission, but Governor Mackenzie refused to approve it (chapter 15 paragraph 11).

4. The Royal Instructions to Governor Mackenzie issued on 2 October 1837 showed a pre-occupation with the religious motive that has not been paralleled by the Royal Instructions given to any other Governor in Ceylon.[6] The reason for this pre-occupation was that the Colonial Office was dominated at this time by two ardent evangelicals in the Secretary of State, Glenelg and the Under-Secretary, Stephen.

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In the Instructions, while disappointment was expressed that there had not been a "more general diffusion of Christianity" during the period of British rule in Ceylon, in spite of the maintenance of an Ecclesiastical establishment at an annual cost of over £6,500, the Secretary of State affirmed his readiness to sanction any expenditure incurred with a reasonable prospect of diffusing Christianity throughout Ceylon.[7] In regard to education, the Governor was asked to report whether the government schools could be increased in number, improved in efficiency and operated with economy. As an alternative, he was asked to consider whether a special grant should be given annually to Christian societies to expand their ecclesiastical endeavours. The Governor was also authorized to propose to the Legislative Council that a grant of £1,000 be provided annually for distribution among Christian missionary societies for their educational activities.

5. Mackenzie took over two years to make recommendations for the reorganization of education. They were first communicated to the Bishop of Madras for his views, as Ceylon came under his ecclesiastical jurisdiction. One of the recommendations was to the effect that with a view to promoting education in general and religious education in particular, the system of instruction should be based on the Holy Scriptures using the extracts put out by the British and Foreign Bible Society. No catechisms or books of particular religious sects were to be used in schools. Another recommendation was to the effect that no teachers were to be appointed without satisfactory recommendation as to character, religion and competence. It was clear that non-Christians would be excluded from appointments as teachers. These two recommendations strengthened the state support that had been extended to Protestantism from the inception of British rule in Ceylon. The recommendations were implemented in due course as they received the support of the Bishop as well as that of the Secretary of State. In regard to religious instruction, Mackenzie stood for the exclusion of pupils in government schools from Christian religious instruction if the parents so desired. The Bishop, on the other hand, was of the view that education had an indissoluble connection with theoretical Christianity and that every student should be instructed in the fundamental truths of Christianity.[8] Mackenzie argued against compelling non-Christian students to submit to such instruction and his views were upheld by the Secretary of State as against those of the Bishop.[9]

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6. In 1841, when the Central School Commission made arrangements for the training of English teachers by attaching a Normal School to the Colombo Academy, one of the requirements for admission was that the students should have been regular attendants of some Christian place of worship, "as nearly all their future scholars will belong to one or another denomination of that religion."[10] In a predominantly non-Christian country, there was discrimination against the majority religions not only in the matter of employment but also in the availability of education. Non-Christians had to pay the price of their religious convictions to receive education or to be given employment.

7. Mackenzie's proposals for reconstituting the School Commission affected the position of the Anglican church adversely. He favoured the inclusion in the Commission of clergymen belonging to Christian sects other than the Anglican. The Bishop had no serious objection to this, but Anglican clergymen in Ceylon expressed opposition to this suggestion. Mackenzie thought that it was unsatisfactory that the office of President of the Commission should be held by the Archdeacon. The Bishop disagreed. The Archdeacon had, of course, become President not because of a provision to that effect in the Minute setting up the Commission but because he was appointed to that office by Governor Horton.

8. The Commission was reconstituted by a Minute dated 27 March 1841.[11] Provision was made by it for appointing to the Commission clergymen belonging to Christian sects other than the Anglican. Thus, the Anglican monopoly of membership in the Commission was broken, and clergymen of other Christian sects, including a Roman Catholic clergyman, were included in the new Commission. Non-Christian interests, however, continued to be excluded from the Commission. By appointing the Colonial Secretary as the President of the Commission, the Governor, using the discretion given to him in the matter of the appointment of the President, deprived the Anglican church of the privilege it had enjoyed. Some years later, namely in 1845, the Anglican church recovered its position for a short period when the first Anglican Bishop of the New Bishopric of Colombo was appointed President. He, however, resigned from the office of President in 1847, and the position again went to a government official.

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According to a Minute of 26 May 1841, though the general education of the whole population was the duty of the new Commission, it was also "a most important portion of their duty to promote the religious education of such of the community as belong to the Christian faith", and the funds under the management of the Commission were to be "equally applicable to this purpose."[12] The Minute went on to say that it was highly desirable that Sunday schools should be established, making it, however, not obligatory for students who urged conscientious objections to attend the religious instruction, the religious instruction being arranged so as not to interfere with secular instruction. The Minute also added that it was highly desirable "perhaps, that an hour daily" in the government schools "should be set apart for religious instruction," not making it obligatory for students who urged conscientious objections to attend the religious instruction, the religious instruction being arranged as not to interfere with secular instruction.[13] The Minute noted the fact that in the schools under the previous Commission the Scriptures had been "read without objection by all."[14] All in all, there was clear advocacy of Christian religious instruction in the Minute, subject to the provision that those who urged conscientious objections could desist from attendance.

9. The government was prepared to go so far as to withdraw its meagre educational provision in order to facilitate the activities of missionary bodies in the field of education. The Secretary of the Central School Commission wrote on 19 October 1858 to the Colonial Secretary as follows: "..far from wishing to interfere with the operations or cramp the efficiency of any Missionary body, the Commission are always ready on the contrary to leave a free and open field before them, even to the extent of withdrawing their own schools, to avoid even the appearance of a mischievous rivalry or competition."[15] No state support or aid was given at all to the Buddhists, Hindus or Muslims. A grant sought for a Hindu school was refused by the Central School Commission on the ground that the "education proposed to be given by that body was of a character not consistent with the objects of their institution".[16] Although the Minute of 26 May 1841 specifying the duties of the Commission stated that "the general education of the whole population" was the duty of the Commission, the Commission had made it a requirement in its rules for grants-in-aid that the first hour of the day should be devoted to a reading of the

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Bible.[17] It is in this context that the education in a Hindu school was not consistent with the objectives of the Commission.

10. The Buddhists were exceedingly tolerant of Christian missionary endeavours, a factor which perhaps contributed partly to the success achieved by the Christian missionaries. According to Emerson Tennent "..in their intercourse with the Christian missionaries, I have rarely heard of an occasion on which the ministrations of the latter had been either denounced or obstructed by the priesthood of Buddhu."[18] Tennent explained this tolerance on a doctrinal basis as follows: "Wisdom..exalted as the sole object of pursuit and veneration, the Buddhists, with characteristic liberality, admit that the teaching of virtue may not be confined to their possession alone."[19]

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CHAPTER 23

STATISTICS OF EDUCATION AND EDUCATIONAL FINANCE (1851 - 1870)

1. A statistical table is given below to show the progress in education in quantitative terms during the period 1851-1870. The period prior to 1851 has not been included in the Table as it has not been possible to trace comparable data for the early period.

Table 1

Number of Schools and Pupils

	1851	1855	1860	1865	1869	1870
Number of Schools						
Government						
English	17	16	15	16	18	18
Anglo-Vernacular.. ..	40	40	42	41	38	33
Vernacular	39	35	45	46	64	105
Grant-in-Aid	31	21	44	17	20	229
Number of Pupils						
Government Schools ..	4,063	3,987	5,679	5,291	7,156	8,726
Grant-in-Aid Schools ..	1,402	854	2,794	1,319	1,595	8,201

2. It will be noted that there has not been much change in the number of government English schools and Anglo-Vernacular schools over the period. In the case of vernacular schools, except for a slight decline during the period 1851-55 there has been a progressive increase. It has already been pointed out elsewhere (chapter 20) that, although the declared policy of the government was to promote English education and not to support vernacular education, the government followed no consistent policy. It did little for English education, and promoted Anglo-Vernacular schools as a second best, and unable to do even this on a satisfactory scale or with satisfactory results turned its attention in a limited way to the promotion of vernacular education. The Morgan Committee of 1865, of course, suggested a reversal of policy and this was to take place after about 1869.

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3. The year 1869 has been included in the table advisedly to show how the implementation of the Morgan Committee recommendation that grants-in-aid be given without any restrictions in regard to religious instruction led to an immediate increase in the number of grant-aided schools. Another point to note is that although in 1851 nearly three times as many pupils received their education in government schools as in grant-in-aid schools, and in 1869 nearly five times as many pupils, the situation changed during the year 1870.

Educational Finance

4. In 1831, the public expenditure on education borne by the government of Ceylon was £1,636, and by 1837 it had increased to £2,175. During this period, however, the government of Ceylon had to bear military expenditure in a sum of £108,500 per year, being local expenditure on the forces stationed in Ceylon to ensure the security of the British occupation of Ceylon and other Asian colonies of the British. During the period 1837 to 1866, apart from bearing the local expenditure, Ceylon was compelled to contribute £24,000 a year in aid of military expenditure incurred by Britain elsewhere, chiefly for the maintenance of the British fleet in the Indian ocean. During the same period, educational expenditure increased from £2,175 to £9,003 by 1848, was sharply reduced to £5,445 in 1849, increasing gradually to £7,400 by 1855, thereafter more rapidly to £13,365 by 1860 and slowly thereafter to £14,873 by 1866. In 1867, the British government decided that, for the next few years, Ceylon's contribution should be £160,000 per year for both local and external military expenditure. To call the colonies the white man's burden was a magnificent deception for, in reality, the colonies were crippled and stunted in their growth by the burden they were forced to bear by the white man, military expenditure being a very good example of this burden.

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CHAPTER 24

REVIEW OF EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS (1832 - 1869)

1. Educational developments during the period under review were largely influenced by the recommendations of the Colebrooke Commission (chapter 12). With a view to reducing the costs of administering the country, Europeans were to be employed only in key top level positions, and the middle level positions were to be filled by Ceylonese. The latter had to be prepared to occupy such positions, and also similar positions in the non-governmental sector, through schools that provided education in English. Apart from the advantages from the point of view of economy, it was considered desirable to encourage the emergence of a group of persons who would be loyal to the British for the opportunities provided for them, and who would exemplify British culture and Christian civilization to the extent that non-Europeans could ever hope to acquire these blessed gifts. The creation of such an elite, largely through the process of education, would also bring about a slow erosion of the power and influence of groups that had hereditarily enjoyed such power and could be a thorn on the side of the British. To be sure, while mobility through education continued to favour the hereditary privileged who were in the best position to make use of education, some among the non-privileged, too, managed to move forward through education. For Colebrooke, the provision of facilities for receiving education in English, necessarily on a small scale to serve the above mentioned purposes, was a high priority.

2. As a result of the parish schools inherited from the Dutch and the pressure of teachers and parents interested in the continuance of the parish schools, many were already receiving an education in the vernacular languages. Such an education was worthless in the light of British interests, and a drain on the finances. By the simple and clever expedient of demanding a knowledge of English from teachers in order to continue them in employment, the government parish school system of vernacular education was destroyed almost overnight. Henceforth, the government was to concentrate on the provision of education in English for the few, while it was open to missionary societies to continue the work they were already doing in the field of vernacular

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education. Even in regard to the provision of education in English, the government was not to compete with the missionary societies.

3. In recommending that the government schools be placed under a School Commission, Colebrooke was adopting a pattern already familiar under the Dutch. The School Commission was to consist of the Anglican clergy and some officials of the government. This arrangement was proposed partly to ensure supervision over the schools. The official members would, however, not only share in the supervision but also ensure that the purpose of the government in encouraging education would not be forgotten through overmuch concern with the religious motive. While the appointment of the Anglican clergy (and they alone of all religious groups, Christian or other) was an admission of a role that was considered legitimate for the established Church, the inclusion of lay officials led in course of time to a slow erosion of the privileged position of the Anglican church in education. This erosion might have been slower than it in fact was, if the Anglican clergy did not have sharp differences of opinion with the lay members of the Commission and the Governor. An undoubted result of these differences was that when the School Commission was dissolved and a new Commission known as the Central School Commission appointed, the Anglican clergy lost their monopoly of membership. Non-Anglican clergy, including a Roman Catholic, were also appointed as members of the re-constituted Commission.

4. The period under review was marked by controversy over the religious question among the Anglicans, the Wesleyans and the Roman Catholics. The government schools under the School Commission, and later under the Central School Commission, provided instruction in Protestant Christianity, but attendance at such instruction was not obligatory for non-Protestant children. The Roman Catholics, however, pointed out that the bias in the textbooks used in the government schools in such subjects as History was patently Protestant and anti-Roman Catholic, and that the schools "in almost every one of their elements and features, have been, to all practical purposes, purely Protestant".[1] Their protest against this state of affairs was one aspect of the controversy. A second and more virulent controversy arose in connection with the conditions for grants-in-aid. Details regarding these controversies may be read in chapters 17 and 21. A contemporary British writer made the following comment about the poor

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impression created by Christian sectarianism in the minds of the Buddhists, Hindus and Muslims.

> "..they also notice that each Christian sect, while striving to convert the heathen, is also eager to make proselytes from other Christians in order to swell the number and increase the importance of their own respective folds; and they conclude, in consequence of these differences and rivalries, that while all may be contending for that which they believe to be truth, it is quite impossible that they can all be right, and that it is possible that all may be wrong."[2]

Apart from the holding power of the traditional religions—Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam—professed by the people, Christian sectarianism was a factor militating against conversions.

5. The very limited nature of the government's participation in educational activities left the field of education wide open for misisonary societies. They were, however, faced with several dilemmas. For purposes of conversion, as well as education, the use of the mother tongue as the medium of instruction, at any rate in the early years of schooling, suggested itself as being more efficient than the English medium and yet during the greater part of the period under review only education in English could qualify for grants-in-aid. In reality, the better the education in English received in the few good mission schools that provided such an education, the more did the students "after getting all its advantages at the Society's expense shirk mission employment and drift away to more lucrative occupations."[3] Not all of them did even become Christians or remain so, but at the least their minds were "imbibed with Christian truth," and it was an advantage to have them "hold respectable and responsible offices under government and elsewhere."[4] Thus, from the point of view of the influence that missionary schools could exercise on the social and political life of the country through alumni who succeeded in getting employment in high positions, the provision of prestigious schools teaching through the English medium was important. The missionary school system consisted of a large number of vernacular schools, and a small number of English medium schools. The latter were generally in the towns and patronized largely by the urban privileged.

6. Missionary societies found that they could not rely entirely on voluntary contributions from their parent bodies in England and the

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U.S.A. to maintain their schools, and sought government assistance through grants-in-aid. The conditions for such assistance increasingly proved to be a constraint on the achievement of the proselytizing objective of missionary education. The following statement is typical of the religious purpose of missionary education:

> "All our education here is conducted on strictly scriptural principles. The Bible is the text book of the schools. The children are taught to reverence it; not as something which they are at liberty to believe or disbelieve at pleasure, but as the only book in existence in which God speaks authoritatively to mankind; as the only book which points out a remedy for the defects and disorders of the human race; as a book in which every one, of whatever age, rank or condition in life, is personally interested, and one also which cannot be neglected without incurring the greatest guilt."[5]

Compliance with conditions for grants-in-aid made departures from the religious purpose inevitable, and this process which started during the period under review was even more accelerated during the remaining years of the nineteenth century and the first quarter of the twentieth. By the end of this period, the secularization of instruction was almost complete, except for the religious knowledge lesson taught for two or three hours a week.

7. In the Royal Instructions of 30 April 1831 to Governor Horton, he was asked to "recommend proper measures for erecting and maintaining schools in order to the training up of youth to reading and to a necessary knowledge of the Principles of Religion."[6] The principles in this context were the principles of Protestant Christianity, but in making grants-in-aid to Roman Catholics, there was an acceptance for this limited purpose of the principles of Roman Catholicism. The above mentioned Instructions also directed that no person should be allowed to keep a school without a licence, in granting which the most particular attention was to be made "to the morals and qualifications of the persons applying for the same."[7] Clearly, no licence would have been granted to non-Christians, as it was axiomatic that the morals of such persons could not be but defective.

8. Instruction in Christianity was given as a matter of course in government schools. It was formalized by the Minute of May 1841

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(see chapter 21 paragraph 5), according to which one hour a day was to be devoted in government schools to religious teaching, specified as reading the Bible and teaching the Lord's Prayer and Commandments, with provision for exemption from attendance. The Christian character of government schools was readily admitted, but it was claimed that liberty of conscience was secured by the provision for exemption from attendance.[8]

9. The provision mentioned above regarding religious instruction was extended to schools seeking grants-in-aid under the general rules of the Commission. The Commission reiterated this position in 1858, when it stated that the government could not contemplate "support of schools conducted on different principles."[9] Earlier, in 1852, the Central School Commission refused a grant to a Hindu society in respect of a school conducted by it on the ground that the "education proposed to be given by that body was of a character not consistent with the objects of their institution."[10] From all this, it is clear that the grant-in-aid scheme was intended to assist Christian, including Roman Catholic, schools and that during the period under review assistance to non-Christian schools was not contemplated at all by the government.

10. The language policy for education enunciated by Colebrooke has been referred to in paragraphs 1 and 2. Economy was achieved by the closure of the government parish schools that did not have teachers competent in English, and Governor Horton was able to convey to the Secretary of State the glad tidings that "considerable expenditure has been saved."[11] This was a negative achievement, except in a limited fiscal sense. The positive element in the language policy, namely the promotion of education through the medium of English, was not capable of implementation on any considerable scale. In fact, it was never intended to be implemented on a large scale, but to have made this position explicit would have been impolitic. English education could be provided only in a limited number of locations on account of the cost of such education as well as the shortage of teachers. Governor Torrington pointed out in 1848 that the expenditure on English education was disproportionate to the benefit derived from it; again in 1849 that it was not possible to extend English education with a reasonable degree of economy. He therefore stood for the promotion of vernacular education.

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11. The language policies pursued during the period under review had no inherent justification in the light of explicitly stated purposes, but they were quite rational in terms of the unstated purposes and reality. One vernacular school in Colombo, St. Thomas' Girls' School by name, survived the closure of vernacular schools.[12] More surprisingly still, the School Commission established in 1832, in Jaffna four schools that taught no English but only Tamil.[13] A Tamil school for girls was established in Colombo.[14] A few non-English medium schools of the Wesleyan mission were given grants by the Central School Commission in 1843. The Central School Commission also passed in 1843 a resolution that every elementary school should be supplied, when necessary, "the means of giving instruction in the native languages, so as to afford the necessary preparation for English education."[15] A number of vernacular schools were established beginning with the year 1847. These were all responses to educational realities and local pressures, while the declared policy of the Colonial Office in London, following Colebrooke, was the promotion of English education. One of the educational realities was that the majority of children, in the few locations in which English schools were established, were not capable of following instruction in English. One of the local pressures was for the expansion of educational facilities, at least in English if not in the vernacular. The provision for English education could not be greatly increased without money and teachers competent in English. The so-called Mixed or Anglo-Vernacular school which provided instruction in the lowest grades in the vernacular, with transfer to the English medium in the later grades, was an attempt at satisfying the demand for English education. The demand for vernacular education was more easily satisfied. In regard to vernacular education, it has also to be recognized that there was substantial local pressure for state provision of education in the vernacular as an alternative to the vernacular education available in missionary schools, government schools being perceived as less harmful to the religious persuasions of the Buddhists, Hindus and Muslims than missionary schools. It must not be thought that the provision of vernacular education by either the government or a missionary society signified the setting up of schools parallel to the English medium schools. No vernacular school went beyond the elementary stage and even in regard to the elementary stage had a limited curriculum in comparison with the English medium elementary school.

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12. Such money as the government was prepared to devote for education should have all been spent on English education, on account of the avowed policy of promoting English education, but a little of it went to vernacular education as well, as explained in the preceding paragraph. No tears need be shed on this account, as the expenditure on English education was for the benefit of the privileged social classes, and among them, too, a small group of Burghers, quick to adopt English as the home language, took up more places in the English schools than the Sinhalese, Tamils and Muslims put together. When the country's finances were sound, more was spent on education than when the finances were not so good, and education went through fair and foul periods. Educational expenditure was not a priority, and in contrast ecclesiastical expenditure in support of the established church and military expenditure in support of Britain's imperial and colonial interests were high priorities. At the period of history with which we are concerned, a commitment to universal education, even as a matter of theory, was in its early dawn.

13. Colebrooke's interest in the establishment of a college, an educational institution providing instruction at a higher level than in the general body of schools, did not find favour with the Governor and the Archdeacon. The Secretary of State thought the idea was important, but was not disposed to authorize its establishment immediately. A Christian clergyman, the Rev. Marsh, stepped in to meet the need for such an institution by establishing a private academy, and in a couple of years the parents who sent their sons to it were so pleased with its progress that they prevailed upon the government to take it over and run it as a government institution with the Rev. Marsh as its head. The Colombo Academy, established in this manner, occupied a leadership position in so far as the government sector was concerned, and was among the leading educational institutions in the whole educational sector, inclusive of missionary schools. At the time of its establishment, the Colombo Academy did not have a missionary rival in Colombo itself, though a few approximated to it in other parts of the country. The first comparable missionary educational institution to come up in Colombo was S. Thomas' College, established by the Anglicans in 1852. The Academy's stature stood in the way of a complete dominance of education by missionary enterprise, especially in the matter of a quality education. But for the Academy, missionary enterprise would have enjoyed a monopoly of quality education, or, in other words, education at a level and of a quality higher than that

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provided in the generality of schools, which were of the Charity School type in England, offering little more than the 3 R's by way of a curriculum. The Colombo Academy, and a few missionary English schools, were in fact comparable to the grammar schools of England and offered an enriched curriculum that included mathematics, science and the western classics. Missionary enterprise, eager to do away with the state rival, exerted subtle pressure on the government from time to time, especially during periods of financial stress, for the government to abolish the Academy. The Academy was, however, saved by the counter pressures which its alumni exerted, and continued to demonstrate over the years that an educational institution run by the government was capable of providing as good an education as any institution run by missionaries. It is of interest to note that in the 1840's three English Central Schools for boys and three superior schools for girls were established in provincial cities by the government in addition to a superior school for girls in Colombo, but none of them survived the economy measures of the 1850's.

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CHAPTER 25

THE MORGAN RECOMMENDATIONS, 1867

1. On 14 October 1865, the Legislative Council decided "that a Committee be appointed to inquire and report upon the state and prospects of education in the Island, the amount of success which has attended the working of the present system of education and any improvement that may be deemed advisable to make thereon," and appointed a Sub-Committee with Richard Morgan the Queen's Advocate, as Chairman.[1]

2. The Morgan Committee (as this Sub-Committee of the Legislative Council was popularly called in educational circles) issued a questionnaire, consisting of eighteen questions some of which are reproduced below.[2]

> 1. What is your opinion of the School Commission? Does this Board answer the purpose for which it was established; viz., "the instruction of the Population of Ceylon"? Favour us with your reasons for your opinion on this subject.
>
> 2. Does the School Commission admit of being modified or improved? And in what respects?
>
> 3. In case you disapprove of the School Commission, can you suggest any scheme in substitution for it, and to subserve the same end?
>
> 4. Is it advisable to have in Ceylon a single Director of Public Instruction, as in the Presidencies of India? What do you conceive are the advantages or disadvantages of appointing such an officer in the stead of the School Commission?
>
> 9. Are you an advocate of purely vernacular education, and on what grounds? Has due attention being paid to vernacular education in the Town, District, or Province with which you are more immediately connected or which you best know? What are the defects, if any, of the existing system of vernacular education? What improvement does it admit of?

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10. What kind of vernacular education would you recommend, in case you think favourably of it? What is the nature of the books that should be translated from the European languages into the vernacular? And are there men in the Colony competent to undertake this work, in case there be a want of such books? How else could this difficulty be obviated?

16. Do the conditions on which grants-in-aid are now made to private schools admit of improvement? Have the sums allowed as grants-in-aid been a clear addition to the amount expended, by others than the Government on Education?

The remaining questions related to the quality of education, the content of education, female education, the Industrial School, adequacy of school provision, teachers (their efficiency, salaries and status), teacher training, school houses, grants-in-aid, school inspection, and school fees.

3. The questionnaire was issued to 43 persons, among whom there was one Sinhalese, who himself was not a Buddhist, and not a single Tamil. In other words the indigenous ethnic interests (Sinhalese, Tamil) and religious interests (Buddhist, Hindu and Muslim) got little opportunity of making their views known to the Morgan Committee.

4. The opinions expressed regarding the School Commission were generally unfavourable.

—"consists of incongruous elements..having different interests to serve do not agree in first principles and consequently the principles of action vary according to the temporary predominance of individual opinion."[3]

—"those representatives who would otherwise have pleaded at the bar of the Commission have been found clamouring on the very seat of judgement."[4]

—"worse than useless..a real obstruction to the spread of education in Ceylon..the want of education which everyone can see in some of the members, the absurdity of expecting harmonious enlightened action from a forced union of members of jarring sects, its slowness of action, its red-tapism."[5]

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— "a Board in which the Missionary element has great weight is unsuited for the direction of education at the public expense in a country where the mass of population is non-Christian."[6]

— "Out of six members, four are teachers of different religious systems, whose very existence depends upon the importance they attach to their own particular differences and each of them, in all probability, believes that instruction in his own peculiar religious opinions is a necessary part of a sound and useful education; hearty co-operation therefore in a system of education which ignores such instruction can hardly be expected from them."[7]

— "the Protestant spirit. . pervades everything connected with the Board—its rules, its schools, its books, its staff of teachers and their teaching. Four of the members of the Commission are, or were, the representatives of interests of such a nature, as admit of no friendly yielding or compromise. The remaining five members although in point of fact, they are and have ever been Protestant were by some fiction supposed to represent the common interests of the people, independently of all religious views and interests. . it ensured to the Protestant official element an easy, undisputed supremacy in government schools."[8]

— "It brought together the most heterogeneous elements, consisting of Episcopalian, Roman Catholic, Protestant and Wesleyan Ministers—men who, as it were agreed to differ."[9]

5. The second and third questions asked for ways and means by which the School Commission might be modified or improved or replaced. The fourth question was on the advisability of appointing a Director of Public Instruction. The responses were very much in favour of such an appointment. It was pointed out that from a single head with power and undivided responsibility there would be prompt and decisive action. A few thought that checks, such as an Advisory Council, were necessary to guard against the danger of too much power being vested in a single person.

6. Some of the views expressed with regard to vernacular education were as follows:

— "If the aim of the government. . be the education of the population of this Island, vernacular education must necessarily form a

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part of their programme. There is no other language in which the masses of the people could be instructed; and to instruct them, and raise them in their scale of civilization, is clearly both the duty and interest of their ruler to do."[10]

— "I am an advocate of purely vernacular education, because I believe it to be the only means by which the mass of people could be educated."[11]

— "I think it desirable that all the people of a country should as far as possible, be furnished with an opportunity of acquiring such elementary instruction in their own language as will enable them to conduct their affairs with intelligence and success, and will put within their reach such means of limited intellectual enjoyment, and of moral or religious improvement as their native literature can provide and the necessities of a life of toil will allow."[12]

7. While dealing with the question of vernacular education, a few of the respondents made comments regarding the traditional schools conducted in the Buddhist temples. An occasional contrast was also drawn between vernacular education in the government schools and in the temple schools.

— "The best existing vernacular schools are perhaps those conducted by the native priests, but they are very inconsiderable in number and some of them wholly inferior."[13]

— "The vernacular schools as kept up by government are generally next to useless and will ever be so under such masters as you in general find in them. In the Sinhalese districts, I think the vernacular is sufficiently well taught at the *pansalas*."[14]

— "I am acquainted with the temples in this Province, and I consider that they are very efficient for vernacular instruction as regards the Sinhalese language..The temple schools educated only in Sinhalese Buddhist Literature, and in doing so perpetuate old Buddhist traditions and superstitions."[15]

— "I think vernacular education may very well be kept to the Buddhist priests and the natives themselves, and the money spent by Government upon it is money wasted."[16]

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8. In so far as the place of the native languages in education was concerned the majority of those who responded to the questionnaire were agreed that the attempt that had been made during the previous thirty years, following upon Colebrooke's recommendation to use English as a medium of instruction, had been a failure, except in so far as a small minority of students was concerned.

Some typical opinions are quoted below.

— "teaching words instead of ideas. Indeed it cannot be otherwise where the studies are pursued so exclusively in a foreign language. The mind is so occupied with the words that will not grasp the ideas. Let the ideas be first acquired in their own language and reviewed in English early in his course and be daily drilled in these, but each new study be first thoroughly mastered in his own mother tongue."[17]

— "The great defect in the system of education in this country, from the very beginning, has been the neglect of the languages of the country, and the attempt to impart instruction chiefly, if not entirely, in English. The consequence is that instead of having in every village an intelligent class of men who while continuing to follow the occupations of their forefathers might be expected to avail themselves of the improved methods of carrying out those occupations, with which a practical education might have made them acquainted, we have scores not to say hundreds of young men with a smattering of English, applying for almost every appointment that becomes vacant."[18]

9. In regard to grants-in-aid, the majority of those who replied to the questionnaire were of the view that the principal conditions of eligibility for grants were so alien to the ways of thinking of the missionaries that they were reluctant to seek grants. These were, firstly the rule that restricted religious instruction to the first hour in the day, leaving it open to the pupils to keep away during that hour; and secondly the rule that religious instruction was to be confined to a simple explanation of the Bible and the leading tenets of Christianity, and was to be conducted "in such a spirit as to avoid if possible, the exclusion of any scholar, on grounds of denominational teaching."[19] It was suggested that these restrictions should be removed.

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10. The Morgan Committee's assessment of the working of the School Commission was as follows:

1. The actions of the School Commission have been characterized for years past by a want of promptitude and despatch;

2. The actions of the School Commission have shown a want of responsibility, or rather the evils of divided responsibility, which attaches to all Boards;

3. The liberal character of the constitution of the Board militated against its successful working by virtue of the diversity of interests among those who composed it.

The Committee recommended the abolition of the School Commission and the appointment of a Director of Public Instruction. His duties were to be analogous to those of the Directors of Public Instruction in the Presidencies of India.

"He will be the head of the entire Educational Department, and all matters relating to the education of the people of this Island will be carried out through his agency and by his intervention. He will be directly responsible to the Executive Government by whom he will be guided in all matters of importance, and whose duty it will be to lay down specific instructions for his guidance which should be laid before the Legislative Council from time to time for their consideration as already submitted. He should also, from time to time, inspect the different schools in the Island, and in order to prevent misconceptions as to his liability to perform this duty, it would be well to call him Director and Chief Inspector."[20]

The Committee also recommended that under the Director of Public Instruction there should be one general Inspector of Schools and a Sub-Inspector for each province. Besides other qualifications, they should know the two vernacular languages.

11. In regard to vernacular education, the Committee was of opinion that "owing to the great ignorance of the bulk of the population ..vernacular education should be undertaken by the government on a larger scale than at present."[21] The Committee, however, went on to elaborate that by the term vernacular education it "intended to imply

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only Elementary Education, whereby the rudiments of knowledge could be conveyed to the mass of the people in their own tongue."[22] The Committee emphasized that it was not its wish to promote the cultivation of the Classics in the vernacular languages. The objective of the Committee was limited to the very simple one of imparting "primary education, and nothing beyond this in the Sinhalese and Tamil languages."[23] The Committee was prepared to concede the difficulties of conveying primary education through English.

"In conveying Primary Instruction by means of the English Language, a double process had to be gone through. That language itself has to be acquired and to know it even imperfectly is a work of time. Then the rudiments of knowledge have to be communicated by means of this new medium. This would not only introduce a cumbrous and unnecessary machinery for attaining an otherwise easy object; but would also render the value of the knowledge imparted to some extent worthless, owing to the indistinctness and obscurity which must always attend the communication of ideas through the intervention of any ill-acquired foreign tongue. Not only would money and time be saved, and simplicity of plan secured by employing the vernacular languages for the purpose had in view, but also some of the evils which the present system of almost exclusive English Education has engendered will be avoided."[24]

12. The Morgan Committee also pointed out that in the Indian situation the conviction had been

"arrived at after much research, inquiry and deliberation that if the great masses of the Indian population are ever to be improved in their moral, social, or intellectual condition, it must among other means, be due mainly to the wide dissemination of primary instruction in the Native languages of India."[25]

13. The Committee recognized the lack of suitable books in the native languages, especially in Sinhalese. The Committee thought there were two means of obtaining a supply of books, namely "by appointing a Committee to make the translations, or by offering prizes for the best works written on the subject, to be approved of by a revising Committee."[26] The Committee recommended the latter, as appearing "to be the more economical and better plan."[27]

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14. In the light of the fact that according to the Minute of 26 May 1841 the duty of the Central School Commission, and therefore of the government, was to promote education in the English language, the Morgan Committee addressed itself to the issue of taking a broad view of the responsibilities of the government. The Committee noted that in 1849, a Sub-Committee of the Central School Commission had itself expressed in unambiguous language that it was the responsibility of the government to provide elementary education. The Morgan Committee also quoted from a report by W. J. Sendall his view that it was "the unquestioned duty of every government" to provide for and to enforce "very rudimentary education," and expressed its strong endorsement.[28]

15. The Committee recommended that besides vernacular schools and the Industrial school, the Mixed (or Anglo-Vernacular) schools should also be retained. The Committee in fact favoured the abolition of Elementary schools (or English schools) in which instruction was given in English, and the establishment in their place of Mixed (or Anglo-Vernacular) schools. It was intended that in these Mixed Schools,

> "children who are desirous of acquiring a knowledge of the English language and who can afford to pay for the same should be given an opportunity of learning the elements of that language and also the rudiments of European literature and science. As in the lower classes of the schools recourse must necessarily be had to the vernacular for the teaching of English, the masters employed must be men acquainted with the latter as well as the former language."[29]

The Mixed School was expected to "occupy a middle place between the purely vernacular and the purely English Central School, and serve as a stepping stone from one to the other."[30] The Committee was of the view that there should be a Mixed school in every town.

15. The Committee recognized the absence of facilities for training teachers and recommended that a Normal School should be opened in connection with the Colombo Academy for training teachers for the Mixed schools and Central Schools, and that a Normal Class should be attached to the Industrial School for training masters for the vernacular schools.

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16. In regard to school buildings, the Committee was "not prepared to recommend such a large outlay of money as would be required, if all the School houses in the Island are to be converted into government property."[31] They thought it advisable, however, to suggest that the government should from time to time construct permanent school buildings for some of the more important schools. In the case of the others, long leases should be taken and the landlords should be held responsible for repairs.

17. The Committee recommended that school fees should be regulated according to the circumstances of the people inhabiting the different Districts and Provinces.

> "..While the State should afford its subjects the opportunity of receiving primary instruction at little or no cost to the people, yet it is equally its duty to exact from the recipients of a superior education such a return in fees as would meet, to some extent, the expenses incurred in the maintenance of the schools where such superior instruction is given. The fees therefore in the purely vernacular school for boys will be only nominal, whilst no fees should be demanded from pupils attending vernacular schools for girls. The fees again in the mixed school, whether boys' or girls', should be slight. For the superior education, it is necessary that the present scale of fees should be raised."[32]

18. In regard to the system of grants-in-aid, the Committee noted that the restrictions placed by the rules of February 1861 (see chapter 17, paragraph 24) prevented many missionary bodies from availing themselves of grants-in-aid.

> "Several of the missionary bodies who are labouring in this island to educate and Christianize the natives do not require that the students attending their schools should either profess or promise to embrace Christianity—they are willing to extend the advantages of secular education to all—be they Christians or not, but they insist that the students should be informed of the principles as they may see fit. The missionaries feel that to make the reception of that kind of instruction optional with the students or their parents is inconsistent with their principles and that therefore they cannot accept grants on that condition."[33]

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The Committee was of the view that "the extension they advocate of vernacular education, particularly as respects schools for girls cannot be carried out" without the aid of missionary societies.[34]

> "Under these circumstances it is not only expedient but positively unjust to continue a system, the effect of which has been, and must continue to be, to deprive the missionaries of state aid in their efforts to educate the natives."[35]

The Committee sought advice from the Secretary of the Christian Vernacular Education Society for India regarding the Indian practice of giving grants-in-aid to schools imparting secular education without imposing on them any condition regarding religious instruction. This gentleman commended the practice, understandably. The Committee concluded as follows:

> "After much consideration the sub-committee have resolved to recommend to the Council the adoption of the Indian Rule. Abstractedly just, regard being had to the object which a government ought to keep in view as respects the education of the people committed to its charge, and to the sources whence our revenue is collected, it becomes necessary and expedient in this country, dependent as we are upon missionary efforts for the present success of any large scheme for promoting the education of its people."[36]

The Committee went on to point out that if the recommendation made by the Committee were adopted, it would be necessary to delete the seventh rule (see chapter 17 paragraph 24) and to set out in the first rule that

> "grants will be made with the special object of extending and improving the secular education of the people, and will be given impartially to all schools..which impart a sound secular education upon the conditions to be specified in the rules, and the good of society, i.e. not *contra bonos mores*."[37]

The Committee also thought that it would be desirable to introduce a further qualification, embodied in an order of the Madras government in 1865, to the effect that the Governor would not sanction a grant-in-aid of the salary of any teacher who devoted less than five hours per

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diem to secular class teaching. This order had been made to ensure that government aid would be given only to bona fide schoolmasters and not to persons who teach an hour or two a day as a supplement to other work. The Committee added that it would be well also to fix the standard which a school should attain before it could qualify for a grant.

19. The Morgan Report was placed by the Governor before the School Commission for its views. A Sub-Committee of the School Commission prepared a statement on the Report. It thought that the criticism made in the Report of the School Commission was greatly exaggerated. In regard to the recommendation that a Director of Public Instruction should be appointed, the Sub-Committee thought that a Board or Council should be associated with him as it was not "desirable that the entire direction of the education of the people should be left in the hands of one man, unchecked save by the extreme course of an appeal to government."[38] It was suggested that the Board should consist of "a Clergyman of the Church of England, a Presbyterian Clergyman, a Missionary, a Roman Catholic, with three members representing the Burghers, the Sinhalese and the Tamils."[39] In other words, it was to be representative of Christian religious interests and no place was conceded to the indigenous religions—Buddhism Hinduism and Islam.

20. The Sub-Committee of the School Commission, by and large, agreed with the Morgan Committee recommendations regarding vernacular education, the Industrial school, Mixed schools, Central schools, the Colombo Academy, the training of teachers, salaries of teachers, and school books. In regard to grants-in-aid, the Sub-Committee (which in fact consisted of three Protestant clergymen) "thoroughly approved of the conclusions" of the Morgan Committee, and "of the proposed revision of the rules of 5 February 1861, believing that the restrictions now existing have been a most serious hindrance to the spread of education, and consequently to the elevation of the people."[40] The Sub-Committee earnestly requested that the system proposed by the Morgan Committee should be brought into effect without delay.

21. The statement of the Sub-Committee was considered at a meeting of the School Commission. The view was expressed by the President that the Board proposed by the Sub-Committee was too

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large. In regard to religious instruction the President, while concurring with the general principle of grants-in-aid, was "decidedly of opinion that in no school, either wholly or partially supported by Government, should any pupil be denied admission to classes for secular instruction, on the ground of his declining to accept religious instruction."[41]

22. Shortly afterwards the Anglican Bishop of Colombo sent a letter to the Governor in which he wrote as follows:

"But I am relieved from all fears on this head, both by the conversation I had with you and by your Excellency's remarks in Council, in all of which I entirely concur. If grants-in-aid are given to Missionary Schools it is both right that the Government should require proof that a certain amount of secular instruction is given; and in places where two schools could not well be supported, it is quite fair to impose, as a condition, that the children of heathen parents shall not be refused admission to the school, even (which is very improbable) though such parents should object to their receiving Religious Instruction. We do not refuse to admit heathens to St. Thomas' College, which, as Your Excellency is aware, is founded for directly religious objects. And whilst I do not agree with the notion that we should, where we have the choice, no ways of approaching the heathen with our influence should be despised; their conversion will not be the result of any single system or set of efforts, but of all—and in time. I grieve, however, to think that this happy result may have been retarded by the indifference of an earlier period, and by the excess of caution, amounting to timidity, which has undoubtedly characterized some even of our late endeavours."[42]

23. The Bishop's letter was clearly a response to the situation that had arisen from the rider by the President of the School Commission that in a school, either wholly or partly supported by government, a pupil should not be denied admission to classes for secular instruction on the ground of his declining to accept religious instruction. In practical terms, to accept this rider would mean that a pupil could be in a grant-in-aid school and yet not receive religious instruction. This is exactly what the missionaries had opposed as one condition for grants-in-aid. The Bishop's response was in the nature of a compromise, for he was prepared to concede that in some places (that is, where two schools could not well be supported) children of heathen parents could

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be granted permission to attend school, even though they could not be given religious instruction on account of the objections of their parents.

24. The official response in the face of this situation was in the direction of making a provision to the effect that the government should reserve to itself "the right of refusing or withdrawing grants-in-aid to private schools, in cases in which the establishment or maintenance of government schools may be rendered necessary by the enforcement of a compulsory rule as regards religious instruction by a mission school."[43] In other words, while there was to be no conscience clause, if there was insistence on compulsory religious instruction by a grant-aided school, and such compulsion made the establishment or maintenance of a government school necessary, the government reserved to itself the right to withdraw or refuse grants. In pursuance of this standpoint, the following motion was moved in the Legislative Council in January 1868.

> "That the Council approve of the recommendations of the Sub-Committee with reference to grants-in-aid, which are concurred in by a majority of the School Commission; but consider that the government should reserve to itself the right of refusing or withdrawing grants-in-aid, to private schools in cases in which the establishment or maintenance of government schools may be rendered necessary by the enforcement of a compulsory rule as regards religious instruction."[44]

The Governor expressed his reservations about the resolution which in effect permitted grants-in-aid to be given for secular instruction without any restrictions on religious instruction.

25. A report relating to education in India, prepared in 1854 by Charles Wood, popularly referred to as *Wood's Despatch* in India and in British colonial circles, greatly influenced educational thinking in Ceylon, including the Morgan recommendations and the subsequent policy of the British government in Ceylon, except in regard to higher education.[45] *Wood's Despatch* emphasized that education was the responsibility of the government. In regard to the language of instruction, it expressed the view that the vernacular languages must be used as the medium to teach the masses, while English should be used as the medium where there was a demand for it and competence to use it—in other words, for a few. A system of grants-in-aid such as that

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obtaining in England was recommended in order to enlist the services of voluntary organizations for the provision of education. The gradual transfer of government schools to local boards was also suggested. All these recommendations were reflected in action taken in Ceylon. *Wood's Despatch* recommended the establishment of universities, and this recommendation was almost immediately implemented ln India. In Ceylon, however, the British authorities refused to make similar provision for higher education, and it was not until 1942 that the University of Ceylon saw the light of day, although a half way measure was taken in 1921 when a university college which prepared students for degrees of the University of London was established.

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SECTION IV

1869 — 1900

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CHAPTER 26

THE POLITICAL AND SOCIAL BACKGROUND

(1869 - 1900)

1. The only constitutional change of any significance that took place during the period under review was the enlargement of the Legislative Council in 1889 by the addition of two unofficial members, nominated by the Governor, to represent the Kandyans and the Muslims respectively.

2. While, during the period 1832 - 1870, European planting and commercial interests were in the vanguard of the agitation for constitutional reforms, as they were conscious of the financial advantages that would accrue to them from a greater participation in the process of government, the remainder of the century saw the emergence of another category of persons who inspired demands for constitutional reforms. These were the Ceylonese who, having received an English education often with distinction, developed aspirations for recognition in political and professional fields. The support of the local newspapers was enlisted in their cause, and to a certain extent the English education given by the British to them proved to be a cause of embarrassment to the British themselves. English education nurtured both conformists—loyal British subjects who adored everything British—and dissidents. The latter played an increasingly vocal role by participating in agitation for more responsible positions to be given to Ceylonese (see next paragraph), and for a greater share to be given to the people of Ceylon in the management of their affairs with a view ultimately to independence. Their movement derived considerable support from contemporary national movements in India.

3. As from 1870, recruitment to the Civil Service was based on an examination held simultaneously once a year both at London and Colombo. A change in this method of recruitment was effected in 1880 by a decision according to which the examination was held only in London. Justifying this measure, Governor Longden argued that "it was impossible for any young man without leaving the island to shake himself so free of local ties and feelings of caste prejudice and insular narrowness as to acquire any independence of thought."[1]

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The intention was to ensure that only the Ceylonese hopefully anglicized by being educated in England would compete in the recruitment examination. This measure was a cause of great disappointment to educated youth in Ceylon who were not affluent enough to be able to proceed to London for the recruitment examination. The Civil Service provided an avenue of upward mobility, and the method of recruitment through an examination placed a premium on educational attainment, subject to the hurdle of nomination, in respect of which considerations of caste and social class undoubtedly prevailed with diminishing importance over the years. Thus education as a whole increased in value in the eyes of the people for the upward mobility that was seen to be provided by it, and this was noteworthy from a societal point of view. The new method of recruitment, involving appearance at an examination held in London, exalted affluence unduly, and there was much resentment about the new requirement. It was partly mitigated by the fact that two scholarships were available as from 1870 for study in England. Matters continued in this manner until 1891, when recruitment at an examination held in Colombo was conceded, but those recruited on the basis of this examination enjoyed an inferior status to those recruited at the examination in London.

4. While the Civil Service was as a whole unswerving in its loyalty to the British government, some of the Ceylonese members in it did not find it irreconcileable with their loyalty to engineer from time to time a covert agitation, through the newspapers and the members of the Legislative Council, to the effect that the plums of office reserved only for European members of the Civil Service should be shared among the Ceylonese members, recruited in England, as well. The British paid little heed to this demand. Judicial positions were also occupied by members of the Civil Service, and the British showed a greater readiness to appoint Ceylonese to judicial posts than to important administrative posts.

5. The coffee plantations that had enjoyed increasing prosperity from about 1850 faced a crisis in the 1870's when the coffee leaf was attacked by a fungus. It defied all attempts at control, and by the middle of the 1880's the devastation was almost complete. While the economy suffered a serious set back, a collapse was warded off by the success which the coconut and tea plantations enjoyed. The extent of land under coconut and tea cultivation was rapidly increased, and these crops became the backbone of the island's economy.

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6. By the end of the nineteenth century, the Ceylonese middle class was growing in size, as a result of the expansion of new opportunities in the professions, notably law and medicine, as well as in agriculture and commerce. Having been exposed to the political and social literature of Europe, including Britain, through the medium of English, they became increasingly committed to concepts of freedom and liberty, and unhappy about the shackles of colonialism that bound them. Their orientation was secular-nationalist, but there emerged also during the last quarter of the nineteenth century a quite powerful movement with a religio-nationalist orientation.

The Indigenous Religio-Nationalist Movement

7. The supremacy of the white race had asserted itself through superior armour and fire power. The military and physical subjugation of the people had long been completed. Vicious onslaughts on the indigenous religions were made through the religious tracts that were profusely turned out by the printing presses established by the missionary societies, partly through the patronage of the government. School children were being subjected to brain washing in the schools. The morale of the indigenous religious groups was low for the past several decades, but never completely broken, as there was a solid base on which it rested. This base rested primarily on two supports. The first was the adherence of the masses to their ancestral religions for it was only a minority that was exposed to Christian education and of it, too, not every one was converted to Christianity. The second was the persistence of a living tradition of religious scholarship at a few centres in the country. It was unassumingly conducted with no fanfare and trumpets.

8. Opposition to missionary methods may not have been unknown prior to the present period, but it was during the period under review that the opposition became pronounced and vociferous. The religious debates of the years 1868-1873 between Christian missionaries and Buddhist monks were greatly publicised events. The most saintly and scholarly among the latter could hardly have made a success of them, and very wisely they stood in the background entrusting the battle to other monks well-known for their oratorical prowess. The most distinguished among the Buddhist monk-orators was the Venerable Migettuwatte Gunananda *Thero*, described by the American Theosophist, Colonel Olcott, as "the most brilliant polemic orator of the island, the terror of the missionaries. . more wrangler than ascetic".[2]

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The religious debates were held in several towns. Although the arguments between the principal debaters were often couched in vitriolic language, the debates were peacefully conducted. A Wesleyan missionary, the Rev. S. Langdon, who participated in the debates, made the following comment about the masses who gathered together to listen to the debates, "I question if a controversy of that kind could be held in the presence of so many thousands in any country in Europe without some disturbance."[3]

9. The best known of the debates between Christian missionaries and Buddhist monks was a debate held at Panadura, and it received publicity abroad through John Capper's *A full account of the Buddhist Controversy at Panadura, August* 1873 *by the 'Ceylon Times' special reporter with the addresses revised and amplified by the speakers.* An American Theosophist, Colonel H. S. Olcott, attracted by Gunananda *Thero's* presentation of Buddhism as reported in this publication, started correspondence with him. Olcott sent Gunananda *Thero* a copy of his book *Isis Unveiled*, and it was translated by the latter into Sinhalese. The perception that at least a few among the white race, which had shown its overwhelming superiority by the use of armour and fire power, were critical of Christianity and sympathetic to Buddhism provided the Buddhists of Ceylon with a great deal of psychological comfort. Accounts of the writings of Europeans critical of Christianity or sympathetic to Buddhism were often highlighted in a newspaper started by the Buddhists. Western interest in Buddhism was much to the dismay of the local Christian community, and it is recorded that the Wesleyan newspaper, the *Ceylon Observer*, published a virulent attack upon Sir Edwin Arnold, author of *The Light of Asia*, for his sympathetic treatment of Buddhism.[4]

10. On the invitation of the Buddhist scholar-monk, Venerable Hikkaduwe Sumangala *Thero* and the orator-monk, Venerable Gunananda *Thero*, Colonel Olcott and Madame Blavatsky, the leading lights of the theosophical movement, arrived in Ceylon in 1880. As a writer in the *Buddhist* was to point out in 1890 in retrospect, at the time they arrived influential Sinhalese families were "ashamed to acknowledge the *Dharma* of Buddhism. .for fear of Christian opinion in authority", but in a matter of ten years a change had taken place as a result of the strength they gave to the Buddhist movement.[5] In Olcott's words, ". .we were the first white champions of their religion, speaking of its

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excellence and its blessed comfort from the platform in the face of the missionaries, its enemies and slanderers."[6]

11. Olcott's survey of the educational scene showed him firstly the importance of a network of Buddhist schools to counter the influence of Christian schools, and secondly the importance of a central organization to mobilize resources, considering that the few local Buddhist societies which had established schools were struggling to maintain them. He created such a central organization through the theosophical society which he founded in 1880. It came to be known later as the Buddhist Theosophical Society.

12. Contemporaneously with the Buddhist revival, a Hindu revival also began. The main force behind it was indigenous, the leadership having been taken by Arumuga Navalar, the product of a Christian educational institution, who later eschewed Christianity and reverted to the religion into which he was born. Perhaps the only exogenous element in the Hindu revival was the inspiration derived from contemporary religio-nationalist movements in India. An English school established by Arumuga Navalar faced such strong opposition from the missionaries and discouragement from the government that it faded out. Shortly after the death of Arumuga Navalar in 1878, the Jaffna *Paripalana Sabhai* was organized. P. Ramanathan complained in the Legislative Council in 1884 that intolerance on the part of the missionaries "appears to have varied with varying times and circumstances, but it is especially observed at the present day ever since the Champion Reformer of Hindus in the Northern Province died in 1878."[7] The *Sabhai* started a newspaper called the "Hindu Organ", which espoused not only the Hindu cause but also the Buddhist cause, both of which suffered equally at the hands of the missionaries and the hands of the government. Encouraged by the success of the Buddhists in getting a handful of their schools registered for grant, the *Sabhai* started the Jaffna Hindu College in 1889, and succeeded in having it registered for grant in 1895. Its management was transferred from the *Sabhai* to the Hindu College Board of Management. Other Hindu schools established by local initiative in various parts of Jaffna handed over the management of the schools to the Hindu Board, thus strengthening its hands for promoting Hindu education. It may be noted that the Hindu revival was altogether on a low key in comparison with the Buddhist revival, but it lent moral support to the latter, receiving similar support in return.

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13. Encouraged by the educational efforts of the Buddhists and the Hindus, the Muslims established in 1891 and 1892 two schools for Muslim boys and succeeded in obtaining grants from the government for them. Schools started for Muslim girls were regarded as a special case by the government, on account of the almost total absence of educational facilities for Muslim girls, and run by the government as government schools.

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CHAPTER 27

THE INDIGENOUS RELIGIOUS SCHOOLS

(1869 - 1900)

1. The Administration Report of the government for the year 1871 contained two sets of comments by government officials on the *pansala* schools (schools conducted in the precincts of Buddhist temples). One was by L. F. Lee, the Assistant Government Agent of Kegalle, who thought that there appeared to be a growing dislike among the people "to the Buddhist priests and an increasing disinclination to sending the children to the *pansalas* for instruction."[1] He was of the view that this promised well for the success of the vernacular schools run by the government, and he went on to suggest that "the confiscation of the royal endowments of *viharas* and *devalas* and the application of the funds resulting therefrom to the advancement of education would not be distasteful to the people."[2] In further elaboration of this idea, he said "To those desiring the spread of vernacular education, this matter possesses particular interest, and history has set us an example of such confiscation which might be well for us, while those who advocate the disestablishment of the English Church in Ceylon would, I have no doubt, join in advocating the annihilation of the heathen establishment, which subsists upon royal endowments, and enjoys the privilege of exemption from taxation."[3] Lee's suggestions do not appear to have been taken seriously by the government. It would have been too explosive politically to consider implementing them.

2. The other set of comments was by W. J. Sendall, the Director of Public Instruction. He had seen on his visits to various parts of the island groups of children receiving "instruction of a very meagre description from the priests."[4] He thought that "many of these *pansalas* might, with proper management, become the habitat of useful schools of elementary instruction in reading, writing and arithmetic."[5] He had met many priests among whom "there were not a few sensible and intelligent men from whom real assistance and work in this direction might be looked for."[6] Sendall's intentions were not clear, but they appear to have been less objectionable than Lee's.

3. A suggestion of a more positive nature came from J. H. Marsh, Inspector of Schools, in 1874:

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"In the North-Central Province, where many indigenous schools continue to exist in connection with Buddhist temples. .the interest of the people would be best consulted by the establishment of a system of government inspection, which, while allowing reading and writing to be taught after the native method, provide for an examination according to the present standard for grant-in-aid schools in these subjects, and also for a money payment, which need not exceed that made to other schools for similar results, for such other subjects (Arithmetic, Grammar and Geography) as are included in the government scheme for grants-in-aid. As schools of this class may be considered as endowed schools, I do not propose that any payment should be made for reading and writing, but only that efficiency in these two subjects should be made the condition on which they should become eligible for a government grant, and that government support should take the form of a payment for results in such subjects as are not taught, or not taught efficiently, in such schools at present."[7]

The treatment that was proposed to be accorded to the temple schools was niggardly in comparison with that accorded to vernacular schools started by missionary societies. Marsh has, however, to be given credit for the suggestion he made, although the government took no notice of it.

4. The recognition by the government in 1878, for financial assistance, of the Vidyodaya *Pirivena*, a college of higher learning in oriental languages such as Pali and Sanskrit, was an event of importance as it was the first occasion on which the government conceded that such learning was of value and deserved encouragement. Among its students were both Buddhist monks and the laity. It was pointed out that arithmetic and geography were not taught even to the laity and the desirability of doing so was emphasized. In 1879 arithmetic was included in the subjects of the examination, but the performance was considered poor.[8] According to the Administration Report of the Director of Public Instruction for 1883, the school was "not examined by this Department but by such oriental scholars as may be selected by the manager, and the Director is merely present at the examination,"[9] The financial assistance to the institution took the form of a lump sum grant of Rs. 1,000 per year. In course of time, the Vidyodaya *Pirivena* acquired a great reputation in Asia for oriental learning, and attracted students from Siam (now Thailand), Cambodia and Japan.

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5. In 1885, the Director of Public Instruction, finding that for want of funds he was "compelled..to refuse many applications" for the establishment of government schools which he would have liked to have granted, and also that he had to keep many applications for grants for aid "waiting a long time", confessed that it was

> "..useless to hope and impossible to expect that the revenue will enable the government for some time to come to increase..votes sufficiently to enable (him) to do anything like so much as (he) shall wish to do in the way of new vernacular schools."[10]

6. The Director suggested to the government a scheme for assisting the temple schools using funds from Buddhist temporalities:

> "After consideration of the whole question I have asked the Government if legislation cannot be undertaken to provide the Department with the funds indicated by the Buddhist Temporalities Commissioners and the Retrenchment Commission, and if these funds are procured, I have proposed to reform and strengthen *pansala* schools in the Kandyan Provinces by working them on special lines, which could be laid down by a short code for pansala schools—Such a code would provide:—
>
> 1. The *pansala* schools which would comply with certain conditions would receive a grant-in-aid. (The amount of grant depended upon the sum provided by legislation, as it would be paid from that fund only)
>
> 2. That the conditions of grant be:-
>
> (a) That there would be a lay teacher competent to teach in the vernacular, reading, writing, arithmetic, geography, and the history of Ceylon. (The priest would teach his religious subjects undisturbed; three hours a day would be plenty for the secular subjects and even now the priest seldom teaches his religious subjects for more than one hour);
>
> (b) That there would be an average attendance of (say) fifteen scholars;
>
> (c) That no *pansala* school should receive a grant if within five miles of an existing Government or grant-in-aid school. (I desire to reform *pansala* schools where there is nothing better to be had;

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not to create new *pansala* schools in opposition to other educational bodies and better educational systems);

3. That the grant should generally be in the form of a result payment for each boy who passed in any one of the secular subjects above specified (No grant would be paid for religious subjects to *pansala* schools any more than to other grant-in-aid schools):

4. That in the province of Uva, being educationally backward, a capitation grant be paid for each boy presented for examination in the secular subjects in addition to results payments. (This grant would I hope after a time become unnecessary, I object to capitation grants, and I have only proposed it as a temporary, special aid in this special instance);

5. That the grant obtained by a *pansala* school be primarily devoted to paying the salary of the lay teachers.

I think that if action can be taken on the above lines we should insure both better and more useful teaching and better attendance, because all government aid would be conditional upon there being a lay teacher who knew his work, where most of the priests do not and the better the teaching the larger the grant would be; while the number of scholars ought largely to increase, as the more presented for examination the more money would be earned, and the lay teacher in his own interests would pay that attention to securing a proper attendance which the priests do not, and the teacher would work under favourable conditions, as the people are always willing (as before pointed out) to send their children to *pansalas*."[11]

The suggestions made by the Director were not implemented, and the *pansala* schools continued to struggle on without any assistance or recognition from the government.

7. A. de A. Seneviratne urged in the Legislative Council on 28 July 1898 that financial assistance be given to other *Pirivenas*, of which four had been mentioned in the Administration Report of the Director of Public Instruction for 1897, in the same way as to Vidyodaya *Pirivena*.[12] The suggestion was deftly side-tracked. P. Ramanathan, the Acting Attorney-General, suggested instead that in order to encourage oriental learning the University of London should be asked to

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include Sinhalese and Tamil as examination subjects. The Lieutenant-Governor concurred in the suggestion, pointing out that the government was not satisfied with the results from the annual payment that was made to Vidyodaya *Pirivena.*

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CHAPTER 28

THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

(1869 - 1900)

1. The Morgan Committee's recommendation that a Director of Public Instruction should be appointed was accepted by the Legislative Council on the basis of a motion moved by the Colonial Secretary. The official motion included a provision for an Advisory Board of six members to be set up to advise the Director. This part of the motion was strongly opposed by Morgan and several others, and was defeated on a vote that was taken.

The first Director of Public Instruction.

2. A British educationist, J. S. Laurie, selected by the Secretary of State for appointment as the first Director of Public Instruction, arrived in Ceylon in February 1869. Soon after his arrival, he wrote to the Colonial Secretary (who was the head of the civil service) asking for instructions regarding his duties but did not receive a reply. Laurie spent the next four months touring the island and familiarizing himself with the educational conditions obtaining in the country.

3. On 1 June 1869, Laurie sent to the Governor a "Special Report on the State of Public Instruction in Ceylon."[1] It had sections entitled:

1. The Department;
2. Cost of Schools;
3. The School System;
4. Normal College etc.,
5. Plans of Model School and School Buildings;
6. Museum of Science and Art;
7. Police, Pioneers and Evening Schools;
8. Estate Schools;
9. Teachers' Certificates;
10. Pupil Teachers;
11. Aided Schools.

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4. Laurie pointed out that in spite of his requests he was "as yet unprovided with instructions in regard to the range and limits" of his departmental powers, and the nature of his control "direct or indirect, over the administration of the fund" placed at his disposal.[2] In the circumstances, he was constrained to acquire a knowledge of his province of duty "by haphazard, or by the decisions in detail" of the Governor's Chief Executive Officer, namely the Colonial Secretary.[3] "Under the present anomalous requirement of having to refer minute and petty, as well as large and important points, for superior sanction, my responsibility becomes a mere abstraction, and my office a misnomer and a farce."[4]

5. Having committed a cardinal sin by firing this salvo at the Colonial Secretary, Laurie could hardly expect reasonable or considerate treatment from the bureaucratic hierarchy. It was not a matter for surprise that in a matter of months the Governor felt that the retention of Laurie's services would be "fatal to the interests of education in Ceylon."[5]

6. Three months after the submission of the Report, the Colonial Secretary sent a letter to Laurie conveying the views of the government upon the proposals contained in the Report. Regarding the powers of the Director, it was naively said that the powers of the Director were defined by his letter of appointment, as those of a Head of a Department, a definition well understood in "Colonial Administration."[6]

7. Some of the chief recommendations in Laurie's Report are outlined below, together with the views conveyed regarding them in the Colonial Secretary's letter.

8. In regard to the grants to be made to schools conducted by missionary societies, Laurie advocated payment by results on the basis of an individual examination of pupils. This was, of course, an importation into Ceylon of the system of payment by results introduced in England by Robert Lowe in 1862. The grant was to be calculated for passes in specified subjects of instruction and was to be greater for the higher standards (or grades) than for the lower standards (or grades). In general, the Colonial Secretary agreed to the 'payment by results' basis for making grants.

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9. In regard to the staffing of schools, Laurie made a number of suggestions. He suggested that the teachers serving in schools should be examined and graded. In fact, with the approval of the Colonial Secretary, Laurie had sent out a circular, dated 12 March 1869, in which it was announced that an examination would be held in November. The payment of grants-in-aid to schools was to be conditional on their teachers' passing the examination. This requirement was strongly objected to by the missions which were running schools with poorly qualified teachers and saw in it a threat to the enjoyment of grants. The Colonial Secretary agreed that the recommendation was "objectionable, as being likely to provoke irritation on the part of the managers of the mission schools."[7] In terms of his circular, Laurie had made arrangements to hold the examination in November, but he was ordered to abandon it.

10. Laurie recommended that the assistant teachers in schools should be provided training in a Normal School, if they passed an examination, or dismissed, if they failed it. The Colonial Secretary did not consider this feasible. He, however, approved another of Laurie's suggestions, namely to substitute pupil teachers for assistant teachers. He also approved Laurie's suggestion for establishing a Normal School to train teachers.

11. Laurie drew attention to the disproportionate cost of the higher class of schools. He emphasised that not only has the administration of the public vote hitherto been partial and restricted, but also injudiciously and unjustly apportioned within its prescribed limits.

"I allude to the peculiar feature of class-partiality....The following table will show at a glance the disproportionate extent to which aid is offered by the Government towards the expenses of the classes, who might reasonably be expected to defray their own expenses:—

Kind of School	Average Attendance	Cost to Government per pupil		
		£	sh.	d.
Colombo Academy (Upper School)	49	25	5	3
Superior Boys' Schools	455	3	17	0
Superior Girls' Schools	265	7	13	4
English Boys' Schools	589	2	12	7
Mixed Boys' Schools (including Galle Lower School)	1,222	2	2	3
Mixed Girls' Schools	163	3	2	0
Vernacular Boys' Schools	2,040	0	18	2
Vernacular Girls' Schools	217	1	1	3

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If it be correct to assume (and I am assured by the best authorities that it is so), that the various grades of schools, on the whole, correspond with the various social grades, i.e., the pecuniary status of the community, it follows that the present mode of distributing the public money is altogether in favour of the well-to-do. Again, unless the subtle idiosyncrasies of Orientalism (of which I have been duly and abundantly forewarned) have nought to do with the domain of logic, I trust I am warranted in repeating the Western maxim (which, after all, came originally from the East) that charity, and especially public charity, should be extended to the poor in preference to the well-to-do. Applying this maxim to the above table, a complete inversion of the specified amounts would naturally take place."[8]

As a principle of common justice, "striking at the root of the present system", Laurie suggested an increase in the school fees payable by the students attending the favoured schools.[9] The Colonial Secretary agreed with the necessity of rendering these schools "as far as possible self-supporting by an increase of the present rate of fees", and instructed Laurie to implement this decision.[10]

12. In connection with the cost of the school establishment, Laurie made certain suggestions for reducing costs and increasing income. An example of the former was the replacement of adult assistants by pupil teachers; and an example of the latter was an increase in fees in the schools patronized by the more affluent social classes. He also went on to say:

"..should the reduced scale of expenditure prove, at any time, beyond the capabilities of the public purse, the alternative is that of special taxation unless indeed, the Home Government, reciprocating, as it is understood to do, the popular desire for the spread of Colonial schools, is willing, as an earnest thereof, to remit a portion of the burdensome Military Contribution in favour of so desirable an object."[11]

Such heretical and intemperate language—burdensome Military Contribution—could have been used only by someone whose sensibilities had not been destroyed by participation in the colonial administration. The Colonial Secretary had no comment to make, but it was as certain as night followed day that the colonial axe would descend on Laurie's neck.

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13. Laurie recommended the institution of a programme, phased over a period of 20 to 30 years, to establish new schools annually so that in course of time the educational requirements of the country would be fully met. He argued in a postscript to his Report for some generosity in this respect.

"..if the Government is unprepared to put forth all its energies in extending schools of its own, the Mission bodies will be naturally tempted to extend the sphere of their operations beyond their present restricted and meagre areas, before they have securely acquired that moral ascendancy over the communities, whose Christianization they ultimately aim at. Hence political difficulties may be warrantably foreshadowed. It is for this reason, combined with those directly affecting the public weal, and the reactionary advantages accruing to the legislature from the improved social condition of the masses, that I emphatically maintain the desirability of assuming a tolerably generous scale of increase, whether the present state of the revenue justifies it or not. I proceed on the broad principle that, under judicious management, nearly every respectable community in the Island will sooner or later be enabled to contribute, by means of a local or general rate, the small sum of £45 per annum towards the maintenance of a school."[12]

14. Laurie recommended a new scale of pay for teachers, which was to be very largely dependent on results. The Colonial Secretary was not in favour of making the pay of teachers "dependent on results to so large an extent" as that proposed by Laurie and suggested a modified scheme for further consideration.[13]

15. Laurie had serious reservations about the use of English as a medium of instruction in the lower grades in school.

"The spectacle of a number of native children studiously labouring to master the bare mechanical difficulties of a foreign tongue, to the utter exclusion of all mental training through the medium of their own language, printed as well as spoken, is bizarre and even painful in the extreme."[14]

He also quoted with approval a statement which he attributed to P. Braybrooke, Government Agent of Kandy:

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"They (i.e. the Kandyan people) have long since discovered that to give their children a knowledge of the English language, and of the other subjects usually taught in Government schools does not really enable them to make their way in the world, whilst it utterly unfits them for agricultural and other pursuits, such as the majority of the inhabitants are engaged in. The employment opportunities in this country for which a knowledge of English, Arithmetic and Geography may qualify them are so few and so overstocked already, that these educated youths are not turned out in the means of gaining an honest livelihood, or being of the slightest use to their parents in after life. Thus they either become burdens to their families or pests of society by taking to petition-drawing, or fomenting quarrels and litigations amongst their neighbours. For this reason the great body of the Kandyans set their faces against their children being educated in those schools."[15]

The specific recommendation that Laurie made was not very revolutionary. He recommended that Sinhalese or Tamil should be used as the medium up to and inclusive of standard 3, "and—with the view of meeting a demand that may be, and doubtless in many cases, is, a necessity—that the transition into English at all (which should bear an extra fee) should be left to the decision of parents."[16] As for teachers, "all alike should be thoroughly acquainted with English, as an indispensable branch of their education."[17] The suggestion regarding the medium of instruction was ignored by the Colonial Secretary.

16. What Laurie had to say on grant-in-aid schools and the religious issue arising in connection with them is worth quoting in full:

"Abstractly, the right distribution of the public funds involves the principle of impartiality, which again implies, that each and every member of the State should be presented with the opportunity of claiming his proportionate share, and none more than his share.

The application of this legislative axiom is simple enough when the boon conferred is universally recognized and absolutely unobjectionable, as for example, the protection of the person and property. But when the question affects an institution ostensibly designed by the legislature for the common good, and which by the nature of things cannot be indefinitely multiplied, every member of

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the community enjoys or is entitled to enjoy, the prescriptive rights of availing himself of its advantages.

If, on the other hand, the restrictions are such that he cannot do so without violating his conscience, the legislature has *ipso facto* imposed on him an unreasonable and therefore unlawful condition.

Applying this doctrine to the point at issue—and keeping in view the wants of a divided village community, an enlightened legislature will religiously shield the conscientious scruples of every member of the community, by the simple expedient of non-intervention or at least, by the nearest practicable or desirable approximation thereto. When, however, school work happens to have been forestalled by any individual society (which has already so to speak conquered the field of operations by hitherto unaided effort) embarrassment on the one side or the other is sure to arise. Hence the invention elsewhere of a "conscience clause" as the primary ground of government recognition, and as an earnest, where no additional school is required, abstinence from rivalry. This clause secures to parents, who may have conscientious scruples to the religious, or rather doctrinal teachings, the right of claiming for their children secular instruction pure and simple.

Such appears to be the posture of affairs under all enlightened legislatures, except that of Madras, where grants-in-aid are conferred without restriction or qualification: and whether or not this is a desirable precedent worthy of imitation by Ceylon, it remains for Your Excellency to decide.

Intimately associated as this question is with political considerations of more or less potential significance, I take the liberty of stating that the concession here mooted might in my opinion safely be made, provided it be restricted in its application to the areas of fixed Mission stations, but subject to a periodic enlargement of the boundaries. This safeguard is based upon the two-fold conviction that on those spots where the Missionaries have long laboured, they have achieved a moral, if not a religious, ascendancy over the masses; and, on the other hand, that where they have not hitherto gained a permanent footing, the sudden introduction of a school, based on the candidly avowed object of Christianizing prejudiced and susceptible members of a different faith,

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would be apt to compromise and perhaps seriously embarrass the Government. The very eagerness of the people to possess a school —a feeling which missionaries have fairly enough turned to account —only serves to fortify an apprehension which, according to evidence of an authoritative character, is not more groundless in regard to Ceylon, than it has already proved in regard to India, China or New Zealand.

That this important subject has already arrested your attention is evinced by the Legislative Council's Resolution 8, of January 1868.

'That the Council approve of the recommendations of the Sub-Committee with reference to grants-in-aid, which are concurred in by the majority of the School Commission; but consider that the Government should reserve to itself the right of refusing or withdrawing grants-in-aid to Private Schools, in cases in which the establishment or maintenance of Government Schools may be rendered necessary (by the enforcement of a compulsory rule as regards religious instruction).' With the omission of the bracketed clause, this Resolution passed, but with a prudential reservation on the part of Your Excellency, which seems to leave the matter still an open and unsettled question. A few additional remarks may therefore be permitted.

While, as Your Excellency is well aware the Roman Catholic and Wesleyan Missions of the North agreed to accept the conditions laid down by the late School Commission, the Church of England representatives continue to hold themselves aloof. I have been led to understand, however, that these are willing to comply with the terms of the amended Resolution; should these therefore receive Your Excellency's sanction, an educational auxiliary of considerable amount would be brought into play."[18]

After outlining a basis for the payment of a results grant, Laurie added, "Precisely corresponding advantages should be conferred on all private or Native adventure schools, appertaining to any form of belief whatsoever."[19]

17. Laurie's statement showed that while he was keen to implement the grants-in-aid scheme approved by the legislature, he was

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himself firmly convinced that a conscience clause was demanded by considerations of justice. Laurie also stood for conferring the advantage of grants, hitherto discussed entirely in terms of Christian schools, to private or native schools "appertaining to any form of belief whatever." Neither of these gestures of sympathy and justice for the indigenous religious groups was comfortable to the vested interests that were entrenched in the country. Laurie was firmly told by the Colonial Secretary,

> "The leading principles by which the grant for aid to schools not under the management or control of government is to be regulated are laid down in the Resolution of the Legislative Council of January 1868, and in the Report of the Sub-Committee of the Council as adopted by that Resolution. The general principles being thus settled, what is now required is a code of plain Rules to regulate the details of the system."[20]

Laurie's progressive views on education were unacceptable to the British government. His term of office was not extended and he returned to England in 1870. W. J. Sendall succeeded him as the Director of Public Instruction. He did not raise any inconvenient questions and was a compliant administrator.

The Revised Code of 1880.

18. In 1879, the Director of Public Instruction, Charles Bruce acting on orders received from the government, drew up a comprehensive code of regulations intended to take the place of the provisional regulations under which the grant-in-aid scheme had been administered for nearly a decade. The experience of the previous ten years in the operation of the scheme was taken into account in the preparation of the new code. The financial crisis that started in 1879 on account of the destruction of the coffee plant from a blight undoubtedly provided some of the motivation for the review and proposed revision of the grant-in-aid scheme. The government was, however, careful to stress the educational arguments for the revision and to avoid any mention of the financial crisis. Some years later, however, the Acting Director of Public Instruction made the statement that "if the object of the promoter (of the Code) was to reduce the expenditure of Government on education it must be admitted it has signally failed."[21]

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19. The new code was tabled in the Legislative Council on 3 December 1879. The Director issued a circular to managers of aided schools, setting out the rationale underlying the code, and asking for their comments and suggestions before it was finally included in the statute book. The circular noted that the grant-in-aid scheme as hitherto operated had led "to the multiplication of small and feeble schools in districts where the interests of the inhabitants would be much better served by a few good schools," and by implication it was clear that the code was intended to rectify this state of affairs.[22]

20. On 15 September 1880, in his opening address to a new session of the Legislative Council, Governor Longden made the following reference to the Revised Code:

> "A revised Code which will be laid upon the table, has been promulgated for the moneys voted by this Council for grants-in-aid, and while the requirements of the Code are designed to prevent any payments of money to schools which do not show good practical results in the examination of their pupils, and also to prevent the multiplication of small and feeble schools, the provisions of the Code are more liberal than the old regulations in the aid given to higher class schools and to girls' schools."[23]

21. The Wesleyan mission took the initiative in summoning a conference of Protestant Missionary Societies to discuss the code. A memorial prepared by the conference was presented in the Legislative Council on 20 October 1880 by one of the private members, P. Ramanathan.[24] The most important points urged in the memorial were as follows:

The publication of proposed schools in the Government Gazette.

The Conference suggested the addition of a new clause, to read as follows: That every application for a new school or proposed changes in the school, whether Government or Grant-in-aid, should be published in the Government Gazette.

The average attendance in A and B Schools.

The Conference argued that the new requirement of a higher average attendance than that which applied before "will if carried out, have a disastrous effect on education of the most necessary kind", and urged reverting to the old requirement.

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The average attendance in C Schools.

The Conference argued that the new requirement of a higher average attendance than that which applied before "will be found to be much too high in some outlying and neglected districts", and urged reverting to the old requirement.

The removal of a school from the list.

The Conference argued that the penalty of "altogether removing from the list a school failing to fulfil any of the necessary conditions" was too severe and that such a school should be down graded from class A to class B, for example.

22. Ramanathan moved that a select Committee of the Legislative Council should be appointed to inquire into the draft Revised Code in the light of the objections raised and report to the Council. The motion was opposed by the official members, but it was passed by a majority of one. The select committee consisted of three official members and three non-official members, including Ramanathan. At the meetings of the select committee, however, one of the non-official members voted with the official members with the result that Ramanathan's efforts to have the wishes of the Wesleyan mission incorporated failed. On a number of minor points, the government gave in and agreed to make amendments.

23. The report of the select committee was debated on 6 December 1880. Ramanathan moved certain amendments but they were defeated. The Lieutenant-Governor, however, assured the Council that the new rules would not result in the denial of educational facilities.

> "It is never intended in any case to suppress a school where the suppression of a school would involve any withdrawal of facilities.. On the contrary, where the suppression of a school would involve anything of the sort, the department would place it under special regulations and support it as an educational necessity; but what is intended is to cope with what has been brought forward year after year to Government for some time past as a very great evil in our educational system; that is the multiplication of rival schools.. competing with one another, and..doing harm rather than good as educational media."[25]

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During the debate, it was stated by one participant that the Roman Catholics supported the "Code as a whole."[26] It was also known that the Anglican mission did not have serious objections to the Code. Although the Wesleyan mission was largely instrumental in working up opposition to the Code and was publicly uncompromising in its criticism of those who supported it, its private view conveyed to the Headquarters of the mission in London was different. One missionary wrote home as follows:

> "..Not that I have much to say against the code as a whole, but it pinches us here and there considerably—the code as a whole is a broad comprehensive scheme much superior to anything we have had before, but it needs slight adjustments here and there. Our Girls' schools will be considerably bettered by it and vernacular schools will be strung up to greater efficiency."[27]

Another missionary's comment was as follows: "The new code with all its exactions is an improvement on the old one in that it makes special provisions for schools in outlying and sparsely populated districts."[28] Two possible reasons for the open opposition of the Wesleyan mission to the Code are firstly that it had a number of feeble schools whose existence was jeopardized, and secondly that the provisions in the Code for liberal grants to superior schools were a boon to the Church mission which had a larger number of such schools than the Wesleyan mission.

24. The Revised Code, following the practice in England, offered to schools teaching in the English medium "grants for examination in specific subjects of secular instruction".[29] The most popularly taken subjects under this scheme as at 1882 were Latin, Mathematics, Mechanics, Chemistry, Light and Heat, Magnetism and Electricity, Botany and Drawing. The Director of Public Instruction explained that he could not extend the scheme to vernacular schools, because "of the absolute want of books in Sinhalese for conveying instruction of the kind required."[30]

25. In regard to Anglo-vernacular schools, it was claimed that the Revised Code introduced a radical change,

> "the effect of which was to make them in reality what they had previously been in theory only, Anglo-vernacular schools on a

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vernacular basis—schools, that is, in which English is taught through the medium of the vernacular to those scholars only who have attained some proficiency in the vernacular, in which all other instruction is to be communicated only through the vernacular".[31]

The Code for 1883 spelled out in detail what an Anglo-vernacular school was:

"..a vernacular school, in which only the vernacular is taught in the first four standards, but when scholars have reached the fifth standard they learn both English and the vernacular, the English being taught upon a vernacular basis; for instance, in arithmetic, a sum given out by the teacher is read in the vernacular, and the meanings or synonyms of an English word in an English reading lesson are given in the vernacular".[32]

Events leading to the appointment of a Board of Education.

26. The Morgan Committee did not consider it necessary that a Board should be established to advise the Director of Public Instruction, although several missionaries urged the importance of doing so in order that too much power should not be exercised by a single individual. Contrary to the recommendation of the Committee, the government wanted to appoint an Advisory Board and included provision for it in a motion placed before the Legislative Council in 1868, but the Legislative Council did not agree to the provision.

27. The Revised Code proposed by the Director in 1880 was seen by the Wesleyans as greatly threatening their educational work, and they began an agitation for setting up a Board. Not receiving much support from the other missions, however, the Wesleyans conceived the idea of a conference among missions as a means through which the view of missions could be conveyed to the government. The Wesleyans called a conference but not all the missions sent representatives with the result that it could not be called a success.

28. In 1886, much to the discomfiture of the missions, the Director proposed the compulsory examination of mission teachers. Furthermore, as an economy measure, in 1887 the Director ruled that the grants payable to English schools would be reduced to the same level as for vernacular schools. These decisions were undoubtedly distasteful to the missionaries but they took no concerted action.

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29. The Director decided about the middle of 1887 that in English schools the teaching of English should begin hand in hand with the vernacular, thereby putting an additional burden on the schools at a time when there was also a cut back in finances. The missions strongly resented the action, and after some correspondence that was inconclusive the Director summoned a conference of representatives of missionary bodies. The mission representatives made certain decisions with which the Director did not agree, and he took no action to implement them.

30. Later in the year 1887, the Director announced that only three-fourths of the grant earned by a school would be paid at the usual time and that the balance would be held over until after 31 December when pro rata payments would be made by him depending on the savings that were available by then. The missions held a conference among themselves to discuss the situation and decided to send a deputation to the Governor. The deputation was received by the Governor and given a hearing, but that was about all that came of it.

31. On 29 November 1893, the Mercantile Representative in the Legislative Council submitted to the Council a memorial from the managers of 318 mission schools urging the appointment of an independent Commission to enquire into the whole question of Public Instruction and grants-in-aid, and to afford such relief and redress as shall seem needful and just. Pending a final decision on this question, they asked that immediate relief may be offered to them in the following particulars:—

1. That the infliction of B grants under clause 21 be abolished;
2. That the examinations be a fair test of knowledge, all mere catch questions being discontinued;
3. That in small villages and outlying districts, C registration be more fully granted;
4. That a Committee on Education be appointed to assist the Director in the administration of the Code, and to which managers, who feel aggrieved, may appeal.

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32. In 1894, missions with grant-in-aid schools took up arms against the Director for issuing a circular to the effect that the Governor, having read a report by the Principal of Royal College, was concerned about the poor quality of the English instruction provided in grant-in-aid schools and the lack of care with which students were promoted from one class to another. The missions felt greatly insulted about the aspersions on the conduct of their schools. More fuel was added to the fire when the Director announced the intention of imposing a minimum scale of fees to be charged by English schools belonging to missions, as the Director considered the existing fees to be too low. The missions feared that they would lose pupils if fees were increased and saw themselves threatened with extinction. The managers of the mission schools sponsored the formation of an association, named the Ceylon Educational Association, and included in the membership managers of non-Christian schools as well. With the demonstration of a broad-based representation, the Association was able in July 1896 to send a deputation to meet the Governor and to persuade him that a minimum scale of school fees should not be fixed by the government for grant-in-aid English schools.

33. Towards the end of 1896, the Governor established a Board of Education, consisting of the Bishop of Colombo, a Wesleyan missionary, a Roman Catholic missionary, a representative of the Buddhist Theosophical Society, the Inspector of Schools of the Western Province, the Principal of Royal College (the premier government school in the island) and the Principal of the Ceylon Technical College. Thus a long-standing hope of some of the missions, most of all the Wesleyan mission, came to fruition. The Administration Report for 1897 of the Director of Public Instruction gave the following account of the functions of the Board of Education:

> "The Board is essentially advisory. The interests of all missions and educational agencies are represented on it. Its duties are primarily to confer with the Director of Public Instruction upon all questions affecting schools other than government schools, and generally to assist the Director in the multifarious details which must necessarily from time to time occur when so many conflicts of interests of agencies and managers are involved."[33]

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CHAPTER 29

GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS (1869 - 1900)

1. The following statement of policy in regard to government schools was made by Governor Robinson on 12 January 1870.

> "..I have to announce to you the adoption of a distinct policy, the tendency of which will be to extend the operations of Government in the direction of establishing village schools in localities as yet unprovided with the means of instruction, but gradually to contract its operations in respect of English schools in the town districts, where an effective system of grants-in-aid will enable the Government to employ its funds to much greater advantage than in maintaining schools of its own..the object has been kept in view, both of increasing the efficiency of those schools of the higher class which the Government does maintain, and of rendering them as nearly self-supporting as circumstances will permit. An increased rate of fees has accordingly been introduced into all schools in which English is taught.."[1]

The fortunes of the government school system may be followed for the next few decades in the light of the declaration of policy quoted above.

English Schools

2. The following quotation from the Administration Report of the Director of Education for 1870 foreshadowed the action that was to follow:

> "..the recent establishment of a large English Boys' school under the Catholic Mission at Negombo, which has been placed upon the list of Grant Schools will probably make it desirable to close the Government school at that station. It may also be expected that the field of English instruction at Kurunegala will ere long be occupied by missionary enterprise, stimulated by the Grant system. The English Girls' School at Jaffna has therefore been closed; the Government feeling that the cost of maintaining a school of this class was no longer justifiable in a place already so fully occupied by other agencies, all of which can now avail themselves of Government aid."[2]

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Subsequent Administration Reports mentioned the names of schools that were closed down or transferred to missions.

3. The closure of government schools or the transfer of government schools was carried out with scant regard for the religious scruples of the students. In an aided mission school the management could, and did in many cases, compel attendance at religious instruction even though the student belonged to a religion different from that of the management. Some aided mission schools did not have a single student professing the religion of the management, as seen from the following statement by the Director of Public Instruction in his Administration Report for 1878: "In some cases. .I have found not a single child professing the nominal religion of the schools he attends."[3]

4. The only advantage in aided mission schools was their lower cost. In the opinion of the Director, government English schools and aided mission schools were "very much alike in every respect except in the important question of expense," the aided schools being somewhat less expensive to the government than its own schools.[4]

5. Reference is made in chapter 31 to the legislation enacted in 1884 to transfer government English schools to Municipalities and Local Boards. The permissive nature of the legislation (there was no compulsion on Municipalities and Local Boards to take over schools) and the absence of any provision to levy a rate together produced an understandable reluctance on the part of local government bodies to assume responsibility. The government for its part was determined to close its English schools as an economy measure, especially because it felt that the number of persons coming out of missionary schools with a knowledge of English was adequate for the manpower needs of the government. The missions made capital of the situation arising from closure of its English schools by the government and the reluctance on the part of local government bodies to take them over by stepping into the breach and taking the schools over.

6. The missions vied with one another in the attempt to take over the schools closed down by the government, and there was the usual quota of allegations by each mission against its rivals. For example, in regard to two schools in the Galle district, the Wesleyan Mission alleged that

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"a large subsidy out of the rates had been given to the Bishop of Colombo for taking over the boys' school, while an application on the part of Rev. S. R. Wilkin of their mission to take over the Girls' school had been treated with contempt and not even a reply received."[5]

7. In an application by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel to take over a school that was being closed by the government, the Society gave an undertaking that pupils would not be required to receive any religious instruction without the consent of their parents or guardians.[6] This statement was a concession to Buddhist opinion which was by this time becoming somewhat vocal, but there is no evidence as to whether it was honoured or not.

8. Little heed was paid by the government to the feelings of parents in making decisions regarding the handing over of schools. This is clearly borne out by the controversy over a school near a coastal town. In 1895, the government decided to close one of its schools which had existed for 36 years. It was attended by 63 Buddhists, 41 Wesleyans, 13 Anglicans, 19 Roman Catholics and 1 Salvationist. The Buddhist parents came to know that the school was to be handed over by the government to the Wesleyans, and sent a letter of protest urging that the school should be continued as a government school. The Director of Public Instruction replied stating:

"..the transfer of the school to a missionary body need in no way interfere with the secular instruction of your children, as the school will be carried on under a 'conscience clause' by the provisions of which religious instruction can be imparted during the first hour only of the school session. There can be no reason therefore why your children should not attend school for secular instruction immediately after the first hour which alone is devoted to the instruction in religious subjects."[7]

To protests by Roman Catholic parents pointing out that their children were sure to incur sacerdotal punishment by attending a Wesleyan school, the Director of Public Instruction retorted,

"This Department is concerned only with the secular instruction of the children of Ceylon, and provision has been duly made to so

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carry on the school..that no child will be required to attend it during the one hour devoted to instruction in religious subjects. The 'Conscience Clause'..will, I trust be embodied in the Code for 1896 and any violation of it will subject a manager to a severe penalty. I would remind you that all schools in England are worked under a Conscience Clause and that attendance at schools being compulsory, a Roman Catholic child is required in the absence of any Roman Catholic school in the district to attend a school under the management of any other religious body."[8]

In fact, a conscience clause was *not* included in the code for the following year, nor indeed for about a decade. However, to continue the story further, the Manager of Buddhist schools wrote to the Director asking him to continue the school as a government school or to hand it over to him to be managed by the Theosophical Society.[9] The Director's reply was as follows:

"..it is, and always has been the policy of this Department to close the government schools and place them under the control of missionary bodies or private Managers whenever such a course has been found to be practicable. I have obtained the sanction of government to close the government school..on the distinct understanding that it will be carried on under a Conscience Clause. The Conscience Clause, which will in all probability be embodied in the Code for 1896 will be the means of my being able to hand over government schools to any missionary body."[10]

The Manager protested against the use of the proposed clause in this manner. He urged that such a clause, if introduced, should apply to all schools so that no religious teaching would be imposed on children of other faiths. He argued against the proposal to apply it only to certain schools to enable the government to hand them over to the missionaries. He also protested against the reliance on a clause that was non-existent. He received the curt reply from the Director that the Director was "at perfect liberty to deal with his own schools in the manner he thinks best."[11] The Director also pointed out that in the past he had handed over schools without any such condition and that the purpose of imposing the condition was to protect the Buddhists. The Manager requested the Director to give notice in future of any intentions to hand over schools. This was to lodge an application

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before any *fait accompli* could take place. The Director, however, refused to give any such notice but added that any request by the Manager to take over a school would receive due consideration. Of course, the whole tenor of the correspondence indicated that the Director would not agree to hand over government schools, that were being closed, to Buddhists, although the majority of the children in the schools were Buddhists.

Vernacular Schools

9. The government's intention of extending "the operations of Government in the direction of establishing village schools in localities as yet unprovided with the means of instruction" has already been mentioned in paragraph 1. The establishment of a government school depended not on whether a school was required but on there being any one interested to apply for a school.[12] While saying this, the Director of Public Instruction recommended the planned expansion of educational provision.

> "An adequate and effective measure should commence with the division of the whole country into school districts, according to the extent of the population and should proceed with the annual establishment of a certain number of schools in each district, until the wants of the people were approximately supplied. Probably nothing short of an Ordinance of the Legislative Council would supply the requisite machinery for the thorough execution of the scheme."[13]

It will be recalled that his predecessor, Laurie, had earlier stated a case for the planning of educational provision in his Special Report of June 1869.[14] The government was, however, not interested in any long range planning.

10. Moreover, although the government claimed to exercise full responsibility for vernacular education, making vernacular education rather than English education a priority after 1869, it is recorded that on more than one occasion it either closed a government vernacular school on the ground that there was an aided school not far distant from it or transferred a government vernacular school to the management of a mission.[15] It has already been pointed out (paragraph 8) that the transfer of government schools to missions was carried out without regard for the religious scruples of the students.

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11. There might have been justification for the closure or transfer of government schools if mission schools were more efficient than government schools. On this question, the following statement appeared in the Administration Report for 1876:

> "Opinions differ very greatly as to the relative capacity of government and aided schools. As far as purely vernacular schools are concerned, from the little I know of them myself and from what I learn from those best able to form a correct opinion, there seems no doubt that those under the management of government are very superior to the general run of those conducted by the missionary bodies or private enterprise."[16]

In the circumstances, there was absolutely no justification for the transfer of government schools to missions.

12. The abolition of the relatively small school fee levied in vernacular schools was suggested in 1870 by the Director on the ground that it kept children away from school.[17] He pointed out that the money realized from school fees was insignificant, and recommended that after the abolition of fees, the community in which the school was situated should be required to maintain the school house without expense to the government. In 1871, it was decided that school fees might be discontinued in cases where the inhabitants of a village agreed to provide and maintain a school building in good repair.[18] The abolition of fees in vernacular schools throughout the island, without any condition being imposed regarding the maintenance of school buildings, took place only in 1877.[19]

13. The economic crisis of the 1880's made the government cut back funds for education, and in 1885 the Director of Public Instruction confessed that "it was useless to hope and impossible to expect that the revenue would enable the government for some time to increase the votes sufficiently for the extension of vernacular schools."[20]

The Director went on to say:

> "..other means of extension must be sought and surely this should be in the direction of the Buddhist temporalities. The subject of temporalities is no new one in this connection. In paragraph 28 of their report, the Buddhist Temporalities Commissioners wrote:

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'The funds of each vihara should be devoted, first, to the maintenance of the vihara and pansala; secondly, to making moderate provision for the incumbent; thirdly, to the maintenance, where funds are sufficient, of a village school in connection with the vihara; and surplus of vihara funds may be applied to the encouragement of Buddhist education in the Districts.'

Then there is the Resolution of the Retrenchment Committee of the Legislative Council, in which occurs the passage—'A great saving may be effected by apportioning a share of the tax now paid by the Buddhists to the temple trustee to the 'secular education of the Kandyan people', instead of allowing the whole to be used exclusively for religious purposes. In the Central and North Western Provinces the percentage of children receiving education is miserably small.'

..I do think that it may fairly be asked that the extension of vernacular education in the Kandyan districts should be largely provided for out of these funds without burdening the general revenue."[21]

No serious attention appears, however, to have been given to this suggestion by the government.

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CHAPTER 30

GRANT - AIDED SCHOOLS (1869 - 1900)

1. The outstanding features of the grant-in-aid scheme recommended by the Morgan Committee of 1865 were the liberal grants suggested for education in secular subjects and the absence of any kind of restriction on the teaching of religion in grant-in-aid schools. The scheme accorded with the most sanguine expectations of the missions in the representations they made to the Committee, and was in fact a virtual bonanza in so far as they were concerned.

2. Announcing the inauguration in 1870 of the new grant-in-aid system, Governor Robinson stated as follows:

> "The sums annually bestowed in grants to Mission and private schools have hitherto amounted to between £800 and £900 or about one-fifteenth of the total expenditure for education; for the current year, however, a sum of £5,000, or little less than one-fourth of the total expenditure has been adopted, which, while interfering as little as possible with the management of aided schools, will insure a definite amount of sound elementary instruction in return for every penny of the public revenue appropriated in this manner."[1]

He also announced the policy of the government "gradually to contract its operations in respect of English schools in the towns where an effective system of grants-in-aid will enable the Government to employ its funds to much greater advantage than in maintaining schools of its own."[2]

3. The grant-in-aid scheme was in the beginning based on a system of payment by results (see paragraph 4 for a variation that was introduced later). In English schools. according to the rules gazetted in 1870 the grant was based on the results in reading (English), writing (English), arithmetic (English) in standards 1 to 3, and the following additional subjects in the higher standards: standard 4—geography (English), standard 5—geography (English) and grammar (English), and standard 6—geography (English), grammar (English) and History (English). In the Anglo-Vernacular schools, the grant was based on subjects as follows: standard 1—reading (Sinhalese or Tamil), writing

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(Sinhalese or Tamil), arithmetic (Sinhalese or Tamil); standard 2—as for standard 1 along with reading (English); standard 3—as for standard 2 along with writing (English); standard 4—as for standard 3 along with geography (Sinhalese or Tamil). In vernacular schools, the grant was based on reading (Sinhalese or Tamil), writing (Sinhalese or Tamil), arithmetic (Sinhalese or Tamil) in standards 1 and 2, and 3, together with the addition of geography (Sinhalese or Tamil) in standard 4. By and large, schooling ended in the highest standard mentioned and hence the lack of provision for standards higher than those mentioned. The rate of grant payable was highest for English schools, less for Anglo-vernacular schools, and least of all for vernacular schools.[3] Within each category, schools were further classified as 'A' schools and 'B' schools, depending on the quality of the buildings, furniture, books, maps, etc., provided and 'A' schools were entitled to a higher grant than 'B' schools.[4]

4. In 1872 a third class of schools was added to the grant scheme, namely 'C' or village schools, which were to be assisted

> "by small capitation grants. Grants will be given with the object of helping these schools to a higher class; and with the view of not departing from the policy of the government, that payments shall be made on results, it is provided that any school, which shall have received assistance as a 'C' school for three years and is not at the end of that time qualified to rank as an 'A' or 'B' school shall, unless good cause be shown to the contrary, cease to receive a grant."[5]

5. It may be noted that, in 1871, passes in Sinhalese or Tamil in English schools became entitled to grants, and that in 1878 grants were given for passes in English in vernacular schools.[6]

6. The grant-in-aid scheme was welcomed by missionary bodies with great enthusiasm. A Wesleyan missionary wrote to his headquarters in England as follows:

> "..a new era has dawned on our educational operations in this district..We think we see the time rapidly approaching when the whole of our educational expenditure will be raised on the spot."[7]

A Church missionary reported to his parent body in England the enthusiasm shown by all the missionary organizations in Ceylon in the hope that

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"by availing themselves of these means for the wider extension of schools the entire education of the country would ultimately fall into their hands. Their belief was strengthened by the fact that the government withdrew from areas whose needs were supplied by mission schools."[8]

The missions vied with one another in rushing to establish schools. Each mission tried to get ahead of the others by establishing as many schools as it possibly could. This is shown by the increase in the number of schools that entered the grant-in-aid scheme.

7. In 1869, the year before that in which the new scheme was introduced, only 21 schools earned grants. During the years 1870-1876, the following increases were recorded, but thereafter there was a slowing down for reasons which would be apparent from the remainder of this chapter.[9]

Year	Number of schools	Number of pupils
1870	223	10,000
1871	314	16,000
1872	462	25,440
1874	595	35,560
1876	697	45,440

8. But schools needed teachers. Facilities for the training of teachers were meagre, and the supply of trained teachers was inadequate except for a handful of schools. The quality of the teachers employed in the grant-in-aid schools caused a great deal of concern to the government. The Director of Public Instruction remarked in his Administration Report for 1872 that in the selection of teachers more regard was "paid to their qualifications as catechists than as teachers."[10] Not even this qualification carried with it an assurance of honesty, for the Director referred in a later Administration Report to "gross dishonesty" in the maintenance of attendance registers.[11]

9. By 1872 there was such a rush of applications from missionary bodies for grants-in-aid to new schools that the sum voted was not sufficient to meet all the applications for grants.[12] The Director of Public Instruction was asked to satisfy himself "that schools are not unnecessarily multiplied."[13] In his address to the Legislative Council

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in August 1873, Governor Gregory stated: "Several applications for grants coming from schools in towns in which other schools were already in operation have been refused."[14]

10. In 1875, Governor Gregory expressed his concern about the expenditure of the government in connection with the grant-in-aid scheme.

> "The Grant scheme is, on the whole, working well; but my attention has been attracted to the disproportionate amount paid by the Government, as compared with that contributed by private and missionary funds, and it will in consequence be necessary to introduce into the Grant system certain modifications."[15]

11. The prestige of a mission depended more on the confidence its few English schools could generate than on what happened in its many vernacular schools. While the missions vied with one another in establishing both English schools and vernacular schools, each mission considered it critical for its success that its English schools should in no wise be inferior to the English schools established by its rivals. The manner in which a Wesleyan missionary urged his headquarters in London highlights this issue: "The Papists are busy at work with 5 or 6 Europeans. The Americans are raising in America for Ceylon £10,000 to open their Batticotta school under the title of College! Will you desert your men?"[16] A Church missionary, urging the re-opening of an English school that had been started and closed in the period before the new grant-in-aid scheme came into being, pointed out the opportunity of taking into the hands of the Church Missionary Society "the education of the higher classes of the whole Kandyan country, an opportunity such as the Society never had in Ceylon and probably will never have again."[17] He cautioned, however, that "unless it can be made a first class school it had better not be undertaken."[18]

12. A British Civil Servant, who held the post of Assistant Government Agent in Kandy, has gone on record as having urged the Church Missionary Society to open a school, predicting that "the education of the Kandyan country will be entirely in the hands of the venerable Society in a very few years."[19] He decried the government school system as one in which scripture teaching would be excluded in the near future. If the Roman Catholic school were left without a

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rival school other than the government school, he felt that the Roman Catholics would go on to establish a convent also and "secure a monopoly of the middle classes in Kandy."[20] This is an example of a government official who threw his weight behind a missionary group. He is unlikely to have been an exception, and there is little doubt that the indigenous religious groups were even more adversely affected than the Roman Catholics by the support given by British officials to Christian missions.

13. Grant-aided English schools were given a good start in 1880 with the fairly liberal grants provided for them, but not long afterwards a series of measures disturbed the serenity they enjoyed. The economic problems of the government were one reason for a change in attitude towards them. A second reason was that the expansion of English education was creating "an unsettled class of aspiring youths for whom there was no employment to be found in the Colony", and it was undoubtedly perceived a couple of years before it was explicitly stated.[21] In 1883, the government exhorted missions to convert their western English schools to Anglo-vernacular or vernacular schools by reducing the grant payable to English schools to the same level as the latter.[22] Grants were, of course, paid on the basis of the results of examinations, and the government made the examinations held for English schools quite difficult. The large crop of examination failures reduced the grants earned by schools. The missions could have tried to make up for the lost grants by increasing tuition fees, but in the absence of any agreement on the part of rival missions to have a uniform scale of fees, the missions in fact reduced fees in competition with one another to maintain attendances lest they should disqualify themselves by declines in attendance. In short, the missions were put to a number of hard choices by the government, and the missions had to decide very carefully which schools they shouid continue to run as English schools and which schools should become Anglo-vernacular or vernacular schools. Naturally, the clientele of the schools constituted an important factor in the decision, the operative principle being English education as far as possible for the 'classes' and vernacular education for the 'masses', with Anglo-vernacular education occupying an uneasy position in between. In 1887, the government decided to pay only three-fourths of the grant earned by schools and to hold back the balance until after the start of the next calendar year to be paid on a pro rata basis according to the money available in the education vote. This decision caused a storm of protest but as

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the government insisted that it had no money to take any other course of action matters were allowed to rest at that.

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The Distance Rules

14. By a circular dated 30 November 1874, a rule regarding the recognition of new grant schools was introduced: "No grant will be made to any school establishment after the date of this circular, within a distance of three miles from an existing Government or Aided-school of the same class, save in exceptional circumstances."[23]

15. The rule was heavily weighted in favour of those organizations which had already established schools. They were, of course, the Protestant missionary societies to a very large extent, as they had been assisted by government patronage. The indigenous religious groups—namely, the Buddhists, Hindus and Muslims—enjoyed no government patronage. They could not have even contemplated the prospect of government assistance until about 1869, as they were excluded by requirements regarding the issue of licences for schools and the teaching of Christianity in schools (see chapter 10 paragraph 5 and chapter 24 paragraph 7). Public opinion among the indigenous religious groups was not sufficiently organized to voice any protest against the three mile rule, but the Roman Catholics pointed out the disadvantages that the rule imposed on them.

> "When the grants-in-aid system was first started we were not quite prepared for it; our limited sources in men and money obliged us to defer for some time the opening of the schools our people required. Meanwhile, in more than one place, the Protestant missionaries stole a march upon us, and they, in numerous instances, planted their schools in the vicinity of our Catholic villages. Eventually the three-mile rule was enacted, which rendered it impossible for us to open schools for our Catholic children, and was indeed tantamount to compelling their attendance at the Protestant school. If that rule was to stand in the rigid construction which its terms seemed to convey, it was plainly over with our schools as far as State help went; their participation in the government grant was no more a matter of principle, it was simply to be the result of a race in which all higher interests being disregarded the plan was to be carried off by the swiftest runner or the more cunning, or the bolder or the wealthier projector."[24]

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An explanation regarding the rule was made to the Rev. Fr. Bonjean by the Colonial Secretary in a letter dated 17 February 1875.

"This rule is intended to put a stop to differences which arise but too often from the competition (very laudable in itself) of the different religious bodies to extend their schools. In accordance with its provisions, if a school occupies the ground among the Buddhists and heathens, assistance will not be given to another school, founded subsequently within the prescribed limit, unless the first school works badly. If, however, there be a Christian religious community of sufficient number for a school, there would be no objection to an application for a grant to a new school in spite of the fact of there being within the three-mile limit another school conducted on religious principles to which the parents of a large portion of the pupils object, or to which children from religious objections refrain from going. Such a condition of things would be 'an exceptional circumstance' but every such case would have to be carefully enquired into before the sanction of government to a grant could be given."[25]

This explanation satisfied Roman Catholic opinion, for it was open for the Roman Catholics to establish a school to serve their children in spite of the existence of a Protestant school. But it was discriminatory in so far as "Buddhists and heathens" were concerned in the sense that unless an existing Christian school within the prescribed distance was inefficient they could not establish a school for their co-religionists and seek a grant even as an 'exceptional circumstance'. Atrophied by the helpless position to which they had been reduced by decades of religious discrimination, the indigenous religious groups were too inarticulate to make any protest at this stage. They found their voice only a few years later (see paragraphs 18 and 22).

16. In 1880, the three-mile rule regarding distance was replaced by a two-mile rule which read as follows:

"As a general rule, no application will be entertained for aid to a boys' school when there already exists a flourishing boys' school of the same class within two miles of the proposed site, without some intervening obstacle, unless the average daily attendance for six months prior to the date of the application exceeds 60. An Anglo-vernacular school will be considered as of the same class as a vernacular school."[26]

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17. W. Blair, Inspector of Schools, referred to the two mile rule as follows in the Administration Report he wrote in 1882 in the capacity of Acting Director of Public Instruction:

"The practical effect of this rule is that in the majority of small towns and large villages in which there are mission schools the people are virtually compelled to send their children to mission schools or to none. This imposes on government a heavy responsibility. Not only must care be taken that the schools are efficient in discipline and instruction, that the instruction imparted is of the kind that is most suited to benefit the scholars in after life, but there also shall be an absolute freedom from compulsion with regard to subjects of a religious character."[27]

18. The opposition of Buddhists to the two-mile rule was feeble at first as they were unorganized, but grew articulate as time went on, especially through the medium of the Sinhalese newspaper, *Sarasavi Sandaresa*, and the English magazine, *The Buddhist*, that were established.

19. In 1891, the Director of Public Instruction amended the rule regarding distance to read as follows:

"As a general rule, no application will be entertained for aid to a new school when there already exists a school of the same class within two miles of the site of the new school, without some intervening obstacle, unless the average daily attendance for one year prior to the date of the application exceeds 60 in boys' and mixed schools, and 40 in girls' schools.

No application will be entertained for a new school when there already exists a school of the same class within a quarter mile of the site of the proposed new school."[28]

20. The rule as amended sanctified distance, for whereas under the rule that obtained till then the distance requirement could be got over if the average attendance for a period of twelve months exceeded 60, under the new rule the distance requirement of a quarter mile was an essential requirement and numbers did not matter. Numbers could be mustered by a religious group if it was in strength in the population as indeed the Hindus in the North of the island and the Buddhists

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elsewhere were. But distance was not a requirement that could be easily overcome. If there already existed two Protestant schools, for example a Wesleyan mission school and a Church mission school (in a predominantly Buddhist village with Buddhist children attending them and undergoing Christianization in the absence of a conscience clause), to establish a third school not within a quarter mile of each of the existing schools was in effect to locate it in the wilderness and construct roads to reach it.

21. In 1892, there was a further amendment. In the first part of the rule, the words "As a general rule" at the beginning were replaced by "Excepting in towns with special claims", while the second part of the rule was reworded as follows: "But in any case, however large the attendance, no new school will be aided within a quarter mile of an existing school, except in towns with 'special claims' as aforesaid."[29] An apparent concession was made, by making an exception in regard to towns with 'special claims', though the 'special claims' not being defined were a matter for the discretion of the Director. The apparent concession was, however, more than nullified by a significant omission for whereas the earlier rule in its second part had the words "when there already exists a school of the same class", the new formulation referred to "an existing school", significantly omitting the words "of the same class". The effect of this was that if a school of one class (e.g., an English school) existed, no school even of a different class (e.g., a vernacular school) could be established within a quarter mile. The following year, namely in 1893, the words "of the same class" were re-inserted.

22. If the quarter mile rule was wicked in its conception, it was inhumane in its application, for the Department of Public Instruction insisted on applying it retrospectively. As pointed out by A. E. Buultjens in letters to the press, the rule virtually demanded the closing down of a number of schools opened at great expense by poor villagers. They had put up the schools, and paid the teachers for several months in the hope of applying for a grant after an average attendance of 60 had been maintained for twelve months, and now by the new rule their hopes were blasted and the schools had to be closed. "The vexatious clause operated very severely on the Buddhist schools which had been opened long before the new clause. .This new rule was almost a death blow to the cause of the Buddhist and Hindu education in the island

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because it meant the pulling down and removal of substantial buildings which had been put up at great expenditure by poor villagers."[30] Moreover, some of the students had joined the new school after leaving the Christian mission schools, and their education was threatened to come to a halt as the mission schools could refuse to admit them if they applied to go back.

23. The Roman Catholics who had protested earlier against the three-mile rule (see paragraph 15) never gave up their opposition to the distance rules, and highlighted the issue over and over again, sometimes emphasizing more the hardship caused to the Buddhists than to themselves. For example, the Catholic Messenger wrote as follows in 1892:

> "..leaving 'en masse' the Protestant schoolrooms, the Buddhist boys fill up the schools opened by their co-religionists. The Protestants call that ingratitude, but we don't think the reproach merited. Had Protestants entered the field merely as educators having no other end in view than to impart instruction to the people, they would have a title to the people's gratitude but to them education was a means to an end. Their intention was to impose upon the unsuspecting natives their particular religious tenets..to try and turn the two-mile rule into a war-engine directed against Buddhist schools erected for the use of Buddhist boys is an abuse against which we must raise our own voice in the name of justice and liberty."[31]

The Protestant missions could hardly deny that their object was conversion, when they prided in this activity, as much in the last decade of the century as they did in the early decades.

> "Schools are a valuable mission agency where the teachers are thoroughly in earnest to make them Gospel nurseries..all our schools are worked as evangelistic agencies, scriptural teaching is regularly carried on in them, and 10,000 heathen and Mohammedan children are brought under Christian instruction."[32]

The lack of sympathy of the missions for the educational efforts of the Buddhists and the Hindus is shown by the undisguised delight expressed by the Protestants when the Buddhists failed in their attempt to get a school registered for grant. "The Buddhists I am glad to say, have

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failed to get registered as a grant school."[33] The *Hindu Organ* wrote of the Protestant schools, missionary agencies as admitted by the management, that the majority of them "are altogether supported by grants-in-aid made up of taxes recovered from a community nine-tenths of whom are non-Christian."[34]

24. Olcott made the following comment about the quarter-mile rule: "This clause is one of those inequities, those violations of British policy, which can only be perpetrated with comparative safety in a distant colony. Once exposed in the London papers, an enquiry is sure to be made in Parliament, and redress to follow after exposure. That was the case in 1884 withother black injustice: it will be the same now".[35] He also referred to the pressure that could be exercised on this issue in England. "We have fellows in such high positions at home that they can easily wipe out this scandal. At the same time they can pillory those who have conspired to virtually compel the Buddhists and Hindus of Ceylon to educate their children under hostile influences or keep them illiterate..Her Majesty's ministers and ex-ministers know the absolute and imperative necessity of keeping Asiatic races of the Empire contented and loyal. They know perfectly well too that the surest way to breed discontent and rebellion is to wantonly act against the religious feelings. Though the Ceylon schemers do not seem to realise it no Liberal or Conservative ministry would countenance such a stupid plot as this. The foundations of the Empire are not going to be upheaved to please a lot of missionaries."[36]

25. Reference was made to the quarter mile rule in the Legislative Council by the Kandyan representative, T. B. Panabokke on 18 November 1892, but the wind was taken off the sails of the protest when the Colonial Secretary insisted that the rule was "a long standing one."[37] The statement was erroneous.

26. On 23 November 1892, Panabokke submitted to the Council "a humble memorial" signed by 2135 Buddhists protesting against the quarter mile rule. The memorial read as follows:

"—That the Buddhist public have voluntarily subscribed funds and under great practical difficulties opened about 50 schools from time to time, confidently hoping that the Government would render every possible aid to supplement and encourage their efforts, but

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instead your memorialists find that obstacles have been, and are to be thrown in their way by grievous alterations in the education code.

—That upto the time the Buddhists undertook, or seriously attempted to undertake the work of education, the Code providing for the registration of grant-in-aid schools required as a condition precedent an average attendance of 60 boys, for six months, for a school placed within two miles from an existing school; but at the latter end of 1890, the number of months was raised to twelve; thus making it doubly difficult for poor Buddhist villagers to have a school of their own.

—That as the new regulation appeared, nevertheless, designed to test their good faith and earnestness, the Buddhists submitted to it without a complaint, though it often told severely on their efforts; but within this year the Government has introduced another regulation, refusing to register under any circumstances a school lying within a quarter mile from an existing school.

—That this hard and fast rule, your memorialists respectfully state, is calculated to completely discourage the voluntary efforts of the Buddhists. In many localities—especially towns—where all the other denominations have hitherto opened schools without let or hindrance, it is virtually impossible to establish a new school in any desirable place, without coming within a quarter of a mile of the previously established schools; and that it is simply courting failure to leave other sects in pre-emptive possession of the best sites and open Buddhist schools in quarters far removed from the centres of population.

—That three schools at Katugastota, Kurunegala and Madapata have already been declined to be registered because of the Quarter Mile Clause, and that the schools at Weragampita, Nugegoda, Karagampitiya, Hatton &c. established before the introduction of the Quarter Mile Clause will also come under its operation.

—That this rigorous rule, your memorialists have reason to fear, is intended to nullify the benevolent intention of Her Most Gracious Majesty by setting up a religious tyranny, and to have a retrospective effect bringing within its operation the schools opened before its

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introduction. And your memorialists respectfully beg leave to state that such a procedure is altogether opposed to justice and fairness, and if their reasonable demands and guaranteed rights are ignored they shall be forced to again petition the Home Government for the protection which was given them freely in the year 1884, and promised that they should have, whenever the necessity for such an appeal might again arise.

—That your memorialists beg to submit that the Buddhist schools are essentially the life of the Buddhist nation, the promise of their redemption from the degradation of ignorance and are therefore well appreciated by them. Experience proves that they secure more regular and greater attendance than the schools of other denominations, to which the Buddhists are on the whole reluctant to send their children. owing to the difference of religious doctrines taught in them.

—That your memorialists humbly venture to hope that Your Excellency and the Hon'ble Members of the Council will take these facts into your earnest and careful consideration, and that this new "Quarter Mile" regulation may be rescinded, and that the Buddhist public will be given every possible encouragement in the promotion of their educational scheme, for both sexes, as is done in the case of their Christian and Mohommedan fellow subjects.

—That as the greater portion of revenue is raised by Government from the taxes paid by the Buddhists, it is manifestly unfair that moneys so raised should be expended on about 1,000 schools of other denominations whereas less than 30 Buddhist schools have hitherto been registered even granting that this is largely due to their own ignorant neglect of prescribed Department rules. Your Memorialists humbly submit that they are entitled to the kindly regard of Government; and they submit with all deference but great earnestness that the principle of local option should be recognized in the Educational System of Ceylon."[38]

27. After the memorial was read in the Council, the hope was expressed that the Governor would be "pleased to inquire into the matter and grant the petitioners' request."[39] The issue was again raised in the Legislative Council on 7 December 1892 by T. B. Panabokke, and it was urged that, at the least, an exception should be made

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in respect of schools established before the rule was introduced.[40] During the discussion which followed, the Colonial Secretary confessed that the remark he had made on an earlier occasion to the effect that the rule was a long standing one was not correct. Moreover, he agreed to consider the request that the rule should not be applied retrospectively. No relief was, however, given and some of the schools were pulled down and new buildings were erected outside the quarter-mile distance to enable schools to be started in them. Four schools continued in the old premises, with no prospect of registration on account of the quarter mile rule.

28. Olcott came again to Ceylon in May 1894. At a Convention of Buddhist School Managers held in July, it was resolved that Olcott be appointed as the representative of the Buddhists "to lay before the Secretary of State for the Colonies the grievances of the Buddhists in regard to the quarter-mile rule and to secure adoption of the principle of local option."[41] A memorial to the Secretary of State for the Colonies was drawn up by the Buddhists setting out their case. The special grievance of the Buddhists was about the addition made in 1892 to clause 12 of the Code for Schools. This addition read as follows: "But in any case however large the attendance, no new school will be aided within a quarter mile of an existing school of the same class excepting in towns with special claims aforesaid."[42] The Buddhists resented most of all the fact that the Director of Public Instruction applied this rule to schools awaiting registration, having been started long before (more than one year in some cases) the clause was introduced. They wanted the rule to be abrogated or a local option to be conceded to parents. Olcott went to England where he interviewed the Secretary of State (the Marquis of Ripon) on behalf of the Buddhists. The decision of the Secretary of State was conveyed by the Colonial Secretary in a letter dated 1 December 1894. It read as follows: His Excellency has received a Despatch from the Secretary of State in which His Lordship expresses the opinion that the principle of local option cannot with advantage be admitted into the education system of Ceylon. His Lordship adds that in his opinion it was hardly equitable to make the operation of clause 12 retrospective in its action, and that he considers that any school established before the rule (clause 12) was promulgated and otherwise complying with the conditions of the Code should now be registered. .I am further to inform you that the Secretary of State does not consider that schools which have been pulled

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down and rebuilt beyond the quarter mile limit are entitled to claim compensation. Your proposal for rescission of clause 12 of the Education Code is under consideration."[43] The letter added that the Governor would instruct the Director of Public Instruction to make a concession in respect of the four schools remaining open but unregistered.

The struggle of the non-Protestant religious groups for grants-in-aid

29. The rules regarding distance discussed in paragraphs 14 to 28 above were only one constraint, though a very important constraint, that hindered the non-Protestant religious groups from obtaining grants-in-aid. Certain other rules and constraints are discussed below. While the distance rules, and indeed other rules and constraints discussed below, applied to Protestant religious groups as well, these groups were so well established by the time these rules and constraints came into being that such rules and constraints really helped to safeguard the status quo of the Protestant groups while effectively hindering the non-Protestant groups and preventing them from challenging the already acquired gains of the Protestant groups. It should also be emphasized that apart from explicit rules, the general lack of sympathy on the part of officialdom towards the indigenous religious groups held the latter in check and prevented them from exercising their legitimate rights.

30. While the tradition of providing a rudimentary literacy to many, and a more advanced oriental learning to a few had continued unbroken in the village temple through the fifteen centuries that had passed since the introduction of Buddhism into Ceylon, the first attempt by a Buddhist monk to organize an educational society and to start under its auspices a school outside the precincts of a temple appears to have been made in 1869 by Piyaratanatissa *Thero* of Dodanduwa when he formed the *Lokarthasadhaka* Society and started a school.[44] Christian missionaries had already established themselves in education in the village, and obstructed the attempts made to register the school as a grant aided institution. However, in 1874 the sponsors of the school and the residents of the village made use of the opportunity of a journey that Governor Robinson was making through the area, and met him in deputation presenting a petition seeking registration for the school.[45] The Governor is reported to have expressed his appreciation of the efforts of the sponsors of the school and promised registration.[46] As a result of the Governor's

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interest, the school was registered and it appeared in the list of grant-aided schools for 1874.[47] Three other Buddhist schools were also included in the list, their registration having perhaps been facilitated by the initiative taken by Governor Robinson in seeing that the school at Dodanduwa was registered.

31. The Administration Report of the Director of Public Instruction for 1878 stated that during the latter part of the year the registration of new schools was restricted for "special reasons."[48] There is little doubt that this restriction affected the Protestants less adversely than it affected the Roman Catholics and the Buddhists who were more or less the new entrants upon the scene to request grants-in-aid.

32. There was opposition from Christian missions to the recognition of Hindu schools for grants-in-aid. The Director of Public Instruction referred to one such case in the following terms:

> "During the last two years some applications were considered for the registration of schools under Sivite managers. They were large schools, had existed for many years, and fulfilled every condition required by the existing regulations. The case of one of the schools was submitted to my particular attention by the Tamil members of the Legislative Council. The protests of one of the Managers against the registration of such schools has been of a very determined kind, and he directly claims for the Society he represents the 'exclusive possession' of the district in which his schools are situated. Indeed with reference to a school which had been in existence for nearly twenty years, he says, 'If it can be made plain that the school is really needed, the teacher should be required to accept Mission management as the sole condition to receiving government aid.' "[49]

There is no record that the school was registered immediately for grants-in-aid, and the Christian opposition appears to have been effective.

33. In the wake of the enthusiasm created among Buddhists by Colonel Olcott (see chapter 26), by the year 1881 several educational societies formed by the Buddhists began to seek grants. Conditions for obtaining grants, however, began to be made more and more

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difficult. The rules regarding distance were part of the story and have been adequately discussed earlier in this chapter. In 1881, the government decided that for the future new schools should be admitted to examination for grant only in the year following registration. In other words, the management had to finance the school out of its own resources for a period of time. This was very hard on the indigenous religious groups which were only beginning to be organized. Moreover, the amount of the grant was also reduced as from 1881, the capitation grant being reduced by half in respect of vernacular schools and altogether abolished in respect of English Schools.[50]

34. In 1884, a new rule was introduced to the effect that before a school could be recognized as a grant-aided school the headmaster of the school should be a certificated teacher. At a period of time when certificated teachers were rare and already in the service of established government schools or grant-aided missionary schools, it was not easy to find such teachers for new schools; even if they could be found with difficulty it was not easy to find money to pay them until such time as the school succeeded in obtaining a grant.[51]

35. The Buddhists justified the opening of new schools on the ground that they wanted to meet the genuine needs of the Buddhist population. "We deny that schools are opened merely in the spirit of opposition and we claim our just rights to establish schools in Buddhist villages".[52] Buddhist students in Christian mission schools were not protected by a conscience clause. As an example of the kind of penalty imposed on Buddhist students, it was pointed out that Buddhist boys in missionary schools were punished for attending a festival such as Vesak, which was the most important annual event for a Buddhist.

36. The Roman Catholics were one with the non-Protestant religious groups in pointing out that the teaching in a Protestant school was harmful from the point of view of its influence upon students belonging to other religious persuasions. *The Ceylon Independent* of 7 August 1889 carried the following remark by the Rev. Fr. Bonjean: "To say that a boy could with impunity attend the teaching of a Protestant schoolmaster was like saying that one could without danger to himself live in a house filled with cholera or small-pox patients."[53]

37. The Hindus also added their voice to the demands for assistance to schools established by them. A Hindu journal reminded

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its readers that when a former Director of Public Instruction, Charles Bruce, attempted to introduce a conscience clause in respect of grant-in-aid schools, he "had to withdraw his propcsal owing to the unreasoning clamour of the interested missionaries and the Protestant press."[54] It was therefore essential in the interests of religion for Buddhists and Hindus to establish schools, but when they did so and applied for grants "the missions opposed them with their might and main, and for the most part successfully, the registration for grant of Hindu and Buddhist schools."[55] In regard to the funds for the support of mission schools, the *Hindu Organ* went on to say, "The vast majority of their schools are altogether supported by grants-in-aid made up of taxes recovered from a community nine-tenths of whom are non-Christian."[56] It was alleged that in these schools, in which about 95 per cent of the pupils were non-Christian, not only is Christian instruction given "but also the missionaries make it a matter of duty to revile Hinduism and Buddhism."[57]

38. Far from paying any heed to the representations of the non-Protestant religious groups, the Director of Public Instruction made matters even more difficult for them by extending to one year (instead of the previous requirement of six months) the period of time for which the average daily attendance had to exceed 60 before a school could make an application for recognition as a grant aided school. He also poised himself for further restrictions. As if to provide an excuse for them, one of his Inspectors made the point that "opposition schools are opened in a spirit of rivalry and faction" and that it "becomes a grave question as to how far government is justified in holding out encouragement to such schools."[58] He himself wrote as follows in his Administration Report, "But when the opposition is on the whole factious and there is no prospect of permanence it becomes a grave question as to how far Government is justified in holding out encouragement to such new schools, even with the fulfilment of Code conditions."[59] The concluding phrase showed how firmly he was poised for the kill. *The Buddhist* tried to explain that there was no factious opposition. "We fail to understand what is meant by 'factious opposition', but we do know that Buddhists have opened schools animated simply and solely with the strongest sense of duty and the most fervent devotion to the cause of the welfare of their children and religion."[60] The Hindus for their part offered a like explanation. "We regret very much to find that the Director cannot appreciate the spirit of the rising generation of Hindus and Buddhists. If he would only watch with

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attention the widespread movement that is going on he will find that it is based on a truly national and religious spirit, and will not call the new Hindu and Buddhist schools that are started 'factious opposition' schools."[61] These explanations were of no avail and the Director introduced a quarter mile rule, completely sanctifying distance and eliminating attendance as a consideration (see paragraph 19).

39. Difficult as it was for the indigenous religious groups to establish schools and satisfy the conditions making them eligible to apply for grants-in-aid, further obstacles were placed in their way from time to time.[62] At least one occasion has been recorded when the grant of Rs. 500, to which a Buddhist school was entitled, was held back on the ground that the total educational vote of the Department of Public Instruction had been exhausted. The grant to Christian missionary schools that year was nearly Rs. 500,000. The Buddhists were entitled to a mere pittance of less than Rs. 4,600,and it was out of this that the above mentioned grant was withheld, the Christian missionary schools being given priority in payments, notwithstanding the fact that Buddhist and Hindu parents bore the brunt of the taxation through which the money for grants was found. There were also occasions on which the Buddhists complained of vexatious delay in the registration of Buddhist schools "even after they had satisfied the conditions of eligibility to receive grants-in-aid."[63]

40. Seeing that the Department of Public Instruction was unsympathetic to the new schools being opened by Buddhists and Hindus and regarded them as 'opposition schools', the Buddhists became interested in the exercise by the parents in each area of a 'local option' to express their preferences for schools. This idea was somewhat unclearly expressed in an article in December 1890: "We deny that schools are opened merely in the spirit of opposition and we claim our just right to establish schools in Buddhist villages. We want local optional registration for grant upon denominational grounds."[64] In August 1892, the Buddhists posed the issue more sharply: "..we make bold to throw out the challenge to the Government that if the sense of the people were obtained, they would by an overwhelming majority vote for the abolition of missionary schools."[65] One year later, the same issue was again posed, and it was pointed out that if the government was anxious to retain the quarter mile clause with a view to avoiding rivalry the only course open to it was to hold a local

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option.[66] Finally, the request for a local option was embodied in the memorial submitted to the Secretary of State in 1892 (see paragraph 26), but did not meet with his approval.[67]

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CHAPTER 31

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LOCAL GOVERNMENT BODIES AND EDUCATION

(1869 - 1900)

1. As at the beginning of the period under review, the local government bodies functioning in the country consisted of Municipalities in the cities of Colombo, Kandy and Galle, Local Boards in town areas, and Village Councils. None of them shared any responsibility for education, as the provision and administration of education were in the hands of the government, missionary societies and private individuals.

2. In India, action was taken in the 1860's to make some of the provinces bear part of the expenditure for education. In England, School Boards were created by the Elementary Education Act of 1870 to take responsibility for education. These developments naturally attracted the attention of colonial administrators in Ceylon, and the Director of Public Instruction made a proposal to the government in the following terms:

> "My proposal is to employ the existing machinery of Village Councils as a medium of organization in the establishment of Village schools..I would create in every Village Council a School Committee of which the Director of Public Instrutcion, when present, should be the Chairman, and I would give to this Committee jurisdiction respecting the creation and upkeep of school houses, and the attendance of the children..by way of illustration, I will take the case of a village in which no school has hitherto been established, but where a desire has been expressed to obtain one. I would give the Village Council power in such a case to decide where the school house should be built, and call upon each family in the community to contribute towards its erection, with power to inflict penalties for non-compliance with the allotted conditions. The subsequent upkeep of the building would be subsequently provided for..Schools established on this basis would turn emphatically free, distinguishing them by this particular title, and providing them with teachers, furniture and books at the expense of the government."[1]

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It was also suggested by the Director that the Village Council should be empowered to punish a parent or guardian who, without reason, refused to send his children to the village school.

3. Based on the suggestions of the Director of Public Instruction, the first legislative measure in Ceylon to involve local government institutions in education took the form of the Village Communities' Ordinance of 1871 which empowered Village Councils to make rules "for constructing and repairing school rooms for education of boys and girls, and for securing their attendance at school."[2] It should be noted that the new powers were given only to Village Councils and that comparable legislation was not enacted for Municipalities or Local Boards. The extent to which the Village Councils made use of their new powers depended largely on the initiative of the people in each Village Council area and their interest in education. When a Village Council which did not have a school did erect a school room or a set of school rooms, the responsibility devolved upon the government to provide teachers. While the involvement of local government institutions could be commended, if they were all equally involved, confining the legislation to Village Councils and making it the responsibility of each Village Council to decide whether or not it should make rules "for constructing and repairing school rooms" did not help a great deal to plan educational provision. Only a year previously, in 1870, the Director of Public Instruction had expressed dissatisfaction with any arrangement by which the establishment of a school depended not on the need for a school but on there being any one interested to apply for the establishment of a school. He pointed out: "An adequate and effective measure should commence with the division of the whole country into school districts, according to the extent of the population; and should proceed with the annual establishment of a certain number of schools in each district, until the wants of the people were approximately supplied."[3] This counsel did not prevail, as interest was wanting in the planned development of education.

4. Local government institutions in Ceylon were of a different character from those in England both in the functions they exercised and in their capacity to raise revenue. Nevertheless, the legislation conferring upon Village Councils powers in regard to education bore fruit in some areas. For example, the Director of Public Instruction stated in his Administration Report for 1874 that in the Central Province "the establishment of elementary schools under Gansabhawas has been most successful."[4]

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5. Interest in the participation of local government institutions was revived in the 1880's, when the government was faced with the crisis resulting from the fall in the revenue derived from the coffee plantations which were attacked by disease. In his Administration Report for 1881, the Director of Public Instruction stated his intention of effecting savings in education "by gradually withdrawing from the management of English schools."[5] The Legislative Council appointed a Retrenchment Committee in 1883 to look into the expenditure of the government.

6. Charles Bruce, Director of Public Instruction, stated as follows in his evidence before the Retrenchment Committee:

> "As regards the expenditure of my department I have received instructions that the maximum limit is to be half a million rupees; I am preparing a scheme for the relief of the general revenue of a portion of the expenditure of Government Schools. It is a very moderate measure, intended at first to apply only to Government English Schools in Municipalities and Local Board Towns. Its object is to leave to Municipalities and Local Boards the option of maintaining such schools. If the schools are to be maintained, the difference between the actual cost of the school and amount earned by the school for results at grant-in-aid rates will have to be defrayed by the local community. The local bodies may either assume or leave the management to the Department of Public Instruction. My object in proposing to relieve the general revenue of a portion of the present expenditure on English schools, is to set free a further sum for the extension of vernacular education."[6]

7. The Retrenchment Committee expressed itself "in favour of the policy indicated by the Director in his evidence, of leaving to Local Boards the option of maintaining the Government schools within their limits."[7] The report of the Retrenchment Committee had three specific recommendations in regard to education. The first was that the whole expenditure of the island in respect of education should be reduced to Rs. 300,000 per year. The second was that the government vernacular schools in Municipalities and towns which were Local Boards should be handed over to these local bodies. The third was that the government English schools within Municipalities and Local Boards towns should be handed over to the Municipalities

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and Local Boards with the option of discontinuing them altogether or of continuing them as grant-in-aid schools. The report of the Retrenchment Committee was not placed before the Legislative Council for discussion and had been forwarded to the Secretary of State. The Governor justified this procedure on the ground that as the report had in view drastic changes affecting financial and administrative matters, it was not in the power of the legislature to deal with it except with the approval of the Secretary of State. The Secretary of State (Lord Derby) refused to approve the first two recommendations, but approved the third modified as follows:

"The proposal to hand over the English and Anglo-Vernacular schools in towns to the Municipalities and Local Boards, giving them the option of maintaining them as grant-in-aid schools, by which it is hoped to effect a saving, may be carried out, as Sir James Longden approves of it; though the poverty of the Municipalities in Ceylon and the want of interest in them on the part of the local residents, which has more than once been shown and commented upon, leads me to fear that the change will not be beneficial from an educational point of view."[8]

The Governor had gone so far as to suggest that the arrangement should extend to vernacular schools situated in towns, but the Secretary of State did not approve of this.

"I am not, however, prepared to accept Sir James Longden's suggestion for extending this new arrangement to vernacular schools situated in towns. Apart from other considerations, I am not satisfied that the Municipalities can equitably be called upon to bear the cost of their vernacular schools. English schools may perhaps be considered a luxury of the towns as opposed to the country districts; but the same argument can hardly be applied to schools in which the vernacular only is taught, and at present it appears to me desirable that, whether in towns or country, they should be charged against the general revenue of the island."[9]

8. On 12 December 1883, the Lieutenant-Governor, in presenting the Supply Bill for the financial year, referred to the intention of the government "to carry out the principle, originally proposed by Dr. Bruce, late Director of Public Instruction, and approved by the Retrenchment Committee for throwing on Municipalities and Local

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Boards the expenses of the English and Anglo-Vernacular schools now solely maintained by the Government."[10] In the Committee stage of the Supply Bill, the Lieutenant-Governor said,

"Of course there is no intention to force the maintenance of these schools on the Municipalities and Local Boards. It will merely mean that the Government will say, 'If you and your ratepayers wish these English or these Anglo-vernacular schools, you will have to pay for them receiving merely a grant-in-aid; if you don't wish them, they will be closed."[11]

9. On 2 February 1884, P. Ramanathan moved in the Legislative Council "that it is undesirable to transfer to Municipalities and Local Boards the maintenance and management of the Government schools."[12] Referring to Lord Derby's view, quoted above, Ramanathan argued that "two conclusive reasons for the non-adoption of the policy" had been indicated by Lord Derby himself.[13] In defence of the proposal, the Lieutenant-Governor argued that "a policy has been adopted in India, precisely similar to what we propose here, by throwing on the Municipalities of India. .the duty of providing for English education", and that it had been tried with success for 14 years in India.[14] In regard to English education, the Lieutenant-Governor said "I feel that by giving a number of youths a smattering of English instead of teaching them anything useful we are giving them a pride which is a curse to them."[15] He also explained, ". .what we intend to do is to regard vernacular education as our special charge and English education as a luxury which we expect Local Boards to maintain at their option."[16] One of the official members of the Council also argued that a very high principle was involved in the recommendation, namely that of "enlisting in the cause of education local interest and responsibility."[17] He went on to express the view that municipalities themselves would rise in importance when such interest was enlisted. A vote was taken on Ramanathan's motion, and it was defeated.

10. On 24 August 1884, the Rt. Rev. Bishop Bonjean sent to the Governor a letter of protest against the proposal to transfer government English schools to Municipalities and Local Boards. He pointed out that English schools were "for the benefit of the well-to-do portion of the community, who alone can have an interest in the creation of such schools."[18] Fr. Bonjean pointed out that if the schools are

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transferred to Municipalities and Local Boards, the burden of supporting them would fall "on people not caring for, not requiring and in fact giving instruction in English to their children." He also pointed out that some parents would disapprove of the religious or moral tones of the instruction given in the Municipal schools and would want to send their children to schools managed by their own religious bodies. Such parents would have to pay twice over for education in the sense of having to support the schools run by their own religious bodies as well as the schools of the Municipalities providing a kind of teaching they disapprove. In fact, they would be paying for starting and maintaining hostile schools.

11. Notwithstanding this protest, on 22 October 1884, the Acting Colonial Secretary moved the first reading of a bill "to authorize Municipal Councils and Local Boards. . to provide for the maintenance of schools in which the English language is taught."[19] The object of the Ordinance was stated as follows: ". . to enable the government to transfer to Municipalities and Local Boards the providing for English education within their limits; and to enable them to raise the necessary funds for that purpose." After some discussion, the Bill was passed with the important change that no provision was made for levying an educational rate to augment the finances of the Municipal and Local Boards.[20] The absence of such a provision was a concession to missionary interests, and it made the legislation ineffective. No Municipality or Local Board was able to take over the schools, the Local Board of Puttalam alone making a short lived effort, and the schools were either closed down by the government or handed over to the missionaries. The determination of the Roman Catholic church was seen at its fiercest in Puttalam. P. A. Templer, Chairman of the Local Board, described as follows the events following upon the transfer of the two government English schools to the Local Boards:

> "Simultaneously, however, with the transfer, a boys' school was opened by the Roman Catholic Mission, which not only held out the bait of low fees as an inducement, but even went the length of bringing to bear the power of the Church by a threat of excommunicating parents who sent their boys to the Board schools. In the face of this opposition. . .schools ceased in April 1885. The girls' school was kept up."[21]

A post script to the story is contained in a report by C. M. Lushington, the Assistant Government Agent.

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"At the beginning of the year the government schools were taken over by the Local Board, but owing to the opening of a rival school by the Roman Catholic mission, the boys' school was closed at the end of the Easter term. The Roman Catholic school is now badly maintained, and Puttalam is practically without the benefits of an English education for its boys. The girls' school has, however, been kept up by the Board, and the attendance is fairly good.."[22]

Thus, with the single exception of Royal College (former Colombo Academy which took this new name in 1881), which was exempted from the provisions of the Bill, the government English schools in the Municipalities and Local Boards ceased to exist. In other words, the move to transfer responsibility over English education in the Municipalities and Local Boards to these local government bodies proved to be a fiasco, and "the Christian clergy received a tremendous accession of power" when the government handed over the English schools to them.[23]

12. One of the factors that stood in the way of making education compulsory was the fragmentary nature of the legislation. Attendance in Municipalities and Local Boards areas was not covered by any legislation. By the Village Committees' Ordinance of 1871, Village Councils could make rules for securing the attendance of boys and girls at school in their respective areas. Some Village Councils did indeed make such rules. The Director of Public Instruction made this comment in the Administration Report for 1877: "In the different *Gansabhawa* districts the rules bearing on this question might, I believe, where they exist be much more stringently enforced, and where they do not exist be made at once".[24] The hope of stringent enforcement was a futile one; while a Village Council might have been disposed to enforce attendance at a government school, it could certainly not be expected to enforce attendance of non-Christian children at a Christian missionary school, especially in the absence of a conscience clause. It was, however, about thirty years later that a conscience clause of a sort found a place in the legislation.

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CHAPTER 32

HIGHER, PROFESSIONAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION (1869 - 1900)

The Colombo Academy

1. The Colombo Academy continued to be at the apex of the English school system in Ceylon. Governor Robinson, in his policy statement of 12 January 1870, made the following reference to the Colombo Academy:

> "Steps have also been taken for giving effect to the decisions of the Council in respect of the Colombo Academy and the English University Scholarships; and changes have been introduced into the organization and working of the Academy, by which it is intended to place a liberal education of the English public school type within the reach of all who may require it."[1]

2. The first student from the Academy awarded a scholarship for study at a British university was admitted in 1870 to Exeter College at the University of Oxford. The next year's scholarship winner was admitted to Christ's College at the University of Cambridge. In this way, a scholar selected from the Colombo Academy proceeded every year to a British university, usually Oxford or Cambridge, to read for a degree. With the introduction of the Revised Code of 1880 (chapter 28 paragraphs 18 to 24), the university scholarships, formerly restricted to students of the Academy, were thrown open for public competition, enabling comparable schools run by missionary societies to present candidates. Although a few scholarships were won by students from other schools, Royal College, as the Academy was called after 1881, continued to occupy a position of pre-eminence.

Ceylon students in British universities

3. The Ceylon students who were awarded scholarships tenable at Oxford or Cambridge generally distinguished themselves by their very high standards of achievement in the courses of study in which they enrolled. Several of them won medals and other awards open for competition by British and foreign students enrolled in their courses. Apart from the credit they brought upon themselves, their academic

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successes were important for Ceylon as a nation, for it showed that the Ceylonese were not inferior to the British in the sphere of intellectual capabilities.

Teacher Training

4. Following upon the Morgan recommendations, a Normal School was opened in 1870 with 10 students in the English class and 20 in the vernacular classes. They were selected for training on the basis of an examination, and were paid a monthly allowance during the training. In 1873, the view was expressed in the Administration Report of the Director of Public Instruction that "it would be productive of much good if government were to hold out inducements to educating bodies to establish training schools."[2] The case for aided training schools was stated again in 1876, but curiously enough the same Administration Report referred to the fact that there was very little competition for admission to the Normal School, the explanation offered being that teaching posts were unpopular. The Revised Code of 1880 offered grants-in-aid to training schools. Missionary organizations made use of the opportunity to establish training schools, and by the year 1900 the Wesleyan mission and the Church of England established three training schools each, the Roman Catholics two training schools and the American mission one training school.

5. Meanwhile, in 1881, on account of the financial crisis and the declared policy of the government of withdrawing its own efforts from English education and entrusting English education to denominational bodies, the English classes at the Normal School were closed down. For a couple of years there was some provision for the training of teachers for Anglo-vernacular schools, but it was discontinued and the Normal School as an institution closed down in 1884. For some years, there was an attitude of complacence, but by the close of the century concern was being expressed about the lack of facilities for training English teachers.

6. Mention may also be made of examinations introduced to enable untrained teachers to obtain a teaching certificate. A Vernacular Teacher's Certificate examination was introduced for males in 1878; a female Teacher's Certificate examination was introduced in 1882; and in 1883, an examination was introduced for the issue of a Teacher's Licence to teachers in grant-in-aid schools.

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7. Side by side there continued the monitorial system, formalized by Director Sendall in 1871 largely on the basis of his predecessor Laurie's recommendations, through which every school obtained one or more assistants to help in the teaching. Some monitors sought to qualify further by entering government or aided Normal Schools. Others sat for the Teacher's Certificate examinations after they were introduced.

Legal Education

8. As no reference to legal education was made in Part II a review of developments during the period 1830-1869 is included in the present discussion. In the procedures established for the administration of justice following upon the recommendations of the Colebrook-Cameron commission, two categories of legal practitioners, namely Advocates and Proctors, were recognized. They had to be enrolled in these capacities by the Supreme Court. They received preparation for these professions through being apprenticed. After the necessary period of apprenticeship was gone through, they were required to pass an examination by a judge of the Supreme Court, and admitted to the profession if they were successful. In 1858, "a Board of Examiners consisting of the Queen's Advocate and his Deputy, five or more practising Advocates and Proctors, and the Registrar of the Supreme Court" was established, relieving the judges of the responsibility of serving as examiners.[3]

9. In 1874 a Council of Legal Education was established. A preliminary examination was also provided for admission as law students, and successful candidates were provided with a series of lectures in law. The requirement of apprenticeship was continued as before, and admission to the profession was based on fulfilling the requirement of apprenticeship and passing the examinations conducted by the Council of Legal Education.

Medical Education

10. During the period 1830-1869, no facilities existed in Ceylon for medical education. Students selected from Ceylon were sent to the Bengal Medical College in Calcutta to qualify as doctors.

11. A Medical College was established in Colombo in 1870. In 1889, holders of the diploma in Medicine and Surgery issued by the

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Medical College were recognized by the General Medical Council of the United Kingdom as competent to proceed to further studies in medicine.

Technical Education

12. A Technical School was established in Colombo in 1893. Its main purpose was to train technical personnel to work in government departments such as the Postal, Public Works, Irrigation, Railway and Survey departments and also to serve in the private sector.

Agricultural Education

13. Eleven Schools of Agriculture were established during the decade of the 1880's. They did not have a firm basis in research nor did they offer much attraction from the point of view of the employment opportunities they were able to provide. The School of Agriculture in Colombo offered courses in agriculture, veterinary science and dairy farming, and it was also responsible for training teachers of agriculture. As from 1896, a course in forestry was also provided.

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CHAPTER 33

LANGUAGE IN EDUCATION (1869 - 1900)

1. The language policy in education during the period 1830-1869 has been described in chapter 20. The period began with a policy decision, on the basis of Colebrooke recommendations, that the government would promote education in English. The circumstances that made the government deviate from this policy have also been discussed in chapters 20 and 24.

2. During the period 1870-1900, there was a partial reversal of the government's policy in the sense that English education was almost wholly left to private enterprise, mainly the Christian missions, while education in the vernacular became much more the direct concern of the government, especially where vernacular education was not available through grant-aided schools. It was not that vernacular education was considered more important than English education, but the government felt that the latter was already in goods hands and the special efforts of the government were required for the promotion of vernacular education.

3. The devaluation of vernacular education vis-a-vis English education continued unabated. The rates of payment fixed as grants-in-aid for English schools were high while those for vernacular schools were low. The extension of vernacular education beyond standard 4 was not contemplated in the early years, and the schedule of grants ended with this standard. The vernacular was, however, given a place in the English schools, and rates of payment for passes in vernacular subjects were announced.

> "With the view of encouraging a systematic study of the native languages, a Regulation (No. 13) was sanctioned, granting vernacular passes to English-teaching schools in which systematic instruction is given in a native language, the design of such instruction being to introduce the pupils to an acquaintance with the best classical literature of the language."[1]

At first six hours of instruction per week were required, but later the number of hours required was reduced to five. The introduction of the

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school examinations of the University of Cambridge was, however, a discouragement of the vernacular languages in English schools, as these examinations did not include the vernacular languages as subjects. The Director of Public Instruction, however, explained away the objections on this account:

> "The intention of these examinations is to encourage instruction in classical and scientific knowledge, which it is absolutely impossible to convey through the medium of our vernacular languages. Let us, by any suitable means encourage the study of vernacular Literature, but it would surely not be wise to debar ourselves from an examination which offers a guarantee and criterion of the reality of our superior instruction, because it does not include a field of knowledge which lies altogether outside the horizon of our intentions. The same objection might be raised against the examinations of the University of Calcutta, and so far as a great part of the colony is concerned against the examinations of the University of Madras."[2]

The qualification about the University of Madras was made in recognition of the fact that Tamil was a subject of examination.

4. The advantages in employment opportunities for persons with a knowledge of English created pressures for more English schools than could be provided. As a response to these pressures, it was decided to introduce English as a subject of study in certain vernacular schools under the system of grants-in-aid.[3]

5. The Director of Public Instruction, in his Administration Report for 1884, advocated the use of the national languages as the medium of instruction in primary and middle English schools. He stated as follows:

> "At present the state of affairs in too many of our primary and middle English schools is much as if in England, at the Board Schools, the boys learnt all the subjects in French paying no attention to English at all; for here a Sinhalese or Tamil in our English schools learns all his Arithmetic, Geography, History, etc., in English and (with a few exceptions) receives no instruction in his own language at all.

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"English should be taught as a language only and should not be the medium of instruction in Arithmetic, History, Geography, etc. which should be taught in the vernacular and I argued that boys would learn a great deal more English on the one hand, while on the other hand they would understand a great deal more about Arithmetic and other subjects in which I have often observed that a boy in an English School will fail by not properly grasping the English of a question whereas if it were put in his own vernacular he would at once understand and answer it.

"School managers have told me frankly and unofficially that they agreed with me but as a rule there has been a disposition to shirk grappling with the problem officially. It must however be dealt with sooner or later unless we are to go on teaching our slipshod smattering of English and encouraging more generations to ignore their own vernaculars, and the sooner it is dealt with the better. I trust therefore that the year will not close without serious consideration of my proposal. It is a grave matter, and one in which all school managers should aid me with their opinion and counsel."[4]

While expressing the opinion quoted above, the Director referred to a resolution of the Government of India (dated 23 October 1884) upon the report of the Indian Education Commission:

"The Governor-General in Council is disposed to agree with the Commission that, for boys whose education terminates with the middle course, instruction through the vernacular is likely to be the most effective and satisfactory. The experience of Bengal goes indeed to show that even for lads pursuing their studies in High Schools a thorough grounding conveyed through their own vernacular leads to satisfactory after-results"[5]

School managers were, however, not in favour of using the national languages as the media of instruction beyond standard 5, and nothing came out of the Director's suggestion.

6. The recognition by the government in 1878, for financial assistance, of the Vidyodaya *Pirivena*, a college of higher learning in oriental languages such as Pali and Sanskrit, was an event of importance, as it was the first occasion on which the government conceded that such learning was of value and deserved encouragement. Among

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its students were both Buddhist monks and the laity. It was pointed out that arithmetic and geography were not taught even to the laity and the desirability of doing so was emphasized. In 1879 arithmetic was included in the subjects of the examination, but the performance was considered poor.[6] According to the Administration Report of the Director of Public Instruction for 1883, the school was "not examined by this Department but by such oriental scholars as may be selected by the manager, and the Director is merely present at the examination."[7] The financial assistance to the institution took the form of a lump sum grant of Rs. 1,000 per year. In course of time, the Vidyodaya *Pirivena* acquired a great reputation in Asia for oriental learning, and attracted students from Siam (now Thailand), Cambodia and Japan.

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CHAPTER 34

RELIGION IN SCHOOL (1869 - 1900)

Grant-in-aid Schools

1. The Morgan Committee (see chapter 25) recommended that denominational schools should be given grants for secular instruction and left completely free to do as they liked in regard to religious instruction.

2. When the recommendation was later considered by the School Commission, the President of the School Commission, concurring with the general principle that grants should be paid without imposing any condition regarding religious instruction, expressed the view that "in no school, either wholly or partially supported by the government, should any pupil be denied admission to classes for secular instruction, on the ground of his declining to accept religious instruction."[1]

3. The missionaries found this condition unacceptable, and the Legislative Council found a way out of the situation that had arisen. The Legislative Council passed a motion in terms of which the government reserved to itself "the right of refusing or withdrawing grants-in-aid to private schools in cases in which the establishment or maintenance of government schools may be rendered necessary by the enforcement of a compulsory rule as regards religious instruction."[2] While thousands of non-Christian children were compelled to receive instruction in Christianity in mission schools, the government did not at any time consider it necessary to establish government schools for the education of such children, and therefore the question of withdrawing grants never arose.

4. Among British administrators themselves, there were a few who were quite uneasy about the propriety of forcing non-Christians to receive religious instruction in Christianity in mission schools. The first Director of Public Instruction, J. S. Laurie, expressed the view that a conscience clause was useful, only to be reminded that it was none of his business to raise such an issue and that he should draw up a code of rules to implement the decision made by the Legislative Council.[3] (See Chapter 28 paragraph 17).

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5. The question of a conscience clause again became a subject of discussion from about the year 1878. In 1878, the Director of Public Instruction stated in his Administration Report, "In some cases ..I have found not a single child professing the nominal religion of the school he attends."[4] The unwritten but essential postscript to the comment was that every single child in such a school was compelled to follow instruction in the religion of the management, though not one of them professed it.

6. In 1879, William Blair in his report as Inspector of Schools wrote as follows: "In not a few cases schools are established not for the spread of education per se, but to spread the doctrines of Christianity. In some of these cases the reading books used are full of the most dogmatic theological opinions which to an honest and intelligent Buddhist or Mohammedan are very offensive and calculated to do more harm than good."[5] (See paragraph 17 also).

7. In 1879 and 1881, referring to the economy in closing government English schools in two towns in view of the presence of aided mission schools, the Director made the point that education could be entrusted to missionary enterprise "if arrangements can be made to prevent denominational teaching from being forced upon those unwilling to receive it."[6] In spite of the obvious reservations of conscience expressed in this statement, the government did proceed to close government schools or transfer them to missions, leaving non-Christian children with no option but to undergo compulsory instruction in Christianity in mission schools, in the absence of a conscience clause.

8. W. Blair, Inspector of Schools, who acted for the Director of Public Instruction in 1882, too, raised the issue of a conscience clause in connection with the two mile rule (see chapter 30 paragraph 17). The two reasons which made him advert to the question of a conscience clause were firstly the complaints made by Buddhists regarding compulsory religious instruction given to their children in mission schools, and secondly the requests from Buddhists for the establishment of government schools in places where there were grant-in-aid schools run by Christians. He wrote as follows:

"There is, however, one important point which I think may with advantage be briefly discussed viz., the desirability (or otherwise)

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of introducing a conscience clause. Hitherto the policy of the department on all religious questions has been one of strict impartiality—absolute neutrality. But at no distant period it will be necessary to introduce into the Revised Code a rule with regard to religious instruction. The provisional regulations for grants-in-aid in not a few cases led to the multiplication of schools—small and feeble—rivals to each other, often doing more harm than good, and from which schools under mission management were often the greatest sufferers. When the late Director prepared the present Code, he decided that, subject to certain exceptions no application for a new school should be entertained if within two miles there was an existing flourishing school, unless the average daily attendance for six months prior to the application exceeded 60. The practical effect of this rule is that, in the majority of small towns and large villages in which there are mission schools, the people are virtually compelled to send their children to mission schools, or to none. This imposes on Government a heavy responsibility. Not only must care be taken that the schools are efficient in discipline and instruction, that the instruction imparted is of the kind that is most suited to benefit the scholars in after life, but there also shall be an absolute freedom from compulsion with regard to subjects of a religious character."[7]

9. About the same time, the attention of the Secretary of State was drawn to the absence of a conscience clause in the Code for aided schools by a letter sent by Mr. Hill, retired Headmaster of the Normal School at Colombo. The Secretary of State referred the letter to W. J. Sendall, a former Director of Public Instruction, for his views. Sendall defended the absence of a conscience clause, pointing out that when restrictions on religious instruction were imposed missionary participation in the grant-in-aid system was negligible, and that with the removal of the restrictions it had become possible to get active missionary participation for the provision of education. The Secretary of State referred the letter also to C. Bruce, Director of Public Instruction. Bruce pointed out that though he himself had introduced a conscience clause applicable to the grant-in-aid system of schools in Mauritius, such a clause was unnecessary in Ceylon, where it had really been left out after it had been shown to be "an inseparable obstacle to the success of the grant-in-aid system."[8] Bruce went on to say that the absence of a conscience clause "may. . lead to instances of individual hardship if the denominational principles of a school are

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carried out rigorously in practice, and thus arises the simple question of expediency, whether it was better to adopt a system which had practically alienated from government the co-operation of these agencies, both Christian and non-Christian, which it was the paramount or only object of the grant-in-aid system to secure."[9] Bruce also went on to say:

> "It must be remembered that if in Ceylon the grant-in-aid system has..been hitherto chiefly made use of by Christian Ecclesiastical and Missionary Societies, yet the intention of the scheme was and is to hold out the same inducements to Christian and non-Christian agencies, and it must especially be remembered that the traditional school policy of Buddhists, Hindus and Mohammedans alike has been to make the language and text of their sacred books the alpha and omega of instruction."[10]

Bruce was less than fair to the indigenous religious groups in the position he took up. No school run by a Buddhist, Hindu or Muslim organization had up till then been registered for aid. In his Administration Report for 1880, he had referred to the opposition of a Christian group to the registration of a Hindu school (chapter 30 paragraph 32). Moreover, the traditional schools of the indigenous groups, unaided as they were and not providing education for children of other religious denominations, had nothing to do with the question of a conscience clause for grant-in-aid Christian schools attended in large numbers by children belonging to non-Christian religions.

10. William Blair, who acted as Director of Public Instruction after Bruce's departure, took up a different position. Pointing out that the rule forbidding the establishment of a new school within two miles of an existing school compelled parents to send their children to mission schools, he stressed the need to introduce a conscience clause. "Not only must care be taken that the schools are efficient in discipline and instruction..but there also shall be an absolute freedom from compulsion with regard to subjects of a religious character."[11]

11. H. W. Green, who succeeded Bruce as Director, disagreed with Blair and supported the position taken up by Sendall and Bruce.

> "..the fact remains that the Wesleyans and Church Missionaries do object most strenuously to a conscience clause; that their schools,

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numbering 363, would be withdrawn from the grant-in-aid system if such a clause were inserted in the Code; and that, though education would not suffer greatly if some of their English schools were withdrawn, yet the large majority of their schools are vernacular, and these are most useful, and it would be a serious blow to the educational system of Ceylon if they were taken away from Government inspection and co-operation.

As regards cases of individual hardship resulting from the absence of a conscience clause in the Code, it appears to me that, if any non-Christian community objects to its children being taught in Christian aided schools, the remedy is in its own hands; if it provides proper management, teachers, and funds, it can withdraw its children from the school objected to, and so cause the numbers of that school to fall below the requirements of the Code and lose its grant. The non-Christian school would then step into the place of the Christian school, and would itself become an aided school.

But so long as a non-Christian community merely complains occasionally in words but does not put its shoulder to the wheel to provide a school for itself as above, so long I hold that it is entitled to little regard compared with a useful and energetic teaching society.

This being the state of affairs, and when it is considered also that the Government reserved to itself by the before-quoted resolution of the Legislative Council the right of refusing or withdrawing grants-in-aid in cases where the establishment or maintenance of Government schools may be necessary, it seems to me that sufficient safeguards exist for rights of conscience under the present system, and that it would be most inadvisable to bring again into force a conscience clause system which has had one protracted trial already, and has been found unsuitable to the needs of this country, however suited it may be, and undoubtedly is, to the educational requirements of England and other more advanced countries than Ceylon."[12]

On account of the views expressed by the Director against the inclusion of a conscience clause, no action was taken to include such a clause.

12. The attitude of the government in refusing to include a conscience clause in the code of regulations for aided schools did not

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find favour with the indigenous religious groups. On 4 January 1884, P. Ramanathan presented to the Legislative Council a petition signed by about 1,500 Hindus complaining of religious intolerance on the part of certain managers of grant-in-aid schools. A few weeks later, he drew the attention of the Council to this memorial.

> "The specific nature of the grievances complained of..is that children who are obliged to go to these missionary schools are forced by the missionaries under pain of fines of expulsion to read the Bible, whether they like it or not..and also to rub off those sectarian marks which Hindus are bound by the rules of their religion to wear on their forehead."[13]

Referring particularly to "the intolerance of the Church missionaries and American missionaries in the Northern Province", Ramanathan drew the attention of the Council to the fact that according to the Director of Public Instruction himself, the managers of the grant-in-aid schools conducted by these missionary societies had "declined to pledge themselves that no scholar shall receive religious instruction contrary to the wishes of the parents."[14] Ramanathan went on to say,

> "It is only last year that in Christian England itself the Archbishop of Canterbury insisted upon a conscience clause in their Church schools..the sooner a clause of that kind is introduced the better it will be for religious freedom in Ceylon."[15]

The Lieutenant Governor promised to inquire into the matter. Whatever inquiry he held did not certainly lead to a conviction on the part of the government to introduce a conscience clause, for only a year later the Director of Public Instruction reiterated the fact that the grant-in-aid system was one of "absolute non-interference with religious teaching in aided schools..We ask no questions about what religion is taught in schools, or whether any religion is taught."[16]

13. In 1892, the Director of Public Instruction recognized the difficulty of enforcing attendance in the absence of a conscience clause:

> "But no controlling officer would be justified in enforcing the attendance of children at schools wherein a course of religious instruction antagonistic to the belief of the parents of the children of the district is made an essential part of the discipline of the school."[17]

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Action was not taken to introduce a conscience clause, however. Of course, no serious attempt was taken to enforce compulsory attendance.

14. One would have thought that a government which refused to accede to the principle of a conscience clause would at least desist from handing over its own schools to missionary bodies. This activity, however, continued unabated. In May 1895, for example, the inhabitants of a village in the Western Province submitted to the Legislative Council a petition complaining that a government school had been handed over to the Wesleyan mission without consulting the villagers, although many non-Wesleyan children attended the school.[18] In order to induce the government to hand over to the management of the mission certain government English schools that were being closed down, the Wesleyans offered to confine religious instruction to the first hour of the day, and also to exempt from attendance children belonging to other religious persuasions (see chapter 29 paragraph 8). The Director used this as an argument to assuage the minds especially of the Buddhists, Hindus and Roman Catholics, who protested against the handing over of former government schools to Protestant missions. The Director went so far as to say that he expected to have a clause to this effect included in the Code for 1896. No such clause was included as the Protestant missions opposed the move.

> "We trust..that the clause will not be proceeded with and that the subject of religious instruction will remain as hithertofore at the discretion of managers of schools and untramelled by departmental regulations"[19]

The concession which the missions made to other religious groups in respect of schools to be taken over from the government was no more than a move to gain an immediate advantage, and the missions were clearly not willing to have it elevated to a principle and given legal recognition by being included in the Code.

15. School books were as much an instrument of conversion as of education. The Christian Vernacular Education Society had produced a series of school books. The books were considered by scholars of the Sinhalese language to be defective on grounds of language, idiom and orthography, while the Buddhists and Hindus pointed out that the books spoke of these religions in a derogatory tone. It was

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proposed that the government should produce a series of school books, but the Christian Vernacular Education Society objected to this proposal. (See paragraph 6 also)

Government Schools

16. The situation during the period under review in regard to the teaching of religion in government schools is somewhat unclear. The practice during the period which preceded it was to teach non-denominational Christianity in government schools, with provision for the exemption of children whose parents objected. The Morgan Committee of 1865 made no specific recommendation regarding religion in government schools. In 1870, W. E. Sharpe, Assistant Government Agent, Kandy, in a letter to the Church Missionary Society urging the establishment of a school made the point that in the near future scriptural teaching would be "carefully excluded" from government schools.[20] This shows that a move was afoot to discontinue scriptural teaching in government schools. Information is not traceable as to when a decisive step in this direction was taken, but it is clear that scriptural teaching in government schools had come to a halt before the year 1898, as it is stated in Sessional Paper 4 of 1898 that religious instruction is not permitted in government schools.

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2. *Ibid.*
3. *Sessional Paper* 5 *of* 1869.
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19. *The Ceylon Methodist Record*, October 1895. Cited by Rajaindran, A., *Some Issues between Church and State in Ceylon in the Education of the People* from 1870-1901, Ph.D. Thesis, University of London, 1964, p. 360.
20. *CMS Mss.* Letter dated 10 January 1871 from W. E. Sharpe to Rev. J. I. Jones. Cited by Rajaindran, A., *op. cit., p.* 224.

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CHAPTER 35

EXAMINATIONS (1869—1900)

1. The period under review was marked by certain changes in the examination system that had quite significant *implications* for the country.

2. A Local examination at the Junior level, intended for students who had completed about eight years of education, had been introduced in 1862 and it had been popular for some time, attracting as many as 129 students by the year 1868 but thereafter declining in popularity to such an extent that only 6 took it up in 1878. The subjects of the examination were as follows in 1870: English Grammar, Dictation, Composition, Literature, History, Geography, Arithmetic, Algebra, Euclid, Mechanics. An extra language selected from among Latin, Greek, Sinhalese and Tamil could also be taken.

3. In 1876, the Director of Public Instruction expressed in no uncertain terms his disappointment at the failure of the grant-in-aid schools to present candidates for the Local examination. "..higher education if it exists in aided schools is superficial and quite unfit to stand the test of a real examination."[1] He was, however, less than fair in making this judgment. In 1878, he listed in more reasonable fashion the reasons for the decline in popularity of the Local examination. They were as follows:

"1. Absence of direct inducement, at a time when the bulk of the community is in that early stage of culture, which measures the value of education by its direct tangible result.

2. The condition which compels a successful candidate for the scholarships to leave his school and join the Academy.

3. The want of recognized and established authority and prestige in the examining board. In this respect no "scratch" company of examiners, however eminent their individual attainments, can carry the weight of a university examination."[2]

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4. The Director proposed the following measures to remedy these weaknesses:

(a) to offer results payments for passes in superior instruction, being the logical extension of the system of the existing code;

(b) to make the scholarships, awarded on the results of the examination, tenable either at the Academy or at any school or college approved by the government;

(c) to increase from one to two the scholarships for studies abroad and throw both scholarships open to public examination, without restricting competition to students at the Academy;

(d) to introduce into Ceylon the school examinations conducted by the Examinations Syndicate of the University of Cambridge.

5. In anticipation of a possible objection to the Cambridge examinations on the ground that no provision was made in them for vernacular literature, the Director explained that the intention of these examinations was "to encourage instruction in classical and scientific knowledge, which it is absolutely impossible to convey through the medium of our vernacular languages."[3] The Director went on to say, "Let us, by any suitable means, encourage the study of vernacular literature, but it surely would not be wise to debar ourselves from an examination which offers a guarantee and criterion of the reality of our superior instruction, because it does not include a field of knowledge which lies altogether outside the horizon of our intentions."[4]

6. The Cambridge Senior Local and Junior Local Examinations were held in Ceylon for the first time in 1880, and the candidates from Ceylon fared very well. All four candidates presented for the Senior Local examination passed it, and out of 15 candidates presented for the Junior Local examination only one failed. The performance in the paper on Shakespeare at the Senior examination evoked the following comment from the examiners: "The high character of the papers of the candidates in Ceylon and Trinidad formed a feature of the examination which the examiners were unwilling to leave unnoticed."[5]

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7. Arrangements were also made for holding in Ceylon the following examinations of the University of London: Matriculation, Intermediate in Arts, and Intermediate in Laws. The London Matriculation examination was held for the first time in 1882, three out of the four candidates from Ceylon being successful. In 1883, a candidate from Ceylon was placed twenty-seventh in order of merit among competitors from England, India, Ceylon and other colonies, and being the first among the candidates from India and Ceylon he was awarded the Gilchrist Scholarship to pursue further studies at London or Edinburgh. The Intermediate in Arts examination was held for the first time in 1885.

8. Although the Colombo Academy severed its special connection with the University of Calcutta in 1869, certain missionary High schools in Ceylon continued to present candidates for Indian university examinations. Schools in Sinhalese speaking areas gnerally sent up students for examinations of the University of Calcutta, while schools in Tamil speaking areas sent up students for examinations of the University of Madras.

9. An important consequence of the introduction of the examinations of the Universities of London and Cambridge into Ceylon was that the high standards of performance of some of the Ceylon students at these examinations dispelled the notion that the white race in general and the British in particular were supermen. For well over 50 years these examinations were held in Ceylon, and throughout this period the candidates from Ceylon acquitted themselves very creditably. The fact that Ceylon students were generally able to do as well as, and in a few cases even better than, British students gave the people of Ceylon a new confidence in their ability. While the irrelevance of these examinations to the culture and socio-economic conditions of Ceylon can hardly be denied, British examinations did much to remove from the minds of the people the feeling of inferiority that came from being a subject race. From this point of view, the abandonment in course of time of Indian university examinations was a blessing, as the kind of self confidence mentioned above could not have arisen from achievements in Indian university examinations.

10. What did indeed give the people of Ceylon the greatest amount of confidence in their intellectual capacity was the performance

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of the Ceylonese who pursued studies at British universities, having gained scholarships from the government of Ceylon for the purpose. Beginning with the year 1871, a government scholar went each year to Oxford or Cambridge. Many of them gained the highest academic honours possible, and some distinguished themselves in debate or sport in addition, contributing in no small measure to give the people of Ceylon a new image of their capabilities as a nation. While some of the British educated intellectuals lost their cultural roots and became de-nationalized, yet others came back with a re-awakened nationalism and formed the vanguard of the religious, social and political movements that have led the country to cultural and political freedom. To be sure, they were not the only leaders of these movements; some English educated who had not been abroad and some vernacular educated were also among the leadership.

References

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3. *Loc. cit.*
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5. A. R. (D.P.I.), 1880.

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CHAPTER 36

EDUCATIONAL FINANCE (1869—1900)

1. The declaration of policy made by Governor Robinson on 12 January 1870 set out the priorities in education for the period immediately ahead. They were "to extend the operations of Government in the direction of establishing village schools in localities as yet unprovided with the means of instruction, but gradually to contract its operations in respect of English schools in the town districts, where an effective system of grants-in-aid will enable the Government to employ its funds to much greater advantage than in maintaining schools of its own."[1]

2. Almost immediately after the above mentioned declaration, the government through the Village Communities' Ordinance of 1871 placed responsibility on Village Councils for the construction and maintenance of school buildings and thereby confined its own expenditure to the payment of the salaries of the teachers. In its vernacular schools (nearly every village school was a vernacular school), the government at first levied a small school fee but it was removed in course of time (see chpater 29 paragraph 12). From time to time, the government either closed some of its village schools on the ground that educational needs in certain villages were already provided by grant-in-aid mission schools, or transferred their control to missions. The argument used was that the savings accruing thereby would permit the government to provide education in villages that had no educational facilities. The readiness to incur such expenditure depended largely on the general state of the economy, and there was less inclination to do so after the financial crisis of the 1880's than before it. Vernacular education in the municipalities and towns was also provided in government schools or in grant-aided mission schools. The recognition for grants-in-aid of mission schools that provided vernacular education in towns or villages was fairly brisk at first, but was greatly slowed down as the expenditure on grants began to rise. Conditions for recognition as grants-in-aid schools were also gradually tightened up.

3. In 1884, the government withdrew from providing English schools in the towns, with the exception of Royal College. The attempt to place the responsibility on Municipalities and Local Boards

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failed, and the government English schools were closed or transferred to the missions.

4. The expenditure on the Ecclesiastical Department was also a serious drain on the country's finances. In a petition submitted to the Legislative Council on 11 September 1876 it was pointed out that the Ecclesiastical Department entailed an annual charge on the revenue of Rs 140,000 for the religious purposes of a group not exceeding 15,000, while the others (Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims and non-Anglican Christians) numbering about 2,393,600 got nothing. The petition urged the government to discontinue the appointment and support by the government of a Lord Bishop, and Episcopal and Presbyterian Chaplains. Speaking in the debate, Muttu Coomaraswamy pointed out that he had raised this same issue in 1869 and 1870. He went on to say,

> "..it is impolitic, unjust, and I must even say unchristian, to spend any portion of the taxes obtained from Buddhists, Hindus and Muslims for the maintenance of the churches and ministers of not Christians merely, but only one or two sections of them."[2]

W. W. Mitchell, the Mercantile Representative, spoke of "the injustice to the great masses of the population of Ceylon—Buddhists, Hindus and Muhammadans — from whom the revenue is largely derived."[3] James Alwis, though a Christian and a member of one of the subsidized churches, agreed with the obejctions, saying, "..I was never aware that government had paid a six pence in aid of Buddhism."[4] These arguments failed to persuade the Council, and a motion to continue the subsidies was carried.

5. On account of the retrenchment measures taken as from 1880, the progressive increase recorded in the education vote after the year 1870 was halted, and there was even a small reduction in the vote. For example, while the vote for education amounted to Rs. 500,978 in 1882, it came down to Rs. 454,481 by the year 1885. Military expenditure incurred to protect British interests in the East continued, however, to be a drain on the revenue, and the amount allocated at this time was Rs. 500,000, clearly a higher priority than education. Appeals by the local population to relieve the country of the burden of military expenditure were, of course, not heeded by the British government.

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6. Aid to the missions through the grant-in-aid scheme was relatively generous. Governor Gregory in his opening address to the Legislative Council in 1875 made the following statement:

> "The grant scheme is on the whole working well. But my attention has been drawn to the disproportionate amount paid by the Government, as compared with that contributed by private and missionary funds, and it will in consequence be necessary to introduce into the grant scheme certain modifications. As a matter of fact the manager's returns prove that a very large number of the so-called aided schools are really schools entirely supported by the Government, with or without the addition of school fees, under private management."[5]

In 1880, the Director of Public Instruction expressed the view that the expenditure of the missions on a grant-in-aid school did not average "more than one rupee per month per school."[6] The generosity of the grant did not, however, prevent falsification of registers. According to one Inspector of Schools, "It is but fair to the very great majority of government teachers to say that their registers are all honestly and neatly kept and always up to date. . I am sorry I cannot speak so favourably of a large number of the Grant schools".[7] According to another Inspector of Schools, "Why should the total number of scholars in Grant schools be 17 per cent less on the day of the Inspector's visit than the daily average attendance for the three months immediately preceding, while in Government schools, visited on the same day, the number present was only 1 per cent less?"[8]

7. Government grants for education were unevenly distributed as between the different parts of the country and as between the various religious groups. In the Northern Province, where the American mission was actively engaged in educational activities in addition to the Wesleyan and Church missions and the Roman Catholics, there were in 1885 three hundred grant-in-aid schools out of a total of 819 schools for the whole island, and 45 per cent of the government grant for the entire island went to this province, although it had only about 12 per cent of the population. With the exception of 8 Buddhist schools, all the other grant-in-aid schools in the entire country were Christian (including Roman Catholic). The Christians, including the Roman Catholics, constituted only about 1% percent of the population.

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8. Provincial administrators repeatedly drew the attention of the government to the need for more support to education. In 1884, Herbert Wace, Assistant Government Agent of Kegalle District in the Central Province wrote as follows:

> "Education is in a backward state in this district. It is not creditable to the British government that this district should be worse off in this respect than it was under the Kandyan dynasty..I feel very strongly on this subject, and I think every effort should be made by those who have the disposal of funds available for educational purposes to devote as much as possible to the encouragement of the acquisition of the simple rudiments of vernacular education in the villages, even at the sacrifice of some higher education in the towns for those who can afford to pay for it."[9]

Two years later, his successor, F. H. Price, wrote as follows: "Application was made for the establishment of twelve others (schools), the erection of a schoolhouse and a sufficient attendance of scholars being in each case guaranteed by the people. One new school only has so far been sanctioned, and it is understood that a grant will not be available in aid of more than three of the rest...Excessive economy in this direction is to be deprecated, and it is a matter for regret that the efforts of the people to obtain education should meet with such scanty response".[10]

References

1. Governor's Address of 12 January 1870 in *Addresses delivered to the Legislative Council of Ceylon by Governors of the Colony*, 1860-1877, Colombo, 1877 p. 191.
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3. *Loc. cit.*
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CHAPTER 37

STATISTICS OF EDUCATION (1869 - 1900)

1. Table 1 shows the growth of grant-in-aid English schools. Beginning with 37 schools in 1871, the number increased to 142 in 1900. The Church of England got ahead of the other Christian denominations during the period and had the largest number of grant-in-aid English schools by 1900. Altogether, the Christians who constituted only 9 percent of the population had 80 percent of the schools under their management.

2. Table 2 shows the vicissitudes undergone by the Anglo-vernacular schools. They increased in number during the first decade of the period under review as a half-way measure towards meeting the demand for English education. The financial crisis of the 1880's settled their fate, and the number of schools came down from 82 in 1880 to 16 in 1890 and remained at that level.

3. The expansion in the provision of vernacular education, following upon the Morgan Committee recommendations, is shown in Table 3. Vernacular schools recorded an increase of over 900 between 1871 and 1900. The Roman Catholics, among all religious groups, showed the greatest gains during the period.

4. The slow expansion of the government school system in comparison with the system of grant-in-aid schools is shown in Table 4. It reflects the readiness of the government to withdraw from education in the face of state aided private enterprise, which had the great advantage of economy from the point of view of the government.

Table 1

Grant-in-aid English Schools, 1871 - 1900

	1871	1875	1880	1885	1890	1895	1900
American Mission ..		1	4	14	5	5	5
Baptist Mission ..		1		1	1		
Buddhist ..					1	10	12
Church of England ..	9	19	22	26	39	40	46
Local Board ..				1	1		
Mohammedan ..						1	2
Presbyterian ..	5					2	2
Private* ..		2	6	7	6	9	14
Roman Catholic ..	12	21	27	24	27	25	34
Wesleyan Mission ..	11	12	14	15	21	21	27
	37	56	73	88	101	113	142

* *Private and Saivite*

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Table 2

Grant-in-aid Anglo-vernacular Schools, 1871 - 1900

	1871	1875	1880	1885	1890	1895	1900
American Mission ..	2	13	11	9	2	2	
Baptist Mission ..	2	7	9	5	1	1	1
Buddhist ..							1
Church of England..	9	37	42	19	5	5	5
Private ..	5	3	1	5			
Roman Catholic ..	3	3	2	2	1	1	1
Wesleyan Mission ..	19	22	17	15	7	8	8
	40	85	82	55	16	17	16

Table 3

Grant-in-aid Vernacular Schools, 1871 - 1900

	1871	1875	1880	1885	1890	1895	1900
American Mission ..	56	89	113	113	127	126	124
Baptist Mission ..	9	29	26	27	40	28	24
Buddhist ..			4	8	17	44	129
Church of England..	76	134	170	168	243	271	267
Mohammedan ..						3	2
Presbyterian ..	2	2	2				
Private ..	14	26	17	18*	26*	41*	51*
Roman Catholic ..	34	117	173	174	197	231	301
Wesleyan Mission ..	46	88	163	168	217	222	272
	237	485	668	676	867	966	1170

* *Private and Saivite*

Table 4

Number of Schools—Government and Aided: (1869 - 1900)

Year	Government Schools	Aided Schools
1869	120	21
1870	156	229
1875	276	654
1880	369	833
1885	417	866
1890	436	984
1895	477	1,096
1900	500	1,328

Note

The Tables are based on the Administration Reports of the Director of Public Instruction, 1869-1900

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CHAPTER 38

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REVIEW OF EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

(1869 - 1900)

1. During the period under review, the main features of the policy of the government in the field of education were as indicated below. They were largely based on the Morgan recommendations (see chapter 25).

(i) A commitment to the promotion of education by extending "the operations of government in the direction of establishing village schools in localities as yet unprovided with the means of instructions".[1] Wherever and whenever possible, private enterprise which in the context of the time meant missionary enterprise was to be encouraged through grants-in-aid. The government would step in with a school, in the absence of a mission school, and would withdraw its own schools any time that educational needs could be met by mission schools.

(ii) A contraction of "its operations in respect of English schools in the town districts," using its funds to give grants-in-aid in support of private enterprise rather than to maintain schools of its own.[2] However, such "English schools of the higher class" which the government continued to maintain would be increased in efficiency and rendered "as nearly self-supporting as circumstances will permit," an increased rate of fees being levied from the pupils.[3]

(iii) A total absence of interference with the religious instruction provided in grant aided schools, thereby giving religious bodies a completely free hand in respect of the religious instruction of pupils of the same religion as the management or of pupils of an unlike religion.

2. In view of the policy of the government, it is to be expected that there would have been a great expansion of the grant-in-aid scheme. Three restrictions on religious instruction, namely that such instruction

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should be confined to the first hour of the day, limited to undenominational Christian instruction such as Bible reading, with provision for exemption from such instruction if parents objected, prevented the missions during the three decades prior to 1869 from entering into the grant-in-aid scheme on a large scale. The removal of these restrictions from 1869 made missions compete with one another to establish grant-in-aid schools.

3. The fact that grants were not given to aided schools for religious instruction in them could scarcely be considered an application of the principle that state aid should not be given for proselytism in schools. On the contrary, grants for secular instruction provided adequate financial support for the school as an institution, and with institutional support assured the school went on to proselytize as much as it could. In effect, therefore, the state promoted missionary education and subsidized proselytism by offering grants for secular subjects and leaving the schools uncontrolled with respect to religious instruction. It is only a conscience clause that could have offered some protection against proselytism in schools earning grant for secular instruction, but the government did not dare to introduce a conscience clause as the missions threatened to walk-out of the grant-in-aid scheme if such a clause were introduced. A handful of mission schools constituted an exception. They were former government schools and in order both to persuade the government to hand them over and to allay the fears of non-Christians, the missions voluntarily undertook to act in regard to them as if a conscience clause operated.

4. While the competition for the establishment of schools was largely among Christian denominations during the period 1832-1870, the period under review was characterized by the entry of new protagonists, namely the Buddhists and the Hindus. Their struggle was primarily against the Protestant organizations that had established themselves firmly in the field of education with state patronage and were resisting instrusion into the field by others. The Roman Catholics were only partially established, and found it convenient to support the Buddhists and Hindus, as they stood to gain by making common cause against the Protestants. In theory, non-Christian organizations could make use of the grant-in-aid scheme as much as mission schools. In practice, the obstacles placed before non-Christian schools were many and formidable. They were regarded as rival schools for the simple

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reason that missionaries had got ahead in the field as the result of state patronage as well as superior organization. The interests of previously established mission schools were safeguarded by the introduction of new rules, such as the distance rule. Free competition was not allowed, as such competition might have led to a fall in attendance in the mission schools (if non-Christians began to patronize new schools established by their own religious organizations) and a consequent disqualification from aid. At all costs the demise of mission schools had to be prevented by state intervention. The lack of sympathy on the part of British officials, chiefly the Governor and the Director of Public Instruction who occupied key roles in making decisions about educational matters, with the movement on the part of the Buddhists and Hindus to establish schools was not entirely owed to their personal identification with Christian interests. While identity of religious interests was a factor, the officials could not have been entirely insensitive to the fact that the educational movement of the indigenous religious groups unmistakably had nationalist overtones that were not a good augury for the undisturbed continuation of British rule in Ceylon, if the movement was allowed to succeed and gather momentum.

5. Two factors led to increased attention being paid to secular instruction in mission schools. The first was that grants were paid for passes in secular instruction, and so mission schools had to aim at good results in the secular subjects, with a consequent diminution of interest in the religious purpose of missionary education. The second was that the competition among schools, whether it was the competition of mission schools among themselves or vis-a-vis other schools (government and non-Christian) led to a certain amount of concentration on the achievement of high standards in secular subjects with second place given to the religious purpose. Thus, while the missions benefited from the liberal grants-in-aid scheme which they embraced with great earnestness, up to a point it was very much like the kiss of death for the peril that it brought to the missionary purpose. In the sense that the competition in its most acute form was among Christian missionary groups, there was the paradoxical situation that their parallel and rival efforts led to a weakening rather than a strengthening of missionary purposes and the possibilities of conversion. This is not to say that proselytism did not take place. Proselytism did take place but not all the energy of the missionary or mission teacher was put at the service of the missionary purpose as some of it was consumed by the secular purposes to which the schools had become committed.

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6. Competition among mission schools had both quantitative and qualitative dimensions. In so far as vernacular education was concerned, quantity (the number of schools) was more important than quality. One reason for this was that vernacular education was never more than elementary and there could hardly be any question of excellence. It was different with the English schools. The reputation of the mission school and its capacity to win in the competition over its rivals depended on the excellence of the instruction. Thus, the English high schools of the missions aimed at achieving the standards of the Grammar schools in England, and competed with one another in doing so. The result was that the best students from the English high schools in Ceylon could hold their own with the best students from schools in Britain. It is of interest in this connection also to note that mission schools in their competition among themselves took great pains to recruit from England and other European countries teachers who had distinguished themselves in universities in their own countries. Most of them brought with them to Ceylon not only high standards of scholarship but also excellence of character and devotion to work, and left their stamp on the Ceylonese students whom they taught. Many schools had such men as Principals, and their names are revered even today in Ceylon. When the Buddhists started schools, they, too, imported Principals and teachers who have left their mark. Competition among rival organizations in the provision of education was not therefore without compensatory features of a most welcome nature. To put these great blessings in their correct perspective, it is necessary to point out that a quality English education was available by and large only to a small number of students, the economically and socially privileged. A few mission schools provided an apology for English education, and everyone recognized them as such, while the government was keen to discourage them and convert them into vernacular schools. The quality of the education provided to the large number of children who received a vernacular education was nobody's concern, the underlying religious and social philosophy being that only to them that have more shall be given.

7. While the grant-in-aid scheme stimulated the expansion of education in general, it specially stimulated the provision of education for groups which were relatively disadvantaged, for example females and young people in areas which had no facilities for education. This resulted from the fact that the intense competition among the missions

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made them reach out to groups which had not been adequately reached earlier. The first mission to establish a girls' school in an area which had only a boys' school or to establish a school in an area in which there was no school at all undoubtedly derived a great advantage for evangelical purposes, if certain prejudices of the people, such as their dislike of mission schools, could be overcome. The missions did much to spread education especially in the Kandyan areas although in some locations they met with determined opposition that made them withdraw. To be sure, the quality of the education provided for disadvantaged groups was marginal, but to provide any education at all was nevertheless a step in the right direction.

8. On the debit side, it has to be recognized that the failure of the scheme to make English education the responsibility of local government bodies was largely due to the activities of missionary bodies which saw in them a rival to the privileges they enjoyed. The *coup de grace* was delivered by the simple device of deleting from the proposed bill the clause providing for the levy of a rate for education, without which local government bodies did not have financial resources to take responsibility for education. Missionary ends were safeguarded through the legislature in this instance as in several others.

9. The policy of the government was to withdraw from English education (with the single exception of the Colombo Academy, later known as Royal College) and leave it to others, namely the missionaries and local government bodies. In fact, as the local government bodies declined to take over responsibility, English education became the preserve of grant-in-aid schools. In regard to the provision of English education there was a congruence of interests among the government, the people and the missions up to a point. It was important for the government that there should be a sufficient number of English educated persons for service under the government as well as in the agricultural and commercial sectors which, though privately owned, were an essential part of the economy of the country. English was important to the people as it was seen as a source of employment and social mobility for some. English was important for the missionaries as they could provide it in their schools and attract children by this means. But beyond a certain point, namely when the number of the English educated was in excess of employment needs, the congruence of interests came to an end in so far as the government was

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concerned. The government tried hard to discourage English education from spreading too far through the medium of grant-in-aid schools, as the extention of English created demands for employment. In the 1870's, Assistant Government Agents complained in their district reports about English educated youth from rural areas who abandoned "ancient paddy fields" to seek "some small government post the demand for which just now is far in excess of the supply."[4] The government stood for the disappearance of weak English schools, reduced grants to English schools to the same level as for vernacular schools, objected to reductions in fees introduced by the missions for the English schools, and in short carried out a number of steps to prevent English education from spreading too widely. Mixed or Anglo-vernacular schools were encouraged up to a point to make the weaker English schools take on the character of Anglo-vernacular schools with a diminution in the attention paid to English; later Anglo-vernacular schools were discouraged so that they could become vernacular schools. In short, the government's policy was to assist a few good English schools (English high schools were at one time encouraged with liberal grants) run by the missions (later by others as well), and to discourage a wider diffusion of English education, so that English education would be the preserve of the wealthier socio-economic classes. The government did indeed succeed in restricting English education, but not as much as it would have liked. More received an English education than the government had use for, much to the undisguised embarrassment of the government. It is a matter for conjecture whether apart from the high cost of English education and the saturation in the employment market for the English educated, the fact that some among the English educated were becoming increasingly vocal politically was also a consideration in the minds of British officials in their endeavour to restrict English education.

10. As pointed out in an earlier paragraph, the declared policy of the government during the period under review was to promote vernacular education by encouraging voluntary effort through grants-in-aid. The role of the government was never to duplicate or supplant missionary effort. If missionary schools were already there the government would aid them and not establish schools, and if a mission was anxious to establish a school in an area already served by a government school the government was prepared to withdraw its own school and aid the mission school. The religious persuasions of the students were

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not of any importance. Requests by parents to the government to establish schools on the ground that for considerations of religion their children could not be sent to the existing aided schools were ignored on the ground that the government was concerned only with secular instruction.

11. Vernacular education expanded at a slow pace, the funds provided by the government for education in general being far from adequate even when the country was doing well financially. In times of economic crisis, education was the first casualty and a much sought after area of retrenchment.

12. More than one Director of Public Instruction who functioned during the period under review expressed concern about the lack of finances from the government for the promotion of education. In order to find money for the expansion of vernacular education, one of the Directors, H. W. Green, supported the suggestion made some time earlier by the Buddhist Temporalities Commission and the Retrenchment Commission for utilizing the funds of Buddhist temples for education, and explored the reactions of the population to the idea of financial aid to temple schools for secular instruction.[5] The idea was not welcomed by Buddhist monks as it was seen as disturbing the *status quo*, and it was strongly opposed by Christian missions which felt that a system of schools to rival theirs might develop.

13. School attendance could not be enforced for several reasons. There was a shortage of schools in many areas. Even where there were schools, school places were not available to accommodate the increased numbers who had to be provided for, if there were compulsion. Furthermore, in the absence of a conscience clause it would have been a serious infringement of religious freedom to enforce compulsion.

14. In so far as religious instruction was concerned, grant-in-aid schools were completely free to enforce any kind of religious instruction they liked. The state was not prepared to intervene to protect the conscience of the child, if he was being forced to follow lessons in a religion other than his own. In the case of government schools, for a part of the period under review they taught nothing other than non-denominational Christianity (e.g. the Bible), and parents who disapproved of the instruction were entitled to have their children

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exempted. In practice, as many of the heads of schools and the teachers were Christians, it was a rash parent who would have dared to withdraw his child and incur the displeasure of the teachers. It is recorded that Olcott campaigned against the Christian character of government schools.[6] It is also recorded that as a concession to Buddhists, the government decided in 1893 that in village schools where the parents were Buddhists the teacher should be permitted to teach the Buddhist catechism.[7] By the end of the period under review, however, the government had come round to the position that religious instruction should not be provided in government schools.

15. The period under review provides an interesting example of the way in which the mechanism of grants-in-aid was utilized by the person who held the reins, namely the Director of Public Instruction, to influence and even control the direction of educational change in Ceylon. Grants were such a boon to the Christian missionary bodies as well as to the non-Christian organisations providing education that the schools were quite dependent upon grants and could hardly survive without them. The Director capitalized on this. To promote English education, he paid high grants and when he thought the provision more than adequate he would reduce grants. To teach certain subjects at certain levels he would offer grants, and to discourage the teaching of a certain subject at a certain level he would remove the subject from the list of subjects recognized for grants. To discourage the opening of new schools, he would impose conditions regarding eligibility for registration. For example, he would insist that it should have functioned for a certain length of time, that it should have staff with certain qualifications, that it should have a certain average attendance, and that it should not be located within a certain distance of existing schools. His attitude was autocratic, and as long as the Governor was behind him, he could do almost anything he liked. It was futile to argue that the rules for determining registration or the quantum of grant were elements in a binding contract between the Director and the managers of schools and that there should be no *ex parte* variation of rules. In sum, by virtue of the great advantage of holding the purse strings, the so-called private sector in education came under the control of a government official, the Director, to the extent that the private sector depended on grants-in-aid.

16. The private sector in education, whether it received grants-in-aid or was completely independent of aid, was subject to another

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kind of control, namely public examinations. The management of a school could hardly ignore the importance of any public examination that had prestige attached to it. The parents would insist that their children should be sent up for such examinations, and the efficiency of a school would be judged by its examination successes.

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SECTION V

1900 - 1920

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CHAPTER 39

THE POLITICAL AND SOCIAL BACKGROUND
(1900 - 1920)

1. In as much as the Executive and Legislative Councils consisted exclusively of government officials, and unofficial members nominated by the Governor, the public of Ceylon did not have a voice in the government of the country. Demands were made for constitutional reforms and for an acceptance of the principle of election of representatives by the people instead of nomination by the governor. Among those who spear-headed the agitation were several Ceylonese of undisputed intellectual excellence, a factor which provided an answer to the argument that the Ceylonese did not have the capacity to govern themselves. There was, for example, James Peiris who as a student at the University of Cambridge achieved the highest distinction open to an undergraduate in the intellectual field by gaining first classes in the two parts of the Tripos Examination, and at the same time achieved the highest honour possible in the life of the student community by becoming President of the Cambridge Union, which was the chief forum of discussion of public issues in the University.

2. Among other academically distinguished persons who took a leading part in the political movement were H. J. C. Pereira, E. W. Perera, D. B. Jayatilaka, P. Ramanathan and P. Arunachalam to name a few.

3. In 1907, Peiris who had entered the field of politics after his return from England addressed a memorial to the British government. Pointing out that, during the seventy-five years the Legislative Council had been in existence, the only constitutional change had been to provide for the nomination of two unofficial members to represent the Kandyan Sinhalese and Mohammedan communities, Peiris argued for an acceptance of the principle of electing members to the Council. The Ceylon National Association, which had two distinguished lawyers as the President and the Secretary, also submitted a memorandum asking for a Legislative Council with an equal number of official members and unofficial members, the latter being elected to represent the nine provinces of Ceylon and certain special interests. Governor Mc-Callum threw cold water on the demand for constitutional reforms,

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in spite of the fact that several British colonies had legislatures with all or some of their members elected, pointing out that the agitation came from an English educated elite and that the vast majority of the population did not have the ability "wisely or usefully to exercise the power to elect persons to represent them in the Legislative Council, nor have they ever evinced any desire to possess or exercise this privilege."[1]

4. It is of interest to note how, when some among the cultural progeny of the British themselves, namely the English educated Ceylonese, made inconvenient demands for constitutional reforms to transfer more responsibility to the people of Ceylon, British officials spoke somewhat contemptuously of them. To quote Governor McCallum from a dispatch by him to the Secretary of State:

> "I would further invite your Lordship's attention to the fact that all these memorials emanate, not from the 'people of Ceylon', as is claimed by the memorialists, but from certain well-defined classes of the native population—classes which, moreover, represent a very small minority of the whole. I refer to those of the natives of Ceylon who have assimilated an education of a purely Western, as opposed to Oriental type, and who are to be regarded not as representative Ceylonese, but as a product of the European administration of Ceylon on lines approved by British tradition."[2]

5. There was a modicum of truth in this. Witness the attitudes of some of them to vernacular education. E. W. Perera, a leading light of the movement for constitutional reforms expressed the following opinion in a memorandum to the Education Committee of 1912: "In my opinion, the vernacular languages are of no value in the education of the classes which attend English schools, elementary and secondary, I think it will be a decided disadvantage for Ceylonese boys to be taught the vernacular in such schools."[3] Or, the opposition of the Ceylon National Congress, even as late as 1927, to the idea of universal franchise when the Congress expressed the view that the franchise should be restricted to those earning above a certain minimum income per month. However, whatever failings the national spokesmen had in some respects, they were certainly more entitled to speak for the masses than British officials and "their cronies—the native chiefs."[4]

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6. When McCallum described the cultural progeny of the British in the above mentioned terms, he was engaging in much more than an exercise in social history. He was building up a case against constitutional reforms on the ground that he and his officials, both British and local, knew the needs and feelings of the masses much more than the English educated local elite did.

7. In spite of Governor McCallum's opposition, however, the Secretary of State sent instructions in 1910 for a modest change in the composition of the Legislative Council. There were to be eleven official members and ten unofficial members. In regard to the unofficial members, partial recognition was given for the first time to the principle of election by a provision to the effect that four members to represent respectively the urban Europeans, the rural Europeans, the Ceylonese, and the Burghers should be selected. Ceylon incidentally became the first British colony in which there was elected non-European representation.[5] The remaining six unofficial members were to be nominated by the Governor to represent the following: Kandyan Sinhalese (1), Low Country Sinhalese (2), Tamils (2), Muhammadans (1). The seat for the elected Ceylonese came to be referred to as the 'educated Ceylonese' seat. According to Ordinance No. 13 of 1910 which was promulgated to regulate the election of members to the Legislative Council, the minimum educational qualification required of a voter for the educated Ceylonese electorate was a pass at the Senior or Junior Cambridge Local Examination. The first member elected to represent the 'educated Ceylonese' was a Tamil, and showed that the Sinhalese were capable of rising above considerations of communalism, first elevated to a matter of principle by the Governor in his nominations of the three native members.

8. In so far as the nomination of members was concerned, the British governors nominated, with a few exceptions, persons who appeared to be compliant fools or sycophants, and unashamedly took pride in describing them in such terms in confidential minutes or dispatches. For example, the great virtue of one nominated member was that he was a "silly old ass", and of another that "he can't put two words together and was therefore likely to give no trouble..to the government."[6]

9. The problems of a plural society manifested themselves in dramatic fashion in the religious riots of 1915 between Buddhists and

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Muslims. A local incident trivial in itself was exaggerated by the voice of rumour and led to one ugly incident after another of violence between the two religious groups in the areas to which the rumours spread. The civil administration of the British government for its part abdicated its authority to a trigger happy military which indulged in a shooting spree quite out of proportion to the needs of the situation. Moreover, quite respectable Sinhalese leaders associated with nationalist movements were rounded up and imprisoned, though they could not in any way be connected with the outbursts of mob violence.

> "Several prominent and highly respectable citizens, including the first future Prime Minister of Ceylon, Mr. D. S. Senanayake, were arrested and subjected to various indignities."[7]

10. After the riots were quelled, complaints in Ceylon and in England about the excessive use of force by the military led to the recall of Governor Chalmers and to the appointment of a new Governor. A Royal Commission of Inquiry was also appointed. The Commission reported, inter alia, that "in each of the cases that have been under investigation the act of shooting cannot be justified on the ground of the existence of martial law—in short, it had no legal justification."[8] The memory of martial law was, however, quite traumatic and caused a slowing down of the momentum of the agitation for constitutional reforms.

11. The changes introduced in the Legislative Council in 1910 were much less than had been demanded, but the people had to be satisfied with them for the time being. Agitation continued, however, for an elected legislature and a constitution that offered self government. With the formation of the Ceylon National Congress in 1919, the Congress began to play a leading role in the movement for self-government. The British government responded to demands for constitutional reforms by agreeing to reconstitute the Legislative Council so that it would have fourteen official members and twenty four unofficial members. The Governor was to be the president. In order to make sure that the official view would always prevail, there was a provision that in the case of measures deemed by the Governor to be of paramount importance to the public interest, they could be carried out by the votes of the official members. The Governor was

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also empowered to stop proceedings in the Council in relation to measures which, in his view, affected the safety of the country. The reforms did not go far enough, and although the first reactions were to boycott the new constitution, public opinion gradually came round to giving it a trial.

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CHAPTER 40

ISSUES IN ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

(1900 - 1906)

1. Governor Ridgeway, in his address to the Legislative Council on 18 October 1900, pointed out that the vote for education had increased from Rs. 474,387 in 1890 to Rs. 869,837 in 1900, and was estimated to amount to Rs. 906,297 in 1901. He went on to say:

> "The Secretary of State during the last year has more than once drawn my attention to this increasing expenditure, and the question is one which must sooner or later be taken up in earnest. To check, or even not to encourage, the growth of Education would indeed be a shortsighted policy, unworthy of a civilized Government. On the other hand, we cannot continue indefinitely to increase an expenditure which in less prosperous days we may be unable to continue. The solution of the problem is to be found in inducing localities to contribute to the cause of Education within their limits, and I propose that this session you should empower Municipalities, Local Boards and even Village Committees, to levy a rate or cess for Educational, Medical and other local requirements."[1]

2. The creation of Local Education Authorities to take responsibility for education in England was very much in the air at this time, though legislation was promulgated only in 1902. Furthermore, the British government had already transferred to local government authorities in certain parts of India the responsibility for elementary education.

3. Governor Ridgeway sent an Inspector of Schools of the Department of Public Instruction to Madras early in 1901 to study the working of the educational system there. The Inspector's report was to the effect that in the Madras Presidency state funds for education were supplemented by financial contributions that Municipal and District Boards were compelled to make under the provisions of the legislation that regulated their working.[2]

4. A few months later, the Governor appointed a committee of three Civil Servants (F. R. Ellis, H. Wace and B. W. Ievers) to report

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on this issue. The main recommendations of the Ellis Committee were as follows:[3]

1. The government should take steps to compel parents to give their children a good vernacular education.

2. A proportion of the cost should be borne by the locality.

3. The general conditions with regard to property in the island are such that the assessment and recovery of a rate on property are not in the present circumstances possible.

4. For educational purposes, the island should be divided into areas, each of which should, as a rule, correspond with the area under a Village Committee. Each area should be compelled to provide for its own education, half the cost being met from general revenue, and half from a local fund.

5. The local fund should consist of fixed sums paid by individuals, the population being divided into three classes; the rich, the moderately well off, and the poor.

6. The religious difficulty is to be got over by scheduling religious instruction after 9 a.m.

7. Grants in vernacular schools should be increased, those in English schools should be lowered.

8. Areas in which adequate provision is made without this system should be excluded from its operation, and the hope is expressed that this will as a rule be done, and that the areas concerned will prefer to meet the cost of education, by paying school fees rather than tax themselves in the manner prescribed.

5. While in this way the government was exploring the possibility of reducing the expenditure of the central government on education by transferring a part or the whole of the educational burden to local government bodies and/or parents, the shortage of educational provision was highlighted in dramatic fashion by P. Arunachalam,

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Superintendent of Census, in his report on the census of 1901. Pointing out that only about one quarter of the children of school age were in school, Arunachalam roundly criticized the rate at which educational facilities had been expanded by the Department of Public Instruction. "There is undoubtedly much headway to be made in elementary education and this demands urgent attention."[4] As if to remind Britain of her responsibilities in this regard, Arunachalam quoted from a speech made by Joseph Chamberlain only a year previously.

> "For my own part, I do not grudge one penny of the money which has been spent upon primary education. I have always regarded it as a national duty to bring to every child in the country tools wherewith he may earn his way in life."[5]

The Director of Public Instruction quoted statistics to show that Arunachalam's estimate of the number of children of school age in school was too low, and that it was nearer two fifths than a quarter. However, he agreed that the position regarding education was "a disgrace" to the country.[6] The Census Report also pointed out that over 60 per cent of the men in the prisons were illiterate. Governor Ridgeway himself thought that there would be no great reduction in the crime rate until "under the ameliorating influence of education and discipline, a new generation arises in which the savage instincts of revenge and retaliation have not the complete mastery of reason and humanity."[7] Apart from the inadequacy of the absolute number of children receiving education, the Census Report also drew attention to a severely deprived caste group, namely the *rodiyas* who were almost completely denied educational facilities.

6. The Census Report triggered off a certain amount of discussion in the Parliament in England on the state of education in Ceylon. A Member of Parliament by the name of C. E. Schwann was the most outspoken critic of the government in this regard, and he urged the expansion of educational facilities for the general population as well as for the children of estate coolies.[8] He was supported by several other Members of Parliament, and for a period of three or four years education in Ceylon came up for discussion from time to time.

7. There emerged also a local pressure group, whose agitation for the expansion of education was inspired partly by the example of

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Japan, an eastern nation, which defeated the Russians, a western nation, in war. Japan's victory was attributed to two educational developments, namely the wide expansion of education and the use of Japanese as the medium of instruction. The formation of the Ceylon Social Reform Society brought under one umbrella several of those who had been agitating in their own way, and the Society's journal *The Ceylon National Review* applied itself assiduously to highlight issues of national importance such as education. It sought inspiration from events and statements outside Ceylon to support the stand it took. Apart from pointing out the lessons of the Russo-Japanese war, it often referred to contemporary developments in nationalist thinking in India, including occasionally citations from British administrators themselves when they helped to fortify its point of view. For example, in regard to the use of the vernacular in education, the journal quoted as follows from the farewell speech made by Lord Curzon when he was giving up the office of Viceroy of India: "By all means let English be taught to those who are qualified to learn it, but let it rest upon a solid foundation of the indigenous languages, for no people will ever use another tongue with advantage that cannot use its own with ease."[9]

8. Elementary education was the commonly shared focus of concern among these several groups, although a few of them showed an interest in secondary or higher education as well. In regard to elementary education, the important issues were as follows:

1. the expansion of facilities for providing vernacular education to the population in general and especially to deprived or disadvantaged groups; and

2. the introduction of measures to make education compulsory;

in so far as the major pressure groups, local or foreign, were concerned. The government, however, had an additional issue on its hands, namely the financing of education and the feasibility of making local bodies and/or parents share a part of the financial burden.

9. The device used by the government to settle these issues was to appoint Royal Commissions. In 1904, one Commission was appointed to report on the education of the *rodiyas* of Ceylon, and a

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second Commission to report on the education of the children of estate coolies. The issue of finance was referred to the Wace Commission appointed in 1905. The Wace Commission quite naturally found itself unable to deliberate on finance without considering related problems such as compulsory education, denominationalism in education, a conscience clause etc. Chapter 41 is devoted to a discussion of the recommendations of the Wace Commission.

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CHAPTER 41

THE WACE COMMISSION, 1905

1. The recommendations of the Ellis Committee appointed in 1901 to report on a proposal to relieve the general revenue of a part of the cost of education have been discussed in chapter 40 paragraph 4. In 1903, a Sub-Committee of the Incidence of Taxation Commission was appointed to report to the Commission further on this subject. The Sub-Committee made a recommendation that the proposals of the Ellis Committee should be given a trial in a limited area.

2. Before taking any action on the above recommendations, the government considered it desirable that a Commission, representative of both the Department of Public Instruction and the managers of schools, should be appointed to go into the matter carefully. A Commission of five members was therefore appointed with Herbert Wace as the Chairman. The terms of reference of the Commission were

> "to inquire into and report on the Education Question with a view to proposing practical steps to give effect to the suggestion contained in the report of the Committee appointed in 1901 to advise on the general question of imposing a cess for educational, medical and local requirements."[1]

3. The Commission was directed to report on the following points also: the education of the children of Tamil coolies employed on estates, the question whether the system provided by the Draft Ordinance for the establishment of Municipal schools should be extended to *Gansabhawas*, and the question whether the duty of providing furniture in government schools should be transferred to *Gansabhawas*.

4. The Wace Commission noted that the policy of the government in the past had been to avoid intruding government schools into localities in which education was, or seemed likely to be, provided by aided schools, and that the government had carried out this policy to such a length that many places were left either quite unprovided for or very insufficiently provided for, owing to the unwillingness of the Department of Public Instruction to intrude into areas where aided schools were functioning.

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5. The Commission addressed itself in the main to three questions.

(a) Is it desirable that the male population as a whole should receive some elementary education?

(b) Should the attendance be made compulsory in places where schools exist?

(c) Should schools be established compulsorily in places where they do not exist?

6. The Commission was agreed about the desirability of providing both boys and girls with elementary education, and it was in relation to the extent of compulsion for each sex that the Commission drew a distinction between the sexes. The Commission noted the comment of the Director of Public Instruction regarding female education in his Administration Report for 1903: "It would be unwise at present to attempt to carry out any wholesale measure for compulsory female education. It is one of the things to which the Oriental mind requires to be habituated gradually."[2] The Commission expressed the view that it thought there were many parts of the island in which the attendance of girls at school might be compulsory when separate girls' schools (not mixed schools) were available. In other words, the Commission was in favour of introducing in the future an element of compulsion gradually to females as and when girls' schools became available. In the case of boys, the Commission thought that where the population was sufficiently dense, the provision of schools for boys should be made compulsory, as a prelude to the introduction of compulsory education for boys. The Commission was in favour of setting up a local organization to establish the necessary schools. The Commission also recognized that there were some parts of the island in which the population was so sparsely distributed that it was not immediately possible to establish schools in them.

7. In regard to compulsory attendance, the Commission noted that in village committee areas attendance at government schools could be enforced by prosecution before Village Tribunals which had the power of inflicting small fines. The powers of the Village Communities and Village Tribunals were defined in this regard by Ordinance

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24 of 1889 and by the rules made by Village Committees under this Ordinance. There was no machinery for enforcing attendance at aided schools in village committee areas, as the propriety of enforcing a child to attend a school belonging to a religious denomination other than his own was a controversial issue, on which firm opinions were expressed not only by Buddhists and Hindus but by the Roman Catholics as well. The position of the Roman Catholics was, for example, set out as follows in the Wace Commission report.

"The introduction of a conscience clause will not remove every objection to compulsory attendance. We have received a strong protest from His Excellency the Papal Delegate, who while approving of legal measures for enforcing the attendance of children at schools of their own denomination, objects to such a compulsion when children are forced to attend schools under another denominational management. In localities where the educational wants are met by denominational schools it may happen that the authorities of one denomination are on conscientious grounds reluctant to allow their children to attend schools under another denominational management; and yet the number of children may be so small that the establishment of a separate school is impossible. In such cases the proper authorities of any religious body should be allowed to make their objection known to the Director of Public Instruction, who should grant exemption from attendance at the school to which exception is taken."[3]

8. This situation led the Wace Commission to come to grips with the question of a conscience clause. The Commission issued a questionnaire in which one of the questions related to a conscience clause. The response of the Bishop of Colombo was as follows:

"..While wishing that this could be left to the discretion of Managers of Grant-in-aid schools, I perceive that in any comprehensive scheme of general elementary education it would be difficult to compel children to attend school, without requiring a conscience clause in Aided schools, save at the expense of partially duplicating schools in a given area. If it is proposed to introduce a conscience clause it should be such that under it—

1. In schools where religious instruction is given a definite period should be assigned for it in the school time table;

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2. Children other than those of the denomination to which the school belongs may be withdrawn by their parents or guardians from the religious instruction;

3. Pupils who are thus withdrawn shall be employed during that period in such other way as the teacher may direct."[4]

A division in the Church of England was revealed when in contrast to the Bishop's view, the Rev. A. E. Dibben, Secretary of the Church Missionary Society for Ceylon, expressed the view that the majority of the Church Missionary Society missionaries were opposed to the inclusion of a conscience clause. The Rev. J. Hanan of the Church Missionary Society, Jaffna also stated that he would refuse to be a manager if attendance at religious lessons was made optional.

9. The American Mission was strongly for a conscience clause. The Rev. J. H. Dickson stated as follows:

"I heartily approve the introduction of a conscience clause in every school. So long as Government maintains the grant-in-aid system, paid for in large part by money raised from the people who are opposed to Christianity, it is eternal righteousness that they should not have an alien religion forced on their children against their will..the whole grant-in-aid system is an unmitigated nuisance and a great waste of money without adequate return. The Government is only playing at education under the grant-in-aid system, and we shall never have thorough-going steady progress until Government takes absolute charge of the education of the children of the island. Missionary bodies did, I believe, in the earlier days serve a useful end in assisting Government, but that time has quite gone by now. At present in Jaffna rival schools are cutting each other to pieces, and efficient, scientific education is impossible. We need in Jaffna fewer schools with more efficiency both of staff and equipment."[5]

The Rev. G. G. Brown of the American Mission expressed the following view:

"If school attendance is made compulsory the only power that can compel is the Government; and if the government compels, that

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means that the grant-in-aid system must be given up, and that the government must take full charge of all education— 'a consummation devoutly to be wished'. If the grant-in-aid system continues and school attendance is made compulsory, the only way to protect that part of the community which objects to religious teaching..is to enforce the conscience clause strictly."[6]

Quakers were opposed to a conscience clause, while the Roman Catholics, the Buddhists and the Hindus were in favour. The Standing Committee of the Wesleyan Mission was in favour of observing a conscience clause voluntarily, but said that it would object to the inclusion of a conscience clause in the Code. It went on, however, to say, "Any system of compulsory attendance should be secular and carried out by the State."

10. Having considered these views, the Commission concluded as follows:

"Denominational schools in Ceylon have hitherto received grants without being obliged to carry out any conscience clause. In order to understand the position it is necessary to remember the figures.. with regard to the distribution of religions. The schools which are under Christian management fall roughly into two classes; those which are Roman Catholic and those which are not. In the Roman Catholic schools it is generally the case that a majority of the children —often a large majority—are Roman Catholics. In the other Christian schools it is generally the case that a large majority of the children are not Christians at all; in fact, cases are not unknown in which every child in a school under Christian management is either a Buddhist or a Sivite. The Roman Catholic schools are the only considerable body of Christian schools of which the main object is to provide an education for children of their own denomination. The main object of the other schools under Christian management is to convert to Christianity the non-Christian children attending them. There is something anomalous in a system under which funds raised by taxation are used to support a movement for changing the religion of those taxed. It owes its existence to the willingness of missionaries to act as pioneers of education at a time when there was no other means of providing for the educational wants of the country, and we believe that all parties are grateful for what they have done. But even if education remains voluntary, we doubt if

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public opinion permanently allows the payment of grant, unless it is coupled with some guarantee that religious instruction shall not be given to those who disapprove of it. Such a guarantee must certainly form a part of any system under which attendance at schools is compulsorily enforced.

Care should be taken that the conscience clause which gives this guarantee should be drawn up in a form suited to the circumstances of the schools for which it is intended. It should not be assumed that a form which is generally approved in England is necessarily the best for Ceylon. There are many managers whose objections to a conscience clause would be removed if it contained no provision preventing them from insisting on religious instruction for children of the denomination to which the school belongs, and if those who are excused from religious instruction remain in school doing other work during the period assigned to it. In place of the regulation suggested by the Committee of 1901 we suggest a regulation to the effect that religious instruction should be given only during periods specified in the time table, that it should not be given to pupils of other denominations except with the consent of the parents obtained for that purpose by the teacher or Manager, and that pupils who do not take part in it should be given other work during the periods assigned to it, provided that if parents object to their being present in the room when the religious instruction is in progress, such work shall be given to them in some other part of the school premises.

We have collected the opinions of all the leading Managers of schools on the general question of introducing a conscience clause. All the non-Christian Managers are strongly in its favour; the Roman Catholics, the American Mission, and some of the Church of England clergy have no objection to it. The Baptists and the Society of Friends object to it. The Wesleyan Synod, which is responsible for the management of several large groups of schools, reply that they already carry out a conscience clause in practice, and that the attendance of scholars during the period set apart for religious instruction is voluntary in their schools, but that they are not prepared to accept a conscience clause in the code. We do not understand this attitude. The clergy of the Church Missionary Society, an important section of the Church of England,

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object to a conscience clause, and the two Managers responsible for their largest groups of schools say that its introduction will oblige them to close their schools. We hope that some of these objections will disappear if the regulation is introduced in the modern form in which we have recommended it. But it can hardly be expected that any step which introduces a restriction in place of complete liberty will be received without some objections.

The Wesleyan Synod, in a letter, while agreeing that compulsion is the only solution of the educational difficulty, considers that such a system must be purely secular, that there must be no teaching of any religion, that religious matters should be excluded from reading and other school books, that any system of compulsory education should be controlled and administered by the Government directly and not through the agency of private individuals and corporations. A similar view is stated in forcible terms by the Rev. J. H. Dickson and the Rev. G. G. Brown of the American Mission. The Synod states its opinions as if they were axioms; the Rev. J. H. Dickson bases his attitude on his experience of State Schools in the United States. We have given our best consideration to these views, but we can see no reason why they should be accepted as universally applicable. There are a large number of Aided Schools doing good work in Ceylon: the Managers of them are quite willing that they should form a part of a compulsory system. There seems to be no reason why this machinery should be broken up and an entirely new system introduced in its place."[7]

11. The Commission went on to consider the machinery for enforcing attendance. In so far as government schools were concerned, the Commission was of the view that the existing practice according to which the teacher was supplied by the headman with lists of children of school-going age should be continued. The teacher would bring defaulters to the notice of the headman, who, after warning parents and guardians, would take action to prosecute them before the Village Tribunal which had the power of imposing fines. In regard to aided schools the Commission distinguished two categories of schools, namely those providing education for all the inhabitants of a village or group of villages, and those which have to contend with other schools. Only schools of the first category will be provided by the headman with the list of children of school-going age, but other

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categories will be expected to report to the headman those who do not put in regular attendance.

12. In regard to the financing of education, the Commission agreed with the conclusion of the Committee of 1901 that a rate on property was not possible. The Committee had proposed a graduated cess, the population being divided for the purpose into three classes, namely the rich, the moderately well-off, and the poor. The Wace Commission did not recommend the adoption of this proposal. It thought that the proposal would throw an additional burden on the poor, and that it would give to Government Agents, whose duty it would be to divide the population into the three proposed classes, an invidious and almost impossible task. The Commission also expressed the view that the proposal "would lead to widespread discontent and possibly to resistance by the rural population."[8]

13. The Commission was not able to suggest any other means for increasing the revenue, from local areas, but it had suggestions to make about the use of the revenues that were already derived from such areas. The Commission noted that under the Village Communities Ordinance No. 24 of 1889, every village had to pay a Road Tax. It was in effect a poll tax for males between 18 years and 55 years of age. Two thirds of the tax went to the Central government for the upkeep of provincial roads and rest houses, and the remaining one third was spent on the upkeep and the extension of minor roads and works. The Commission suggested that, out of the Road Tax, one third should be spent as before on the upkeep and extension of minor roads and works, and that the remaining two thirds, after giving a small sum to the Central government for dispensaries, should be spent on education through the District Schools Committees that the Commission proposed. With this money, the District Schools Committee should provide furniture for government schools, make grants to Village Committees and other bodies in part payment of the cost of erection and extension of school buildings, and remit any balance money remaining to the government as a contribution to the cost of salaries and grants for schools situated in the province.

14. The Commission also recommended that a direct contribution from the villagers should be required when a new building for the village school or the extension of an old building was necessary.

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"It is already usual in some districts, when funds are required for new school buildings, for a special contribution..to be imposed and recovered by the Village Committee from the adult males residing within a given radius of the school."[9]

The Commission recommended making this a general procedure when new school buildings or extensions of existing school buildings were required, and suggested including a clause in the Village Committee Ordinance to legalize their recovery, if there was any doubt about its legality.

15. The Commission further suggested that the government should place a fund in the hands of each District Schools Committee to enable it to give assistance to Village Committees.

16. The Commission recommended the setting up of District Schools Committees and Divisional Schools Committees, constituted as follows:

Districts Schools Committee

Chairman : The Government Agent, or in his absence the Assistant Government Agent;

One Chief Headman of the district;

One representative chosen by Managers of Aided schools in the district;

One officer of the Department of Public Instruction;

Two members nominated by His Excellency the Governor.

Divisional Schools Committee

Chairman : The Chief Headman of the division;

One representative of each Village Committee in the division;

One or two members nominated by the Government Agent.

The first duty of each Divisional Schools Committee would be to collect data about the educational provision in the area under its jurisdiction. Where the educational facilities were provided, wholly or partly, by a denominational school,

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"the residents of the village should be called on to determine by a majority of votes of householders whether they are satisfied with such provision. If all or any of the villagers are dissatisfied, the cost of providing new schools will have to be borne by the villages which are dissatisfied. The rights of religious minorities must be protected by the insertion of a regulation in the Code for Aided Schools to the effect that any denominational school at which the attendance of children of that denomination satisfies the requirements of a C School shall be eligible in spite of an adverse decision of the Divisional Committee."[10]

The District Committee will review the proposals of the Divisional Committees. It will also make recommendations to the Director of Public Instruction on applications for registration of aided schools. It will then draw up a complete scheme for the education of all parts of the district, to be forwarded to the Director of Public Instruction for approval. The District Committee will also communicate with the Director of Public Instruction with regard to the provision which should be made in the estimates for the payment of salaries and grants.

17. The Wace Commission Report itself did not contain a summary of the recommendations of the Commission, but the following succinct summary was provided by Governor Blake in his Address to the Legislative Council on 2 July 1907.

"1. That it is desirable that the male population as a whole should receive some elementary education;

2. That in places where schools exist attendance should be made compulsory in aided schools as well as in Government schools;

3. That a conscience clause should be adopted as a guarantee that religious instruction is not given to those who disapprove of it;

4. That in all parts of the Island where the population is sufficiently dense, the establishment of schools for boys should be made compulsory, and that an improved local organization should be introduced for the purpose;

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5. That this organization should take the form of District Schools Committees and Divisional Committees;

6. That it is not possible at present to meet the cost by any local rate or cess;

7. That the payment of salaries in Government schools and grant-in-aid schools should continue to be met from general revenue;

8. That the local funds now devoted to the construction and maintenance of school buildings should be augmented by handing over to the District Schools Committee a portion of the tax now levied locally as road tax;

9. That as regards estates there should be no rigorous system of compulsory attendance, but that it should be made the duty of the planter that all cooly children, so far as is reasonably feasible, receive some instruction, that the arrangements made by the planter should be inspected by the Department of Public Instruction and that an ultimate power should be given to the Governor to provide instruction at the expense of any estate on which after clear warning no provision is made."[11]

The action taken by the government following upon the recommendations of the Wace Commission is considered in chapter 42 dealing with the Town Schools Ordinance of 1906 and the Rural Schools Ordinance of 1907.

References

1. *Sessional Paper* 28 *of* 1905, p. 1.
2. A. R. (D.P.I.), 1903.
3. *Sessional Paper* 28 *of* 1905, p. 4.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 24.
5. *Ibid.*, p 27.
6. *Loc. cit.*
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 4, 5.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 6.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 7.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 8.
11. *Hansard* (LC), 2 July 1907.

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CHAPTER 42

THE ORDINANCES OF 1906 AND 1907

1. Ordinance No. 5 of 1906 was described as an ordinance to provide for compulsory education in Municipal and Local Board Towns and in Towns under the operation of the Small Towns Sanitary Ordinance, 1892; Ordinance No. 8 of 1907 was described as an ordinance to make provision in rural and planting districts for the education of children in the vernacular languages. The former was known by the short title "Town Schools Ordinance" and the latter by the short title "Rural Schools Ordinance."

The Town Schools Ordinance

2. Before the Wace Commission (chapter 41) was appointed, the government had under consideration the enactment of an ordinance to empower the Colombo Municipality to enforce compulsory attendance and to establish vernacular schools. The scope of the proposed ordinance was later widened and it was enacted as the Town Schools Ordinance, providing for compulsory vernacular education in "Municipal and Local Board Towns, and in Towns under the operation of the Small Towns Sanitary Ordinance, 1892." In so far as Municipal Councils and Local Boards, but not Sanitary Boards, were concerned Ordinance No. 33 of 1884 empowered these local authorities to maintain English schools. This Ordinance was repealed by the new Ordinance.

3. In order to make the Town Schools Ordinance applicable to any particular municipal or town area, the Governor had to issue a proclamation making the Ordinance applicable to it. Furthermore, even in a municipal or town area proclaimed as one in respect of which the Ordinance was applicable, the local authority had the power, if it so desired, to make provision for the establishment and maintenance of schools for the instruction of children in the vernacular languages, and, *inter alia*, to make by-laws requiring the parent of any child between the ages of six years and twelve years old or in the case of Muhammadan and Tamil girls between the ages of six and ten to attend school. It should also be noted that by-laws regarding attendance could apply to both boys and girls, or to boys only, or to girls only. Thus, both the provision of education and the enforcement of compulsory attendance were permissive.

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4. Certain features in the legislation pertaining to compulsory education are of interest. There was provision for the employment of Attendance Officers appointed by the government "on the requisition of a local authority", with salary paid by the local authority.[1] The Attendance Officer was empowered "to require the occupier of any premises to give full information with regard to the children residing in such premises and to the provision, if any, which is made for their instruction, and if necessary to produce such children before him for inspection."[2] If the Attendance Officer had reason to believe that information given to him was false, he could, with the authority in writing of the Chairman of the local authority, enter the premises and search them. To give false information to the Attendance Officer or to obstruct him was an offence, punishable by fine in a court of law. It will be noted that a person had only to be an occupier of any premises, and not necessarily a parent or guardian to come within the provisions of the legislation. The legislation also made provision for the punishment of any parent who failed to provide a child, between the prescribed age limits, with adequate education. There was also a provision to the effect that if any child between the prescribed age limits

> "neglects to attend..school or is found habitually wandering about the streets and not under proper control, or in the company of disorderly or immoral persons or of reputed criminals, it shall be the duty of the Attendance Officer after due warning to the child and to the parents of the child, if they can be found, to present a written report..to a Magistrate, and the Magistrate shall summon such child and the parents (if they can be found) before him, and if satisfied of the truth of the report may order such child, if a male, to be whipped in accordance with the provisions of 'The Flogging Regulation Ordinance 1904', or order any such child to be sent to any school or institution certified by the Governor under 'The Youthful Offenders Ordinance 1886'..for such periods not less than three months or more than six months, as to such Magistrate shall seem proper."[3]

The costs of maintaining and educating the child at the certified school had to be defrayed by the local authority or by the parent.

5. On the issue of religious instruction, the Ordinance distinguished between schools established by local authorities and grant-aided schools. No religious instruction was to be given in any school

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established by a local authority. In the absence of any specific statement to this effect in the Ordinance, it must be taken as having been understood that existing government schools within the area of a local authority became local authority schools when the Ordinance was proclaimed in that area.

6. In so far as grant-aided schools were concerned, no school in which religious instruction was given could be recognized as a school making "efficient provision" for vernacular education for the purpose of the by-laws to be made under this ordinance, unless that local authority was satisfied

"(a) that religious instruction is given only during the times specified in the school time table;

(b) that religious instruction is not given to pupils of other denominations than that to which the school belongs, if the parents object;

(c) that pupils who do not attend religious instruction are employed in other studies during the hours allotted to religious instruction;

(d) that such pupils, if their parents object to their being present in the room where religious instruction is given, are either allowed to study in some other part of the school premises during the hours when such instruction is given or their presence in the school during such hours is excused;

and (e) that a copy of sub-section (2) of this section in the English, Sinhalese and Tamil languages is conspicuously posted up in the school."[4]

7. In regard to (b) above, it is to be noted that it was substituted in the Legislative Council in place of a more rigorous draft formulation which read as follows: "That religious instruction is not given to pupils of other denominations than that to which the school belongs, unless the consent of the parents has been first obtained," and was in fact copied from the Cowper-Templer clause that was partof the educational legislation in England.[5] Christian denominational interests succeeded

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in divesting themselves of the responsibility of obtaining the consent of parents, and of transferring to parents the onus of lodging objections. Few parents dared to lodge such objections, and in a denominational school children belonging to religious persuasions other than that of the management were given instruction in the religion of the management.

8. The Town Schools Ordinance was very limited in its effectiveness on account of the reluctance on the part of the local authorities to assume responsibility for education and on the part of the government to proclaim it in all the areas to which it could have been applied. The financial burden that a local authority had to bear, if it was willing to take responsibility for education, was quite heavy.

> "The expenditure which such local authority is hereby authorized to incur shall include the cost of acquiring and purchasing or renting sites for school buildings, of providing suitable school buildings, and providing the same with the necessary furniture, maps, books, and equipment and of paying salaries of a suitable staff of teachers, caretakers, and attendants, and of one or more attendance officers to be appointed as hereinafter provided."[6]

English education rather than vernacular education was the priority among the more well-to-do residents in municipal and town areas, and they could hardly have been interested in increased taxation to bear the costs of vernacular education, when their own children received an English education, in fee charging grant-aided schools.

9. Upto the end of the year 1908, no Municipal or Local Board had been brought under the Town Schools Ordinance, and the Director of Public Instruction stated in his Administration Report for 1908, "It seems clear that no substantial progress will be made under this Ordinance until it is amended so as to make action under it compulsory on all Municipal and Local Boards."[7] The Administration Report for 1909 pointed out that the Local Board of Kegalle was the only Local Board in which the Ordinance was at work. In regard to Municipalities, a part of the Municipality of Kandy was brought under the Ordinance. The Director again made the point: "No progress can be expected under this Ordinance until it is made compulsory in its operation."[8]

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10. By the year 1909, only one small town had taken on responsibility for vernacular education. In that year, by Ordinance No. 30 of 1909 which amended the Small Towns Sanitary Ordinance of 1892, it was provided that

> "The Governor in Executive Council, whenever he is satisfied that the provision for the vernacular education of the children of any town or village subject to this Ordinance can be made more efficiently by means of 'The Rural Schools Ordinance, 1907' than by means of 'The Town Schools Ordinance, 1906' may, by order in the *Government Gazette* direct that such town or village shall be a school division for the purposes of 'The Rural Schools Ordinance, 1907', and that the said last named Ordinance shall be in force in such town or village."[9]

In such cases, the powers and duties assigned by the Rural Schools Ordinance, 1907 to Village School Committees (see paragraphs 14, 15, 17) were to be exercised and carried out by the Sanitary Board of the town or village. It was also provided that:

> "The Sanitary Board shall annually place at the disposal of the District Schools Committee of the school district within which the town or village is situated, for the establishment and maintenance of sufficient accommodation in vernacular schools for the education of children resident in such town or village, so much of the labour and money as can be made available for the said purpose under section 32 of this Ordinance."[10]

Section 32 of the Ordinance provided that for the purposes of the Ordinance, the Sanitary Board could "impose and enforce an annual tax payable in six days' labour, or in money, not exceeding two rupees and fifty cents in commutation of such labour, upon all persons residing within the limits of the town or village."[11]

11. By the year 1914, the Town Schools Ordinance had been proclaimed only in seven Local Board Towns and in a part of the Kandy Municipality. A motion was moved by a member of the Legislative Council in July 1916 to the effect that steps should be taken to bring all Municipal and Local Board towns within the operation of the Town Schools Ordinance. The Colonial Secretary, however, opposed the

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motion, arguing that the Legislative Council should not do this, and that the Governor in Executive Council could declare the Ordinance to be operative in any town. The Legislative Council thereupon passed a resolution stating that "it was desirable that all Municipal and Local Board towns should be brought within the operation of the Town Schools Ordinance."[12] Shortly afterwards, by Ordinance No. 43 of 1916, the government amended the Town Schools Ordinance to exclude the Colombo Municipality, thereby giving legal recognition to the reality that the premier municipality in the country was not interested in taking on the responsibility for vernacular education. By this amendment, the Director of Education (or in other words, the chief educational executive of the central government) was designated the local authority for the municipality of Colombo to carry out the provisions of the Town Schools Ordinance. In 1917, the Town Schools Ordinance was brought into operation in Galle and Nuwara Eliya with meagre results, however.

The Rural Schools Ordinance

12. The Rural Schools Ordinance was intended to make provision for the education in the vernacular languages of children living outside the limits of Municipal and Local Board towns, and towns under the operation of "The Small Towns Sanitary Ordinance, 1892." In other words, the Rural Schools Ordinance was intended to apply to areas that were not covered by the Town Schools Ordinance.

13. Every revenue district and every province which was not divided into revenue districts was regarded as constituting a school district. Within each school district, every subdivision into which any chief headman's division was divided into a Village Committee by the Village Communities' Ordinance of 1889 constituted a school division, and the Village Committee became the governing body of such a school division taking on for this purpose the title "Village School Committee." In such parts of school districts as did not come within the operation of the Village Communities Ordinance of 1889, the Governor in Executive Council was empowered to constitute school divisions out of convenient villages or groups of villages. In such cases, Village School Committees were specially elected for the purpose.

14. For every school district, there was a governing body to be called the District Schools Committee, consisting of

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"(a) A Chairman, who shall be the Government Agent of the province, or, in his absence the Assistant Government Agent of the district;

(b) The Director of Public Instruction, or, in his absence, an officer of the Department of Public Instruction appointed by him;

(c) One of the chief headmen of the district, nominated by the Government Agent;

(d) One or more school managers or other persons interested in education in the district, nominated by the Governor."[13]

Each year, the Legislative Council would make available to the Chairman of each District Schools Committee "not more than one third of the amount which is shown. .as the value of the labour of the inhabitants of that district under 'The Roads Ordinances, 1861 and 1884' appropriated for maintenance of roads."[14] This money constituted a fund to be spent very largely on government school buildings (erection or repair) and the supply of furniture etc., to government schools. Teachers were appointed and paid by the government.

15. The District Schools Committee was required to subdivide each school division in its area into school circles, and make sure that adequate provision for vernacular education existed in each school circle through an existing government school or an existing aided school the manager of which was prepared to subscribe to certain conditions. Three miles was the maximum distance that a child could be expected to travel to school. Where adequate provision did not exist, the District Schools Committee was required to establish a new school. Notice had to be given to the Director of Public Instruction of the intention of a District Schools Committee to establish a new school, and a period of twenty eight days was allowed within which objections could be lodged against the establishment of the school. This provision was intended to safeguard the position of grant-aided schools providing public vernacular education, which could lodge objections if they anticipated that the proposed school would be a threat to their existence.

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16. Among the conditions to which the manager of an aided school was expected to subscribe in order that his school could be regarded as a public vernacular school for the purpose of this Ordinance, the most important ones were those relating to religious instruction. These conditions were the same as in the Town Schools Ordinance (see paragraph 6).

17. After assuring itself that adequate provision for education was available in a school division, the District Schools Committee was empowered to make by-laws

> "requiring the parent of any child between the ages of six years and twelve years, or in the case of Mohammedan and Tamil girls between the ages of six and ten, residing within such school division or part of a school division to cause such child to attend one of such schools, unless he has made other adequate and suitable provision for the education of such child."[15]

18. Unlike in the Town Schools Ordinance, there was no provision in the Rural Schools Ordinance whereby a child between the prescribed ages who neglected to attend school or was found habitually wandering about streets and not under proper control or in the company of disorderly or immoral persons or reputed criminals was liable to be whipped (in the case of a boy) or committed to a certified school.

19. The Rural Schools Ordinance contained several clauses pertaining to the education of the children of the labourers employed on estates. One clause read as follows:

> "It shall be the duty of the superintendent of every estate to provide for the vernacular education of the children of the labourers employed on the estate between the ages of six and ten, and to set apart and keep in repair a suitable schoolroom."[16]

This clause was anomalous in the sense that neither the Town Schools Ordinance nor the remainder of the Rural Schools Ordinance placed the onus on any individual, organization or agency to ensure the provision of education for other categories of children. It was only in respect of the children on the estates that educational provision was made

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obligatory. If the superintendent failed to make provision, the Director of Public Instruction was empowered to make suitable provision and recover the expenditure from the estate.

20. In contrast to the Town Schools Ordinance which was almost wholly ineffective, the Rural Schools Ordinance was able to achieve a limited amount of success, and there was an undoubted expansion of educational provision in the areas served by it. The government failed, however, to supplement the meagre local resources adequately with an input of money from the government in any appreciable measure, and this fact naturally acted as a brake on educational development.

Amending Ordinances

21. There were a number of amending ordinances passed during the next few years, and some of the more important provisions in them are worth consideration. According to the Rural Schools Ordinance, the money and labour which could be made available under the Village Communities' Ordinance of 1889, and such money or labour as the Village School Committee placed at the disposal of the District Schools Committee could "be applied only for the benefit of such government schools as are attended by the children of the village school division."[17] The limitation to government schools was removed by Ordinance 14 of 1913. Ordinance 8 of 1917 substituted the phrase 'a public vernacular school' for the phrase 'one of such schools' in the formulation quoted in paragraph 17.[18] The same Ordinance recognized that the education of children could be provided not necessarily by schools within a division but "by means of schools situated in that division or elsewhere".[19] Even in the latter case, attendance could be compelled by means of by-laws subject to the proviso that the school was within three miles of the child's home. Ordinance 34 of 1917 amended the age limits that were specified in 1907 (see paragraph 17). The word 'fourteen' was substituted for the word 'twelve' in the phrase "twelve years old", but the higher age limit was made to apply only to boys by adding after the word 'old' the following phrase: "or in the case of girls between the ages of six years and twelve years old."[20] The amendment raising the upper age limit for boys led to the anomalous situation that in areas in which the Rural Schools Ordinance was applicable the age limit for boys was fourteen years, whereas in the areas in which the Town Schools Ordinance was applicable the age limit for boys continued to be twelve years.

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3. *Ibid*., section 15.
4. *Ibid*., section 9.
5. *Hansard* (LC), 7 February 1906.
6. *Ordinance No*. 5 *of* 1906, section 6.
7. A. R. (D.P.I.), 1908.
8. A. R. (D.P.I.), 1909.
9. *Ordinance No*. 30 *of* 1909, section 35. (1).
10. *Ibid*., section 35. (2).
11. *Ibid*., section 32.
12. *Hansard* (LC), 12 July 1916.
13. *Ordinance No*. 8 of 1907, section 6.
14. *Ibid*., section 10.
15. *Ibid*., section 20.
16. *Ibid*., section 29.
17. *Ibid*., section 32.
18. *Ordinance No*. 8 of 1917, section 4.
19. *Ibid*., section 18.
20. *Ordinance No*. 34 of 1917, section 3.

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CHAPTER 43

SECONDARY EDUCATION (1900 - 1920)

1. The official policy of the government in regard to secondary education, reflected in the following statement,

> "The Government, thus, for the last 20 years, has practically confined its attention to vernacular primary education of the native masses, and has left English and secondary education almost entirely to private enterprise which as regards quantity if not quality seems to have fairly carried out its task. It is thus with primary vernacular education of the Sinhalese, Tamils and Moors that we are really concerned, considering the educational problems of Ceylon,"

obtained throughout the period under review.[1]

2. In so far as the policy was translated into action, the government assumed initiative and responsibility for elementary education, and responded to the efforts of the private sector to provide secondary education by making grants-in-aid, which were quite liberal. Finance was, however, the critical consideration in whatever the government did.

3. The position in regard to post-elementary education at the beginning of the century was that the government had one institution, namely Royal College, to provide such an education, and that the government also assisted 142 grant-in-aid schools. All the schools were fee-levying and used English as the medium of instruction.

4. By and large, the secondary schools provided a literary curriculum, and the better schools prepared the students for the Cambridge Junior and Senior examinations or the London Matriculation examination. Syllabuses and text-books were completely unrelated to the local environment, and the world of education was alien to the world in which the children lived their daily lives.

5. Royal College, the sole government institution providing secondary education, was a matter of concern to the government. It was largely a question of its cost, for each pupil at Royal College cost

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the government Rs. 77.50 per year while a pupil in a grant-in-aid school cost only Rs. 4.94 per year. The comparison based on average costs was not strictly fair in the sense that many grant-in-aid schools did not provide the same curriculum or an education up to the same standard as Royal College. There was, however, no gainsaying the fact that even in comparison with a grant-in-aid school of a strictly comparable standard, the government expenditure on Royal College greatly exceeded its expenditure on the grant-in-aid school. Apart from the high level of expenditure on Royal College, which was always a matter of concern to the government, there was a certain amount of antagonism towards Royal College on the part of at least one denominational body, the Roman Catholics. This was on the ground that Royal College was unduly privileged as a result of the large financial input by the government. The fact as such was incontrovertible, but underlying the opposition there may have been a desire on the part of the Church to see a powerful rival eliminated.

6. Henry McCallum was Governor of Ceylon from 1907 until 1913, and his tenure of office was marked by the very great interest he took in education. One of the first educational questions that came up for consideration during his regime was the future of Royal College. McCallum decided that he had been in the country too short a time to be able to make a decision on his own, and appointed a Commission to report on it. The Commission was divided in its views.

> "One thing appeared certain, namely, that the College as it stands has practically fulfilled its purpose, and that, in matters of public examination and other particulars, it was competing with the denominational colleges in a uniform curriculum, rather than maintaining an independent lead in the path of progress. For this reason, the four European members of the Commission considered that the institution was no longer required as a model of education. On the other hand, the five native members favoured its retention and improvement, and viewed with much disfavour any idea of its being closed."[2]

The members of the Executive Council were also divided in their opinion. McCallum took into account the opinions expressed by the members of the Commission and the members of the Executive Council,

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and made the following recommendations in January 1909 to the Secretary of State:

"(a) That the Royal College should be maintained as a Government Institution and as a pioneer of modern education;

(b) That special attention should be paid to Science as distinct from Arts, and to suitable training for a commercial life;

(c) That the College should not be a competitor with denominational colleges; that it should gradually discourage cram for examinations and should study thoroughness and quality rather than quantity."[3]

The phrase "pioneer of modern education" was intended to be understood in the context of an Asian country and in pursuance of this aim, the Director of Public Instruction (J. Harward) referred to the possibility of making

> "such changes as shall guide the College into a line of development which will enable it to give to its pupils of Oriental birth an education more in harmony with their nationality, without forcing on those of European descent a course of training which they are likely to resent, and without cutting off both classes from contact with European thought and from the prospect of profitably continuing their education in Europe."[4]

In regard to recommendation (c) listed above, Harward wrote as follows:

> "If it means that the courses of study are to be framed and the teaching arranged, not with a view of securing the top place in this or that examination, but with a view to meeting adequately the real wants of the country, to guiding the work of other institutions in directions adapted to those wants, and to providing instruction in the higher branches of the courses of study such as will enable pupils of other institutions to continue their studies, the ideal, is undoubtedly the right one."[5]

The Secretary of State concurred in the recommendations made by Governor McCallum, and it was agreed that the Director of Public

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Instruction should take advantage of the period of leave he was to spend in England for discussions with experts and with examining bodies (Cambridge and London University Examination Syndicates) that conducted examinations in Ceylon with a view to making arrangements "for the re-casting of subjects and courses in order to give effect to the new policy."[6]

7. Having decided on this policy and action in regard to Royal College, Governor McCallum turned his attention to another question that was very much in the limelight, namely the curriculum of the secondary school. One of the criticisms of the curriculum of the secondary school was that it neglected the study of the national languages. Agitation to give the national languages an important place in the curriculum had been going on for sometime. The Ceylon Social Reform Society, founded in 1905, had sent a deputation to the governor the following year urging that Sinhalese or Tamil should be made compulsory in English Schools.[7] The prominent Theosophist, Dr. Annie Besant, had visited Ceylon and in a lecture on "Social Reform" deplored the attitude of the English educated native to the native languages and literatures both in India and Ceylon, and urged the need for Sinhalese boys to study Sinhalese literature rather than the literature of other lands.[8] There were also demands for a reform of syllabuses to suit "the commercial, industrial or agricultural pursuits of life."[9]

8. Governor McCallum prepared a memorandum, dated 27 June 1810, on the system of education in Ceylon. In the first paragraph of the memorandum, McCallum summarized the criticism that had been made in England regarding the system of education in England:

> "..it is in its broad principles too medieval, hidebound and illiberal;..its curricula stand in urgent need of revision and reform in order to meet more satisfactorily the altered circumstances and requirements of the twentieth century; secondary instruction particularly should be made much more elastic and adaptable, as is already the case in many modern secondary schools, in order to satisfy the ever-increasing demands of commerce, industries and public utility generally."[10]

McCallum pointed out that change was on the way, and mentioned one specific area in this regard: "The dead languages are slowly but

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surely being ousted from the fetish groves where for so long they have been superstitiously worshipped."[11] McCallum's references to education in England were intended to prepare the way for what he had to say about education in Ceylon.

> "The disadvantages and unsuitability of an inelastic literary education at home are intensified when we find that the same has been more or less servilely applied to Oriental communities without any serious attempts to adapt it to Oriental conditions, needs and idiosyncracies. Practically to ignore these is to act contrary to the first accepted principles of any sound educational scheme."[12]

He quoted at length the views expressed in 1906 by the Rev. A. G. Fraser (Principal of Trinity College, Kandy). Fraser pointed out firstly the difficulties inherent in the use of English as a medium of instruction for students unfamiliar with it, and secondly the additional language burdens that had to be faced in pursuing higher education.

> "The great majority of our youth start their school days by working in English as a foreign tongue. Slowly they learn to speak it, and ultimately perhaps even to think in it. But meantime much of their work has been quite unintelligent and purely by memory. The departmental reports prove that much of the teaching in our schools is painfully stupid. The reason is largely that the masters have been educated through the medium of at best a half-known tongue, and are now using it in order to teach others. But in spite of this our better boys learn English well enough to speak it fluently, and to pass the Cambridge Senior. They then are beginning to feel free to study in the tongue they have acquired, and commence to consider their choice of a University. At once the Department steps in and recommends of all B.A. degrees that of London. In other words, the unfortunate lads are to read for their Intermediate in Latin, French, Greek or German, and Mathematics. No sooner have they got beyond the memory and rote stage in English, no sooner is the path opening out before them to an appreciation of literature, a study of the sciences and philosophies than the vision is shut out and they are thrust back to another deadly struggle with grammar, prose and idiom."[13]

Elaborating on the London University requirements, Fraser went on to say,

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"It aims at saturating the best educated men of the Island with ancient Western traditions and literature, and modern Western languages and views. We cannot imagine the youth of Ceylon becoming a better administrator, judge, doctor or pleader through his study of German and French or Greek whilst he is unable to read or write his own tongue. We do not require a more Western, but a more Eastern education."[14]

McCallum would not go so far as Fraser in condemning the London University examination wholesale, and agreed with Fraser only in regard to the "undue importance attached..to the study and knowledge of the two dead languages."[15] McCallum thought that Ceylon suffered from thraldom more than India, for in the latter country the University Matriculation course, while requiring the study of a language other than English, permitted the choice of a classical language (Oriental or European) or a living language (Indian or continental European). McCallum's mind was set more against Greek than Latin. He stated with some glee that the "swan song of Greek is heard in Ceylon as well as at home," but he recognized in Latin "a good medium for mental training and discipline in the case of those Ceylonese lads who have not got an inclination for mathematics.."[16]

9. Apart from "the undue importance attached..to the study and knowledge of the two dead languages", McCallum listed the following as the general faults of the system of education in Ceylon. He said that it appeared to him that

"(a) higher education is being directed for the purpose of entry into the Government Service, the Law, or Medicine, and that those who failed in these directions are ill-adapted to other walks in life..;

(b) these professions in the Colony are rapidly becoming overmanned and that there is but little field outside the Colony for employment of Ceylonese;

(c) too much weight is attached to examinations, with the result that the memory is trained too much by mechanical repetition, the intelligence too little to allow the attainment of sound knowledge;

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(d) although some progress is being at last made in the all-important department of science, the general curriculum is still too literary in character for the prospective careers of the many;

(e) the cultivation of the vernaculars has been neglected in the pursuit of English education, with the result that the desirability of their becoming the vehicle for diffusing Western knowledge among the masses as has taken place in Japan—is practically as far from realization as ever."[17]

10. In order to decide upon the reforms that might be effected, McCallum sought the views of the local Board of Education in regard to the following questions:[18]

1. In view of the large number of pupils learning Latin under unsuitable circumstances the desirability of removing from the Code of Regulations the provision assigning grants to Latin as a specific subject;

2. In view of the fact that the Cambridge Examinations in their present form are not suited to the wants of a large number of schools which present students, the desirability of

   (a) requesting the Cambridge Syndicate to adapt its syllabus to local wants, including provision for the vernacular in one or both examinations;

   (b) substituting for the Cambridge Examination some other examination conducted by an English educational body e.g. the Junior School Examination and the Leaving Certificate Examination of the London University;

   (c) substituting for the Cambridge Examination an examination held by examiners appointed in Ceylon on lines suggested by the Ceylon University Association;

   (d) abolishing general examinations of this type and substituting for them a system of inspecting individual schools;

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3. The desirability of a general course of studies with a view to a 'modern' as distinct from a 'literary' curriculum including certain subjects at present taken up by the 'commercial' classes only and the extent to which such subjects as book-keeping, shorthand, and typewriting should be made special and compulsory;

4. The best means of introducing useful and practical courses in Chemistry and Physics, the curricula to be recommended, and the extent to which these courses should be obligatory as subjects of the different examinations to be introduced;

5. The desirability of requiring manual and physical training as an essential element of school life, the courses to be prescribed and the extent to which efficiency should be required at the different examinations.

(Certain other questions that related to the university level are considered elsewhere.)

11. The views of the local Board of Education on the questions listed above were as follows:[19]

1. Latin should be removed from the list of specific subjects for which grants were to be given;

2. The Cambridge Examinations were not unsuited to the needs of the better schools which sent up candidates for them;

   (a) Before making any recommendations regarding the introduction of the vernacular languages into the Cambridge Examinations, it would be wise to watch the effects of the change with regard to the vernaculars in English schools which the Board has already suggested to the government. The Cambridge Syndicate should make it compulsory for Ceylon candidates to pass in English in both the Junior and the Senior Examinations. The Cambridge Syndicate should improve its Senior papers in Arithmetic and Geography "so as to encourage more intelligent work";

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(b) The school examinations of the London University were not suitable for introduction into Ceylon on account of the expense and the number of subjects necessary for a pass;

(c) A local examination was not advisable;

(d) It was not advisable to dispense with the stimulus afforded by general examinations;

3. It was advisable to watch further developments in regard to the teaching of commercial subjects.

4. An attempt was made to develop work in science in directions suited to Ceylon boys, and it was desirable to watch the results before taking further steps;

5. It was desirable to encourage manual training in schools, "but it would be fatal to attempt to encourage it" where there was no specially trained teacher, and premature to make it obligatory.

12. Governor McCallum concurred in the recommendation of the Board that Latin should be removed from the list of specific subjects for grants. "I regard this step as one of the most important which has been yet introduced to make the Ceylon system of education suitable to local requirements."[20]

13. McCallum noted that the Board did not consider that the Cambridge Examinations were unsuited to the needs of the better schools. The recommendations that only recognized schools should send up candidates and that no private students should be allowed to sit received the approval of both the Director of Public Instruction and Governor McCallum. The former pointed out that these examinations which had been "introduced to meet the wants of the Royal College and a few other leading schools..have caught the public taste, and are now taken up by a large number of other schools to whose wants they are not suited."[21]

14. McCallum's position was that it was inconvenient and wasteful to involve two universities, namely the Cambridge University

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at the level of the Junior and Senior Examinations and the London University at the Intermediate and Degree examination levels. One distinct criticism he offered regarding the Cambridge Examinations was that they permitted a wide choice of subjects.

> "Nothing could be more harmful to the general cause of education than to allow our boys to run riot in this way of choosing for themselves subjects for examinations, instead of having to take up a limited number of compulsory subjects which will eventuate in a useful intellectual standard. The present system is distinctly harmful to our boys, and unfair to the schools which have to keep provided the machinery of instruction in a plethora of subjects."[22]

He was in favour of the introduction of the Junior Pass Examination of the London University to replace the Cambridge Junior Examination, and the leaving Certificate Examination of London University to replace the Cambridge Senior Examination. The Board was not in favour, as shown by its answer to question 2b. McCallum nevertheless continued to pursue his line of thinking in the hope of implementing it if the Secretary of State gave his approval.

15. In reply to the question whether in the opinion of the Board provision should be made for the vernaculars in one or both Cambridge Examinations, the Board recommended that it would be wise to watch the effects of the recent changes with regard to the vernacular in English schools that the Board had suggested to the government. This was a reference to the proposal that grants for vernacular languages should not be restricted to standards VI, VII and VIII but should extend to standards IV and V as well; also that in English schools no pupil of Sinhalese or Tamil extraction should be eligible for a grant in the fifth or any higher standard who has not passed in his own vernacular language the fifth standard, or an equivalent examination in the subjects Reading or Writing.

16. The Colonial Office entrusted the Board of Education in England with the task of considering the proposals for educational reform and making recommendations. The Board, however, "found themselves unable to reconcile certain portions" of the Governor's memorandum, and "in the absence of local knowledge" not "sufficiently sure of their ground" to make a definite recommendation.[23]

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The Board considered it desirable that "the matter of curricula and a general survey" of the system of education should be gone into on the spot with the assistance of one of the Board's Inspectors. Governor McCallum announced the decision of the government to take advantage of the Board's offer to send out an Inspector, and "to submit the whole question of secondary and higher education" to a Committee.[24] This was the background to the arrival in Ceylon of J. J. R. Bridge to report on the school system, and to the appointment of a local Committee headed by William Macleod. The Bridge Report and the Macleod Report are dealt with below.

The Education Reports of 1912

17. The Macleod Committee was appointed in June 1911 and consisted of K. W. B. Macleod and nine others. The Committee issued an interim report in January 1912 and the final report in May 1912.[25] Bridge spent the period June to August 1911 in Ceylon assisting the Committee, but he also submitted in February 1912 a report of his own, independently of the Committee.[26] Whatever the propriety of this action, his report is full of penetrating insights and it is a valuable document in its own right.

18. The Macleod Committee was entrusted with the task of making "a general survey" of the system of education prevailing in Ceylon, and to "investigate in particular the present provision for secondary and higher education."[27] Governor McCallum expressed in the Legislative Council the hope that the Committee would take a broad perspective of its task "independently of financial considerations."[28]

The detailed instructions to the Committee were as follows:

"You will accordingly direct your attention, but not confine it, to the following questions:—

Secondary Education

Curricula — (a) Whether the curricula now prescribed for English Schools, elementary as well as secondary, with such additional courses of study as are taken up for the Cambridge local and other examinations, are suitable for local conditions and the school-leaving age, and what particulars require revision.

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(b) What provision there should be for instruction in:

(1) The vernacular languages of Ceylon;

(2) The Classical languages of the East;

(3) The Classical and modern languages of Europe;

(4) Science;

(5) Commercial Education;

(6) Manual Training;

(7) Special Training to fit girls for household management ?

Financial Support, Inspections, and Examinations

(c) Whether the financial support given by Government to English schools is sufficient;

(d) Whether steps can be taken for increasing the number of schools in which the grant is paid on the average attendance and not on individual examinations;

(e) Whether the inspection now provided by the Department of Public Instruction is adequate;

(f) Whether the system of holding the Cambridge Local Examinations should be continued, or should be replaced by a system in which all the pupils of certain classes are presented for examination in the subjects which they have studied as class subjects, the examination being confined to schools which have been specially recognized for the purpose. If the latter course is recommended, the Committee should advise as to the authority by which the examinations should be conducted."[29]

The major recommendations of the Macleod Committee along with the views of Inspector Bridge and Governor McCallum are considered below.

The language medium for the early years of schooling

19. The vernacular schools used the national languages as the media of instruction right through school, and the Anglo-vernacular schools used the national languages as the media of instruction during the early years of schooling. There was no controversy about this use.

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20. The controversy was about the medium of instruction in English schools. These schools were committed to the use of English as the medium of instruction. English schools were considered as belonging to two schedules, A and B. In schedule A schools, English was to be exclusively used, but in schedule B schools English was supposed to be taught on a vernacular basis. Bridge was of the view that the distinction did "not amount to a great deal in theory, and to still less in practice."[30] He pointed out that as the use of the vernacular was "generally regarded as something derogatory and akin to an admission of inferiority," the vernacular basis was chosen only when success through the use of the English basis was completely despaired of.[31] He went on to say,

> "There are not more than one or two schools in which the system of the vernacular basis gets a fair trial, but in these there is not the least doubt that the work of the average pupil is distinctly superior to that of the average pupil in schools on the English basis of similar standing and circumstances."[32]

Most children attending the English schools, schedule A or B, did not come from English speaking homes, and the English school system therefore involved a "striking departure from the principle that the early education of a child must be in its mother-tongue."[33] Bridge was quite convinced about the baneful results of the system.

— "Clearly education based on a medium other than that in which the whole of the child's ideas are contained is in reality education limited to the acquisition of the new language..The English school system bases its work largely on the mechanical use of the memory. The result is evident both in the very small proportion of pupils who attain to the standard of success indicated by the results of Local examinations, and in the absence of almost all prospect of progress in the majority of those who fail to reach even that standard."[34]

— "The simple fact is that the English school system, confronted with the problem of treating non-English speaking children and English-speaking children as if they were identical, has evolved a *via media* of mechanical work which is prejudicial to the interests of both."[35]

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— "A consideration of the work of the schools leads irresistibly to the conclusion that a system based on the needs and potentialities of less than one-fifth of its pupils, and seeking to deal with the remaining four-fifths in identically the same way, is, as it might be expected to be, a failure, and does full justice to neither element."[36]

— "The system fails signally for the many, and succeeds but partially for most of the few. The reasons for its failure are inherent in the false principle underlying the whole, namely the treatment non-English-speaking children and English-speaking children as if their needs were identical"[37]

21. Bridge did not stand for the abolition of the English school system but for making it operate effectively.

— "The normal way of introducing the vernacular-speaking child to English must be on the basis of education through the medium of the vernacular with special attention to English on the direct method."[38]

— "The medium of instruction would be English for those children who come from English-speaking homes; for those who do not, a vernacular according to the language they speak, with English on the direct method, for the first three or four years of school life at least."[39]

— "Primarily, the English school system must exist for the Europeanized section of the Community which for purposes of employment and so forth wishes to become Europeanized, but has first to be enabled to do so by a rational system of early education based on the mother tongue."[40]

— "It follows that the early education offered in the English schools must be of two kinds, according as the mother-tongue of the pupil is English or one of the vernaculars."[41]

22. The Macleod Committee enunciated two principles in regard to the language of instruction in the early years:

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"1. If a child is not bilingual, and it is desired to make him so, the first steps in learning the new language should be purely oral. This is the only way he will learn to think in it. He should not attempt to read or write in it till he has a fair amount of colloquial knowledge.

2. If he is not bilingual, he should learn reading and writing and the first steps of arithmetic in his mother tongue before learning them in a foreign language."[42]

23. In the light of these principles, the Macleod Committee made the following recommendation:

"That in dealing with vernacular-speaking children, the teaching of English reading and writing should in every case be preceded by a course of oral teaching of English conversation and some instruction in reading and writing in the mother tongue."[43]

24. Governor McCallum concurred in the recommendation, pointing out that it introduced "a natural condition of preliminary education instead of an unnatural."[44] He also suggested that the recommendation should be amplified "by adding the first steps in arithmetic to reading and writing."[45]

25. As a corollary to its above mentioned recommendation, the Macleod Committee also recommended that "the four lowest standards of English schools should be organized as a lower school."[46] Governor McCallum considered this to be thoroughly sound.

"Under it the lower school will be the arena for dealing with the bilingual difficulty in a practical common sense manner, and for preparing as far as possible vernacular-speaking children for meeting English-speaking children on the common platform of standard V. the lowest of the highest elementary department of the upper school."[47]

Standard for compulsory vernaculars

26. The recommendation that the four lowest standards of English schools should be organized as a lower school led the Macleod

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Committee to recommend that the requirement for a compulsory study of the vernaculars should not go beyond standard IV. The idea was that the compulsory stage should be completed as part of the work of the lower school, but it did give a set back to the study of the vernaculars in the sense that the number of years for which they were compulsorily required was reduced from five to four.

Gradation of English schools.

27. The Macleod Committee thought that the existing division of English schools into elementary and secondary should be simplified as several of the so-called secondary schools were in fact "overgrown elementary schools, with arrangements tacked on to them by which the more promising pupils are put through courses of work in higher subjects in order that they may be presented for the Cambridge examinations."[48] The Committee recommended that English schools should be graded as follows:

"1. The purely elementary School;

2. The elementary school with secondary department working up to the Junior standard;

3. The elementary school with secondary department working up to the Senior standard;

4. The fully organized secondary school."[49]

One of the requirements to be recognized as a fully organized secondary school was that the school provided instruction in science and manual training.

Abolition of Cambridge Local examinations

28. The Macleod Committee considered whether the work of secondary schools should continue to be examined by means of the Cambridge Local examinations:

"The examinations are too easy to pass and therefore set to the schools too low a standard of achievement..In order to obtain a pass candidates are only required to pass in three sections, which may be selected from a very wide range. For instance, a certificate, either Senior or Junior, can be obtained by satisfying the examiners

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in religious knowledge, French and Botany, in addition to the compulsory subjects which are arithmetic only for Senior candidates. Such an examination enables schools to gain certificates without having to arrange and teach efficiently well-organized courses of study. It should be noticed that English is not a compulsory subject if another language is taken..Though candidates are passed on too few subjects, they are allowed to take too many."[50]

29. In regard to the reform of the system of examinations, the Committee had this to say:

> "The natural line of reform is to adopt the Cambridge Junior and Senior School Certificate in place of the ordinary Cambridge Local Examinations. The principal difference is that candidates are required to pass in five sections and that the choice of sections is limited, so that the work corresponds to the full curriculum of a secondary school."[51]

Bridge expressed the view that "the Locals have served a very useful purpose, but the stage has been reached where...their influence on the curriculum and methods and the general system has become positively harmful".[52] He went on to say:

> "It seems evident that the needs of Ceylon can only be met by means of an examination designed by those who know and appreciate local circumstances, and the facility of providing for a school-leaving examination through the staff of a university college is yet an additional argument in favour of the establishment of such an institution."[53]

The Macleod Committee came up with the following recommendation:

> "That instead of the present system of holding the Cambridge Local Examinations, the Cambridge Syndicate should be requested to hold examinations for Junior and Senior School Certificates, with certain modifications in their rules and syllabuses.."[54]

Governor McCallum endorsed the recommendation, regarding it as a temporary substitute. "What is urgently required, and what must eventually be established, is a properly organised local Examination Board."[55]

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Denominational Schools

30. The major recommendations of the Macleod Committee, and the views of Inspector Bridge and Governor McCallum have been considered above. Another subject of interest is the expression of views by Bridge on the denominational school system. The Board of Education in England made the following reference to them in a report to the Under-Secretary of State:

> "Though the desire of the different denominations to have their own schools is natural and indeed inevitable, Mr. Bridge has satisfied himself that the competition thus engendered is, under the conditions that obtain in Ceylon, highly detrimental to efficiency, and entirely prejudicial to economy; and secondly, that this competition had led, by a process of artificial development, not only to a serious over-supply of schools and to a consequent lowering of the general standard of efficiency, but also to confusion in the aim and purpose of the English school system. If these contentions are admitted, it would seem to be beyond dispute that the English school system of Ceylon is in need of some re-organization."[56]

A review of the denominational school system was, however, not on the cards and no notice was taken of the remarks made by Bridge in this regard.

After the Education Reports of 1912

31. The Department of Education took on a new name in 1913, becoming the Department of Education. A Code of Regulations introduced in 1914 sought to implement the recommendations of the Macleod Committee. It contained two new rules which school managers found inconvenient. The first rule was to the effect that no pupil could be admitted to an English school from a vernacular school unless he has passed the third standard in the vernacular; the second was to the effect that pupils could not be promoted to the upper divisions of English schools without passing standard four in reading and writing the vernacular. The Code also recognized the existence in English schools of three distinct groups of children, namely:

(a) children entering the infant department of an English school and receiving their education entirely in English on the first syllabus of schedule A;

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(b) children beginning their education in a school working on the second syllabus of schedule A in which the three lowest standards are taught in the vernacular and English is taken separately;

(c) children entering the English school system after passing standard 3 in a vernacular school, thereafter spending two years on English in special classes before going on to standard five.

32. In 1915, attention was again drawn to the denominational system when P. Ramanathan referred in the Legislative Council to a visit by two Russian educationists to investigate the condition of Buddhism in Ceylon. He went on to say that the Russians assured him "that there was no such thing as a grant-in-aid school system in Russia, and that the government there felt it to be its duty to establish in every village or group of minor villages a school to answer the requirements of the people to whatever religion they may belong."[57]

33. In 1917, a scholarship scheme was introduced by E. B. Denham, Director of Education, enabling boys selected from vernacular schools by means of a competitive examination to proceed to the Training College Practising School, from where after five years they could proceed to Royal College. Denham wrote as follows about his scheme:

> "The experiment is of peculiar interest as, I believe, it is the first attempt in the East to form a special class of village boys, all under 11 years who know no English, to give them individual attention, to board them together, and to teach them English by the direct method."[58]

Many intelligent children, whose parents could not otherwise have provided them with an English education, profited by the scheme and became quite distinguished in various walks of life as a result of the opportunities that were opened to them by the scholarship scheme.

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CHAPTER 44

THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM (1900 - 1920)

1. Throughout the greater part of the period under review, the school system consisted of (a) elementary schools using English or Sinhalese or Tamil as the medium of instruction (b) Anglo-vernacular schools in which Sinhalese or Tamil was the medium of instruction in the lower grades while English was expected to be used as the medium in the upper grades, and (c) secondary schools using the English medium.

2. Among elementary schools, those which used English were distinguished by two features. They were fee levying and they could lead the pupils to a secondary education. The English elementary school set its sights on the secondary school and was regarded as a preparation for it. The curriculum was a literary curriculum, except for the fact that attention was paid to arithmetic.

3. The vernacular elementary school led to nothing beyond it in general, its curriculum was literary, with attention paid to arithmetic, but from time to time the introduction of a practical bias was talked about or feebly implemented. School gardens were introduced in 1901 as a means of giving a practical bias to the curriculum. The majority of the children got nothing from this. They were used to gardening in their homes, and the same activity was carried out in the school, for gardening at school was no more scientific than gardening in the home. It was only an additional chore. A difference could have been made if there were inputs from agricultural research into the practice of gardening, but when no research was being undertaken at the national level there was no source from which an input could have come. The Wace Commission of 1905 recommended a more practical curriculum, but the manner of implementation was essentially as described above. In course of time, classes in carpentry, basket weaving and certain other crafts were added to a few schools with very little benefit to children. There was nothing in the teaching that distinguished the practice of the craft in school from what happened outside.

4. English elementary schools also had a literary curriculum. There was no interest in providing a practical bias to these schools, but this was no loss as nothing was achieved by means of the practical

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bias imparted in the elementary vernacular schools. The vernacular was taught as a subject in English elementary schools through standard four as from 1914.

5. The curriculum of the Anglo-vernacular school differed from that of the elementary school in the opportunity it provided for the study of some English. Generally, however, the level of instruction was not such as to give adequate competence, with the result that the children left school with only a smattering of English.

6. The secondary school, too, imparted a literary curriculum and used English as the medium of instruction. A very small number of schools had provision for science and/or commercial subjects. Science education was keenly sought where it was available, but commercial education was regarded as suitable only for the pupils who could not do well in academic subjects. The curriculum being geared towards examinations conducted in England, the world of education was alien to the world in which the children lived their daily lives. Those with intellectual gifts of a high calibre, however, achieved conspicuous success in their examinations and found the gates open for higher education and lucrative employment. They were few, and the others barely scrambled through the examinations or failed them, but their knowledge of English generally helped them to secure decent employment. Several issues relating to the secondary curriculum have been already been discussed in chapter 43 in connection with the Education Reports of 1912.

7. The Revised Code of 1914 embodied the changes that were necessary to implement the Macleod Committee recommendations in so far as they related to secondary education. The classification of schools recommended by the Macleod Committee was adopted. Only 13 schools were classified as fully organized secondary schools. Grants to these schools were based on average attendance. These schools were also permitted to frame their own syllabuses but they preferred to follow up to standard 8 the syllabuses drawn up by the Department of Education for elementary schools and thereafter use the syllabuses prescribed for the London or the Cambridge examinations. In the case of the Cambridge examinations, the Cambridge Senior and Junior School Certificate examinations replaced the Cambridge Senior and Junior Local examinations as from 1916. The national languages

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received the recognition of the London and the Cambridge examining bodies in 1919 when students were permitted to offer them as examination subjects. Very few of the Christians schools encouraged students to study them, as the literature available in Sinhalese and Tamil often dealt with Buddhist and Hindu themes from which the Christian schools were keen to shelter their students. The Elementary School Certificate examination, introduced in 1915 and conducted locally, did not attract many schools as it lacked the prestige associated with examinations conducted by examining bodies in England.

8. In so far as subjects other than the humanities were concerned, only science made some headway. Where commercial classes were started as, for example, at Royal College, they were the refuge of the students who could not cope with other subjects. Manual training never caught on, as the secondary school child was believed to be destined for a higher station in life than to work with his hands.

9. The truth was that attempts at curriculum diversification had no chance of success as long as economic rewards went only to those who excelled in academic studies. Neither agriculture nor industrry advanced appreciably as the government was not interested in promoting them above their traditional levels, which were quite adequate for the maintenance of a colonial economy that served the interests of the rulers and not the ruled. To say that "there is really no reason why the country that contributes materially to the rubber supply of the world should not manufacture its own rubber goods" was to shut one's eyes to the stark realities of colonial rule, and to deny that the paramount consideration in decision making was the interest of Britain rather than that of the colony[1]. Where there was a congruence of interests, the colony benefited as Britain did, but where there was no congruence of interests the colony was no more than a milk cow which could be drained at will by the colonial ruler.

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CHAPTER 45

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HIGHER, PROFESSIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION (1900 - 1920)

1. In 1898, the University of London gave notice that, as from 1900, the examinations which it conducted at various centres in the colonies would be discontinued. The discontinuance of these examinations would have meant the withdrawal of the opportunity which was open for an interested student to prepare by himself and appear for the Intermediate or Degree examinations of the University of London.

2. In the Census Report of 1901, P. Arunachalam drew attention to the absence of facilities for higher education in Ceylon, and called it "a serious want."[1] While he was quite outspoken, his early thinking was very much in the direction of suggesting the provision of adequate facilities in Ceylon for preparing students for the degrees of a British university. He wrote as follows in the Census Report of 1901:

> "Our so called higher education ends where it should begin. To curtail even this would be a retrograde step. The times call rather for a great extension and advance, and the establishment—say at the Royal College, which would then be worthy of its name—of a University course (if not a University) which would concentrate the teaching powers now dissipated in different institutions, and permit of degrees being obtained in the various branches of knowledge, literary, scientific, and technical in connection with the London or some other University."[2]

3. In 1902, the University of London announced its decision to continue the examinations, much to the delight of the Director of Public Instruction who made the following comment in his Administration Report: "We in turn are saved from the other two alternatives; a Ceylon University, which would have been eventually ridiculed, and affiliation with one of the Indian universities."[3] The justification for his remark about a Ceylon university is not clear, for the few Ceylonese who had enjoyed the opportunity of study at British universities had held their own in competition with British students. Of course, justification for statements by some British colonial officials could hardly be expected, for logic was not their forte. In regard to

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the reference to Indian universities, the Director went on to say that it was impossible to read the report of the Curzon Commission on Indian universities "without rejoicing that we have so far battled successfully against closer connection with them."[4]

4. The Intermediate and Bachelor's examinations in Arts and Law were already being held in Ceylon, and in 1905, it was announced that the Senate of the University of London had agreed to accept Ceylon as a centre for the Intermediate examination in Science, and for the Bachelor of Science (Pass degree) examination. In 1907 candidates from Ceylon appeared for the first time for the Intermediate examination in Science, and in 1916 for the Bachelor of Science examination. In 1910 candidates appeared for the first examination for the degree of Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery, and in 1911 for the second examination for the same degree. The most popularly taken degree examinations during these years were the Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Laws examinations.

5. In 1905, the University of London announced that the following subjects would be accepted as alternatives to French and German at the Intermediate examination in Arts: Advanced Modern English Literature, Sanskrit, and British Constitution. In 1920 Sinhalese and Tamil were accepted as optional subjects for the Bachelor of Arts degree examination.

The agitation for a University of Ceylon

6. Arunachalam's thinking underwent a welcome change from a commitment to an institution in Ceylon preparing students for degrees of a foreign university to the establishment of a university itself. In 1906, the Ceylon University Association was founded under the chairmanship of Arunachalam. The following motion was moved by H. M. Fernando at a meeting of the Association:

> "Since the present state of higher education is most unsatisfactory, it is the opinion of this meeting that the best solution of the difficulties of the educational problem is to be found in the establishment of a University of Ceylon, which having a knowledge of local needs and circumstances, will be able to adapt the education and culture of the West to the less advanced state of society here, and to develop

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the education of the country along the lines which experience shows to be the most suited to local conditions and needs."[5]

The motion was unanimously passed. The Association also started a Journal known as the Journal of the Ceylon University Association. In an article in the first issue of the Journal, Arunachalam argued with great cogency the case for the establishment of a university. Arunachalam pointed out that although elementary education was "an indispensable factor of national progress", its full benefits could not "be reaped unless on its foundation is raised a noble superstructure of secondary and higher education."[6] In Ceylon, the value of secondary education was sufficiently appreciated, but unfortunately the upper limit of that education was the Cambridge Senior Local Examination, further education being available only outside the island. Arunachalam went on to point out that the university movement was started with the ultimate objective of persuading the British government to concede a university. He argued that "Calcutta University which was established in 1857 was not the spontaneous gift of government. It was the result of preparation and agitation on the part of patriots and enthusiasts."[7] Arunachalam also made it clear that whatever scheme for higher education that was then before the public in connection with the universities of Cambridge, London or Madras could be "pursued without let or restraint", but should be regarded as a "transitional" step towards the establishment of a university of Ceylon.[8]

7. Writing in the same Journal, a Christian missionary Rev. R. J. M. Park tried to meet the arguments that were generally urged by British officials against the establishment of a university. Two of the main arguments were that the time was not ripe, and that the university would be a pigmy university with a handful of students. The Rev. Park also expressed the hope that the Buddhist priesthood in which he estimated there were 7330 monks "many of ability and scholarship", and many others hoping to be so, would enrol in courses if the oriental studies became a part of the curriculum.[9]

8. In a later issue of the Journal, Arunachalam again made a plea for a Ceylon university, emphasizing the role that the national languages could play:

"..The few who have assimilated Western culture and whose mission it should be to interpret the West to the East, are disqualified for that great office. Having passed through a curriculum in

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which their mother tongue is proscribed, they have grown up in a deplorable ignorance of it. There is no prospect of the greatest need of the country being supplied—viz., a good Sinhalese and Tamil literature inspired with the best spirit of modern Europe. Only by the creation and spread of such literature can what is good in European civilization be brought within the reach of the people and become, as it has in Japan, part of their life and character and contribute to the vigorous growth of national life... It will be a chief aim of the Ceylon university while making efficient provision for the study of English and the assimilation of Western culture to take care that our youth do not grow up strangers to their mother tongue and to their past history and traditions. Here they will learn to use their mother tongue with accuracy and ease, to appreciate the beauties of their classical languages and literatures, to realize that they are inheritors of a grand past... The vernacular literature of the day will then be rescued from its pedantry and triviality, and be made a worthy vehicle for the dissemination of what is best in Western and Eastern culture and of the thoughts, hopes and aspirations of our best men and women. Then at last the masses of the people will be really influenced for the better by Western civilization.."[10]

9. Arunachalam also pointed out the role that science could play in a local university:

"Science is the most important factor of modern life, and the renaissance of Japan has shown how the life and character may be revolutionized by scientific study conducted in the proper spirit and manner..our educational authorities are profoundly ignorant and contemptuous of science and their great aim is to make our youth construe elegantly a bit of Latin or Greek verse."[11]

10. Arunachalam also dealt with the usual arguments against a local university, namely that the time was not ripe, that there would be too few students, and that the degrees would have no prestige value compared with those of Oxford, Cambridge or London.

11. J. Harward, the Director of Public Instruction, expressed his opposition to the establishment of a university. He argued that the time was not opportune for the establishment of a Ceylon University

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because there would not be a sufficient number of students for such an institution, and also because sufficient funds were not available to be spent on it. He also pointed out that the London University course which had been adopted after full consideration would suit the needs and conditions of Ceylon better and that it ought to be given a fair trial.[12]

12. In 1907, the Ceylon University Association received the following communication from the Secretary to the Governor:

"I am directed by H. E. the Governor to inform you that that matter was laid before the executive council, but that the council does not consider that the question is yet ripe for consideration. The Council is of opinion that the result should be awaited of the experiment of attempting systematically for some few years a part at least of a recognized university course as has just been arranged with the London University after the fullest consideration."[13]

13. The following issue in regard to higher education was included in the terms of reference of the Macleod Committee appointed in June 1911.

"Whether it is desirable to continue the present system, under which the older pupils of the Royal College and the more prominent grant-in-aid schools continue their studies by preparation for the external examinations of the University of London or to replace it by a system under which higher education is provided by means of courses of instruction at a single institution, either a university or a university college. If the first of these alternatives is recommended the Committee should advise as to whether the staff of the Royal College should be strengthened, so as to enable students to be prepared for degrees in Arts and Science. If the second alternative is preferred, the Committee should advise as to the constitution and staff of the institution, as to the continuance of the present system of university scholarships, and as to the question whether the institution may be utilized to provide any part of the special education required by medical students, law students, and students in training for the profession of teachers."[14]

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14. In February 1912, the Macleod Committee issued an interim report making a recommendation for the establishment of a university college. One member of the Committee thought that the recommendation did not go far enough, and added a rider expressing the view that what was needed in the country was the establishment of a full-fledged university and not a university college. Governor McCallum concurred in the recommendation of the Committee and conveyed to the Secretary of State the following resolutions adopted by the Executive Council:

"1. That a University College be established in Ceylon;

2. That it be called the Ceylon University College;

3. That in the first place it shall be organized so as to provide for (i) Higher Education (ii) Courses in Arts and Science for teachers under training (iii) Preliminary training of medical students in chemistry, physics and biology;

4. That in the first instance no special provisions should be made for law students, but that a member of the Council of Legal Education should have a seat on the University College Council;

5. That hostels be provided by Government and leased by Government to different religious bodies."[15]

The Secretary of State referred the proposals to the Board of Education in England, and later sent a dispatch to Ceylon seeking clarification of certain points. Governor Robert Chalmers, who succeeded McCallum as Governor of Ceylon, replied to the dispatch outlining the following scheme:

"(a) A University College was to be established at Colombo.

(b) Its status in the first instance was to be that of a College qualified to grant diplomas, but ultimately it was to be converted into a degree-granting University.

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(c) The College was to be affiliated to an English University, preferably Oxford.

(d) The Royal College buildings were to be utilized and adapted for the purposes of the new institution.

(e) As to the staff, the Principal was to be an administrative officer, and was not himself to hold a Professorship. The Professors were to include a Professor of Sanskrit and Pali, and the professorial staff was to be assisted by Lecturers paid for special courses, the proposal to employ Lecturers on sterling salaries being abandoned.

(f) As to the curriculum of the College, the ordinary course was to consist of two parts:—

(i) A course of a general character leading to an intermediate examination; and

(ii) A more specialized course leading up to the final diploma in Arts, Science, or Oriental studies.

(g) The College was to be residential in character, and was to comprise Government hostels leased to educational organizations, the ideal being to establish something corresponding to the "Oxford Tutorial System."

(h) The government of the College was to be in the hands of a Council, and the conduct of examinations was to be left to a Board of Studies nominated by the Council.

(h) The College was to be opened to women."[16]

15. The University of Oxford, however, was not prepared to accept full affiliation without a period of trial, and suggested that in the first instance the University would appoint an Advisory Committee to advise the government with respect to the College. The Secretary of State accepted the scheme submitted by Governor Chalmers subject to this modification.

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16. The proposal to take over and adapt the Royal College buildings was abandoned, and it was decided to construct new buildings on a site adjacent to Royal College.

17. The war of 1914 to 1918 held up developments for a while, and it was not until 1921 that the Ceylon University College saw the light of day. The idea of affiliation to the University of Oxford was given up, and instead the Ceylon University College prepared students for the external examinations of the University of London.

Legal Education

18. The Preliminary Examination for admission as a law student was abolished in 1906. In its place, an Advocate student had to pass the Intermediate Examination in Arts of the London University, while a Proctor student had to pass the Matriculation examination of the London University. Passes in English and Latin at the Matriculation level were an essential requirement for admission. With the construction in 1911 of a building within easy reach of the law courts in Colombo, the Ceylon Law College was established to provide legal education. Admission to the legal profession was open only to men during the period under review, as indeed it was during the period which preceded it.

Medical Education

19. The Ceylon Medical College, established in 1870, continued to turn out fully qualified medical practitioners. An important event in its history was the incorporation of the Medical College Council by Ordinance No. 3 of 1905, thereby vesting it with formal power to confer diplomas in medicine and surgery, a power that had hitherto been exercised without a formal legal basis.

Teacher Education

20. The term 'Normal School' used to denote an institution for the training of teachers had gone out of usage, and the new term used was 'Training College'. In 1903, the government established a Training College in Colombo with three streams, English, Anglo-vernacular and Sinhalese to train teachers for these three types of schools. Admission was restricted to men students only, but following upon a recommendation from the Wace Commission it was thrown open to

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female students in course of time. A Tamil stream was also added after a few years. In 1919, the government realizing the inadequacy of the facilities for training Sinhalese teachers started a branch institution some miles away from Colombo.

21. Meanwhile, the teacher training institutions established by denominational bodies for training vernacular teachers also continued to function. The monitorial system was also in operation, and Teachers' Certificate examinations also continued to be held.

Technical Education

In 1907, a Royal Commission with Brigadier-General R. C. B. Lawrence as the Chairman was appointed to inquire into and report upon various matters in connection with the Royal and Technical Colleges. The Commission, which consisted of the Chairman and eight members, expressed its unanimous view that the Technical College "has hitherto been a practical failure for the purposes for which it was instituted."[17] The Commission made a number of recommendations for remedying the defects it had noted. Some of the recommendations were implemented in due course. Apart from serving the needs of technical departments for trained personnel, the Technical College paved the way for advances in science education:

> "The Government Technical Schools became the centre for the development of science education in the island. The pre-professional science classes in Chemistry, Physics and Biology for medical students for instance were conducted at the Technical Schools till the buildings for the laboratories at the Medical College were ready."[18]

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CHAPTER 46

LANGUAGE IN EDUCATION (1900 - 1920)

1. The situation in 1900 in regard to the place of English and the national languages in education was the result of the decisions and actions taken over a period of about seventy years. Schools were classified as English schools, Anglo-vernacular schools, and vernacular schools according to the extent to which English or the vernacular was used as the medium. They enjoyed prestige in this same order, and the students completing their education in the schools went into employment in which the rewards also diminished in the same order. The government for its part was committed after the year 1869 to providing vernacular education on a fairly large scale either directly through its vernacular schools or less directly through grants to religious and other organizations providing vernacular schools; and to encouraging English and Anglo-vernacular schools through the grant-in-aid scheme.

2. English occupied pride of place as the official language, as the language through which the highest levels of education could be attained, and as the language which opened the door to lucrative employment in general. The vernacular languages commanded no prestige at all and limited the levels of education and employment that could be obtained.

3. The best of the English schools in Ceylon were modelled on the so-called Public Schools of England which were in reality quite exclusive private schools. The English schools in Ceylon were started by Christian missionaries (except for one government institution, the Royal College). The Buddhist and Hindu revivals of the last quarter of the nineteenth century made little difference to the dominance of the British model for, while the Buddhists and the Hindus established a large number of schools using Sinhalese or Tamil as the medium of instruction, they also established a small number of English medium schools that really constituted their show pieces rivalling the English schools established by Christian missionary organizations. It was perhaps inevitable that this should have been so, for so long as the best educational and employment opportunities were open only to those receiving an English education, it was only by the provision of

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such an education that the Buddhists and the Hindus could hope to challenge the well established Christian monopoly over education.

4. To the 1901 Census Report of P. Arunachalam is owed the following powerfully argued statement of concern regarding the neglect of the national languages:

"They are taught from early childhood not things but words, and in the town schools the words of a foreign language. In these schools which attract the best pupils in the Island English is the medium of instruction to children imperfectly acquainted with the language. In the lower forms students scarcely understand what is taught or understand only at the cost of great mental strain. Think what it would be in England if, say, German was made the medium of instruction in the elementary school and English was entirely excluded. Yet German is more akin to English and easier to an English child than English is to a Sinhalese or Tamil child. A parrot-like repetition of words with little understanding of their meaning is necessarily encouraged. The pupils of the English schools are, in fact, worse off from an educational point of view than the pupils of the vernacular schools who are at least taught to think. English itself is so imperfectly taught that, after spending over a dozen years in its study, many are found unable to express themselves without committing gross blunders of grammar and idiom, though sometimes they acquire a certain vocabulary of English speech which they mistake for education."[1]

5. There were others, too, who were not happy with the place given to the national languages. They belonged to several groups. One was a religio-nationalist group which looked upon the neglect of the vernacular languages as a factor that denationalized the people. Upto a point, this group was inspired by the military successes of Japan over Russia. Japan was perceived as a fellow Asian and non-western language speaking race, and this group felt that Japan's success had a moral for other Asian countries. They were also encouraged by the contemporary movement in India for increased attention to the national languages. Anagarika Dharmapala was one of the chief spokesmen of this group. A second group consisted of social reformers with a secular disposition, and many of them belonged to the Ceylon Social Reform Society founded by Ananda Coomaraswamy on

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a multi-racial and multi-religious basis. A deputation from this Society waited on the Governor in 1906 urging him to introduce the national languages into the English schools. They pointed out that

> "under the scheme of education then existing, the higher class youths of the country, owing to their extremely inadequate knowledge of the native languages, found that not only could they not carry on an intelligent conversation with the villagers but they could not even express their ideas intelligently in their own homes where as a rule the parents talked the native languages, as was quite natural."[2]

A third group consisted of writers, mainly journalists and novelists writing in the national languages, with Piyadasa Sirisena as the most distinguished among the latter. They were in general nationalists and social reformers, with religion thrown in from time to time, and they decried the neglect of the national languages and other practices that served to alienate the people from their national culture. A fourth group consisted of quite perceptive observers and educators who saw quite clearly the sorry plight of many children who tried unsuccessfully to receive education through the medium of English which was not their home language. The views of the Rev. A. G. Fraser regarding the language burden placed on students have been quoted in chapter 43. Mention may also be made of F. L. Woodward, the British Principal of a Buddhist school, who expressed himself in no uncertain terms on the language question.

> "If you cannot read the very language in which your nationality is enshrined or speak the tongue which reflects its underlying life, you become at once a pariah. You will not be acknowledged as belonging to your adopted nationality. You will be out of touch with your own people and then miserably fall between two stools. You will be deprived of the advantages which may be derived from one side or the other. Empires have flourished and passed away with their languages and civilisations but the East has still the password to the common treasure of all, enshrined in a great literature, of science and metaphysics written in Pali and Sanskrit, Tamil and Sinhala and here must be sought the progress in real life. My own view is that the mother tongue should be enforced in all grant-in-aid schools if government has the welfare of the people at heart."[3]

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All these groups, each in its own way, campaigned for better recognition to be given to the national languages. Sometimes, the campaign was to the effect that the national languages should be used exclusively as the media of instruction. At other times, the campaign was to the effect that one or the other of the two national languages should be a compulsory subject of study in English schools.

6. Governor McCallum, too, expressed himself on the language question. He drew a comparison between India and Ceylon (chapter 43 paragraph 8) and wrote of Ceylon:

> "..the cultivation of the vernaculars has been neglected in the pursuit of English education, with the result that the desirability of their becoming the vehicle for diffusing Western knowledge among the masses—as has taken place in Japan is practically as far from realization as ever."[4]

One of the questions regarding which Governor McCallum sought the views of the local Board of Education was whether the London university should be asked to modify its requirements to permit "the inclusion of the Ceylon vernaculars."[5] The Board, however, expressed the view that it did not "at present desire the inclusion of the Ceylon vernaculars in the subjects for the Intermediate and higher examinations".[6] No information is available as to whether the Board was unanimous in its view. It may be noted that the Board consisted of one Ceylonese and seven Europeans, the Rev. A. G. Fraser being one of the members. The local Board of Education was also asked whether provision should be made for the vernaculars in the Cambridge Junior or Senior Local examination. Even on this question, the Board took up a negative attitude (chapter 43 paragraph 11).

7. One of the terms of reference of the Macleod Committee, appointed in June 1911, related to the provision that should be made in the curriculum for instruction in the vernacular languages. There was a division of opinion in the views submitted to the Committee by educationists and others. Some of the opinions were as follows:

— "When a small boy eight to ten years old comes to school, knowing little or no English, and speaking fluently only in his own vernacular, it is destructive to his vigorous mental growth

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to teach him through the medium of English, a foreign tongue. *It inevitably tends to make* the mind concentrate on the medium of expression rather than on the idea expressed. It increases greatly the emphasis laid on memorizing rather than on understanding. Also, it fosters that shallowness of mind, which is ready to accept any pleasing statement without enquiry"—the Rev. A. G. Fraser.[7]

— "I consider that the vernacular should be compulsory in the higher parts of the curriculum of secondary schools in place of the classical and modern languages of Europe"—the Rev. J. W. Garforth.[8]

— "In English schools the value of the vernacular languages is practically nil..The optional or compulsory use of the vernaculars for the classical languages of Europe would be a fatal mistake."—the Rev. J. G. C. Mendis.[9]

— "I do not consider it at all advisable to substitute the vernaculars, either optionally or compulsorily for the classical and modern languages of Europe in the higher parts of the curriculum of secondary schools."—Edward W. Perera.[10]

Strange as it may seem, some of the Europeans who sent memoranda to the Macleod Committee were more sensitive than some of the Sinhalese to the importance of giving the national languages a place in the curriculum of educational institutions.

8. The Macleod Committee recommended:

(a) "That in dealing with the vernacular-speaking children, the teaching of English reading and writing should in every case be preceded by a course of oral teaching of English conversation and some instruction in reading and writing in the mother tongue";

(b) "That no one should be promoted from the lower school who has not passed in English an examination in conversation, reading, writing and arithmetic equal to the 4th standard, and in the vernacular (if he is Sinhalese or Tamil) a 4th standard examination in reading and writing";

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(c) "That the compulsory requirements in the vernaculars should not go beyond the 4th standard."[11]

It may also be noted that the Macleod Committee was not averse to the inclusion of the vernaculars as optional subjects in the Elementary School Leaving Examination.

9. In 1919, Sinhalese and Tamil were for the first time included as optional subjects for the Cambridge Junior and Senior examinations as well as for the London Matriculation examination.

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CHAPTER 47

RELIGION IN SCHOOL (1900 - 1920)

1. The situation at the beginning of the twentieth century was that no religion was taught in government schools, while in grant-in-aid schools the religion of the managing body of the school was provided even to pupils professing religions different from that of the management. In practice, this meant the teaching of Christianity to non-Christian pupils. The imposition of religious instruction on the part of grant-in-aid schools made the enforcement of compulsory attendance impracticable. As the Director of Public Instruction stated in his Administration Report for 1901, "..the mere existence of an aided school without a conscience clause by no means necessarily places education within the reach of all of the neighbourhood."[1]

2. The Wace Commission of 1905 went into the question of a conscience clause. Some of the views expressed to the Commission, and the recommendations of the Commission have been considered in chapter 41 paragraphs 7 to 10, and 17.

3. The draft of the Town Schools Ordinance presented to the Legislative Council on 7 February 1906 contained a conscience clause which read as follows:

> "That religious instruction is not given to pupils of other denominations than that to which the school belongs, unless the consent of the parents has been first obtained."[2]

Christian missionary interests were opposed to the inclusion of a clause in this form, and saw to it that it was amended to read:

> "That religious instruction is not given to pupils of other denominations than that to which the school belongs, if the parents object."[3]

In effect, the onus placed on the school to obtain the consent of the parents was removed, and placed on the parent requiring him to object. It was indeed a foolhardy parent who ever dared to do so, and this provision in the Ordinance was more or less a dead letter. A similar

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clause was embodied in the Rural Schools Ordinance of 1907. The clause has been quoted in full in chapter 42 paragraph 6.

4. The debate regarding the inclusion of a conscience clause died down for the time being, but the issue of religious instruction came up in an indirect way in connection with the debate as to whether a denominational system of schools provided an appropriate pattern of education for the country. The views expressed by Inspector Bridge have been reported in chapter 43 paragraph 30. In 1915, the visit of a Russian delegation to study the condition of Buddhism in Ceylon led to a renewal of the demand for a state system of education. It was urged in the Legislative Council that it was "impossible for the children of any religious sect to be instructed in the schools of any other religious sect without their religious views being interfered subtly or openly."[4] The Ceylon Reform League also took up the issue, and it was pointed out that

> "Christian schools were really disguised instruments of proselytism, stumbling blocks to real educational expansion and an excuse for government inactivity and laissez faire policy."[5]

Governor Manning took note of the criticisms made of the denominational system. The statement of government policy tabled in the Legislative Council on 19 November 1919 had this to say:

> "Government can hardly acquiesce in the suggestion that compulsory attendance could in any way connote the suggestion of compulsory Christianity and such an idea it has never entertained. The Christian manager of schools in non-Christian villages is within measurable distance of being superseded by the non-Christian proprietor of the private school, and it would be inadvisable to seek any remedy, except a system of state education, in areas, other than those where the large majority of the inhabitants are Christians; for, with the elimination of the school under Christian management the private school—established, it is presumed, with the idea of avoiding the influence of Christian doctrines—loses its *raison d'etre*.."[6]

Brave words, indeed, but the government was mistaken in the belief that the Christians would readily surrender their privileged position

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in education. The Education Ordinance of 1920 provided for the continuance of denominationalism in education. In regard to the issue of religious instruction, the new legislation was an advance upon the previous legislation in the sense that English schools were also brought under a conscience clause. The clause itself was more or less in the same form as in the legislation of 1906 and 1907, and placed on parents the onus of requesting exemption of their children from religious instruction.

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CHAPTER 48

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EXAMINATIONS (1900 - 1920)

Cambridge Local Examinations

1. These examinations were first introduced in 1880, with 4 candidates appearing for the Senior examination and 17 candidates for the Junior examination. The number of candidates increased to 172 for the Senior, and 287 for the Junior by the year 1900. The Director of Public Instruction was quite pleased with this system of examinations:

> "These examinations are and will doubtless continue to be the principal test of higher work in the schools of Ceylon. The high reputation in which this examination is held is partially due to the admirable way in which it is managed in England and to the complete impartiality and secrecy which are ensured by its methods. It is not claimed for it that it is a perfect examination in this Island and it would be difficult,though not impossible, to improve upon it."[1]

2. The Ceylon University Association (see chapter 45 paragraph 6) was not satisfied with some features of the Cambridge local examination, and the Secretary of the Association wrote about it as follows in 1906:

> "The chief condemnation of the Cambridge tests is that they admit of specialization too early. The only compulsory subject for the Junior and Senior Examinations is arithmetic, together with dictation for the former. A pass in either of these examinations is possible by satisfying the examiners in three out of the sixteen or seventeen sections, and the utmost freedom is given to students to make their own combinations and permutations of sections and sub-sections, to the detriment of the proper development of the students' intellectual life."[2]

3. In December 1909, a committee of the Ceylon University Association submitted a memorandum to Governor McCallum in which it expressed some dissatisfaction with the examination:

> "There is at present a consensus of opinion that, while the examinations have largely stimulated a desire among the various communities for higher education generally, they have tended to make

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education somewhat superficial, owing to the multiplicity of the subjects over which they encourage students to distribute their attention".[3]

4. The scheme of the Junior examination in 1910 was on the following lines.[4] Part I consisted of two subjects only, namely Writing from Dictation and Arithmetic, and was compulsory. For Part II, students were required to satisfy the examiners

either in three of the sections 1-14 (one at least of the three being section 2 or one of the sections 4 to 9)

or in two of the sections 1-14, together with two subjects out of any other two of these sections (one at least of the two complete sections being section 2 or one of the sections 4 to 9); it was also provided that any one of the sections 15, 16, 17 may count in the place of one of these two subjects.

The sections and subjects were as follows:

1. Religious Knowledge (Christianity)
2. English Language and Literature
   (a) English Composition
   (b) Shakespeare: Twelfth Night
   (c) Scott: The Lay of the Last Minstrel
   (d) Scott: Ivanhoe; Tennyson: The Coming of Arthur, The Passing of Arthur
   (e) English Grammar
3. History and Geography
   (a) History of England
   (b) History of the British Empire
   (c) Roman History
   (d) Geography of Great Britain and Ireland
4. Latin
5. Greek
6. French

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7. German
8. Spanish
9. Dutch
10. Mathematics
11. Elementary Experimental Science
12. Chemistry
13. Physics: two of Heat, Sound and Light, Electricity and Magnetism
14. Botany and Physical Geography.
    (a) Botany
    (b) Natural History of Animals
    (c) Physiology and Hygiene
    (d) Physical Geography
15. (a) Book-Keeping
    (b) Mensuration and Surveying
    (c) Shorthand
16. Drawing
17 Music.

5. Governor McCallum, in his memorandum of 27 June 1910, quoted the scheme of the Junior examination in full in an appendix and expressed his own view that it was

> "difficult to imagine anything more unsuited to local conditions and requirements. Not only is there this multiplicity of seventeen sections to select from, but. .these subjects are in their turn divided in many cases into subjects really constituting several distinct subjects under one section. Nothing could be more harmful to the general cause of education, than to allow our boys to run riot in this way of choosing for themselves subjects for examinations, instead of having to take up a limited number of compulsory subjects which will eventuate in a useful intellectual standard. The present system is distinctly harmful to our boys, and unfair to the schools which have to keep provided the machinery of instruction in a plethora of subjects."[5]

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6. Governor McCallum went on to point out that apart from the multiplicity of subjects, another cause of criticism was that it was possible for a student to obtain a pass in both Junior and Senior examinations without taking up English as a subject.[6] In this connection, the Governor noted with satisfaction that the local Board of Education had recently recommended that a pass in English should be made compulsory in both examinations.[7]

7. The question was in due course referred to the Macleod Committee, which was of the view that the "natural line of reform" would be to adopt the Cambridge Junior and Senior School Certificate examinations in place of the Cambridge Local examinations.[8] "The principal difference is that candidates are required to pass in five sections and that the choice of sections is limited, so that the work corresponds to the full curriculum of a secondary school."[9]

8. Governor McCallum endorsed the recommendation to hold the Cambridge Junior and Senior School Certificate examinations in place of the Cambridge Local examinations.[10] The School Certificate examinations were held in Ceylon for the first time in 1916. In the examinations, as held locally, in order to obtain a pass candidates had to satisfy the examiners in the whole of the English section, in one of the mathematical or scientific subjects, and in three other subjects. Admission to the examination was restricted to students who had been attending recognized schools for at least two years in the case of the Juniors and three years in the case of the Seniors. A minimum age limit was also fixed. In 1919, Sinhalese and Tamil were included as subjects in the Cambridge Junior and Senior examinations for the first time.

London University examinations

9. The introduction into Ceylon of the examinations of the University of London has been referred to in chapter 35. The number of different examinations which could be taken up in Ceylon increased during the period under review, and by the year 1920 candidates could sit for the following examinations of the University of London: Matriculation, Intermediate in Arts, Bachelor of Arts, Intermediate in Science, Bachelor of Science, Bachelor of Laws, and Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery (First and Second examinations). As from 1919, Sinhalese and Tamil were recognized as subjects for the Bachelor of Arts examination.

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Local examinations

a. Oriental Studies Society examinations

10. A Committee on Oriental Studies appointed in 1902 recommended the institution of three examinations: a Preliminary, an Intermediate and a Final examination, the last named being comparable to the examination for the degree of Bachelor of Arts of a university, in order to "centralize and bring to a system the work of the various institutions" devoted to oriental learning.[11] The Preliminary examination was held for the first time in 1903, the subjects of the examination being Sanskrit, Pali, Sinhalese, and the History and Archaeology of Ceylon. The Intermediate and the Final examinations were held for the first time in 1905 and 1907 respectively.

b. Other local examinations

11. As from 1914, the government introduced the Elementary School Leaving Certificate examination to be taken up at the end of the eighth standard by students who were being educated through the English medium in schools which did not aspire to send up candidates for the Cambridge Junior School Certificate examination. Later, in 1917, the government decided to hold the Vernacular School Leaving Certificate examination for students completing the eighth standard in vernacular schools. In order to make this examination attractive, the government undertook to give special consideration to holders of this certificate in appointing headmen, registrars, etc.

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CHAPTER 49

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EDUCATIONAL STATISTICS AND FINANCE

(1900 - 1920)

1. The three Tables which follow show the growth of the denominational schools during the period 1900-1915. It will be noted that while the indigenous religious groups made some progress during the period, they still lagged behind the Christians.

TABLE

Grant-in-aid English Schools, 1900 - 1915

	1900	1905	1910	1915
American Mission ..	5	9	8	10
Baptist	0	0	0	1
Buddhist	12	14	17	21
Church of England ..	46	53	51	53
Mohammedan	2	3	1	1
Presbyterian	2	3	4	4
Private and Saivite ..	14	20	20	25
Roman Catholic ..	34	42	48	55
Wesleyan Mission ..	27	30	28	27
	142	174	177	197

TABLE

Grant-in-aid Anglo-vernacular Schools, 1900 - 1915

	1900	1905	1910	1915
American Mission ..	—	—	2	1
Baptist	1	1	—	1
Buddhist	1	—	1	4
Church of England ..	5	6	8	8
Mohammedan	—	—	1	1
Private	—	1	7	6
Quaker	—	1	1	1
Roman Catholic ..	1	1	6	7
Wesleyan	8	8	8	9
	16	18	34	38

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TABLE

Grant-in-aid Vernacular Schools, 1900 - 1915

	1900	1905	1910	1915
American Mission ..	124	119	121	116
Baptist	24	21	29	33
Buddhist	129	141	208	325
Church of England ..	267	272	344	333
Gansabhawa	—	7	4	1
Mohammedan	2	4	3	5
Municipal	—	—	—	1
Private and Saivite ..	51	146	257	262
Quaker	—	14	20	20
Roman Catholic ..	301	350	399	428
Salvation Army	—	—	2	5
Wesleyan Mission ..	272	289	312	298
	1,170	1,363	1,699	1,827

2. The following Table shows the amount of government grant earned by each denomination.

TABLE

Percentage of Government Grant Earned by Each Denomination

	1900	1915	1922
American Mission	9.0	4.9	5.7
Baptist	1.5	1.0	1.4
Buddhist	12.0	19.0	12.6
Church of England	19.5	16.2	16.2
Mohammedan	—	0.1	0.7
Presbyterian	—	0.4	0.9
Private and Saivite ..	6.2	14.5	16.7
Quaker	—	—	0.3
Roman Catholic	32.2	29.8	33.2
Salvation Army	—	0.3	0.1
Wesleyan	19.0	13.3	12.2

Particulars for 1922 rather than 1920 are given as the latter were not available. It should be noted that the category 'private' would include both Christians and non-Christians. According to the Census of 1921, the Buddhists, Hindus and Muslims constituted 91.2 per cent of the population, but the grant earned by them in 1922 was less than 30.0 per cent. The Christians who constituted only 8.8 per cent earned a grant over 70.0 per cent.

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3. The following table shows the growth of government schools. It will be noted that English schools increased only by one, and that government effort was very largely concentrated on expanding the number of vernacular schools.

TABLE

Government Schools, 1900 - 1915

	1900	1905	1915
English	4	5	5
Anglo-vernacular	12	18	20
Vernacular ..	484	801	734

Note

The Tables are based on the Administration Reports of the Director of Public Instruction.

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CHAPTER 50

REVIEW OF EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

(1900 - 1920)

1. The period under review was characterized by a large volume of public discussion about education, followed by a certain amount of action which, however, fell far short of expectations.

2. The period began with an expression of concern by the Governor about the increasing expenditure of the government on education. There was consequently an exploration of ways of passing on part of the burden of the expenditure to others. A curtailment of educational facilities was out of the question. The Census Report of 1901 highlighted the inadequacies in the provision of education at all levels—elementary, secondary and higher—for the population in general; and also the almost complete absence of educational facilities for a depressed caste group, the *rodiyas*. The Census Report attracted the attention of some parliamentarians in England, and they insisted that effective action be taken. The lack of educational facilities for the children of estate labourers of Indian origin was also brought to the attention of the British public. Local pressure, too, began to mount. Various nationalist and/or social reform groups agitated for compulsory elementary education, a more relevant secondary education, the establishment of a university, and a place for the national languages in education.

3. The government took recourse to commissions and committees for recommendations to solve the several issues in education to which the attention of the government was directed. The Van-Cuylenberg mission to India in 1901 to examine the way in which local authorities in certain parts of India shouldered the responsibility for elementary education, the Ellis Committee appointed in 1901 to report on a proposal to relieve the general revenue of a part of the cost of education, the report on the Ellis recommendations by a Sub-Committee of the Incidence of Taxation Commission, a Commission appointed in 1904 to report on the education of the *rodiyas* of Ceylon, a Commission appointed the same year to report on the education of the children of estate coolies, and finally the Wace Commission of 1905 all

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had their say. The Indian example as well as the Balfour Act of 1902 in Britain transferring the responsibility for education to local authorities also served as guides to action. In the end, two Ordinances, namely the Town Schools Ordinance of 1906, and the Rural Schools Ordinance of 1907 were enacted.

4. The Ordinances were no more than a facade offering the pretext of effective action rather than instruments of effective action. Ordinance No. 33 of 1884 which empowered Municipalities and Local Boards to maintain English schools was a miserable failure, and yet the Town Schools Ordinance gave local authorities in cities and towns the power to establish and maintain schools for vernacular education, and to enforce attendance. Both the provision of education and the enforcement of attendance were permissive, and the extent to which local authorities took an interest in these tasks was so meagre that the legislation was more or less a dead letter. The legislation did, however, succeed in setting down certain limits within which grant-in-aid schools were permitted to provide religious instruction. The most important of these limits was the provision enabling a parent to ask for exemption of his child from religious instruction. In practice, few parents dared to incur the wrath of the school authorities by making use of the provision, but the existence of the rule made parents feel that their religious rights were respected. It should be noted that the rule fell short of the Wace Commission recommendation that before a student was given religious instruction the consent of the parent should be obtained by the school.

5. By the Rural Schools Ordinance, which applied to areas not covered by the Town Schools Ordinance, District Schools Committees were created with responsibility for education, together with Village School Committees for sub-divisions. In some cases, the local body of the sub-division, namely the Village Committee, was also the Village School Committee. The Rural Schools Ordinance was more successful than the Town Schools Ordinance but the chief constraint in limiting its activities was finance.

6. All in all, the public sector in education financed by the government with or without some support from the local authority was always feeble. The government for its part relied chiefly on the grant-in-aid scheme for the promotion of education, extending generous financial assistance to the private sector, and treating the public

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sector in niggardly fashion. Vernacular education was compulsory in theory in certain parts of the country but not in practice, while in the others it was not compulsory in theory and even less so in practice.

7. In the preceding paragraphs, the focus of attention has been the vernacular school system. The legislation of 1906 and 1907 did not apply to English schools. With the single exception of Royal College, the public sector in English education was weak and it was the grant-in-aid system that occupied pride of place. Taking all schools together, regardless of medium of instruction, the number of government schools increased by 419 during the period 1900 to 1920, while the number of grant-in-aid schools increased by 794.

8. The curriculum of schools providing education in the vernacular seldom rose above elementary level. English schools in Ceylon looked to the best secondary schools in England to serve as models. The curriculum suited a gifted minority, and the majority derived little advantage from it. There was frequent discussion of curricular diversification, especially of the need to provide vocational subjects, but it ended in no more than lip service.

9. The national languages served as a vehicle for the elementary education provided in the vernacular schools, but struggled to receive recognition in the English medium schools. A pass at the standard 4 level was tardily accepted as a requirement, and in a limited number of schools there was provision for the optional study of the national languages to a higher level.

10. Agitation for the establishment of a university fell on deaf years, as one Governor after another found excuses for insisting that the country did not need a university. The principle of establishing a teaching institution for preparing students to appear for degree examinations of a British university was at last conceded by the British government, but the period of gestation was unduly long and a university college did not see the light of day until after the period under review.

11. The local Board of Education was European-Christian dominated and scarcely reflected indigenous interests. The pressure group that influenced the Governor's thinking most was also of similar complexion, and it was the Governor's thinking that generally lay behind

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educational decisions. This dismal picture was partially brightened during the period under review by the occasional gleam that came from the Board of Education in England which, on the few instances when it was consulted, brought to bear educational perspectives on national needs uncontaminated by the vested interests of the above mentioned pressure groups. The comments of the Board of Education in England were always well-balanced and the report of J. J. R. Bridge, H. M. Inspector sent by the Board of Education to make an on-the-spot survey was in many respects like a torch that was flashed on a murky pool and revealed the skeletons that lay underneath.

12. The class bias that characterized educational provision in Ceylon throughout the nineteenth century was recognized and in a sense institutionalized by the nomenclature suggested by the Macleod Committee. The elementary school providing education in the vernacular for the masses was at the bottom end of the socio-economic continuum, and at the upper end was the 'fully organized secondary school' providing an English education, including science, leading upto the Cambridge Senior and London Matriculation examinations for the upper socio-economic classes. In between were the elementary school with a secondary department working upto the junior standard, and the elementary school with a secondary department working upto the senior standard providing limited opportunities for social mobility.

13. The denominational system had its share of critics in the representations made to the Wace Commission, but the Commission was reluctant to interfere with it. The Bridge Report also highlighted its inadequacies and wastefulness, but the Macleod Committee disregarded the issue. The system did thrive throughout the greater part of the period under review until Governor Manning's memorandum of November 1919 posed a threat to it. The vested interests behind the system were, however, too powerful to be dislodged, and the Education Ordinance of 1920 did not succeed in reducing the pre-eminence of the denominational school system.

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SECTION VI

1920 — 1948

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CHAPTER 51

THE EDUCATION ORDINANCE OF 1920

1. The substantive legislation relating to education, as at 1919, consisted of two Ordinances dealing with vernacular education. One was the Town Schools Ordinance No. 5 of 1906 which applied to Municipalities, Local Board Towns and Sanitary Board Towns, making each of them the authority for vernacular education, with the exception of the Municipality of Colombo. In the case of the Municipality of Colombo, responsibility for vernacular education was transferred from the Municipality to the Director of Education by Ordinance No. 39 of 1916, as the Colombo Municipality was unable to discharge its functions for financial reasons. The Rural Schools Ordinance No. 8 of 1907 applied to areas other than Municipalities, Local Board Towns and Sanitary Board Towns. By that Ordinance, education in such areas was the responsibility of District Schools Committees specially set up for the purpose, subject to a provision that Village Committees in such areas were responsible for vernacular education in their own areas of authority. In so far as English Schools were concerned, there was no substantive Ordinance dealing with them, although there were Codes of Regulations applicable to government schools and aided schools.

2. A Director of Public Instruction was appointed in 1869, and a Department of Public Instruction was established. In 1912 the designation of the Director of Public Instruction was changed to Director of Education, and the Department of Public Instruction became the Department of Education. No legislation was enacted to give legal status to the Director or to define his functions in the overall plan of education in the country. The Director of Public Instruction was mentioned in two or three clauses in the Town Schools Ordinance No. 5 of 1906, and when the Ordinance was amended in 1916 his designation was changed to Director of Education. Although the Rural Schools Ordinance No. 8 of 1907 was also amended at about the same time, the reference in it to a Director of Public Instruction remained unchanged.

3. The Governor set up in 1896 a Board of Education "to advise the Director on such questions connected with the working of voluntary schools receiving aid from the public revenues as he might wish to

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take their advice upon."[1] No reference was made to the Board of Education in the Town Schools Ordinance or the Rural Schools Ordinance, and it had no statutory standing.

4. Apart from the above mentioned legislative anomalies, account had to be taken of the problems arising from the dominant position which denominational schools occupied in education, The criticism levelled against the denominational school system in the representations made to the Wace Commission has been noted in chapter 41. A more telling indictment was that made by Inspector Bridge in his report and echoed by the Board of Education in England in the following comment:

> "Though the desire of the different denominations to have their own schools is natural and indeed inevitable, Mr. Bridge has satisfied himself that the competition thus engendered is, under the conditions that obtain in Ceylon, highly detrimental to efficiency and entirely prejudicial to economy; and secondly, that this competition has led, by a process of artificial development, not only to a serious over-supply of schools and to a consequent lowering of the general standard of efficiency, but also to confusion in the aim and purpose of the English school system."[2]

5. In the demands for political reforms that were voiced on a mounting scale during the period 1915 onwards by the Ceylon Reform League and the Ceylon National Association, education occupied a central place. It was the policy of the British to reiterate *ad nauseam* that they were governing the colonies in the discharge of a trust, semi-divine if not divine judging from the sanctimonious style in which the trusteeship idea was affirmed, until such time that the natives showed themselves capable of governing themselves. Education being perceived as the road to such competence, agitation for constitutional reforms transferring a greater measure of responsibility to the representatives of the people was accompanied by demands for the improved provision of education. It was in this context that the trenchant criticism by Bridge of the denominational system had a special significance. If indeed the denominational school system was detrimental to efficiency, prejudicial to economy and made the planned expansion of education impossible, the system had to be abolished as a precondition for the improved provision of education, both in quantitative

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and qualitative terms. An important educational reform urged side by side with the demand for a greater share in political participation was the curtailment, if not the abolition, of the denominational school system. A typical statement of this position was as follows:

> "..the Christian schools were really disguised instruments of proselytisation, stumbling blocks to real educational expansion and an excuse for inactivity and a laissez faire policy."[3]

6. Governor William Manning showed a great deal of sensitivity to the criticism of the denominational system on the grounds of both religion and finance, and was convinced of the need for substantial reforms. Addressing a deputation of school managers on 31 October, 1919 he is reported as having said,

> "Except in the case of such schools as had a majority of pupils of the particular denomination, it was the policy of the government gradually to replace denominational by government schools."[4]

7. New legislation was proposed to the Legislative Council in November 1919. On 19 November, speaking in the Legislative Council on the Local Government Bill, the Attorney-General pointed out that the Education Bill which was also on the Order Paper for the day removed education altogether from the purview of local government bodies, and that the entire expenditure on the provision of education would be met out of the general revenue. This was the dismal end of the attempt to involve local government bodies in the financing of education. The attempt had been so unsuccessful that there was no one to shed a single tear over the change.

8. The views of the government regarding the provision and management of education were set out in a memorandum tabled on the same day along with the Education Bill. The memorandum read as follows:

> "Now, while it is undoubtedly true that the people of this country owe the Christian Missions a deep debt of gratitude for their work as pioneers of education, it should have been clear to all concerned that a situation had arisen wherein it would have been advisable for Christian missionaries to withdraw from work as the agents of Government for providing secular education for non-Christian communities.

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It was apparently lost sight of that the non-Christian communities might deprecate the necessity for sending their children to Christian schools, even if they were called Public Vernacular Schools; and would hold the opinion that the doctrines of Christianity might not be wholly eliminated in the conduct of such schools.

This feeling of uncertainty expressed itself in the rapid extension of the establishment of private "rival" schools, not in every case of a high standard; and the Education Department appears to have attempted to effect a compromise by the insertion in the Code of an addition to clause 12, paragraph 6, recognising these schools, but refusing them State aid for a period of five years; a measure which regarded as a deterrent, has been by no means a success, for the rival schools have grown and flourished until we have an undesirable condition of affairs existing which does not make for economy.

The State is now provided with machinery of its own for the management of schools; it examines all teachers and issues diplomas to them; its inspecting officers devote an amount of attention to grant-in-aid schools equal to that given to Government schools, and it is difficult to see why a system in which the manager is merely an intermediary between the State and the teacher should have been allowed to persist. If a saving has been effected, it has been effected at the cost of efficiency.

The position of the Christian manager of schools in non-Christian villages requires very careful consideration. To quote from the report of the Education Commission of 1905:

'There is something anomalous in a system under which funds raised by taxation are used to support a movement for changing the religion of those taxed.'

Government can hardly acquiesce in the suggestion that compulsory attendance could in any way connote the suggestion of compulsory Christianity and such an idea it has never entertained. The Christian manager of schools in non-Christian villages is within measurable distance of being superseded by the non-Christian proprietor of the private school, and it would be inadvisable to seek for any remedy, except a system of State education, in areas, other than those

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where the large majority of the inhabitants are Christians; for, with the elimination of the school under Christian management the private school established, it is presumed, with the idea of avoiding the influence of Christian doctrines—loses its *raison d'etre*; and it must be granted that, however high the motives which may have animated the promoters, there is connected with these schools, and the voluntary system generally, an incontrovertible record of ill-paid teachers for there has been no legislation to define the limits within which public funds given as grants-in-aid to these private ventures might properly be expended. The grants were intended primarily for the pay of teachers, but the permission to apply part to "other school requirements" (clause 22) has been so broadly interpreted that public money has been spent on the erection of buildings, which afterwards become the property of the proprietor; and it has become the practice to consider a grant-in-aid vernacular school as a school which must be supported entirely by public funds.

It has been assumed that the question of eliminating as far as is necessary the system of grants-in-aid presents insuperable difficulties, but, although it is a much more difficult matter to deal with than it would have been in 1905, it is not so formidable a task as it might be in the future. A large number of the qualified teachers will be employed on probation in Government schools; superfluous schools will be closed; it is believed that many of the non-Christian schools will be handed over voluntarily to the State; a pretentious building scheme in the immediate future is neither necessary nor desirable and Government possesses ample and up-to-date machinery for the training of teachers, male and female, for vernacular schools.

In the belief that this a measure of reform which will benefit both teachers and children, we may hope for the co-operation of all concerned in arriving at a speedy and final settlement,"[5]

9. Speaking in elaboration of the memorandum, the Attorney-General emphasized that there were

"more schools being carried on in certain localities than are really necessary. You have overlapping, you have increased cost, and, as often happens, you have also diminished efficiency. The tendency has arisen, so far as the Education Department is concerned,

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> to provide schools in non-Christian localities and the chances are that this tendency must, in the ordinary course of events, strengthen, and, as a result, assistance to schools, missionary and otherwise will have to be withdrawn gradually."[6]

An implication of these statements was that if the children of a major religious group attended a school run by another religious group, for want of a school provided by co-religionists, the government might have to provide a government school. If such an action led to a dimunition in attendance in the previous school and rendered it superfluous, it might be closed. It was hoped that many of the non-Christian schools would be handed over to the government, as many Buddhist, Hindu and Muslim managers had given such an assurance. It was admitted that in areas where there was a sufficiently large Christian population there was no objection to the continuation of the practice of grant-in-aid schools without the necessity for a government school. This was the answer to the apprehensions of the Roman Catholics that their management would be ousted. It was repeatedly emphasized that it was only in districts which were "not pronounced in their character" (in other words, districts without religious homogeneity) that the government would establish government schools as a matter of policy.

10. Strong support for the stand taken by the government was provided by one of the un-official members, K. Balasingham.

> "If elementary education, which is very largely vernacular education, is to continue to be compulsory, I think in a country like Ceylon where there are so many religions, it is eminently desirable that the State should provide secular schools for such education."[7]

Balasingham then quoted statements made by two Protestant missionaries favouring the state provision of education (see chapter 41 paragraph 9).

11. Another un-official member, A. Sapapathy, while supporting the policy of the government, was at pains to point out that the Governor erred in his memorandum when he referred to Buddhist and Hindu schools as rival schools in the sense of their being rivals to the Christian denominational schools. He emphasized that they were "schools

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established to supply a great want of the non-Christian community", and that to establish such schools was "undoubtedly a legitimate expectation" on the part of the Buddhist and Hindu communities.[8]

12. Altogether the tenor of the discussion was such that high hopes could be entertained for an amicable solution to the question of denominational control over education after the enactment of the Ordinance, but these hopes proved illusory. The retreat of denominationalism was no more that strategic, and the loss of the battle by its adherents did not presage loss of the war. Indeed, a new and completely effective second line of defence, in the form of the Board of Education, protected denominational interests. As set up by successive Governors, it was so overwhelmingly weighted in favour of Christian (including Roman Catholic) interests that no rational planning of educational provision that endangered denominationalism had the faintest chance of seeing the light of day. Any organization (or re-organization) of school education or teacher education had to take place within the sanctified framework of an assured continuation of Christian denominational schools.

13. The Education Ordinance No: 1 of 1920 contained six parts as follows:

Part I. — The Department of Education, the Director and Officers
Part II. — Board of Education
Part III. — Religion in Schools and Local Managers
Part IV. — Education Districts and District Committees
Part V. — Estate Schools
Part VI. — General

Part I: The Department of Education, the Director and Officers

14. This part of the Ordinance was intended to give a legal status to the Department of Education, the Director and Officers. Prior to the enactment of this Ordinance, they had no legal status. The promulgation of a single Ordinance in place of the two Ordinances of 1906 and 1907 that dealt separately with the urban and the rural sectors provided the opportunity for taking an integrated view, as it was the responsibility of the Director of Education to propose to the Board of Education for its approval regulations, to be known in their

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totality as the Code of Regulations, which set out the conditions for the operation of schools. In the circumstances, it was only appropriate that the Department of Education, the Director and Officers should receive explicit mention in the new Ordinance.

Part II : The Board of Education

15. Although a Board of Education existed since 1896, it was not mentioned even incidentally in any legislation, and it was only in the Ordinance of 1920 that the Board received explicit mention. According to the Ordinance, the Board of Education was to be composed of "not less than sixteen or more than twenty members nominated by the Governor, of whom the Director and the Assistant Director and two Unofficial Members of the Legislative Council shall be four."[9] One of the chief ways in which the composition of the Board differed from what existed previously was in the provision of membership on the Board to two members of the Legislative Council. Although the members of the Council were to serve on the Board in their individual capacities and not as representatives of the Legislative Council, this step ensured a relationship between the Legislative Council and the Board of Education. A more important and formal relationship was established by the provision that all regulations made by the Board should be reported to the Council to "be disallowed, amended or otherwise dealt with" by the Council.[10] The Director was to be the Chairman of the Board. The most important function of the Board was to make regulations, to be known as the Code, dealing with specified subjects relating in the main to elementary and secondary education, and to the training of teachers.

16. In regard to elementary and secondary education, the following were perhaps the more important among the ten subjects about which regulations were to be framed.

1. "The establishment, taking over, transfer, recognition, maintenance, continuance, or discontinuance of elementary and secondary schools;"[11]
2. The courses of study;
3. The inspection of schools;
4. The status of local managers;

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5. The qualifications and salaries of teachers; also the appointment, classification, suspension and removal of teachers;

6. The enforcement of compulsory attendance.

In regard to the training of teachers, the only subject mentioned was as follows:

"The establishment, taking over, transfer, administration, maintenance, continuance or discontinuance of government and assisted training schools for teachers."[12]

17. The first subject quoted verbatim above was intended to provide the opportunity for a rational development of educational provision by the establishment of schools where they were needed, by the discontinuance of schools that had been set up either through religious rivalries or religious needs duplicating educational provision in a manner unjustified by the number of pupils involved, and by the taking over under state management of schools that justified such a measure.

Part III : Religion in Schools and Local Managers

18. The inclusion of two subjects "Religion in Schools" and "Local Managers" in the same Part of the Ordinance is idiosyncratic in the sense that there is no relationship between the two. Nothing that is said about managers has a special relationship to religion.

The clauses relating to religion were as follows:

"13. No applicant shall be refused admission into any assisted school on account of the religion, nationality, race, caste, or language of such applicant or of either of his parents.

14. Religious teaching shall not form part of the instruction to be given at any Government school whether secondary or elementary by any teacher; but any minister or teacher of religion authorized by the Director by writing under his hand may give religious instruction to the children of the religious denomination to which the minister belongs at such times and places as may be agreed upon between him and the Director.

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15. (1) It shall not be required as a condition of any child being admitted into or continuing in an assisted school that he shall attend or abstain from attending any Sunday School or any place of religious worship, or that he shall attend any religious observance or any instruction in religious subjects in the school or elsewhere, from which observance or instruction he may be withdrawn by his parent or guardian, or that he shall attend the school on any day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parent belongs.

(2) The time during which any religious observance is practised or religious instruction is given at any meeting of an assisted school shall be either at the beginning or the end or at the beginning and the end of such meeting, and shall be inserted in a time table approved by the Director, and to be kept permanently and conspicuously affixed in every school room, and any scholar may be withdrawn by his parent or guardian from such observance or instruction without forfeiting any of the other benefits of the school."[13]

It will be noted about clause 13 firstly that it mentions not only religion but nationality etc., and secondly that its operation is limited to assisted schools. Nationality, race, caste and language are wrongly placed in a section entitled "Religion in Schools and Local Managers", and should have been found a suitable place elsewhere in the Ordinance. In regard to refusal of admission, there is no clause anywhere in the Ordinance forbidding government schools from refusing admission. It may have been taken for granted that government schools would not refuse admission, and there may have been instances where assisted schools had refused admission on account of religion etc. It may be noted that the earlier Ordinances, namely The Town Schools Ordinance of 1906 and the Rural Schools Ordinance of 1907, which governed vernacular education did not have a clause similar to 13. (There was no legislation at all governing English education).

Clause 14 related to religious instruction in government schools. The position which obtained in government schools until 1920 is unclear. The Town Schools Ordinance of 1906 had a clause forbidding religious teaching in vernacular schools established by the local authority in terms of clause 6 (1) of the Ordinance.

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20. According to the present clause, applicable to both English and vernacular government schools, it is not the function of the government to provide religious instruction in government schools. Religious instruction will not be part of the curriculum in government schools. Any religious body, desiring to provide religious instruction in a government school to pupils belonging to the religious body, will receive authority to do so.

21. In so far as assisted vernacular schools were concerned, the Town Schools Ordinance and the Rural Schools Ordinance provided that any religious instruction in them was subject to five conditions:

(a) That religious instruction is given only during the times specified in the school time table;

(b) That religious instruction is not given to pupils of other denominations than that to which the school belongs, if the parents object;

(c) That pupils who do not attend religious instruction are employed in other studies during the hours allotted to religious instruction;

(d) That such pupils, if their parents object to their being present in the room where religious instruction is given, are either allowed to study in some other part of the school premises during the hours when such instruction is given or their presence in the school during such hours is excused; and

(e) That a copy of the above mentioned provisions is conspicuously posted in the school, in the English, Sinhalese and Tamil languages.

Clause 15 in the Ordinance was applicable to both English and vernacular assisted schools, and in this sense brought the English assisted schools within the purview of a conscience clause. It also specified that religious instruction should be given at the beginning and/or the end of a school day, thereby making it convenient for any parent who was not in favour of religious instruction to arrange for his child to withdraw from religious instruction.

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The clause did not, however, go far enough. It placed the responsibility on the parent to take the initiative in seeking exemption. What the indigenous religious groups strongly desired was a conscience clause that placed the responsibility on the school to seek the consent of the parent before the child could be given instruction in a religion other than that of the parent.

Part IV : Education Districts and District Committees

22. Every Municipal or Local Board town, every local authority created in the future, and every district was to be an educational district. In every educational district, an Education District Committee was to be established consisting of not less than six and not more than nine members, of whom two were to be nominees of the Municipality, Local Board town or local authority concerned. The others were to be nominated by the Governor. In the case of revenue districts which became education districts, all the members of the Education District Committees were nominated by the Governor. The legislation deprived Municipalities and Local Board Towns of the responsibility envisaged for them in the Town Schools Ordinance of 1906, in terms of which these local bodies were entrusted with responsibility for vernacular education in their respective areas. The intentions of the legislation of 1906 had not been realized, and there was general satisfaction with the new legislation. In the case of Village Committee areas, however, it was permissible for the Education District Committee within which the Village Committee was situated to delegate certain powers to the Village Committee by means of by-laws. Thus, Village Committees retained some of the connection they had with education under the Rural Schools Ordinance of 1907. All District and Village Committees were required to assist the Director in all matters relating to elementary schools within their respective areas.

23. District Committees were empowered to make by-laws for the compulsory attendance of children between the ages of six and fourteen years (or between the ages of six and ten in the case of Muhammadan and Tamil girls). It was the responsibility of the parent to make "adequate and suitable provision" for the education of children, and failure to do so was punishable by a fine or by imprisonment, in default of payment.[14]

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24. In regard to the financing of education, an important decision embodied in the new legislation was that the central government would allocate to Education District Committees money out of the revenue of the central government. This money was to be used for the benefit of government schools for

"(a) Erecting new buildings, extending existing school buildings, making and fencing school gardens and playgrounds, constructing teachers' dwelling houses, and wells for school gardens, necessary premises and offices;

(b) Repairing school buildings, teachers' dwelling houses, fences, wells, offices, and premises;

(c) Supplying furniture, school apparatus and agricultural implements."[15]

The money allocated by the government could also be applied for the benefit of assisted schools, with the approval of the Director. The salaries of teachers in government schools were to be paid by the government. In the case of clerks and other offices employed by District Committees, the salary payments had to come out of the funds allocated by the government to the Committee.

Part V : Estate Schools

25. Parts II to IV of the Ordinance did not apply to an estate on which there were more than twenty-five children, between the ages of six and ten, of labourers employed on the estate. Where, however, the children on such an estate could be more conveniently educated in a school of the education district within or near which the estate was situated, the Governor could by gazette notification exempt the estate from the provisions of Part V and bring it under Parts II to IV.

26. It was the duty of the Superintendent of an estate to provide for the vernacular education of labourers' children, who were between the ages of six years and ten years, by providing a class-room and a teacher. No child between the ages of six and ten was to be employed on work in the estate before the hour of ten in the morning. The Superintendent was liable to a fine for neglect of this duty. Furthermore, if the Superintendent failed to make adequate provision for the education of labourers' children between the ages of six and ten, the Director of Education could serve the Superintendent with notice to

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make such provision. If he failed to do so within six months, the Director had the power to authorize another person to make educational provision on the estate, and recover the expenditure from the estate. The labourers who had children between the ages of six and ten were responsible for the attendance at school of their children, and were liable to be fined for neglect of this duty.

27. An important point to be noted is that by the Ordinance itself education became compulsory for estate children between the ages of six years and ten years, while the situation in respect of non-estate children was that Education District Committees had to make by-laws before education in their respective areas could become compulsory. The upper age for compulsion was, however, ten years for estate children, and fourteen years for non-estate children, with the exception of Tamil and Muslim girls, in whose case it was ten years.

28. It should also be noted that estate children between the ages of six years and ten years were protected from being engaged in employment before 10 a.m., whereas a similar protection was not extended to non-estate children.

Part VI : General

29. The first clause in the section read as follows:

> "It shall be the duty of any person who desires to open a school or give instruction in English or any other language in any school-room or any building not previously used by him for the purpose to any class or classes attended by children of school-going age, at least one month before the opening of such proposed school or the commencing of such proposed instruction, to report particulars of such school or instruction to the Director, and thereafter supply such information as may be required by the Director with regard to his school or his class or classes, and the courses of instruction he is giving or proposes to give."[16]

A subsequent clause provided for the inspection by the Director or one of his officers of any elementary school. Notice had to be given of intent to open a school, but nowhere in the legislation was there any clause empowering the Director to prohibit a person from opening a school, due notice of which had been given. A school opened in this

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manner could, however, be closed, if under Part II of the Ordinance regulations had been made dealing with the discontinuance of schools. The idea behind the clause was to prevent the multiplication of schools.

30. The remaining clauses of Part VI dealt with the judicial processes that were necessary to bring before the law persons contravening the Ordinance.

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CHAPTER 52

THE POLITICAL AND SOCIAL BACKGROUND

(1920 - 1948)

The agitation for constitutional reforms

1. As in the preceding two or three decades, the agitation in the 1920's came more or less from two elite groups. One group consisted of those who had received a high quality education through the English language assimilating western ideas of political independence. They belonged largely to the professions but a fair number were engaged in entrepreneurial undertakings especially in the agricultural sector. The second group consisted of a second level elite, in as much as it consisted of those who had received an education in Sinhalese or Tamil, the best available in these languages and yet limited in scope in comparison with education in English. Leadership at the topmost level was not theirs to claim, but they played a useful role often through their contributions to newspapers in Sinhalese and Tamil highlighting constitutional issues.

2. A third elite group joined in the agitation in the 1930's and 1940's. They were also English educated, but an important difference between this new group and the first group mentioned above is that the new group consisted of intellectuals with a leftist orientation. A labour movement strictly interested in the rights of labour appeared on the scene in the 1920's, and this new group was able to penetrate into it in the 1930's and 1940's, adding a political dimension to the movement. It was intellectual and verbal, rather than action-oriented.

3. At no time was there in Ceylon a mass agitation for constitutional reforms comparable to the Civil Disobedience Movement which took place in India. The Indian nationalist movement was, however, a source of strength for the Ceylonese, and Ceylon enjoyed the fruits of success of the Indian movement.

4. The political complexion of the government in power in Britain was a factor in the attitude of the British to the agitation for constitutional reforms. On the whole, the Labour Party in England was more sympathetic in its attitude and actions than the Conservative Party, and constitutional reforms were more readily conceded by Labour than by the Tories.

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The Constitution of 1920

5. In 1920, the Legislative Council was reconstituted, this time with fourteen official members and twenty-three unofficial members. The unofficial members thereby became a majority in the Legislative Council. Eleven of the unofficial members were elected on a territorial basis, the franchise being limited to those with the minimum qualification of a pass in the Cambridge Junior School Certificate examination; eight were elected from communal electorates, namely two to represent Europeans, one for the Burghers, one from the Chamber of Commerce (European), one from the Low Country Products Association (mainly Sinhalese), two from the Kandyan Sinhalese, and one from the Indians. Four unofficial members were to be nominated by the Governor. One of them was to represent the Muslims, and three were to represent interests not adequately represented in the Governor's opinion. In order to ensure that the Governor's own powers might not be diminished in matters of importance, it was provided that where the Governor declared that the passing of any measure was of paramount importance in the public interest, the votes of the official members of the Legislative Council were adequate to carry the measure through. The Governor was also empowered to prohibit discussion of any measure that he considered likely to affect the safety and tranquility of the country. The 1920 Constitution provided for the first time the addition of three unofficial members to the Executive Council.

6. The constitution of 1920 was severely criticized by Governor Hugh Clifford on the ground that it was very difficult to exercise executive responsibility without adequate support from the Legislative Council. "In the face of the opposition of the elected majority of the Legislative Council, the only method by which the Governor could enact unpopular measures which he considered of paramount importance to the public interest was by the use of his powers of certification; but the Governor was against the use of these powers with their tendency to result in political crisis."[1] The educated Ceylonese were also critical of the constitution as it did not meet their demands for greater executive responsibility and for the complete acceptance of the principle of territorial representation.

The Constitution of 1924

7. In 1924, the composition of the Legislative Council was changed, reducing the officials to 12 and increasing the unofficial members to 37, of whom 34 were to be elected. 23 were to be elected on a

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territorial basis, while 11 were to be elected for communal electorates as follows: Urban European (1), Rural European (1), Commercial European (1), Burghers (2), Indians (2), Muslims (3), and Ceylon Tamils in the Western Province (1). "Elected members had to be British subjects, over 25 years of age, able to speak, read and write English, and possess an income of not less than Rs. 1,500, or immovable property of the value of not less than Rs. 5,000, or must occupy premises of not less than Rs. 500 annual value in a town, or not less than Rs. 400 annual value elsewhere. The franchise was given only to male British subjects, not less than 21 years of age, able to read and write English, Sinhalese or Tamil, and possessing an income of not less than Rs. 600, or immovable property of not less than Rs. 1,500, or must occupy premises of not less than Rs. 400 annual value in a town, or not less than Rs. 200 annual value elsewhere."[2]

8. The constitutional changes of 1924 made the Legislative Council a "Representative Legislature" within the meaning of the *Colonial Laws Validity Act of* 1865, by virtue of the fact that at least half of the members were elected by the inhabitants of the colony.

> "The Legislature was therefore in a position to oppose legislation introduced and thus thwart the Governor and the Executive Council. But in the last resort, the Governor could always impose his will because of his powers of reservation and certification. These were meant to be exceptional powers and the Governor was gradually able to work out a compromise with the unofficials who were conscious that if they did not compromise the Governor could exercise his reserve powers."[3]

The Constitution of 1931 (also known as the Donoughmore Constitution)

9. In 1927, the Secretary of State for the Colonies appointed a Commission under the chairmanship of Lord Donoughmore to report on the constitution of Ceylon and to make proposals for revision. The recommendations of the Donoughmore Commission were accepted with some minor modifications by the British government, and a new constitution was introduced.

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10. The franchise was extended to all men and women over 21 years, and the income and literacy qualifications that applied earlier were removed. In other words, universal, adult franchise was introduced. Communal representation, that formed a feature of earlier constitutions, was abolished. The Donoughmore Commissioners had expressed the view that the very existence of communal representation in the past had tended to prevent the development of harmonious relationships among the communities, "and that only by its abolition will it be possible for the various diverse communities to develop together a true national unity."[4]

11. The Legislative Council was abolished and replaced by a representative chamber known as the State Council. It was to consist of 61 members. 50 were to be elected for constituencies into which the island was divided territorially. 8 were to be nominated by the Governor, using these nominations "to make the State Council more generally representative of the national interests" that might not be adequately represented by the territorially by elected members.[5] The three remaining members of the State Council were ex-officio members, namely the Chief Secretary, the Legal Secretary and the Financial Secretary. They were to be called Officers of State, and had no vote in the State Council.

12. The Executive Council was also abolished. It was provided that the State Council would deal with both legislative and executive matters, and would sit in separate sessions for these purposes. At the first meeting of the State Council, the members, other than the three ex-officio members, would divide themselves into seven Executive Committees dealing with the following subjects:

1. Home Affairs;
2. Agriculture and Lands;
3. Local Administration;
4. Health;
5. Labour, Industry and Commerce;
6. Education;
7. Communications and Works.

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Each Executive Committee would elect a Chairman for appointment by the Governor. The activities of the government would be divided among these Executive Committees, by the assignment to them of the relevant government Departments. The Chairman of each Executive Committee would be given the title of Minister, and would be in charge of the functions and Departments allocated to the Executive Committee of which he is Chairman.

13. The public service, external affairs and defence were under the Chief Secretary, elections and the legal system under the Legal Secretary, and finance under the Financial Secretary.

14. The seven Ministers and the three Officers of State constituted the Board of Ministers, with the Chief Secretary as the ex-officio Chairman. The Board of Ministers was collectively responsible only for financial matters. In regard to other matters, each Minister was held responsible as the Chairman of his particular Executive Committee.

15. Under the Royal Instructions of 1920, the Governor had the power to veto certain classes of bills. The veto was now extended to certain new classes. In other words, some of the rights held out to the representatives of the people on the right hand were nullified by reservations grasped tenaciously in the left hand.

16. Of the constitutional changes effected on the recommendations of the Donoughmore Commission, the most far reaching were the abolition of communal representation and the extension of the franchise. Regarding the latter, a commentator has made the following observation:

> "The extension of the franchise in Ceylon in 1931 had the direct consequence that the State Council enacted social and industrial legislation. The system of free medical services and of free education from kindergarten to university, the subsidisation by the government of public transport and of the staple food of the people, may also be regarded as direct consequences of the extension of the franchise, and have to a great extent operated to relieve the frustrations of the less privileged sections of the community—frustrations which may otherwise have sought expression in a violent form, which would have resulted in an overthrow of the constitution, or could have been repressed only by a totalitarian regime."[6]

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The Constitution of 1947

17. In 1943, the British Government made a declaration that at the conclusion of World War II, which was then being fought, the Government would carry out a "re-examination of the reform of the Ceylon Constitution .. directed towards the grant to Ceylon. . of full responsible Government under the Crown in all matters of internal civil administration."[7] In pursuance of this declaration (as a matter of fact even before the war ended), the Secretary of State announced in 1944 the appointment of a Royal Commission under the Chairmanship of Lord Soulbury to make proposals on the subject of constitutional reform.

18. Based partly on a draft Constitution prepared by the Board of Ministers, and partly on the recommendations of the Soulbury Commission, a new Constitution was introduced in 1947.

> "It provided for a Parliament consisting of the King, represented by the Governor, a Senate, and a House of Representatives. The House of Representatives contained 101 members, of whom 95 were elected from territorial constituencies and six were nominated by the Governor, acting in his discretion, to represent interests not adequately represented by election. A system of weighting for sparsely populated Provinces enabled the minorities to obtain higher representation than they could have obtained had all the constituencies been of equal size. The Senate consisted of 15 elected by the House of Representatives for periods of six years, one-third retiring every second year, and 15 members appointed by the Governor, in his discretion, for a similar period. Parliament had power to make laws for the peace, order and good government of the Island, subject to restrictions on laws imposing religious or communal disabilities. Power was given to amend the Constitution by a two-thirds vote in the House of Representatives, though any such Bill had to be reserved for the King's assent. Also, the King in Council retained a right to legislate on defence and external affairs and to suspend or amend the Constitution. No powers of legislation were vested in the Governor, but he was required to reserve Bills dealing with:—
>
> (a) Defence;
>
> (b) Orders in Council relating to defence or external affairs;
>
> (c) External affairs;

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(d) Currency and bank notes;

(e) The royal prerogative;

(f) Minorities;

(g) Constitutional amendments."[8]

The Constitution of 1948

19. The Constitution of 1947 was in operation for a few months only, when the British Government, in response to representations from Ceylon, pointing out, *inter alia*, the declarations made by the British government about Dominion Status and independence for India and Burma, agreed to confer 'fully responsible status' on the country. An Act, called the Ceylon Independence Act, was passed in the British Parliament extending to Ceylon the principles contained in the Statute of Westminster. Some of the features of the Westminster model are as follows:

> "It is a system in which the executive government is carried out in the name of the head of state, yet the effective head is the Prime Minister presiding over a cabinet composed of Ministers over whose appointment and removal he has at least a substantial measure of control. Another characteristic is that the executive branch of government is drawn from the legislature and the members of the executive are individually and collectively responsible to a democratically elected and representative legislature. The legislature generally consists of the Queen in Parliament, and Parliament sits in two houses. The sovereign is an integral part of the legislature and her assent is required for all Acts of Parliament. But such assent where legislation had been duly passed through the two Houses of Parliament is a mere formality. An important characteristic of the British constitution is the sovereignty or supremacy of Parliament. And the influence of this doctrine is reflected in Ceylon though the powers of the Ceylon Parliament are not so extensive as its British counterpart."[9]

The Ceylon Independence Order in Council 1947 came into operation on 4 February 1948, and Ceylon gained independence with effect from that day.

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The social scene

20. Beneath the superficial unity of the nation state, there were deep seated though relatively inarticulate cleavages. An English educated minority enjoying good educational and employment opportunities constituted one nation, while the vernacular educated masses with limited educational and employment opportunities constituted an inferior nation. After 1931, both groups enjoyed the franchise equally. The aspirants to political positions came initially only from among the English educated, and the vernacular educated enjoyed only the dubious privilege of voting them into office. In course of time, however, aspirants to political office from among the English educated minority began to develop a sensitivity to the needs of the vernacular educated masses, and to this extent a number of measures for the welfare of the masses were initiated (see paragraph 16). The realisation had not yet dawned upon the vernacular educated that having the strength of numbers they might as well elect their own kind into office instead of perpetuating the pattern of the past.

21. The manning of the topmost grades of the Civil Service by British nationals came in for increasing criticism in the 1930's, as there was no shortage of Ceylonese competent to fill these positions. The discrimination against Ceylonese is shown by the fact that in 1928 the three highest posts, 21 out of 23 posts at the next lower level, and 22 of the 27 posts at the next level were filled by British nationals.[10] In 1932, by a resolution passed in the State Council it was decided that non-Ceylonese should be recruited into the public service only if no Ceylonese were available and that every such recruitment should be approved by a resolution passed in the State Council. This was all right in so far as new recruitment was concerned, but in the deployment of persons already in the public service certain important posts were invariably filled by British nationals for many years to come.

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CHAPTER 53

THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM (1920 - 1948)

1. A complex of factors gave rise to a school curriculum that was predominantly literary and academic. The products of the schools found their most remunerative employment opportunities in jobs of a clerical nature, and for efficient performance in them a literary and academic background was as good as any other. Financial rewards were at their highest, and the tenure of employment was most secure in white collar jobs. Agriculture was by and large carried out on traditional lines, and the concept of scientific agriculture in relation to the basic food crops was unheard of. The large plantations, especially tea and rubber and, to a small extent, coconut were on the alert for improved methods of production and processing, but the know-how was generally not needed in a big way even at the level of the local superintendent as there was a small class of expert advisers, called "visiting agents", who were paid to visit the plantations from time to time and give specific instructions as to what should be done. There was no industrial development at all as Ceylon, in common with other colonies, provided a ready and preferential market for industrial goods produced in England. A handful of schools had facilities for science largely of the textbook variety, and in any event, the applications of science learnt were in relation to situations in England, from where the textbooks used by the students came. No attention was paid to the application of education and knowledge to the solution of local problems, for subservience to foreign rule for many decades had produced among the people a state of petrification and lethargy which made them lose all initiative and leave it to the imperial rulers to solve the problems that confronted the country. The best schools were geared to the preparation of students for the Cambridge Senior and the London Matriculation examinations conducted by examining bodies in England; all the other schools set their sights on watered down versions of the curriculum of the prestigious schools, and were geared to the preparation of students for the Senior School Certificate examination, which in turn was a watered down version, with some regard to the local situation, of the Cambridge Senior examination.

2. Social mobility lay unmistakably along the path of examination success to the limited extent to which it was not controlled by the

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factor of birth in the right circles. The intellectual horizons of a limited number were undoubtedly broadened by the exotic fare, and some of those who went to Britain for university studies showed their mettle in competition with the best products of the British Public School system. Others merely acquired the veneer of a superficial acquaintance with the English language and the culture of English, but the veneer was sufficiently in demand to qualify them for middle grade employment under the British in Ceylon. The mass of schools for the most part set their sights on the curriculum of the prestigious schools, but their resources were so limited as to permit its adoption only in a greatly adulterated form that provided no intellectual stimulation at all while being at the same time socially irrelevant. The seal was thus set on the separation of education from life, and the only saving grace was that the basic literacy which the curriculum provided was of some value. A few from among these ranks emerged as a Sinhalese educated or Tamil educated elite group socially inferior to the English educated elite and with fewer opportunities for economic mobility, generally holding appointments as Sinhalese and Tamil teachers, or practising Eastern systems of medicine. Their mastery of the national languages and familiarity with the ethos of the nation gave them an effective capacity to alert mass opinion on public issues, and they turned out to be a powerful political force.

3. When the British introduced the curriculum of their Public Schools, and the Cambridge Senior and the London Matriculation examinations into Ceylon, they no doubt did so with the best of intentions and in the belief that they were conferring a choice blessing on Ceylon. Later, the British themselves were quite conscience-stricken by their appraisals of the results of the system so hopefully introduced by them. It will be recalled (chapter 43) that one of His Majesty's Inspectors, J. J. R. Bridge, sent from England to review the state of education in Ceylon in 1912 admitted that he was led irresistibly to the conclusion that the education system, being "based on the needs and potentialities of less than one-fifth of its pupils and seeking to deal with the remaining four-fifths in identically the same way is, as it might be expected to be, a failure and does full justice to neither element".[1] In other words the exposure of one hundred per cent of the school-going population of Ceylon to a course of study geared to the requirements of the Cambridge Senior and the London Matriculation examinations attempted in Britain by not more than twenty per

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cent of the school population there was doomed to failure. Bridge lamented the inevitable fact that the system failed "signally for the many" and succeeded "partially for most of the few", and called for a diversity that would meet the needs of the many. In 1928, the Right Honourable W. G. A. Ormsby Gore, Member of the British Parliament and Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, touring the British colonial empire in the East and assessing the proud achievements of British rule in these areas, made an agonised confession of the "denationalizing, de-ruralizing, and intellectually and socially cramping results of the system of education" and the tyranny of "an external and distant written examination wholly out of touch with the needs, traditions, mental gifts, and aptitudes of the people", and condemned in no uncertain terms the "anglicizing and denationalizing tendencies of academic or clerical education in the Colonial schools".[2] All honour to Bridge and Ormsby Gore for their confession that what was intended to be Britain's priceless gift to Ceylon had turned out to be Britain's shame and Ceylon's disaster. In a sense, neither Bridge nor Ormsby Gore was saying anything quite new or profound. They were only stating the obvious, but the fact that they were from England not only clothed them with authority but also rendered them immune from the charge of extremist nationalism that was usually levelled against any Ceylonese who dared to be critical of the gifts of imperial England, and they served cumulatively to create a climate of opinion in which the diversification of education could become a live issue for discussion, though not for implementation as social rewards lay unmistakably along the academic path.

4. In 1928, the Education Department issued a publication entitled *The Scheme of Studies and Syllabuses for Schools*, outlining the curriculum that was used from the Kindergarten through Standard 8. It was as follows:

Kindergarten :	Language, Number, Physical Exercises, Drawing, Singing.
Standards 2, 3 and 4 :	Language, Number, Physical Exercises, Drawing, Handwork, Singing, Needlework for girls.

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Standard 5 : Language, Number, Physical Exercises, Geography, Drawing, Handwork, Singing, Housecraft including Needlework for girls.

Standards 6, 7 and 8 : Compulsory—Language, Mathematics, Physical Exercises, Housecraft if not taken as an optional subject. Optional—one subject from each of the groups.

A. History or Geography

B. Elementary Science or Rural Science or Housecraft.

C. Sinhalese or Tamil Literature or Music or Drawing.

5. In 1929, the division of schools into elementary schools and secondary schools was replaced by the division into primary schools, junior secondary schools and senior secondary schools. They were distinguished not by the beginning grade, as even a secondary school could have a kindergarten or standard one, but by the terminal grades which were standard 5 for a primary school, standard 8 for a junior secondary school, and a standard higher than standard 8 for a senior secondary school. Meanwhile, in 1924 a category of industrial schools had been created to provide industrial training for boys who had passed standard 5 and were interested in learning a craft.

6. In 1931, an attempt was made to diversify the curriculum by inaugurating a scheme of education, known as the rural scheme in the post-primary classes of a few schools. R. Patrick, the Deputy Director of Education, was the moving spirit behind the scheme which was described by him in the following terms.

"In this scheme for post-primary classes the usual subject-titles are omitted as far as possible, and tasks and lessons have been grouped under the following headings which together are considered to provide an ample field of instruction suitable for schools: (a) Health (b) Study of the locality leading up to the knowledge of the world (c) Occupations (d) Literature, art, and music etc."[3]

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A few schools started on the scheme at first but, by the year 1939, the number of schools working on a revised scheme which had by then been introduced was 253. In a description of the revised scheme it was stated that

> "approximately half of the school day is allotted to practical work out of doors, and the lessons which are given in schools during the remaining periods are developed as far as possible from the practical work; the pupils assist in preparing whatever plans are required in connection with the tasks; the maintenance and repair of school buildings and furniture have to be undertaken as part of the work."[4]

In his Administration Report for 1939, the Director of Education made the following comment about the rural scheme schools:

> "There was some doubt whether the scheme interferes with the preparation of pupils for examinations. But a comparison of the figures at public examinations shows that the rural scheme schools have invariably fared better than others both at the Junior School Certificate and Senior School Certificate examinations..Several of these schools have done splendid work not only in the schools but in surrounding villages particularly in regard to health requirements. The excellent example set by the young farmers in paddy cultivation and in the systematic growth of fruit and vegetables according to modern methods has been followed with marked results even by the older generation of farmers."[5]

7. In 1940 the *Scheme of Studies and Syllabuses for Ceylon Schools* issued in 1928 was re-issued with a few changes as *The Revised Scheme of Studies and Syllabuses*. More importantly, the year 1940 saw the beginning of the new system of Central schools, a category of school which was destined to play a key role in the educational history of Ceylon. The aims of Central schools have been described in certain Administration Reports issued by the Director of Education and may be summarized as follows:

1. To collect together the pupils who have passed the primary stage from all schools within a certain radius and provide education for them in a Central school staffed with the best teachers obtainable. It was hoped that in course of time the work involved in having small

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post-primary classes in every or nearly every school would be eliminated.[6]

2. "A training, cultural as well as practical," was envisaged with provision in the curriculum for academic subjects, including art, music and experimental science, and for practical instruction in vocational subjects, such as Agriculture, Commerce, Housecraft and Handicrafts.[7]

3. "To correlate the education imparted to the needs of the locality; to prepare pupils for life and according to their ability and natural equipment; by creating a love for their village environment and by concentrating on occupations, traditional or otherwise, which could be developed nearer the pupils' home to counter, as far as possible, the tendency of village lads to migrate to towns and semi-urban areas in search of employment and thereby to swell the ranks of the unemployed and become useless to themselves and to the community."[8]

8. The Central schools did play a significant role in the educational history of Ceylon, but it was not in the achievement of aims 2 and 3 listed above that their contribution lay. As a matter of fact, the hope that Central schools would pioneer a more practical bias to education was not fulfilled.

> "The better developed Central schools provided a wide variety of subjects—Arts (including languages), Science, Agriculture, Commerce, Handicrafts (Metal work, Wood work, Lacquer work, Weaving etc.,)—and yet they were unable to make children, most of all the good ones, interested in agriculture and handicrafts. In other words, agriculture and handicrafts were without exception the Cinderellas of the Central Schools."[9]

However vital agriculture and crafts studies were to the economy of the country, they were over-shadowed in Central schools "by the superior prestige of the pure Arts and Sciences". Agriculture and craft skills had to be "salvaged from their submergence in the sea of academic subjects" in Central schools. In terms of this analysis, therefore, in whatever else the Central school system succeeded, it did not succeed in achieving curricular diversification on any serious basis. The support from the economy to curricular diversification was limited, for

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while there was no doubt that the needs of the economy required persons with specialist skill in agriculture and handicrafts, a wage structure heavily weighted in favour of white collar employment offered no financial inducements or other social rewards for specialising in agriculture and handicrafts. By 1943, the Director of Education himself had come to appreciate the situation. No longer did he envisage the mission of Central schools as that of correlating "the education imparted to the needs of the locality" or "creating a love for their village environment" as his predecessor had done in 1941.[10] In 1943 he described the mission of Central schools as that "of bringing secondary education to the very doors of poor but deserving pupils."[11] In other words, in the limited number of areas in which Central schools had been established, they brought within easy reach of poor pupils and at no cost to them the kind of good secondary academic education that had hitherto been available in a few good urban schools to fee-paying pupils. But from the point of view of curricular diversification on any serious basis, the Central schools were a failure.

9. Reference was made in paragraph 6 to the rural scheme of education that was inaugurated in 1931. Two rural training centres for the training of teachers for the rural scheme existed at Mirigama and Welitara, and in order to train more teachers, a new training centre was started near Kandy on 1 May 1941.

> "The curriculum included knowledge of dairy farming, poultry-keeping, bee-keeping, principles of agriculture, general rural scheme work, and rural reconstruction, literature, art, music methods of co-operation and health work."[12]

In June 1943, Patrick, the mentor of the rural scheme, left Ceylon to become the Director of Education in Trinidad, and with his departure the rural scheme of education that held so much promise died an immediate death. The Administration Report of the Director of Education for 1943 referred to the "satisfactory progress" made by the rural scheme schools and "their record of good work" but this was in effect an obituary notice.[13] No mention was made of the rural scheme in the Administration Report of the following year and thereafter, and the scheme was abandoned without a word of explanation.

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10. The Kannangara Report recognized "the excessive uniformity of our educational system, which is almost purely academic in character and bears little relation to the practical aspects of life" as one of the major defects of the educational system, and regretted that "all post-primary education should be of one type and should be almost completely divorced from the needs of the pupils after they leave school".[14] With a view to diversifying post-primary education, the Report recommended that, at the end of the primary stage (fifth Standard or Grade, age eleven or twelve years), children should be made to sit for a selection examination and assigned to "secondary schools leading to the university and professional colleges" or to "senior schools leading to polytechnics and technical schools", or to "practical schools leading to the agricultural and trade schools".[15] It was envisaged that the percentages entering the three types of post-primary schools would be as follows:

Secondary schools	5%
Senior schools	8%
Practical schools	8%

Each type of post-primary school was to be organized into a lower department giving a three-year course and a higher department giving a two-year course. The allocation of pupils to the three types of schools was not to be regarded as final, and it was said that, if circumstances warranted, transfer from one type of school to another would be possible at the end of any year in the post-primary school, and especially at the end of the third year on the results of the fitness test which was to be taken at that stage. The speech of the Minister of Education in the State Council showed that there was a certain amount of confusion in the minds of the authorities regarding the nature of the curricular provision in the schools. On the one hand, each type of school was to have a distinctive objective; on the other hand, in trying to show that transfer from one type of school to another would be possible, the Minister pointed out that "in the case of the lower department of three years and the higher department of two years, it has been suggested that work should be practically the same".[16]

There was also a basic contradiction in the social philosophy under-lying the reforms proposals. On the one hand, it was the proud claim of the Minister that he and his Executive Committee

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found education "the patrimony of the rich and left it the inheritance of the poor"; on the other hand, he was prepared to concede that if a parent was dissatisfied with the type of post-primary school for which a child had been selected he would not object to an arrangement by which the parent educated the child in a non-grant-in-aid school. This was without doubt a clear concession to the upper social classes.[17] The claim in the Kannangara Report that "all the three types shall be accorded parity of status" had scarcely any basis of fact to support it.[18] The secondary school envisaged a seven-year course, while the senior school and the practical school envisaged only a five-year course.[19] The equipment grant for practical schools was to be at half the rate as that for secondary and senior schools.[20] The quota of pupils per teacher was less for secondary schools than for senior schools and practical schools.[21] Teachers in practical schools were to get lower pay than teachers with the same qualifications in secondary and senior schools.[22] In his speech in the State Council, the Minister himself had to concede that parity of status was unachievable largely on account of the cost involved.[23]

11. The proposals of the Kannangara Committee regarding the selection of pupils at the age of 11 + and the provision of post-primary education in three types of schools were clearly based on the thinking and the recommendations contained in the report on secondary education brought out in England by the Consultative Committee of which W. Spens was Chairman.[24] More or less the same arguments as had been urged in England against the recommendation regarding trifurcation at the age of 11+ were used in the State Council debate against the Kannangara Committee proposals for the selection of pupils and their allocation to three types of schools. The support for the proposal was feeble, and the opposition was vehement. In the end, in lieu of selection at the age of 11 + to three types of schools, a proposal for selection at 14+ to two types of schools was accepted, and the relevant recommendations were phrased as follows:

"1. Schools shall be divided into two grades: primary and post-primary; the primary grade being uniform in type and the post-primary consisting of a Junior school from Standard VI to Standard VIII bifurcating at Standard VIII (normally at 14+) into Senior Secondary and Senior Practical Schools, Junior Schools being of diverse types adapted to suit local requirements. Provided that such secondary education is imparted in Multilateral schools.

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The system of Multilateral Central Schools conducted by the State and providing courses of instruction free of charge up to the standard of the Higher School Certificate Examination shall continue with necessary alterations and modifications.

2. Each type of post-primary school shall be organized into a lower department giving a three-year course and a higher department giving a two-year course, the secondary school giving a further two-year course.

Pupils may be transferred if the circumstances demand it with the approval of the Department from any type of post-primary school to another at the end of any year in the post-primary stage.

3. There shall be a fitness test at the end of the Junior School Course—the test being organized and administered by the Department of Education in collaboration with the schools provided, however, that in the allocation of pupils to the two types of Senior Schools, the wishes of parents and school records shall also be taken into consideration."[25]

12. While trifurcation at 11+may have been indefensible, the phraseology used in the first of the above recommendations appears to contradict itself by speaking of bifurcation into two types of schools in order to give education in a multilateral school. Junior schools would be of "diverse types adapted to suit local requirements" but at no stage of the debate in the State Council was there any elaboration of this idea to indicate what was proposed.

13. In February 1947, the Minister placed before the State Council a draft Education (Amendment) Bill to give a basis in law to some of the decisions reached in the 1944-45 debate on the reform of the system of education. The decision regarding bifurcation at 14+ and the school system received no mention as such in the Bill, but provision was made in the Bill to expand the regulation making powers, vested in the Executive Committee of Education by the Ordinance No. 31 of 1939, to include the following matters—

(a) The classification of pupils other than those attending unaided schools, and their assignment to classes or schools, according to their proficiency and aptitude;

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(b) The classification of schools into

(i) secondary schools,

(ii) senior schools,

(iii) practical schools, and,

(iv) other classes and types.[26]

14. As a result of the enactment of the Education (Amendment) Ordinance No. 26 of 1947 with these provisions, the Executive Committee was vested with power to make regulations carrying out any kind of classification of pupils and schools that it had in mind, subject to the condition that the regulations had to be approved by the State Council and then ratified by the Governor. In theory, regulations could be made even for trifurcation at 14+, subject to approval as stated above. This was patently an unsatisfactory state of affairs mitigated only by the fact that no action was taken under the Ordinance to classify pupils or schools.

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CHAPTER 54

THE EDUCATION ORDINANCE OF 1939

1. Under the Donoughmore Constitution introduced in 1931 (see chapter 52 paragraphs 5 to 12), education was one of the subjects entrusted to the State Council by article 32 of the Order in Council. Under article 34 (1) of the Order in Council, the State Council at its very inception entrusted this subject to the Executive Committee of Education. The Chairman of this Committee was called the Minister of Education and the first holder of this office was C. W. W. Kannangara.

2. The law relating to education consisted of the Education Ordinance No. 1 of 1920. By its provisions, the Director of Education (the chief executive officer for education) was responsible to the Board of Education consisting of certain officials and non-officials nominated by the Governor, with the Director of Education as the Chairman. The Ordinance had to be changed in the light of the provisions of the new Constitution which created the Executive Committee of Education and entrusted to it the responsibility for education.

3. Clearly, the rights and functions of the Board of Education as provided in the Ordinance of 1920 were quite incompatible with the transfer of responsibility to the Executive Committee by the Donoughmore Constitution, and this situation had to be remedied by converting the Board of Education to an advisory body and assigning policy and regulation making functions to the Executive Committee. No sooner than the Executive Committee for Education began to function, a Draft Bill taking account of the new situation was prepared, and sent to the Legal Draftsman in July 1932. For seven long years an intolerable situation existed, with responsibility for education torn between the Board of Education jealous of its rights under the existing Ordinance, and the Executive Committee for Education, responsible for getting money voted for education, answerable also to the people of the country for the state of education and yet with no legal standing in the Ordinance governing education. The standpoint of the Board of Education, with its predominantly Christian composition, on important issues was reactionary. The refusal of support for Pirivena education, opposition to the introduction of Sinhalese as a subject in English schools on the ground that Buddhism would be taught in an

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indirect way were part of the melancholy record of the Board of Education. It is a measure of the strangle-hold that vested interests exercised over the body politic that this state of affairs was allowed to continue without correction in spite of all the efforts of the Minister of Education and some of his Executive Committee to set it right. The rationale underlying the opposition to the transfer of power took the following form—the composition of the Board of Education was largely representative of denominational (mainly Catholic-Christian) interests; the Executive Committee, on the other hand, being representative of the people might in co-operation with them espouse other interests. The fact that no regulation made by the Executive Committee could have validity until it had been approved by the State Council and ratified by the Governor should have been an adequate safeguard and should have allayed fears, but it did not, for there was suspicion of the State Council itself and indeed of the whole concept of popular representation. In the final analysis, the fears were of the operation of democratic processes, and though their irrationality was obvious, they were expressed by powerful vested interests which had to be placated.

4. When the Bill was presented in the State Council in 1938 and came up for discussion, an attempt (defeated by 33 votes to 13) was made to postpone discussion for six months, in spite of the fact that at the very beginning of the discussion the Minister made the following declaration at the request of the Executive Committee: "This Ordinance is not designed to give effect to any policy aimed against denominational schools".[1] In truth, the declaration, as also its subsequent inclusion in the Ordinance itself, was unnecessary. An analysis of the Ordinance shows that its provisions were innocuous, but certain elements had to be placated. The debate on the Bill took several months and it was at last passed in 1939.

5. The Education Ordinance No. 31 of 1939 has the following long title "An Ordinance to make better provision for education and to revise and consolidate the law relating to education", all the significant words in the title having been copied from the Education Ordinance of 1920. The Ordinance is divided into the following major divisions, called Parts.

Part I — Central Authority.

Part II — Advisory Bodies and Committees, Central and Local.

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Part	III	—	Constitution, powers and duties of Urban and Rural Educational Authorities.
Part	IV	—	Religion in schools and Managers.
Part	V	—	Powers of Executive Committee to make Regulations.
Part	VI	—	Estate Schools.
Part	VII	—	General.

The different parts of the Ordinance were to come into operation on dates to be specified by the Governor. As a matter of fact, Part III was never proclaimed.

6. Part I gave legal status to the Department of Education as the central authority for education, and provided for the discharge by the Department (through its chief executive the Director of Education and the other officers) of the provisions of the Ordinance subject to the general direction and control of the Executive Committee of Education. A conspicuous defect in this Part, as well as in the entire Ordinance, is that notwithstanding the promise in the short title "to make better provision for education", no one is charged with the responsibility for providing schools in sufficient number to meet the needs of children of school-going age, save in the event of there being a proclamation in terms of Part III of the Ordinance that a specified Municipal Council or Urban Council or Village Committee should supply the educational needs of its local area. For the latter condition to take effect, Part III of the Ordinance had first to be proclaimed by the Governor and thereafter the Governor could in his discretion make a proclamation in respect of any specified Municipal Council or Urban Council or Village Committee. As Part III was never proclaimed, the situation in law was that it was no one's responsibility to provide education. Quite in contrast to the absence of a legal requirement to provide education, Part I included a provision which empowered the Director, with the approval of the Executive Committee, to reduce, in the event of financial stringency, the grants to which assisted schools would have been entitled in terms of the Code of Regulations for Assisted schools. This section was in effect a sword of Damocles hanging over the heads of assisted schools. Such a potentially restrictive clause should not have found a place in an Ordinance to make better provision for education. Fortunately it has never been called into use.

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7. Part II provided for a Board of Education to be established to give advice to the Director, and for local advisory committees to be established in different areas, both urban and rural.

8. Part III making provision for setting up local education authorities was never proclaimed and remained a dead letter. Perhaps, the inclusion of this Part, with no intention on the part of the Minister to have it proclaimed, was a strategical move to appease vociferous elements (led by European nominated members of the State Council) which were expressing concern at the increase in educational expenditure and the burdens on the rich consequent upon it. No doubt they breathed sighs of relief at the prospect that at some future date local authorities might bear part of the cost of education and so reduce the financial commitment on the part of the Central Government.

9. Part IV is entitled "Religion in schools and Managers". The place of religious instruction in schools was one of the most controversial issues in the entire Ordinance. The provisions of this Part are considered in detail in chapter 59.

10. Part V entitled "Power of Executive Committee to make Regulations" listed the matters in respect of which the Executive Committee could make regulations. In order that a regulation could have effect it had to be approved by the State Council, ratified by the Governor, and published in the Government Gazette. It is important to note that one of the matters in respect of which the Executive Committee could make regulations was that of requiring compulsory attendance at school. The Executive Committee failed to make any regulation in this regard, and successive governments also failed to make good this omission. Regulations and by-laws made under previous Ordinances, however, remained valid in the absence of any regulation made under the present Ordinance. In relation to compulsory attendance, the by-laws made under previous Ordinances varied from area to area and some are not even traceable. In this sense, the Ordinance failed to provide uniform legislation specifying the age limits for compulsory attendance at school. Children on estates constitute an exception. In their case, section 30 of the present Ordinance laid down certain age limits. See chapter 56 paragraph 3.

11. Part VI dealt with Estate schools. A discussion of the provisions will be found in chapter 56.

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12. Part VII entitled "General" dealt with a number of miscellaneous matters, such as the conditions for opening new schools, powers of school inspection, penalties for non-attendance at school and the acquisition of private land by the government for educational purposes.

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CHAPTER 55

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DENOMINATIONAL SCHOOLS AND THE GOVERNMENT (1920 - 1948)

Brief history of the denominational school system up to 1939

1. Beginning in 1843, arrangements were made by the government to provide financial assistance to schools run by Christian Missionary bodies. Until 1869 the number of schools aided in this manner was small. As from 1869 however, with the removal of restrictions on the teaching of religion, the number of schools rapidly increased. After 1885, the Buddhists, Hindus and Muslims also entered the scheme on a small scale, but the position of dominance was occupied by Christian, including Roman Catholic, organizations.

2. The role of the denominational schools in education came into sharp focus when, about the year 1900, the question of making education compulsory was considered. The number of secular government schools at that time was 498; the number of Buddhist, Hindu and Muslim grant-in-aid schools was only 211 although the adherents of these religions constituted 90.14 per cent of the population; the Christians constituted only 9.79 per cent of the population but had 1,117 grant-in-aid schools. To insist on compulsory attendance without increasing the two former categories of schools many times, a prospect that was quite unachievable, would be to insist on compulsory Christianization. The introduction of a conscience clause was mooted, and while it could have partially answered the problems of the non-Christian population, the solution which the non-Christians saw was in the direction of a rapid expansion of the government school system or of their own denominational schools. In 1905, strong broadsides at the denominational school system were fired by two Christian groups, the American Mission and the Wesleyan Synod, which urged in their answers to a questionnaire issued by the Wace Commission (see chapter 41) that the denominational school system should be abolished and that education should be made compulsory on the basis of a system of secular government schools. But other Christian groups, most of all the Church of England, small in its numbers in Ceylon but powerful at the Colonial office in London, and the Roman Catholics strongly supported the denominational system,

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and the Wace Commission recommended its continuance subject to the introduction of a conscience clause. The Town Schools Ordinance of 1906 and the Rural Schools Ordinance of 1907 provided in identical terms a conscience clause, not in the form recommended by the Wace Commission but in a greatly enervated form (see chapter 42). Both Ordinances dealt with schools providing vernacular education; in so far as English schools were concerned, the denominational system continued without any kind of conscience clause. In 1912, J. J. R. Bridge made the following comment about denominational schools in his report: "The desire of different denominations to have their own schools is natural and it is inevitable, but nevertheless the competition is highly detrimental to efficiency and entirely prejudicial to economy, and as such cannot be recognized by the State".[1] No notice was, however, taken of this point of view, and the denominational system continued to grow in strength. The Education Ordinance No. 1 of 1920 brought all assisted schools, irrespective of language medium, within its scope. The conscience clause of the 1906 and 1907 Ordinances was included in it and became applicable to both English and vernacular schools. During the years 1920 to 1938, the basis of grants for denominational schools became increasingly liberal, and there was a rapid increase in the number of denominational schools undisturbed by the fact that there was criticism of the denominational system expressed both in the legislative bodies and outside by the spokesmen of the Buddhists and the Hindus from time to time; and also by a distinguished foreign educator, Professor W. H. Kilpatrick of the United States, who in an address to the members of the Macrae Commission, which sat during the years 1926 to 1929, observed that the denominational school system tended to divide the population of Ceylon into permanent groups with the attendant dangers of such division. The Commission itself was for the continuation of the denominational system, but with a conscience clause so worded as to require the written consent of the parent before religious instruction was given. No legislative action was taken, however, to introduce this change.

Denominational schools and the Education Ordinance of 1939

3. The first serious confrontation between supporters and opponents of denominationalism was the debate in the State Council on the draft Education Ordinance of 1939. The unconscionable delay of seven years in the preparation of legislation to transfer power from the

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Board of Education, with a preponderance of denominational interests, to the Executive Committee for Education which was representative of the people, has already been mentioned. When the draft Ordinance did finally come up for debate an attempt, defeated by 33 votes to 13, was made to postpone discussion for six months (a parliamentary phrase for indefinite postponement), in spite of the fact that at the very beginning of the debate the Minister of Education, C. W. W. Kannangara, made the following declaration at the request of his Executive Committee, to allay the fears of denominational bodies: "This Ordinance is not designed to give effect to any policy against denominational schools".[2] Kannangara was, of course, well known for his uncompromising opposition to denominational schools, but there was nothing in the Ordinance itself to forebode danger to denominational schools, except that certain rule making powers were being belatedly transferred from that guardian angel of denominational interests, the Board of Education, to the Executive Committee for Education set up in terms of the provisions of the Donoughmore Constitution of 1931. The enjoyment of unjustified privilege exacts its own price in the form of hallucinations of catastrophe and persecution at the slightest indication of a modicum of justice to the deprived. The history of education in Ceylon bears this out. The Education Ordinance No. 1. of 1920 was interpreted as a death blow to denominational interests, and petitions were submitted on behalf of missionary schools expressing apprehension that their "management will be ousted".[3] Nothing of the sort took place, and not only did the old bouyancy of these interests soon manifest itself, but they also became firmly committed to the defence of the Ordinance and resisted attempts to change it. The opposition from denominational interests to the Ordinance of 1939 centred firstly on the abolition of the rule making powers of the Board of Education in which denominational interests were entrenched; secondly on the provision in the Ordinance to make denominational schools observe a conscience clause formulated in a positive form on the lines of the recommendations of the Wace and the Macrae Commissions; and finally on the proposal to provide religious instruction in government schools. Sensing that the Executive Committee for Education, constituted from persons elected to the State Council on the popular franchise, may one day pass legislation to deprive denominational schools of the privileges so far enjoyed, denominational interests urged that the following clause be inserted in the Ordinance: "This Ordinance is not designed to give effect to

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any policy aimed against denominational schools." This proposal was opposed by several members of the State Council, one of whom argued as follows: "The reason which impelled Hon. Members to demand the introduction of a new Education Bill was to economize by amalgamating schools in various areas and by eliminating redundant schools. That is the only reasonable and radical way of economizing. This proviso if accepted will be the death knell of that movement".[4] The Minister who had earlier cited the case of Nawalapitiya, a small town in which there were four English schools managed by the Roman Catholics, the Hindus, the Buddhists and the Church of England while in so many other towns not a single English school existed, now cited the example of a small town, Wadduwa, which had seven assisted schools and one government school within a radius of 1½ miles, and argued that in the interests of educational efficiency a perpetual immunity could not be assured to denominational schools, as would be the case if the suggested clause were entrenched by inclusion in the Ordinance.[5] Strongly opposing the clause, he argued that his oral assurance conveyed his intention of not doing anything to affect adversely the generality of denominational schools, but the inclusion of the suggested clause in the Ordinance would bar action even against a single school, however compelling the educational reasons for such action. Spokesmen for Christian denominational interests were insistent that the clause, inserted during the Standing Committee stage in spite of the Minister's opposition, should remain, and one of them, a nominated member held out the threat: "I trust that the proviso will not be removed because I doubt whether even the Secretary of State will pass this Ordinance", thereby making no secret of the fact that the final battle line of the Christian denominations lay along Whitehall and Downing Street, where ultimate victory could in any event be assured.[6] To go that far in this case was, however, unnecessary as the clause was accepted on a division, 27 voting for it, and 26 against.

4. That the denominational system was not so angelic as to deserve immunity even in other respects was clear from a letter cited in the State Council as having been sent by the Methodist Church in Ceylon to a teacher in a Methodist school. The teacher, a Methodist who had married a non-Christian had been informed of a rule of the Church as employer "that marriage with a non-Christian on the part of a Christian teacher is regarded by the Synod as equivalent to resignation," and discontinued from service.[7]

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From the Ordinance of 1939 up to the 1944/45 debate on Education: Reform of System

5. The denominational issue did not engender much heat during this period, but it came up from time to time in a relatively mild way both in the State Council and outside. The Auditor-General had in his annual report drawn attention to "proven cases of forced levies on teachers' salaries by the managers each month", and also highlighted abuses by school managers and proprietors in the disbursement of school fees received from pupils and grants received from the government.[8] With a view to correcting the latter abuse, the Minister of Education sought to use the powers granted to his Executive Committee under section 32 of the Education Ordinance No. 1 of 1939 to lay down in precise terms the areas of expenditure for which the funds concerned could be used.[9] With this end in view, he proposed certain amendments to the Code of Regulations for Assisted English Schools. The amendments were never passed because of dilatory tactics used in the State Council by certain members, among whom were several managers and principals of schools.

6. It was indeed the constant complaint of the Minister during the period following the Education Ordinance of 1939 that although denominational interests entrenched in the Board of Education had been rendered ineffectual by the transfer of executive power from the Board to the Executive Committee for Education, the presence of a number of school managers and principals of denominational schools in the State Council, a few of them being in the Executive Committee itself, hindered effective action on his part as his proposals were meticulously examined from the viewpoint of how they would affect the rights and privileges of school managers and principals rather than their educational utility.[10] Certain Ministers and, above all, the Speaker of the State Council were managers of denominational schools. In their capacity as managers of denominational schools they were bound to safeguard denominational interests. They received government grants in respects of the schools they managed. The propriety of their holding membership in the State Council while drawing grants from the government was strongly questioned by the Minister. Article 9 (D) of the Ceylon (State Council) Order in Council, 1931 had the following proviso:

> "no person shall be capable of being elected or appointed as a member or of sitting or voting in the Council as an elected or nomi-

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nated member who directly or indirectly himself or by any other person whatsoever in trust for him or for his use or benefit or on his account, holds or enjoins, in the whole or in part, any contract or agreement or commission made or entered with or accepted by any person for or on account of the public service.."

Quoting this proviso, the Minister argued that it was nothing but right that members of the State Council should give up the management of schools, but his appeal to them fell on deaf ears.[11] This issue was revived again in 1944 when a member of the Executive Committee for Education moved the following motion: "This Council is of opinion that it is desirable that the members of the Executive Committee of Education should not be managers or teachers in assisted schools."[12] He stressed the anomaly of a situation in which the Director of Education had to follow the policy and rules determined by the members of the Executive Committee over some of whom the Director exercised supervision in their capacity as managers or principals of schools. A few members took an even stronger view of the question than the mover, and moved the following amendment: "This Council is of opinion that it is desirable that Members of the State Council should not be managers of assisted schools".[13] The amendment was defeated by 8 votes for and 28 against, but the original motion was passed by 19 votes to 14. The few State Councillors who were school managers and principals, however, ignored the resolution and remained in the Executive Committee for Education instead of transferring to one of the other Executive Committees.

7. One issue of a different sort that was settled during this period is of more than ordinary interest. Attention had been drawn during the 1938 debate to the humiliation to which Buddhist children in Christian schools had been subjected.[14] In one school, as a punishment for absence from attendance at school on Vesak day, the most important religious day of the year for Buddhists, a Buddhist student had been made to put on a dunce's cap. Although Vesak day was a public holiday, Christian schools were not observing it as a school holiday. In 1944 the Minister moved an amendment to the Code of Regulations for English schools to the effect that "all public holidays should be observed as holidays by every school", but the climate of hostility to a modicum of justice to the rights of the Buddhist, Hindu and Muslim

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populations (the holidays of the Christians were already school holidays) was such that the Minister's amendment was pressed to a division before being passed 10 voting for it and 6 against.[15] The amendment was later extended to include assisted vernacular and bilingual schools.

The denominational issue in the 1944/45 debate on Education: Reform of System

8. Among the recommendations of the Executive Committee for Education, one pertained to the continuance of denominational schools. It was as follows:

"The system of state schools and denominational schools shall continue subject, in the case of new denominational schools, to the conditions:

(a) to be recognized, a denominational school shall have at least 30 pupils of school-going age of the same denomination as the controlling body who reside with their parents within a radius from the school of two miles for boys and one mile for girls and children under 8 years of age;

(b) having been recognized and registered for grant, such a school shall have at least 30 pupils of school-going age of the same denomination as the controlling body if it is to continue to receive assistance from public funds;

(c) if it is within two miles of an already existing state school, children of an 'unlike' denomination shall not be taken into account for assessing grant;

(d) if it is within 2 miles of a state school established later, children of an 'unlike' denomination shall continue to be reckoned for assessing grant."[16]

9. In placing this recommendation before the State Council, the Minister of Education made it abundantly clear that he did not agree with it. He adduced the following arguments against the denominational system.

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1. It was not possible to have a properly co-ordinated system of education if two parties, the government and the denominational bodies, took responsibility for education. For example, denominational schools will be a threat to the success of central schools as they will not close down their post-primary classes to enable the children to attend central schools.[17]

2. Proselytisation took place in certain Christian denominational schools. The Christian denominations sometimes conducted schools in which not more than one per cent or two per cent of the students were Christians.[18]

3. Christian teachers in denominational schools had been dismissed for marriage with non-Christians.[19]

4. Senior assistant teachers in denominational schools were not appointed to fill vacancies for headships. Priests were appointed instead.[20]

5. Teachers with political affiliations different from those of the managers of denominational schools were often transferred.[21]

6. Certain managers of denominational schools had been caught in the act of not paying the full salaries of teachers.[22]

7. Certified and audited statements of annual accounts submitted by certain managers were found to be false and inaccurate.[23]

He also answered in advance an argument which he anticipated would be adduced; namely, that denominational schools had rendered a great service in the past and deserved protection for this reason. The argument was in fact urged, but the Minister had already disposed of it with the devastating statement:

> "..where duty demands that justice shall be done, not by managers of schools or by institutions, but by the people of this country, where the nation calls for justice, that kind of shibboleth of gratitude should not stand in the way of our taking proper action".[24]

State Councillors who supported the Minister's stand on the denominational issue generally reiterated the arguments he had used.

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Among the new points urged was an explanation that the real reason why certain Christian denominations conducted schools such as one in which out of 150 children not more than 3 children were Christians was that employment could be provided in them for Christian teachers.[25] One State Councillor made the interesting point that the dual system was especially unworkable and a barrier to compulsory education, when the state system was feeble in comparison with the dominant position enjoyed by the denominational schools of the Christian minority. Its result was to force the majority religionists (Hindus, in the constituency he represented) to patronize Christian schools or to be without education. The argument of the protagonists of the denominational schools that state education was an infringement of personal freedom was not tenable in that context. He also pointed out that enthusiasts about denominational schools often had in mind a few very good schools and did not think of "the potty little schools that one finds in the villages."[26] The "unnecessary and wasteful competition" arising from the dual system was emphasized by another State Councillor.[27] Another was strongly for the abolition of the dual system and asked "..how can you have a system of denominationalism side by side with your aspirations for a united Ceylon?"[28]

10. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike, who became Prime Minister a decade later, argued that the Christian denominational system had served two purposes, namely an "imperial purpose" from the point of view of the government, and the "purpose of giving education to the benighted heathen, and, at the same time, showing them the light of better things" from the point of view of the missionary bodies.[29] The nationalist system of pirivena education was "deliberately suppressed as a further step in the imperial policy" that was pursued by the British government at that time.[30] Both purposes had now disappeared. The system had filled a void and done some good to education. Its present claims for continuance were that it had long traditions and provided education of a high standard. It did not, however, meet the needs of the day. To buttress this argument he quoted a report of the National Union of Teachers in England which stated that the divided responsibility of the dual system of state education and denominational education "has retarded educational progress and is inconsistent with proper economy and efficiency".[31] The Association of Directors and Secretaries was quoted as having stated that "unless the denominational system is brought to an end it will prove an increasingly serious

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obstacle to the refashioning of the educational structure".[32] In relation to the situation in Ceylon, Bandaranaike posed the question:

"Why should the state be called upon to give assistance to a denominational system whose chief *raison d'etre* is the fact that a religious atmosphere is necessary, if that religious atmosphere is going to be imposed upon children of other denominations?"[33]

While he hoped that the denominational system with its "enormous waste" would eventually disappear, he was for restricting its scope, and he moved to amend the first recommendation to read as follows:

"The system of state schools and denominational schools shall continue provided that, in the case of denominational schools, only children of that denomination attending it will be taken into account for assessing grants."[34]

He also urged the adoption of a new recommendation: "Steps shall be taken to establish state primary and secondary schools, wherever necessary in order to afford a reasonable opportunity for all children of school-going age to receive education", pointing out that a multiplicity of schools existed in certain areas and none in others.[35]

11. In the view of another State Councillor, economies had to be exercised in surplus areas by closing down certain schools and amalgamating others in order to provide an adequate number of schools in deficit areas, and this was "not possible unless you take the entire control of education in your hands."[36] As an added argument, he quoted figures to show that out of 150,000 students in Christian schools about 100,000 were non-Christians so that in effect "the state is giving money to Christian denominations to teach Buddhist children in a Christian atmosphere".[37] He opposed the use of state funds to support denominational schools, but had no objection to the existence of denominational schools, without aid from the state. The following amended motion: "The system of public education shall be a state system" was moved by him.[38]

12. The chief defenders of the denominational school system argued that education without religion was of no value and that education must be conducted in a religious atmosphere. State education

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was quite unacceptable to them, and they urged the unrestricted continuance of the denominational school system. To abolish it was an interference with individual freedom. One of them conceded that there could have been "stray cases of conversion" and irregularities in the treatment of teachers, but in his opinion they were not widespread.[39] He suggested that abuses in the system could be rectified by appropriate rules and regulations and reminded the Minister of his declaration of 1938 that effect would not be given "to any policy against denominational schools".[40] The original recommendations and the amendments came up for voting on 5 June 1945. An amendment that grants should be payable to denominational schools only in respect of pupils of the same religion as the management was defeated by 15 votes to 29. Another amendment that the system of public education should be a state system was also defeated. Certain other amendments, too, were rejected. The recommendation that was finally accepted included three amendments and took the following form:

"The system of state schools and denominational schools shall continue in respect of the existing schools provided however it shall be the duty hereafter of the state exclusively to establish schools of all types where necessary.

Provided further that—

(1) Denominational schools shall be subject to the following among other conditions:—

(a) to be recognized, the school shall have at least 30 pupils of school-going age of the same denomination as the controlling body who reside with their parents within a radius from the school of two miles for boys and one mile for girls and children under 8 years of age;

(b) to be registered for grant the school shall have at least 30 pupils of school-going age of the same denomination as the controlling body who reside with their parents within a radius from the school of two miles for boys and one mile for girls and children under 8 years of age;

(c) to continue to receive assistance from public funds the school shall have at least 30 pupils of school-going age of the same denomination as the controlling body, who reside with their parents within a radius from the school of two miles for boys and one mile for girls and children under 8 years of age."[41]

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The denominational issue in the Education Ordinance of 1947

13. A Bill to give effect to the decisions of June 1945 took very long in the making and as before the delay was imputed to the legal Secretary, J. H. B. Nihill who, as a State Councillor quipped later, had shown masterly inactivity quite in keeping with his name.[42] The observations of the Financial Secretary (Sir O. E. Goonetilleke) on the Bill were as follows: "The Bill is intended to implement the decisions of the State Council concerning the scheme of free education and seeks power to make regulations for this purpose".[43] No section or sub-section in the Bill said anything about free education, but many followed the example of the Financial Secretary and called it the Free Education Bill. The masses themselves gulped the idea down, and as events turned out this was to the great discomfiture of the opponents of the Bill, who were labelled opponents of free education and held up to ridicule by those who organized mass support for the Bill. No less a person than the Leader of the State Council, tried to move an adjournment even as the Minister of Education moved the first reading on 23 January 1947, but Mr. Speaker held that the question had to be put and so the first reading went through. When the Minister moved the second reading on 20 February 1947 a postponement was moved and carried by 19 votes to 17. Finally, it was on 16 March 1947 that discussion on the Bill started. Some of the controversial sections in the Bill related to the place of religion and the provision of religious instruction, and they are dealt with in chapter 59 paragraph 22. Only the provisions regarding the position of denominational schools are discussed here. The recommendation accepted by the State Council had a part which read "..it shall be the duty hereafter of the State exclusively to establish schools of all types where necessary".[44] In order to give effect to this recommendation, it was sought to empower the Executive Committee, by section 7 sub-section 1 (b) of the draft Bill to make regulations "for the prohibition of the registration of schools after a prescribed date for the purpose of receiving grants from state funds."[45] In fact, the Minister could not have done anything less to implement the decision of the State Council; he could in truth have done more and sought power to make regulations for altogether prohibiting the establishment of schools and justified his action in terms of the State Council decision. But not even his moderation was to save him from the onslaughts of denominationalism in education. The perfectly legitimate and modest power sought was hotly contested.

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On 28 February 1947, the Roman Catholic hierarchy in Ceylon sent a memorandum to the Minister and members of the State Council in which they said:

> "We wish to make it clear that we cannot on any account accept the position that would be created if the Minister of Education were empowered to prohibit the registration of schools after a prescribed date for the purpose of receiving grants from state funds, i.e. if the Minister be allowed to prohibit the opening of assisted denominational schools."[46]

A six month deferment of discussion of the Bill was proposed and seconded. Various diversionary arguments were also used. The Bill was only an amending Bill to amend the Education Ordinance No. 31 of 1939 to give effect to the 1945 decisions of the State Council. An amending Bill was not good enough, it was said. A comprehensive Ordinance should be prepared. Such a far reaching set of rules and regulations should not be brought during the closing stages of the life of the State Council, it was said. A State Councillor who came out in strong support of the Bill said

> "..this opposition is the historic opposition at all times by what are called vested interests..This is the opposition of the classes against the struggle of the masses..The denominational schools represented vested interests..opposition really comes from the principals and managers of the big denominational schools.."[47]

Another, opposing the Bill, exulted that the United National Party, which formed the government, was "so delightfully divided into two camps".[48] He was the last speaker on the second day of the debate, when he made this comment, and he could not have been referring to the trends of the two days of debate, for only one State Councillor had supported the Bill while eight, including the Leader of the State Council had opposed the Bill.

14. After 7 March the State Council was in recess until 15 May and these two months were characterized by feverish activity. Three national leaders, E. W. Adikaram, G. P. Malalasekera and A. Mivanapalana formed themselves along with others into a "Central Free Education Defence Committee" and carried on an island wide campaign

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to make sure that the Bills would not be shelved. Wherever they went they commanded mass support for the Bill. Those who were for postponing the Bill realized that the public would not brook any delay in passing the Bill. What they lacked in numbers and public acclaim, however, they made up by their subtlety. A master plan unravelled itself when the State Council met after the recess. The first scene in the drama was enacted when one State Councillor withdrew his proposal for deferment as soon as proceedings for the day commenced. The next speaker after some criticism of the leaders of the public campaign gave an assurance that the Bill "must be passed; and it will be passed", throwing out at the same time a gentle hint that some amendments of the sections which denominational bodies considered objectionable might be moved at the Standing Committee stage.[49] Speaking next, another State Councillor who had in June 1945 moved the amendment which sought to prevent the establishment of new denominational schools in the future (this amendment was passed by the State Council, and the attempt to incorporate it into legislation triggered off the present controversy), hinted that "reasonable concessions" might be possible at the Standing Committee stage, and expressed his satisfaction that those who opposed the Bill "have veered round to that point of view".[50] Another State Councillor sensed what was going on and expressed his fears that the Bill "will be sabotaged at the Standing Committee stage".[51]. A State Councillor who had shown himself to be an uncompromising opponent of denominationalism in the 1944-1945 debate, was a mixture of sweetness and invective. "In the Committee stage, of course, we may try to amend certain clauses", he said; later, some venom was shown: "We read in the papers reports of speeches of men like Father Peter Pillai in the course of which they stated 'Victory is in sight."[52] A State Councillor quoted derisively the remainder of what the Rev. Father had said: "The enemy had been routed on all fronts", and went on to say that the grave danger that the Bill would be postponed was averted by "the politically conscious section of the Buddhist clergy", and the political awareness and awakening among the masses.[53] Another described the retreat of the opponents as only a "strategic retreat".[54] He was right, as indeed Rev. Father Peter Pillai was right in what he was alleged to have said, and among those who later contributed to his triumph with their votes were the two estimable gentlemen who were so derisive of his paen of victory.

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15. When the Standing Committee met on 23 May 1947 the Leader of the House moved that the words "the prohibition of the registration of schools, after a prescribed date, for the purpose of receiving grants from state funds," which would have given the Executive Committee the necessary power to make regulations excluding new denominational schools from becoming entitled to grants, be deleted and replaced by the words

> "the registration of schools after July 1, 1947 subject to the conditions that in the case of any denominational school any grants from state funds shall be payable only in respect of pupils whose parents profess the religion of the proprietor of the school",

thereby limiting to this framework the regulation making power of the Executive Committee and ensuring that new denominational schools could be opened and aided to the extent of the pupils of the same denomination as the management.[55] The Standing Committee accepted this amendment by 19 votes to 2, the Minister being among the dissentients. The recommendation of the Standing Committee came up before the State Council on 27 May and was accepted by 43 votes to 3, the Minister being among those who opposed. Rev. Father Peter Pillai's claim of victory was more than vindicated. It was a sad day for the Minister, and the bitterest cut of all was that A. Ratnayake who had long been his trusted lieutenant in the crusade for a state system, also cast his vote in furtherance of denominational interests. Denominational interests were appeased and all was set for the elections to the first Parliament of Ceylon. The Minister lost his seat, the party emerged victorious and it was only a matter of time before denominationalism gained more victories.

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CHAPTER 56

ESTATE SCHOOLS (1920 - 1948)

1. From about the middle of the nineteenth century, British entrepreneurs opened up coffee and tea plantations in the central highlands of Ceylon, employing Indian Tamil labour recruited from South India. The immigration of Indian Tamil labour continued, from there on with a few interruptions, through the present period.

2. Living in estate enclaves, speaking a language different from that spoken by the indigenous population in the villages surrounding the estates, and professing a religion different from theirs, the estate labourers constituted a distinct community. As the labourers were imported to serve the needs of the owners of the estates, the responsibility of caring for the welfare of the labour force was placed on the owners of the estates. The responsibility for the provision of education was imposed on estates, first by the Rural Schools Ordinance No. 8 of 1907 (see chapter 42 paragraph 19), and later by the Education Ordinance No. 1 of 1920 (see chapter 51 paragraphs 32 to 28).

3. Part VI of the Education Ordinance No. 31 of 1939 was closely modelled on the Ordinance of 1920, and generally repeated its provisions. Two changes may, however, be noted. While the Ordinances of 1907 and 1920 required the estate superintendent to make provision for the "vernacular education" of estate children, the word "vernacular" was omitted from the Ordinance of 1939. The superintendent is required "to make such provision as may be prescribed for the education of the children". This phraseology leaves it open for the Director of Education to prescribe, for example, that some English be taught, whereas under the previous Ordinances there would have been no legal basis to require compliance. In fact, however, the Director has done nothing to broaden the curriculum beyond vernacular education in reading, writing and arithmetic. A second important respect in which the Ordinance of 1939 differed from the Ordinance of 1920 is that it placed on the superintendent of the estate the duty to report to the Director of Education any parent failing to cause a child between the ages of six and ten to attend school. Although the Ordinance of 1920 had a requirement of compulsory attendance with penalties on parents, it provided no machinery by which the Director of Education could discover errant parents.

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4. An issue of great importance in relation to the education of children attending estate schools was raised in the State Council in 1942 by a Member.

"The other day I raised the question of introducing Sinhalese in estate schools. We are faced with the position that in our area we have a percentage of foreign—Indian—labour which is permanently settled..the sooner they are enabled to establish contact with the permanent population, at least in the matter of language, the better it would be for all concerned..There is no contact in language; no contact by proximity, in the course of neighbourliness, because they have nothing to do with each other and they tend to become isolated blocks. I do not think it is in the interests of anybody that permanently settled labour should be an isolated block..if only we can take steps to establish contact, and if possible, absorb it into the general population it would be all the better for us in the long run".[1]

The Minister of Education replied that the superintendent of the estate was made responsible for the education of the children on the estate and that a reasonable grant was paid to the superintendent. He, however, agreed to get in touch with the Agent of the government of India and the estate proprietors, and discuss this matter.[2] To this, the Member made the pertinent and apt comment: "I do not know whether this is a matter for the estate superintendent to decide. This is a matter of policy to be accepted by the government and laid down as part of the curriculum of estate schools".[3] It is not known whether the Minister and the government pursued this matter at all, but it is clear that nothing tangible followed.

5. Not a word was mentioned about estate schools in the Kannangara Report.[4] On 30 May 1944, in opening the debate on the recommendations based on this report, the Minister said that the question of education in estate schools has been "dropped for the present."[5] However, in June 1945, during the concluding stages of the debate, the following addition was proposed, in the form of an amendment, to the list of recommendations: "that all estate schools shall be converted into primary State Schools and shall form part of the system of National Education".[6] The Member (see paragraph 4) who had raised the issue of Sinhalese earlier seconded the amendment and, in doing so, expressed the hope "that in these schools Sinhalese will be made compulsory, and Sinhalese of such a standard will be taught that these boys

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can take the fullest part in the life of the community".[7] On 5 June 1945, the amendment was accepted without a division by the State Council.[8]

6. Section 8 of the Education (Amendment) Ordinance No. 26 of 1947 repealed the sections in the Ordinance No. 31. of 1939 dealing with estate schools. While some of the provisions of the 1939 Ordinance were repeated, others were changed. The principal changes introduced by the new Ordinance are given below:

1. The compulsory school-going age was from 6 years to 10 years. The age limits were changed to 5 years and 16 years respectively.

2. By the 1939 Ordinance the estate superintendent was required to set apart and keep in repair a suitable school room.

The new Ordinance required the estate owner to set apart, on the estate, premises consisting of:

(a) a building which conformed to certain prescribed standards.
(b) a habitable house for a married teacher.
(c) uncultivated land of a prescribed extent to serve partly as a playground and partly as a school garden.

The 1947 Ordinance reiterated the proviso of the 1939 Ordinance that if an estate owner failed to provide the above facilities in spite of due notice by the Director, the latter could take all such measures as were necessary to provide facilities, the expenses being recoverable from the estate as a debt to the Crown.

3. The duty cast on the estate superintendent by the 1939 Ordinance "to make such provision as may be prescribed for the education of the children" was removed. Instead, the owner or the person for the time being in charge of an estate is required to permit the Director to establish and maintain a government school on the premises set apart as above.

7. An implication of the above provisions was that it was no longer necessary for the management of an estate to engage a teacher and provide education. By law, it had only to provide the physical facilities and leave it to the Director to establish and maintain a government school using the facilities provided by the estate.

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CHAPTER 57

THE FREE EDUCATION SCHEME, 1944

1. The position as at 1943 was that education in Sinhalese schools and Tamil schools, both government and assisted, was entirely free, while school fees were payable in English schools and bilingual schools, both government and assisted. In other words, the language of instruction determined whether fees were payable or not, and whether the government or the private sector provided the schools was not a material factor. The total number of free schools in 1939 was 4701 with 675, 281 pupils, and the number of fee levying schools was 410 with 98,898 pupils.[1] In the case of government schools, the total expenditure (less the fees collected in the English and the bilingual schools) was a charge on the government revenue. In the case of assisted vernacular schools, the entire salary bill of the teachers was met by the government, while in the case of assisted English schools the government met nearly 50% of the salary bill of the teachers, leaving it to the proprietors of the schools to meet out of school fees the balance salary as well as the money necessary for maintaining the buildings in good repair.

2. From the standpoint of the pupils in the schools, the situation was that if they attended English or bilingual schools, government or assisted, school fees were payable, but if they attended vernacular schools education was free. The Kannangara Committee, considering that English schools, which provided courses of study leading to the best opportunities of employment and higher education, were fee-levying and therefore patronized only by the well-to-do, recommended that in order to make equality of opportunity a reality, education should be made free in all schools.[2] It also recommended that education should be free in the institutions of tertiary education as well. In making these recommendations the Committee was no doubt influenced as much by their intrinsic appeal as measures of social justice to the masses as by the fact that in certain other parts of the world moves were afoot to make education at the school level free. The boldness of the Committee was specially to be commended for extending the principle of free education to its logical conclusion to embrace the entire field of education inclusive of the University.

3. Among the proposals placed before the State Council in 1944, three were specifically intended to implement the above recommendations. They were worded as follows[3]:-

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(a). In assisted or state primary and post-primary schools and Training Colleges, in the state technical, agricultural and trade schools and in the University no tuition fees shall be levied.

(b). The full salaries, according to prescribed scales, of teachers constituting the "eligible" staff of assisted primary and post-primary schools and Training Colleges shall be met from public funds.

(c). An equipment grant shall be paid annually to assisted schools at prescribed rates provided that equipment so procured remains the property of the state and provided that no fees, other than games fees, towards the cost of providing equipment shall be charged in assisted schools from pupils therein.

4. H. J. Huxham, the Financial Secretary, who held office in Ceylon by virtue of an appointment made by the British government, expressed the view that the proposals of the Executive Committee involved "expenditure on a scale which this government cannot possibly afford".[4] The Board of Ministers claimed that it was only placing the proposals "to promote discussion" and that financial implications were

> "so considerable and uncertain that the Board must retain the right to consider these implication in detail and must not be regarded as committed either in respect of the extent or the date of the implementation of any recommendation approved by the Council, which must depend on the financial position of the country from time to time."[5]

The Minister of Education in urging the acceptance of the proposal pointed out that "the affluent, the rich, the influential, those that can afford to pay attend one kind of school imparting the higher education which is given in a foreign tongue".[6] Although it had to be paid for, it was worth the price because the official language of the country was English and "no one without a knowledge of English can fill any high post".[7] Vernacular education, which was the only kind of education open to the poor man, led even the most gifted child no higher than to the comparatively unremunerative posts of a vernacular teacher, an ayurvedic physician or a notary. Free education at all levels was the panacea and if the scheme is accepted "we shall be able to say that we found education..the patrimony of the rich and

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left it the inheritance of the poor".[8] A group of wealthy and prominent citizens in the country, among them four Knights Bachelor, who had submitted to the Board of Ministers a memorandum to the effect that the proposals be deferred on the ground that, if the recommendations were adopted even in principle, they "would materially affect not only our education system but also our entire social and economic organization in the Island" received devastating treatment at the hands of the Minister in his speech.[9]

5. The idea free education was born in the minds of a handful of persons who comprised the nationalist-socialist sector of the English educated elite. C. W. W. Kannangara and A. Ratnayake were the pioneers from the nationalist sector; two or three left wing political leaders of the time were the pioneers from the socialist sector, and most prominent among them was N. M. Perera, whose book *The Case for Free Education* was characterized by intellectual capacity and social sensitivity of a very high order. The idea of free education that came from the nationalist-socialist sector of the English educated was taken up enthusiastically by a second level elite, namely the Buddhist monks, ayurvedic physicians, Swabhasha teachers, and the editors of the Swabhasha newspapers, who harnessed mass support for the campaign. Free education spelt danger to the smugly complacent, self interested sector of the English educated who were so alienated from the roots of their culture as well as from the bonds of humanity with the common man that neither nationalist aspirations nor socialist aspirations formed any part of their thinking and living. It spelt disaster also to vested interests of all sorts—colonial or imperial, social, economic, and religious—entrenched in positions of privilege in the public life of the country.

6. The idea of free education from the Kindergarten to the University had such an emotional appeal to the enfranchised masses that iit became a slogan with them. For any political personality to oppose free education was to commit political suicide, and none dared to take the risk. The opposition to free education therefore took a subtle form. Attempts were made from time to time to get adjournments and to postpone discussion, with the result that the debate lasted over a year. The most powerful political personality of the time and the Leader of the State Council, D. S. Senanayake, not only associated himself with attempts at postponement, but was also cryptical in his support. In the concluding stages of the debate, he said,

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"..it is clear that secondary education is not going to be free to every child, that it is to be free only for that limited section of the population, for those considered suitable—the 5 per cent..let no one claim free education from the Kindergarten to the University. I say that that is not true. These proposals may provide for free education upto the age of 11+, and education of certain children after that age may also be provided free, but it would be free only to a selected few..",[10]

only to receive a few days later from the Minister of Education the taunt: "He is now an expert in the best Ministerial style of concealing his thoughts in his words".[11] Another line of opposition to free education was to say that the strict enforcement of free compulsory primary education was the first priority and that until it was achieved it was premature to speak of free education beyond that stage. A third line of argument was that the free education scheme would cause a delay in the extension of educational facilities to certain areas, namely the Eastern, Uva, North Western, North Central, and Sabaragamuwa provinces and parts of the Southern and the Central provinces, and that the needs of these areas should be first supplied.[12] A fourth argument was that the rate of equipment grant proposed to be paid to assisted schools under the free education scheme was inadequate. Amendments to the effect that the grants be increased were moved in the State Council, but they were defeated.[13] A fifth argument, urged at first to complicate issues, was later taken up enthusiastically by others of a genuine socialistic frame of mind. This was to the effect that children from poor homes would not be able to take advantage of free education unless other necessary amenities were provided. An amendment that attendance at school be compelled "provided free books and necessary clothes are supplied by the state", and another that "all pupils shall be provided with a free mid day meal on a balanced diet, and in case of malnutrition all other meals shall be the concern of the state" were both passed.[14]

7. Two amendments seeking to allow assisted schools which so desired to continue under the scheme of receiving grants in aid while being fee-levying were defeated.[15] The free education scheme accepted by the State Council consisted of the three recommendations, listed earlier in this chapter. One of the original recommendations, however, was that unaided schools should be permitted to exist provided that they give "adequate and suitable instruction", and it was

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accepted.[16] They could, of course, levy fees, as they stood outside the free scheme.

8. The acceptance of the free education scheme was a great victory for the Minister of Education, but it had to be implemented. It is the claim of the Minister that he took advantage of the absence from Ceylon of the Leader of the House during the period of July to October 1945 to get the approval of the Board of Ministers and the State Council to the necessary regulations framed under section 32 of the Education Ordinance No: 31 of 1939.[17] The regulations, known as the School Grants (Revised Conditions) Regulations, were approved by the Board of Ministers and placed before the State Council on 24 August 1945. The effect of the regulations was to enable the managers of assisted schools enter the free scheme with effect from 1 October 1945, or 1 October 1946, or 1 October 1947, or 1 October 1948. As from the date on which a school entered the free scheme, it should levy no fee other than a games fee not exceeding Rs. 6/- a year from each pupil. The government for its part would meet the total salary cost of the eligible teachers of the school and pay a maintenance and equipment grant at specified rates. Assisted schools which did not come into the scheme were to receive grants in aid on the old basis until 30 September 1948, after which all aid would cease.

9. In a belated but estimable concern for the principle of equality of opportunity, the Secretary of State for the Colonies writing from Downing Street on 15 December 1945, when British rule in Ceylon was within sight of ending after 150 years of supremacy, was gracious enough to suggest that the principle be taken to its logical conclusion with the provision of "free books and stationery".[18]

10. The strangest of all tributes to the free education scheme was paid by one of its most inveterate opponents, W. I. Jennings, Vice Chancellor of the University of Ceylon. Writing to the Minister on 28 August 1946 within less than one year of the inauguration of the scheme, he said, "You may like to be informed that the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine has reported to me that this year's batch of new medical students is the best we have had. I would regard this as due to No. 1 Free Education,"[19] Dr. Jennings' conclusion had no basis in fact and an undoubted lack of reality about it, as the scheme could not bear fruit so soon. But his gesture did serve to establish peace between

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him and the Minister, and not long afterwards Jennings was made a Knight Bachelor by the King, in recognition of his services in connection with the framing of the Constitution of Ceylon, and in relation to education.

11. The moratorium given to assisted schools for entering the free education scheme was to cease after 30 September 1948 according to the School Grants (Revised Conditions) Regulations, 1945, and by 1 May of the same year schools had to communicate to the Director of Education whether they were entering the scheme or not. This moratorium was in fact extended, but the story of the extension belongs to a period not covered in the present book.

12. It should not be thought that the acceptance of the principle of free education ensured equality of educational opportunity. Though the masses thought they had won a great victory, the forces of reaction had conceded victory on the front only to dig themselves in for resistance and sabotage behind the lines. Subtleties of implementation by their very nature did not lend themselves to slogans with mass appeal, nor was the elite leadership of the free education campaigns sufficiently vigilant or persistent in its efforts to ensure effective implementation of the victory that had been won. There was, first of all, unconscionable delay in embodying in legislation the decision regarding free education. But after the legislation finally came, other tactics were used. Education was already free in the mass of schools, certainly in most of the schools patronised by the masses. Education was not free in a minority of schools, and these were by and large the schools patronised by the well-to-do. The immediate consequence of the principle of free education accepted in 1945 was to give a bonanza to the well-to-do by giving them without payment the good education that had hitherto been paid for by them. The masses continued to receive free the poor quality education that had all along been free to them. The Central School idea represented a genuine attempt to extend the benefits of a good quality education, but the establishment of Central Schools could proceed only at snail's pace as the lion's share of the finances of the government was taken up by grants of great liberality to the few prestigious schools which had been earlier fee-levying but had now become free. The welfare of this small number of schools was upper-most in the minds of the educational bureaucrats, for they were the schools to which the middle and upper socio-economic

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groups sent their children. The bureaucrats themselves belonged to these groups and had a natural interest in furthering their welfare; moreover, the middle and upper socio-economic groups were articulate in canvassing government aid in increasing measure. A honey and nectar repast was enjoyed by the prestigious schools attended by the few, while the schools attended by the many had to be satisfied with the dregs. The Junior school came as a half way measure in the government sector between the old, bad, free school for the masses, and the new and better Central school for a few of them, but even Junior schools were not established in sufficient number. Such small mercies as did come their way placated the masses, and they were too inarticulate to ask for full scale justice. Officialdom was content to programme changes at the minimum rate of disturbance to its own lethargy and complacence. The policy that had been accepted was free education from the Kindergarten to the University. Education was indeed free to all in theory, but in practice what was free was a good education for the few and a bad education for the many. In other words, from the point of view of quality, free education was more a mirage than a reality for many more years to come.

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CHAPTER 58

LANGUAGE IN EDUCATION (1920 - 1948)

1. A member of the Legislative Council, A. Canagaratnam, moved the following motion in the Legislative Council on 25 February 1926.

"As the educational policy of maintaining two sets of schools for the people of this Island, English and vernacular, has resulted in the following:

(1) Vernacular being reduced to the level of teaching pupils just to read and write and not proceeding much further in the imparting of knowledge;

(2) The vernacular languages having no chance of development as vehicles of modern thought in spite of their being cultured languages, although under an altered policy, all modern knowledge can be easily incorporated into them so as to become the property of the Ceylonese people, just as it is the common property of all other civilized nations;

(3) The people being deprived of originality of thought and of culture in their own languages and the growth of their own literatures having come to a dead stop;

(4) The training given in English Schools alienating the pupils from traditions, instead of enabling them to utilize their own ancestral culture and advancement on foundations upon which to build further intellectual progress;

(5) The environment in English schools encourage the indiscriminate adoption by Ceylonese youths of European modes of living which are unsuited to their own traditions and the conditions of the climate;

(6) An economic and social revolution caused by such indiscriminate imitation of European modes of living which is causing new social irregularities and an increased cost of living;

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(7) Education in English schools, owing to such being regarded as of a superior class, leading to a false sense of dignity and causing distaste to manual labour;

(8) Children whose mother tongue is Sinhalese or Tamil being unable, when sent to English schools, where alone some substantial knowledge is imparted, to connect ideas imparted to them at school, and the natural and progressive growth of their intellect being thus checked;

(9) The necessity under which such children are placed to acquire knowledge of a new langnage in their infancy, in order to acquire fresh ideas creating an undesirable mental strain on them and leading to considerable waste of time and energy;

(10) Neglect of provision for instruction in Sinhalese and Tamil languages in Sinhalese and Tamil schools respectively;

this Council recommends that the policy adopted in most civilized countries, of having only one set of public schools graded according to the standard of instruction imparted in them be adopted in Ceylon also, and that English, Sinhalese and Tamil be made language subjects in all schools, mother tongue of the students being gradually adopted as the medium of instruction in schools of all grades and that with a view to devising practical measures to give effect to this recommendation a Committee of the House or a Commission be appointed consisting of members who understand the traditions, culture and present requirements of the mass of the people."[1]

2. Towards the end of a lengthy debate an amendment that was moved found unanimous acceptance:

"A Commission be appointed to inquire into and report upon the system of education in Ceylon particularly with reference to the question

(a) What measures should be adopted in order to extend the scope of education in Vernacular schools;

(b) How far is it practicable to make Sinhalese and Tamil the media of instruction in the schools;

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(c) What steps should be taken to improve the teaching of Oriental Languages in the English Schools?"[2]

3. In July 1926 the Governor appointed a Commission consisting of A. Macrae Acting Director of Education as Chairman and thirteen others "to inquire into and report upon the present system of education in Ceylon particularly with reference to the questions:—

(a) What measures should be adopted in order to extend the scope of education in vernacular schools;

(b) How far is it practicable to make Sinhalese and Tamil the media of instruction in the schools of Ceylon;

(c) What steps should be taken to improve the teaching of Oriental languages in English schools"[3]

4. The schools in Ceylon at this time were classified as

(a) English schools

(b) Anglo-vernacular schools

(c) Vernacular schools

5. The English schools followed one of two alternative syllabuses. According to one syllabus, instruction from the first year of schooling was in English. This syllabus was intended for children from English-speaking homes, but in fact many children from non-English-speaking homes also followed this syllabus. An alternative syllabus intended for children who had already attended a vernacular school and passed the third standard in Sinhalese and Tamil provided two years in special classes for the intensive study of English after which such children would join, at the stage of the fifth or sixth year, those who were following the first syllabus. In other words, the special classes provided for the transition from the vernacular medium to the English medium.

6. In Anglo-vernacular schools, instruction began in the vernacular but as children went up the school they were taught English as a subject. In course of time, children were able to switch over entirely to the English medium in a few schools which had good facilities for the study of English. In the remaining schools they continued through the vernacular medium while English was studied as a subject.

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7. In vernacular schools, the medium of instruction was Sinhalese or Tamil. Some children, of course, left vernacular schools after passing the third standard or a higher class in order to join an English school. Those continuing in the vernacular school did not receive any instruction in English.

8. In so far as the curriculum of schools was concerned, the English schools provided a broader and more advanced curriculum than Anglo-vernacular schools, which in turn provided a slightly broader curriculum than vernacular schools.

9. In English schools, school fees were payable; in Anglo-vernacular schools school fees were payable only after a student commenced the study of English; no fee was payable in vernacular schools. The English schools were attended by the students belonging to the upper and upper middle socio-economic classes, and enjoyed the greatest amount of prestige in the community. The Anglo-vernacular and the vernacular schools provided education for those lower down in the socio-economic scale, the Anglo-vernacular school being regarded with a little more respect than the vernacular school. To be sure, these features of the school system were by no means new, and had characterized it for about seventy to eighty years prior to the 1920's. In the 1920's, and 1930's, however, attention began to be drawn increasingly to the lack of parity among schools, and one of the first major expressions of concern in the legislature took the form of the motion (see paragraph 1) moved in February 1926.

10. The Macrae Commission addressed itself first to the situation in which some children from Sinhalese and Tamil speaking homes had to accommodate themselves to receiving instruction in English right from the beginning of their schooling.

> "The Commission agreed..that the sudden transference of a child from the conditions of home to conditions which are so radically different from home could not be otherwise than detrimental to the development of his intellect and, indeed the whole of his personality. It appeared to them obvious that a period of repression for several years was bound to result which might well create a permanent disability in the development of such a child."[4]

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The Commission recommended that "instruction in the vernacular languages should be compulsory for all pupils at the earlier stage of their school career."[5] The phrase 'earlier stage' was too vague to make the recommendation serve any serious purpose.

11. The next question to which the Commission addressed itself related to the manner in which a transition to the English medium might be made by those to whom facilities for such a transition were available. The usual way of effecting the transition was to spend a couple of years on the intensive study of English with a view to moving over to the English medium. Another possible way was to provide for the study of English in a graded manner, alongside instruction through the vernacular, over a period of years and thereafter switch over to the use of the English medium. The Commission thought that a school should be free to adopt either of these alternatives, and that the Department of Education should prepare a graded scheme for the study of English so that the second alternative, too, might be widely used with a view to a possible evaluation later on of the merits of the two alternatives.

12. The Commission also concluded that "a bilingual system has greater advantages for Ceylon than a unilingual system of education."[6] The practical implication of this recommendation was that in a school which used a certain medium of instruction (English, Sinhalese or Tamil), facilities should exist for the study of one of the other two languages.

13. The Commission failed to come to grips with the three questions explicitly contained in the terms of reference of the Commission, and only skirted on the boundary. In regard to the question "What measures should be adopted in order to extend the scope of education in vernacular schools?", the Commission came up with only one suggestion, namely that facilities should be made available for the study of a second language. In regard to the question, "How far is it practicable to make Sinhalese and Tamil the media of instruction in the schools of Ceylon?", it failed to provide an answer. It stood for the maintenance of the status quo, without saying it in so many words. As in the past, some schools could continue to use Sinhalese and Tamil as media; but some schools could use English as the medium, through all the grades in the case of non-Sinhalese and non-Tamil pupils, and in all grades except the lower grades in the case of pupils

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who were Sinhalese or Tamil. In regard to the question, "What steps should be taken to improve the teaching of Oriental languages in the English Schools", the Commission had nothing to say.

14. In so far as the report of the Macrae Commission bore on the questions contained in the terms of reference of the Commission, it could hardly have been a more disappointing document. The riders by two members of the Commission, however, added purpose and colour to an otherwise shallow exercise in futility. One of them, in fact, pointed out in his rider that the "Commission should not evade the duty cast upon it by the second term of reference", but this rebuke appears to be all too mild in the light of the Commission's general evasion of duty in regard to all its terms of reference.[7] The one saving grace of the Macrae Commission was that it did consider some questions outside its original terms of reference, and had some useful and definitive recommendations to make upon them.

The decisions of 1943-45

15. The English language held a position of pre-eminence in the educational and administrative set up of the country, and the languages of the people Sinhalese and Tamil, occupied an insignificant place. Only 7% of the population was, however, literate in English.

16. On 22 June 1943, a member of the State Council gave notice in the State Council of the following motion:—

"That with the object of making Sinhalese the official Language of Ceylon within a reasonable number of years this Council is of opinion—

(a) That Sinhalese should be made the medium of instruction in all schools;

(b) That Sinhalese should be made a compulsory subject in all public examinations;

(c) That legislation should be introduced to permit the business of the State Council to be conducted in Sinhalese also;

(d) That a Commission should be appointed to choose for translation and to translate important books of other languages into Sinhalese;

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(e) That a Commission should be appointed to report on steps that need to be taken to effect the transition from English into Sinhalese."[8]

17. The motion did not come up for discussion until May 1944. In moving it, the mover pointed out that "this country is always in danger of being governed by a small coterie who go through these English schools, whereas the vast majority who go through Sinhalese and Tamil schools must always be in the position of hewers of wood and drawers of water."[9] At the very outset of the debate, the mover expressed his willingness to add the words "and Tamil" after the word "Sinhalese" wherever it occurred.[10] An amendment to this effect, was passed by 29 votes to 9.[11] The argument of those who voted against the amendment was that national unity could be forged only on the anvil of a single language. Dudley Senanayake, a future Prime Minister, was quite forthright in his view: "It is very essential that there should be one official language. And, I ask, what could that language be other than Sinhalese?"[12]

18. Meanwhile, the report of the Kannangara Committee had been published in November 1943.[13] It listed four major defects in the system of education obtaining in Ceylon. Of them, the first and the third related to the language issue.

"(a) The first major defect is the existence of two types of education according to the medium of instruction used. The great majority of our pupils are taught in "vernacular" schools where Sinhalese or Tamil is the medium of instruction. With a few exceptions, the rest are taught in "English" schools where English is the medium of instruction.

The objections to this system are:

(1) English has become a badge of social superiority, thus dividing the population into two more or less watertight social compartments, the English-educated and the vernacular-educated.

(2) Sinhalese or Tamil, the "natural" medium for Sinhalese or Tamil people respectively, and the best medium through which they can effectively contribute to the world of literature and art, has not been developed.

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(3) The third major defect is the absence of equality of opportunity, the development of our educational system having resulted in two types of schools—one attended mainly by those who can afford to pay fees, and the other attended by those whose means do not permit them to do so."[14]

19. This is a quotation from the summary of the report. The body of the Report elaborated on (1) above pointing out that education through the English medium, available for payment, promised the best material prospects in that—

(a) a knowledge of English was required for all the better paid posts;

(b) English being the language of government and of all important commercial establishments, a knowledge of English provided the path to affluence;

(c) A knowledge of English was required for higher studies. Moreover, English schools had better buildings, and were better equipped and better staffed than other schools. The Report regretted the fact that English had become a medium of instruction in Ceylon schools and given rise to a privileged group. It went on to assert that the mother tongue was the natural medium of instruction, and that there was no reason "why English should be retained as a medium of instruction at any stage in the educational process" except for those, notably the Burgher community, for whom English was the mother tongue.[15] While "the ideal should be the mother-tongue at all stages of education," the Committee was of opinion that the change should be phased over a number of years and recommended that the medium of instruction in the primary school should be the mother tongue.[16]

20. On the basis of the observations made in the Kannangara Committee Report, the Executive Committee for Education placed the following recommendations, relating to language, before the State Council in May 1944;

"1. The medium of instruction in the primary school shall be the mother tongue.

2. The medium of instruction in the lower department of the post-primary school may be either the mother tongue or bilingual.

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3. The medium of instruction in the higher department of the post-primary school may be English, Sinhalese or Tamil or bilingual."[17]

21. In introducing these recommendations, C. W. W. Kannangara, the Minister of Education, made the following comment:

> "..we have two classes of society in this country divided by English education. The affluent, the rich, the influential, those that can afford to pay, attend one kind of school imparting the higher education which is given in a foreign tongue. They have to pay for it? Why! Because the official language of this country is English, because no one without a knowledge of English can fill any high post."[18]

What was the prospect for the poor who had to attend schools providing education in the mother tongue? In general, they had to be satisfied with being "hewers of wood and drawers of water", while a handful of the most gifted of them could aspire to be vernacular teachers. Supporting him, one State Councillor said "Knock out English from the pedestal it occupies today and place thereon our Sinhalese and Tamil languages and we shall soon be a free race" and urging "the Burgher nominated members and his community to join with us even at this stage and adopt either the Sinhalese or the Tamil way of living and the Sinhalese or the Tamil language as their mother tongue", moved the following amendment: "The medium of instruction in all schools shall be Sinhalese or Tamil with English as a compulsory second language".[19] Some State Councillors were not prepared to have English as a compulsory second language but wanted English to be optional. One of them moved the following amendment: "The mother tongue shall be made the medium of instruction in all schools, with English as an optional language".[20] He said, "..our educational structure is divided into two types of educational institutions; some institutions giving instruction through the mother tongue, and the other institutions giving instruction through English. This particular defect has created to my mind, two different nations; one nation learning Sinhalese and Tamil and speaking in Sinhalese and Tamil, and the other speaking and learning English. I think this has been one of the worst features of British rule introduced into this country. We find 95 per cent of our pupils in the schools learning their mother tongue but completely unequipped to take part in the government of the country,

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because the government of the country is conducted in English. We find 5 per cent of our schools teaching English; and those who go through those schools are completely denationalized, are out of touch with the people, are ignorant of their history and their customs.. if we make English a compulsory subject it may be that after a time we may revert to the bad old system and that Sinhalese and Tamil in Ceylon may not be of economic value and will therefore gradually disappear."[21] The above mentioned amendments were defeated, and in so far as the medium of instruction was concerned the decision, based on the recommendations of the Executive Committee, was that (i) in the primary school the medium shall be English, (ii) in the lower department of the post-primary school the medium may be either the mother tongue or bilingual, (iii) in the higher department of the post-primary school the medium may be English, Sinhalese or Tamil.

22. In rejecting the second of the above mentioned amendments in so far as it related to the medium of instruction in classes above the primary level, the State Council was rescinding part (a) of its earlier decision of May 1944, based on an amended version of the motion of 22nd June 1943 (see paragraph 16). In the form in which the motion was accepted, it read as follows:

"That with the object of making Sinhalese and Tamil the official languages of Ceylon within a reasonable number of years this Council is of opinion—

(a) That Sinhalese and Tamil should be made the medium of instruction in all schools;

(b) That Sinhalese and Tamil should be made compulsory subjects in all public examinations;

(c) That legislation should be introduced to permit the business of the State Council to be conducted in Sinhalese and Tamil also;

(d) That a Commission should be appointed to choose for translation and to translate important books of other languages into Sinhalese and Tamil;

(e) That a Commission should be appointed to report on all steps that need to be taken to effect the transition from English into Sinhalese and Tamil."[22]

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23. There was an incontrovertible and compelling logic underlying this resolution, but the State Council chose to negative it by its decision of 1945 to modify part (a) and to allow Sinhalese and Tamil children educated through these media in the primary classes to receive their post-primary education through the medium of English. This proviso, in conjunction with the great illusion of "compulsory English for all school children" decided upon in 1945 not only threw the entire language situation into a welter of confusion from which there was no escape for years, but it also prevented the establishment of a democratic system of education by making large sectors of education the monopoly of the socially and economically privileged strata which alone were able to give their children the necessary proficiency in English. A close analysis is required of the educational and social implications of these twin branches of language policy, namely the promise of compulsory English for all school children, and the option given to certain schools to use English as a medium of instruction in the post-primary classes for Sinhalese and Tamil children in spite of their having been educated through the Sinhalese and Tamil media in the primary school.

Compulsory English—fact or fiction ?

24. Compulsory English for all children in and above Standard III is one of the greatest deceptions perpetrated on the people of this country. It is a deception for two important reasons. In the first place, about 20 per cent to 25 per cent of the schools never had a single English teacher in them. Secondly, the calibre of the staff recruited to teach English was sub-standard. In the matter of acquiring a knowledge of English, discrimination against the mass of students arose from the fact that only a small number of schools had good facilities for the study of English, and also from the fact that, when the actual quality of teaching in so many schools was poor, children's knowledge of English largely became a function of the extent to which they were exposed to English in the home environment. From every angle, therefore, it was the child from a relatively prosperous home who was able to acquire a good knowledge of English.

25. If English were unimportant, it would not matter if a good knowledge of English was the preserve of a small and select minority. But the truth is that English occupied a position of pre-eminence in Ceylon in so far as educational and employment opportunities were concerned. The State Council resolution of 1944 regarding the relative place of English and the national languages in the educational

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and public life of the country was logical in conception and comprehensive in scope. It was never implemented as a totality. As a concession to vested interests, the State Council approved various deviations beginning from the year 1945; the State Council attempted to implement the language proposals hesitantly and in piecemeal fashion phasing the changes over an unconscionably long period, punctuated by months or years of inactivity. Students receiving education through the national languages came up against two kinds of frustrations—one of finding that for education beyond a certain level English was a requirement but that they were ill equipped for it on account of the deception that had been practised on them by the government, and the other of finding that proficiency in English was a requirement, express or implied, for most worth-while appointments in spite of the lip service that was being paid to the national languages. The first of these was intimately connected with the policy followed by the Minister of Education in giving a language option. The second of the two frustrations was largely a consequence of the worship of English as a result of a mentality deriving from the unthinking force of inertia, long after it should have been dead and buried. To be sure, State Councillors were not lacking in sensitivity to the realities of this problem, but their words were not effectively translated into action, largely because of the strength of vested interests dedicated to the perpetuation of the *status quo* with all the advantages that went with it.

26. As from October 1945 the primary school medium became Sinhalese or Tamil with no option of an English medium. In post-primary classes the medium could be a national language or English, at the option of the school, and where a school desired to use English, it meant that students whose primary education had been in a national language had to switch over to the English medium.

27. One alleged reason for the option was a shortage of teachers capable of teaching through the national languages. The few students who had a knowledge of English, owed in the vast majority of cases not to the teaching done at school, but to the students' home background, made the transition from the medium of the national language with ease, but others became educational and emotional casualties in the switch over. Martyrs to the self interest of teachers and administrators who, finding the thought of their acquiring a knowledge of the national languages exasperating to themselves in spite of their intellectual capacity, maturity and adulthood, evolved the bright solution

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of requiring the children to accommodate themselves to English somehow, the children had none to complain to about the sorry plight into which the official policy of making matters as comfortable as possible to teachers had driven them; a stray one, here and there, became the subject of a case study by a teacher in training, and what a tale of lost hope and frustration was unfolded then. Official reports recognized the existence of the problem, but instead of attacking the problem at its source, most of them engaged in various kinds of digressions. The Director of Education set the tone for this kind of thing. He recognized the fact that students who were weak in English "faced the prospect of a five-year connection with the junior school," but went on to say, "The defeatist proposal that some adjustment is urgently needed to ensure an unbroken or unhindered study in the mother-tongue (which means dropping the English medium before text books in the mother-tongue are available)..cannot be accepted".[23] An additional Sixth Standard called the Lower Sixth, was started in which special work was to be done in English, making the junior school a four-year one for all students involved in the transition. With some effort, books could have been produced in a matter of months. The truth, however, is that there was no determination to pursue the national language media to a logical and successful conclusion.

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CHAPTER 59

RELIGION IN SCHOOL (1920 - 1948)

Government schools

1. The position in regard to religious instruction in government schools, according to the Education Ordinance of 1920, may be summed up as follows:

(a) Religious instruction was not included in the curriculum of government schools, and it was not part of the work of a teacher in a government school to impart religious instruction.

(b) Any minister or teacher of religion, authorized by the Director of Education in writing, could give religious instruction to the children of the religious denomination to which the minister or teacher of religion belonged at such times and places as may be agreed upon between him and the Director.

2. The principle of government neutrality in religion was not convincing in the face of the government's massive support of a denominational school system that was heavily weighted in favour of Christian denominations. The demand of the Buddhists, the Hindus and the Muslims was that every pupil in a government school should be given instruction in his or her religion.

3. Very few ministers or teachers of religion applied, under the terms of the 1920 Ordinance, to the Director of Education for the necessary authority to provide religious teaching on the conditions to be laid down by the Director.

4. On 17 February 1927, a member of the Legislative Council moved:

> "That in the opinion of this Council provision should be made for a training in their religion for all children attending Government and assisted schools where compulsory attendance is enforced".[1]

One member, opposing the motion, pointed out that he knew of no school in which compulsory attendance was enforced. This was, of course, correct as a statement of fact. But he was quite insensitive to

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the situation that if a parent wanted to educate his child, he had often no alternative except to send his child to a government school in which no religion was taught or to an assisted school which might provide instruction in a religion other than that of the parent. After a lengthy debate, an amendment to refer the motion to the Macrae Commission which was sitting at the time was accepted.[2]

5. The Macrae Commission considered, *inter alia*, the question of religious instruction. It formulated a number of questions in regard to religious instruction and set out the results of its deliberations in the form of answers to these questions. The questions and the answers are given below.

(a) Is religious education necessary for the development of character?

Here, the phrase 'religious education' was used in a very wide sense and irrespectively of where such education might be imparted. The Commission was of the view that a religious education, wherever and however imparted, had a fundamental effect upon the development of character.

(b) What institutions ought to be primarily responsible for religious instruction?

There was unanimity in the Macrae Commission that the home, church, temple or mosque were primarily responsible for religious instruction; there was a difference of opinion, however, as to whether the school should also be included as one of the institutions primarily responsible.

(c) Can character be developed in schools without the doctrinal teaching of religion?

The phrase "doctrinal teaching" was understood to mean the teaching of the systematized body of religious doctrine belonging to a particular religion or a particular denomination. The Commission decided that doctrinal teaching was not an essential function of schools, and that character could be developed in schools without doctrinal teaching of religion.

6. These answers led the Macrae Commission to conclude that no change was necessary in the provisions relating to religious instruction in government schools in the Education Ordinance of 1920. The

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so-called neutrality of the government therefore continued to be maintained, though it could scarcely be reconciled with the government's support of a denominational school system heavily weighted in favour of Christian denominations.

7. In March 1938, the following motion came up for discussion in the State Council:

"This Council is of opinion that teachers in government schools should be permitted to give religious instruction to children in their schools immediately before or after school sessions."[3]

In supporting the motion one member submitted that not more than 5 or 6 per cent of the government schools were taking advantage of the provision in the 1920 Ordinance, and that "a class of man who has no character" was being turned out of government schools for want of religious instruction.[4] A few members opposed the motion, the main grounds of opposition being two, namely that the government should follow a principle of absolute neutrality in respect of religion, and that if religious instruction were to be provided in a government school too many religions would have to be taught. That the government should observe a policy of absolute neutrality in relation to religion was a piece of legal fiction, for the government was subsidising denominational schools by means of liberal grants to them, and the grants were not in proportion to the strength of the different denominations in the population. In spite of the opposition to the motion, it was passed by 17 votes to 6.

In the Education Bill that was placed before the State Council in 1938, a clause was included to give effect to the above decision. In commending the clause to the State Council, the Minister explained that parties opposed to the State Council decision of August 1938 had gone so far as to lodge protests with the Secretary of State for the Colonies. The opposition in the State Council itself during the 1938 debate was relatively mild, and the provisions relating to religious instruction in government schools were passed with some amendments, and embodied in the Education Ordinance No. 31 of 1939. Instruction in religion was not to "be given in any government school as part of the ordinary course of studies at the school".[5] Religious instruction could, however, be provided in any part of the school premises

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"at any time either before or after the hours appointed for the ordinary meeting or session of the school, or on any day on which such meeting or session is not held".[6] A teacher authorized by the Director could give religious instruction to children of the same religious persuasion as the teacher, but parental consent expressly communicated in writing was required before a child could attend a class for religious instruction.

8. One of the recommendations placed before the State Council in 1944 by the Executive Committee for Education pertained to religious instruction. It read as follows: "Religious instruction (appropriate to the religion to which the parent of the child belongs) shall normally be provided in all State Schools including all State Training Colleges subject to the right of individual parents to withdraw their children from such instruction by written request addressed to the head-master."[7] In so far as government schools were concerned, the intention of this recommendation was to remove the limitation imposed by the 1939 Ordinance, namely that "No instruction in religious subjects shall be given at any government school as part of the ordinary course of studies at the school", and to make it the responsibility of government schools to provide religious instruction.[8] The recommendation was opposed by a few members of the State Council who argued that the government should observe neutrality in the matter of religion.[9] To be quite consistent, the abolition of the system of assisted denominational schools had also to be urged, for in the distribution of grants to such schools, especially in a proportion quite different from the strength of the various denominations in the general population, neutrality was not shown. In this respect, a consistent position was taken up by only one of the advocates of religious neutrality.[10] On the whole, the opposition to the recommendation was feeble, and it was approved by the State Council on 5 June 1945.

9. Obstacles placed in the way of framing the necessary legislation prevented the Minister from giving effect to these decisions until he introduced the Education Ordinance of 1947. This Ordinance provided that "instruction in the religion of the parent of each pupil in a government school shall be given to that pupil, as part of his course of studies in the school, by a person who is an adherent of that religion and who has been approved by the Director".[11] In other words, the ban on religious instruction in government schools as part of the course of studies was removed. A clause in the Ordinance exempted

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a government school from providing instruction in a particular religion if the number of pupils whose parents professed that religion was less than 15.[12] There was also a clause to the effect that a pupil was entitled to be exempted from attendance at religious instruction or worship in the religion of the parent on a written request from the parent.[13]

Denominational schools

10. According to the Education Ordinance of 1920, an assisted denominational school (assisted school, for short) was entitled to provide, and in fact every assisted school did provide, religious instruction in the religion of the manager or board of management of the school. It was, however, not obligatory for a pupil in an assisted school to attend religious instruction or religious observance if his parent or guardian objected. It was only at the beginning or the end of a school day that religious observance could be practised or religious instruction given. The time devoted to such practice or instruction had to be indicated in the time table of the school.

11. As assisted Christian schools occupied a dominant position in the educational system, it generally happened that nearly every Christian school had many Buddhist, Hindu and Muslim children attending it. In fact, there were some Christian schools in which over ninety per cent of the children on roll were non-Christians. The reverse case, namely that of a Buddhist, Hindu or Muslim school having more than a minority of children belonging to any other religion was almost unheard of. The result of this state of affairs may be summed up as follows:

(a) Buddhist children in assisted Buddhist schools, Hindu children in assisted Hindu schools, and Muslim children in assisted Muslim schools received religious instruction. Children belonging to religions other than that of the management in one of these schools did not receive religious instruction, but the number of such children was small.

(b) Christian children in assisted Christian schools received religious instruction in Christianity. Large numbers of non-Christian children attended such schools, receiving no instruction in their own religion. Most non-Christian children, however, received instruction in Christianity as their parents had not lodged any objection to the giving of such instruction.

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12. The propriety of the action on the part of many Christian schools in teaching Christianity to non-Christian children often came up for public discussion. The management of the school for its part pointed out that it was entitled to provide such instruction in the absence of an objection from the parent. On behalf of the parents, however, it was urged firstly that many parents did not know that they had a right to object, and secondly that parents who objected and their children would not be popular with the management of the school and the teachers, and ran risks of discrimination.

It was urged that in place of a negative conscience clause, namely a clause in terms of which exemption from religious instruction was possible if an objection was lodged, there should be a positive conscience clause, namely a clause which required the consent of the parent before providing to a child instruction in a religion other than that of the parent.

13. The question of a conscience clause assumed special importance in connection with the enforcement of compulsory education. There were areas of the country in which a parent could not find a government school; nor an assisted school run by the religious group to which he belonged. In other words, the only school to which he could send his child was an assisted school run by a religious group different from his own. The enforcement of compulsory education in such circumstances appeared to be tantamount to interference with the religion of the parent.

14. The Macrae Commission (1926) considered three aspects of the problem of religious instruction in assisted schools. Firstly, it considered the feasibility of requiring assisted schools to provide ministers of other religions with an opportunity of giving religious instruction to pupils belonging to their respective religions. Secondly, the Commission discussed the operation of the conscience clause and its possible amendment. Thirdly, the Commission addressed itself to the task of providing school facilities so that attendance could be compelled without the danger of religious interference.

15. The Macrae Commission thought that it would not be feasible to require an assisted school to permit ministers of other religious groups to come into them to provide religious instruction to

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children belonging to such religious groups. The managements of the schools were not willing to give such a right of entry to teachers of religions other than their own, and it was felt that they could not be compelled to do so.

The Macrae Commission was in favour of modifying the conscience clause given in the Ordinance of 1920, and re-stating it in a positive form. The clause as finally approved by the Commission was in three parts as follows:

(a) It shall not be required as a condition of any child being admitted or continuing in a school that he shall attend or abstain from attending any Sunday school or any place of religious worship, or that he shall attend any religious observance or any instruction in religious subjects in the school or elsewhere;

(b) No child belonging to a religious denomination other than that to which the managing body of the school belongs shall be required to attend or abstain from attending any Sunday school or any place of religious worship or to attend any religious observance or instruction in religious subjects in the school or elsewhere unless the parent or guardian of the child has expressly stated in writing his consent that his child shall attend such place of religious worship or receive instruction in religious subjects in the school.

(c) No child shall be required to attend school on any day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parent belongs.

16. As an alternative to amending the conscience clause as indicated above, the Macrae Commission made two recommendations pertaining to compulsory attendance and the provision of schools. They were as follows:

(a) That the by-laws for compulsory education should provide that parents should not be prosecuted for failing to send their children to a school of a different denomination from that to which they belong.

(b) That with a view to securing compulsory attendance throughout the island, the government should establish schools (i) where

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there are no schools, (ii) where there are children for whose education no provision exists except in a school of a denomination different from that to which they belong.

17. The reality of conversion against parental wishes was highlighted when the parents of a Buddhist girl applied for a writ of *habeas corpus* for the production by the Principal of a Christian school of their daughter who was seventeen years of age. The girl was being educated as a boarder in the school, and having been converted to Christianity was refusing to return to her parents. The Supreme Court held that the age of consent in such cases was sixteen years, when individuals can be considered as having reached an age of discretion at which their choices and wishes could be taken into account. It was therefore competent for the Court to take note of the wishes of the girl. The Court refused the application of the parents for the custody of the girl.[14]

18. A conscience clause in a positive form was included in the Education Bill moved by the Minister of Education in 1938. Part of the opposition to the Bill arose from the inclusion of this clause, which read as follows:

> "No child belonging to a religious denomination other than that to which the proprietor or manager of an assisted school belongs shall be permitted to attend any Sunday school or any place of religious worship or to attend any religious observance or any instruction in religious subjects in the school or elsewhere unless the parent of the child has expressly stated in writing his consent that his child shall attend such place of religious worship or receive instruction in religious subjects in the school".[15]

19. Opposition was expressed in quite strong terms by certain Christian denominational groups, but the clause was not pressed to a division in the State Council and was embodied in the Education Ordinance No. 31 of 1939.

20. The issue of religious instruction in denominational schools came to the forefront again in the Education Debate of 1944-45. The Minister of Education pointed out that there were abuses in the operation of the conscience clause, and that the managers of certain schools

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were in the habit of printing forms, signifying consent to religious instruction being given to children, and sending them to parents for signature.[16] These forms were received by parents of religious denominations different from that of the management and signed either as a matter of course or through fear of incurring the displeasure of the school, and in this way the conscience clause was more or less circumvented. The Minister urged that an absolute ban be placed prohibiting instruction being given in the religion of the management of the school to children belonging to other religious persuasions. This did not cause much controversy, objections to it being quite faint hearted.

21. The only specific recommendation about religious instruction placed by the Executive Committee for decision by the State Council in the 1944-45 debate made no reference to assisted schools and related only to government schools. It read as follows: "Religious instruction (appropriate to the religion to which the parent of the child belongs) shall normally be provided in all State Schools including State Training Colleges subject to the right of the individual parents to withdraw their child from such instruction by a written request addressed to the headmaster".[17] U. B. Wanninayake moved an amendment to add after the word "all" the following words "Assisted denominational schools and in", and also to add at the very end the proviso: "provided that it shall not be compulsory to provide such religious instruction to such children if their number on the roll does not exceed fifteen".[18] The proviso caused no difficulty, but the effect of the five words to be added after the word "all" was to make it obligatory for assisted denominational schools to provide instruction appropriate to the religions to which the parents of the children belonged. In other words, it meant that an assisted denominational school should provide instruction not only in the religion of the management but in other religions as well if there were children belonging to them. The amendment was moved on 26th January 1945, but in moving it Wanninayake did not elaborate on it. Notice of the amendment had been given earlier, and opposition had been expressed by one speaker in July 1944 to "forcing denominational schools to teach religions other than their own".[19] No other member had any comment on the amendment except the Minister who, in the concluding speech of the debate, explained that the mover of the amendment had taken a line indicated by the Minister, namely that "if denominational schools are

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to go on, then, in that case they must be fair-minded" in the matter of religious instruction by providing, for every child attending school, instruction in the child's religion.[20] It is a matter for surprise that the amendment did not attract much attention and was, in fact, accepted by the State Council without a division on 5 June 1945.[21] It was a day on which many recommendations were discussed and passed, amended and passed, or rejected, so much so that in the general confusion which prevailed the full implications of this particular amendment may not have been appreciated. There is no doubt that Christian denominational bodies found the amendment quite unacceptable.

22. It was the Minister's complaint that until 1947 various forces were at work to prevent him from giving legal effect to the decisions of June 1945. Strangely, however, the above decision of 5th June 1945 was not embodied in the draft Ordinance that was placed before the State Council in February 1947. In relation to assisted schools, what the Ordinance did was to provide that any instruction in (or worship or observance connected with) religion should be at the beginning or at the end of the school day, and to prohibit attendance by any child for instruction in (or worship or observance connected with) a religion other than the religion of the parent. A definition was attempted of what was meant by the religion of the parents. Earlier it had been taken for granted that where the father and the mother of the child professed different faiths, the father's religion should be taken as the parental religion for the purpose of providing religious instruction for the child. The Roman Catholics asked for a more flexible interpretation, pointing out that very often a marriage between a non-Catholic male and a Catholic female was permitted by the Church on the distinct understanding that children of the union would be brought up as Catholics.[22] As a concession to Roman Catholics, the Ordinance left a loophole so that by the simple device of not getting a declaration regarding religion from the father but getting it from the mother, the objective of the church could be realised.

23. The failure to give legal effect to the decision of the State Council in June 1945 that every student in an assisted school should be provided instruction in the religion of his parent resulted in the continued denial of a religious education to thousands of children attending schools managed by religious denominations other than their own. The rationale for the denominational system was that a religious educatuon was

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necessary, and yet the necessity was confined in respect of any particular denominational school to children of the same religious persuasion as the managing body of the school. The fact that government schools provided religious instruction for children of all religious faiths showed that such provision was both desirable and feasible. Attempts to evade the issue of religious instruction in denominational schools for children professing religious faiths different from those of the managing bodies were not successful, and pointed attention was drawn from time to time to the void that had to be filled.

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CHAPTER 60

HIGHER, PROFESSIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION (1920 - 1948)

1. In January 1921, the University College was formally opened by Governor Manning, who was also ex-officio honorary President of the College. It was established as a government institution affiliated to London university, and a Principal was appointed in due course. Admission was restricted to applicants registered as matriculated students of London university. The initial enrolment consisted of 155 students. Classes in the following subjects were provided for the external degree (Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Science) examinations of London University: English, Latin, Greek, Sinhalese, Tamil, Sanskrit, Pali, Mathematics, History, Economics, Geography, Chemistry, Physics, Botany, Zoology, Education and Philosophy.

2. In October 1921, action was taken to appoint an Academic Committee to draw up proposals for setting up a full-fledged University that granted its own degrees. The Academic Committee took about three years to draw up plans for the academic side of the new University, and when its work was completed a set back took place in the form of an acrimonious controversy as to the site on which the University should be located. In June 1926, the Governor appointed a committee to report on the question of a site, and after a protracted discussion on the report of the committee, the Legislative Council resolved in March 1927 as follows:

"(a) That the proposed University should be unitary and residential;

(b) That it should be established in Kandy on the Aruppola site in Dumbara valley:

(c) That the Government should appoint a Commission to work out the details."[1]

3. In terms of decision (c), a Royal Commission with Sir Walter Robert Buchanan-Riddell, Baronet, as Chairman, and consisting of 25 members, was appointed to inquire into and report upon the details.

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While recognizing that the details regarding subjects of study and their groupings should be finally formulated by "the appropriate academic bodies when the University is eventually constituted", the Riddell Commission emphasized that certain features should characterize the scheme of degree courses:[2]

(a) All the University courses should lead to a first degree of Bachelor of Arts;

(b) Requirements for the entrance examination as well as for the degree should include both Arts and Science subjects;

(c) Every candidate at the entrance examination who is of Sinhalese or Tamil race and at a later stage every undergraduate belonging to these races should undergo a compulsory test in the Sinhalese or the Tamil languages, unless he offers it as an optional subject under the scheme;

(d) There should be compulsory tests in English for all candidates both at the entrance examination and at a later stage.

4. In making recommendation (a) the Commission expressed its preference for the practice of Oxford and Cambridge universities which conferred the degree of Bachelor of Arts as the first degree, reserving the degrees B.Sc., B.Litt., B.C.L., etc., for post-graduate and research courses. The University of London pattern was different, with B.A., B.Sc., LL.B., etc. as first degrees. In recommendation (b), too, the Riddell Commission departed from the London pattern which did not require a combination of Arts and Science subjects. In making recommendation (c), the Commission made the statement, "no man can be considered to have received a sound and good education until he has mastered his own tongue and is able to speak and write it fluently and correctly." At the same time, the Commission did not want to see the study of English neglected, and made recommendation (d) in this regard.

5. Students had the choice, after completing three terms of study, of sitting for *either* the First Public Examination *or* the Honours Preliminary Examination, and on passing it to proceed to read for the pass degree of Bachelor of Arts *or* the Honours degree of Bachelor of Arts. The latter was intended to encourage specialization.

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6. In addition to making recommendations on the character and scope of the curriculum, the Commission went on to deal with (1) the number of students to be admitted, the conditions of residence, charges and bursaries, (2) the number, status, method of recruitment, etc., of the staff, (3) the constitution of the University, (4) relations with the government, and (5) buildings. The Commission also prepared a draft university ordinance and statutes.

7. The members of the Commission were not unanimous in regard to a few of their recommendations. The greatest disagreement, both within the Commission and outside it among certain members of the public, was about the idea of a unitary residential university at Kandy. Alternative sites were debated with such vehemence that the controversy came to be known as the "Battle of the Sites".

8. While the principle of establishing the University on the lines indicated by the Riddell Commission was readily accepted by the government, the draft Ordinance was considered to be in need of modification in matters of detail. The modifications were made and the draft University Bill passed its second reading in the Legislative Council in 1930. The country was in the grip of an acute economic depression at about this time, and moreover the controversy regarding the siting of the university again raised its head. These two factors contributed largely to create a stalemate in the situation for the next eight years. In 1938, a decision was made to abandon the Aruppola site and to establish the University at Peradeniya.

9. One of the immediate consequences of the outbreak of World War II was that it dislocated the arrangements for holding the London University examinations in Ceylon, and the Ceylon University College was faced with certain problems in this connection. Delays in receiving the examination papers and the results of the Intermediate examinations upset the time-table for the preparation of students for the degree examinations. There was also the inevitable risk of the loss of the answer scripts of the candidates on their way from Ceylon to London. The only available alternative was to convert the Ceylon University College into a degree granting institution operating in its buildings in Colombo without waiting for buildings to come up at Peradeniya which was to be the real location of the University. The factor which clinched issues and made the University of Ceylon an

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immediate reality was the dynamic personality of Dr. W. I. Jennings, the Principal of the Ceylon University College. A constitutional lawyer of great repute, he carried out what he thought were necessary modifications in the earlier Bill, and persuaded the Minister to place his draft before the legislature. Priority was given to the passage of the Bill, and it became law with effect from 1st July 1942 as the Ceylon University Ordinance No. 20 of 1942. The Riddell Commission had recommended that the University of Ceylon should be unitary, residential and autonomous. These principles were embodied in the Ordinance, and on 1 July 1942 the Ceylon University College and the Ceylon Medical College lost their separate indentities and became the University of Ceylon. Four Faculties comprising eighteen Departments of study constituted the University, along with the Senate, the Council, the teachers, the officers and the students. The Faculties, and the Departments of study included in them, were as follows in 1942:

Faculty of Oriental Studies: Departments of Indo-Aryan, and Tamil.

Faculty of Arts: Departments of English, Western Classics, History, Geography, Economics, Philosophy, Indo-Aryan and Tamil.

Faculty of Science: Departments of Mathematics, Chemistry, Physics, Botany and Zoology.

Faculty of Medicine: Medicine, Surgery, Anatomy, Physiology (including Pharmacology and Biochemistry), and Pathology (including Parasitology, Bacteriology and Forensic Medicine).

The degrees to be awarded were the degrees of Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science, and Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery.

10. In June 1945, the State Council passed by 31 votes to 10 the following motion moved by S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike: "The University shall confer external degrees".[3] No action was taken by the University to implement this resolution.

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Medical Education

11. Medical education was provided at the Ceylon Medical College and led to the qualification entitled "Licentiate in Medicine and Surgery". In 1942, the Ceylon University College and the Ceylon Medical College were amalgamated to form the University of Ceylon, and thereafter graduates in medicine were awarded the degree of Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery (M.B., B.S.).

Legal Education

12. The Ceylon Law College, which functioned under the auspices of the Council of Legal Education, was responsible for the education of lawyers. In order to encourage the study of law at the University of Ceylon, negotiations were conducted between the Council of Legal Education and the University. The Council made a financial contribution in 1946, and a Department of Law was established at the University in 1947.

Technical Education

13. As at 1920, the Technical College provided classes in Building Construction, Engineering Workshop Practice, Plumbing, Machine Drawing, Applied Mechanics, Practical Mathematics, and Carpenter's Drawing. Students were presented for the examinations of the City and Guilds Institute of London. Classes in commercial subjects were conducted for the examinations of the London Chamber of Commerce. The training of technical personnel for the railway and the postal departments was also a function of the Technical College. In 1921, the science section of the Technical College became the nucleus of the science departments of the University College. No regular courses were conducted at the Technical College for the degree examination of London University until 1942, but one student successfully passed the degree examination as an external student in 1942.

14. In 1942, the Technical College which had hitherto functioned under the Department of Education was raised to the status of an independent Department under the Ministry of Education. The following were the main elements in the re-organisation proposals of 1942:

"(1) The Ceylon Technical College was to be developed to become the centre for technological instruction in the island.

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2. The College was to offer courses leading up to the London University degree in Engineering and the Associate Membership of the Chartered Institution of Engineers.

3. Day and evening courses were to be provided for the training of sub-professionals or sub-technical grades, such as, foremen, overseers, signallers, inspectors and draughtsmen; and continuation courses for the training of artisans.

4. It was to provide special unit courses in practical subjects such as electric wiring, radio engineering and motor mechanism.

5. It was also to offer courses in arts and crafts of a reasonably high standard, including courses for the training of Art and Industrial Teachers.

6. The College was to offer elementary and advanced courses in Commerce to enable students to acquire the qualification expected of book-keepers and shorthand typists, as well as the higher qualifications of recognised institutions of Secretaries, Accountants and Auditors.

7. All theoretical instruction in connection with technical training was to be centralised at the College. Government technical departments were, as far as possible, to modify their schemes for imparting technical training accordingly.

8. It was to be invested with authority to issue certificates of efficiency in (a) Engineering, (b) Commerce and (c) Arts and Industries, on the results of examinations held at the end of prescribed courses."[4]

By and large, these proposals were implemented.

Agricultural Education

15. In 1921, the Central School of Tropical Agriculture at Peradeniya, established in 1916, was closed down and replaced by four Farm Schools, one of which was at Peradeniya. The Farm School at Peradeniya provided a two-year certificate course in the English

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medium and a one-year course for teachers in Sinhalese. In 1941, the name of the Peradeniya Farm School was changed to School of Agriculture. The one-year course for teachers was abandoned, and a one-year course for women was provided, along with the two-year certificate course.

16. Negotiations between the University of Ceylon and the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands were concluded in 1946 for the establishment of a Faculty of Agriculture using land and buildings belonging to the Ministry. First-year courses for degrees in Agriculture were begun in 1947.

Teacher Education

17. In 1920, the government had a Teacher's Training College with two departments, namely, an English department and a vernacular department. The courses of training provided in them were of two years' duration. In the English department, there was also provision of a course of one year's duration for teachers who already possessed a second class teacher's certificate. There were also six assisted teacher training schools. Four were under the management of the Roman Catholics, two under the Wesleyans, and two under the Buddhists.

18. Reference has been made in chapter 53 paragraph 6 to the inauguration of the rural scheme of education in 1931. In connection with this scheme, two rural training centres were started in 1934 at Mirigama and Welitara and a third some years later at Kandy. As interest in the rural scheme waned not long afterwards, the centre at Kandy was converted in 1942 into a training school of the conventional type for the training of teachers for ordinary schools. In 1944, the rural training centre at Welitara ceased to train teachers for rural scheme schools and instead provided teachers in training from the general training colleges with short residential courses in gardening, building construction, dairy farming, poultry farming and bee-keeping.

19. The Kannangara Committee recognized that "the key to educational reform" was "the proper training of teachers", and expressed the opinion that "almost all the teachers of the future should be trained".[5] Noting that only a handful of th graduates employed in schools had received any kind of professional training, the Committee recommended that the University should be provided with the

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necessary funds for starting a Department that could take charge of the training of graduate teachers. For the training of non-graduate teachers to teach general subjects in schools, the Committee recommended a single type of training college.

> "A training college cannot exist by itself. It should be conducted in connection with an educational centre. An educational centre should consist of a training college and schools in which the art of teaching can be practised. The Principal of the college will be the Controller of these schools. There should be attached to every training college a primary school, a practical school, and a senior or secondary school. The centre should have playing fields, a gymnasium, a workshop, suitable laboratories and agricultural gardens in close proximity for the use of the component institutions".[6]

The Committee was of the view that "training colleges conducted and controlled by denominational bodies should continue to be assisted from public funds", provided that within three years they organised themselves as educational centres in accordance with the above recommendation.[7]

20. In the 1944-45 debate on the reform of the system of education, the Executive Committee for Education placed before the State Council a recommendation to the effect that "the system of state training colleges and denominational training colleges shall continue" subject to the fulfilment of the condition that they should be organised as educational centres.[8] Amendments were moved by two members, and the recommendation finally accepted was as follows: "The system of state training colleges and denominational training colleges shall continue subject to the fulfilment of the conditions recommended in paragraph 347 of Sessional Paper XXIV and to the further conditions that assisted denominational training colleges shall admit only students of like denomination, and the number of students admitted into any training college shall be restricted only to the number assigned to the management by the Director after taking into consideration the number of unemployed teachers and teachers required for employment by the management in their schools. Provided that a minimum of 100 students be considered adequate and that practising schools need not necessarily be attached to the training college but should however be within easy reach of it".[9] No attempt was, however, made to enforce the above provisions.

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21. In 1948, the government had 11 teacher's training institutions under its management, while there was an equal number of assisted training schools. Of the latter, the management of one training school was described as private, while the Roman Catholics had four training schools, the Hindus three training schools, the Buddhists two training schools, and the Protestants one training school. The enrolment of teachers-in-training in these institutions was as follows:

		Males	*Females*
English medium	..	223	55
Sinhalese medium	..	230	197
Tamil medium	..	323	208

References

1. *Sessional paper* 4 *of* 1929.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Hansard* (SC), 6 June 1945, col. 2986.
4. *Sessional Paper* 10 of 1963.
5. *Sessional Paper* 24 *of* 1943, p. 70.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 71.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 139.
8. *Hansard* (SC), 6 June 1945, col. 2910.
9. *Hansard* (SC), 6 June 1945, col. 2927.

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CHAPTER 61

ADULT EDUCATION (1920 - 1948)

1. Provision existed for making grants to night schools, established by an individual, a religious body, or a voluntary organization. As of the year 1920, there were only 15 night schools, and their main task was the promotion of literacy in English among those who were already literate in one or the other of the national languages, Sinhalese and Tamil. No educational programme existed to promote literacy in the national languages among adults.

2. On 12 December 1929, C. W. W. Kannangara (who became Ceylon's first Minister of Education about 18 months later) gave notice of the following motion in the Legislative Council:

> "This Council is of opinion that the government should take early steps to enable the illiterate population of the island to become literate and that as a first step in that direction evening classes should be immediately started in localities where government and assisted school buildings and teachers are available."[1]

The motion did not come up for discussion until February 1931, and when it did so Kannangara pointed out that after notice of the motion was given a committee of the Board of Education was appointed to report to the government.[2] Nothing was known of what had happened to the report, if any, of the committee. Kannangara took care to state that the expenditure involved in implementing his motion would be small. He also pointed out that the charge had often been levelled against the educated community that it was indifferent to the welfare of their poorer brethren and that the illiterate masses were utterly neglected. Kannangara referred to the fact that the Donoughmore Commissioners (see chapter 52 paragraph 9) had expressed the view that the government should take steps to improve the condition of the illiterate people. The recommendation for universal adult franchise assumed that more would be done for the illiterate population of the country. Kannangara's concrete suggestions were to the effect that evening classes should be started immediately in localities in which government buildings, schools and teachers were available, and that a small sum of money should be paid to teachers in schools for the one or

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two hours of work they would have to put in outside their usual duty hours for adult literacy work. The British officials in the Legislative Council, concerned about the additional expenditure that may be entailed, opposed the motion. One of them was, in fact, the Director of Education himself, L. Macrae. The motion was, however, passed with 22 voting for it and 18 against it.

3. No action was taken to implement the motion. However, a few months later, Kannangara became Minister of Education, and there is little doubt that he made up his mind to do something about adult education. The Administration Report of the Director of Education for 1931 contained the following statement:

> "With the extension of the franchise under the new Constitution, it is expected that there will be developments in adult education for those people who are illiterates."[3]

The same statement was repeated in 1932. In 1933, however, it was reported that classes for adults were started at ten rural scheme classes and that there was a ready response. Apart from attention to literacy, there were lectures and discussions on health, agriculture, the co-operative movement, and on matters of general interest.[4] In 1934, an increase in the number of classes to 41 was reported. The following year, however, it was stated that the classes were in abeyance on account of the malaria epidemic. In 1936, it was stated that the classes had not achieved the success that was hoped for them. Nevertheless, there was an increase in number to 150 in 1937, and the number in 1938 was 271.

4. In 1940, certain unemployed persons (males) who had passed the Teacher's Certificate examination were given a short term training course in adult education and rural development. After training they were attached to schools to assist the schools with the war-time food production drive and also to organize adult classes.[5] In 1941, a few unemployed women who had passed the Teacher's Certificate examination were also trained and attached to schools.[6] The number of adult classes rose to 329 in 1941 but came down to 141 by 1943. The Kannangara Committee Report of 1943 stated that except for a few experiments by voluntary bodies and by the Education Department "there is hardly any adult education provided in Ceylon".[7] Without

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going into any details it recommended programmes at three different levels. It was suggested that the Education Department and religious bodies should provide adult education for the illiterate and the semi-illiterate. The provision of vocational training using peripatetic teachers was suggested to improve the vocational efficiency of workers. Finally, the Committee suggested University extension classes for adult education at the highest level. As a sequel to the Report, the Education Department took the initiative to provide adult education at the most elementary level, by expanding the number of adult classes. From 141 classes in 1943, the number rose to 469 in 1944 and to 895 in 1945, but by 1948 the number dwindled to 75. It was clear that classes were being opened largely for purposes of record, and that programmes to hold the interest of the people were not being developed.

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2. *Hansard* (LC), 5 February 1931.
3. A. R. (D.E.), 1931.
4. A. R. (D.E.), 1934.
5. A. R. (D.E.), 1940.
6. A. R. (D.E.), 1941.
7. *Sessional Paper* 24 *of* 1943, p. 70.

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CHAPTER 62

EXAMINATIONS (1920 - 1948)

1. The Cambridge Junior School Certificate Examination which replaced the Cambridge Junior Local Examination in 1916 continued to be held through the period 1921 to 1936 and was abandoned thereafter. The Cambridge Senior School Certificate Examination which replaced the Cambridge Senior Local Examination continued to be held during the period 1921 to 1939, and was again held for the last time in 1942 after an interruption of two years. The following table gives the numbers presented during selected years:

	BOYS		GIRLS	
	Senior	Junior	Senior	Junior
1921 ..	741	1,002	68	150
1926 ..	1,459	1,080	167	211
1931 ..	1,645	1,237	305	264
1936 ..	470	1,337	273	349
1937 ..	276	—	266	—
1939 ..	174	—	247	—
1942 ..	32	—	124	—

2. The London Matriculation Examination, which was first held in 1882, continued to be held during the period under review, except for interruptions during the years 1940, 1941, 1944, 1945 and 1946. The following Table gives the numbers presented during selected years:

Year	Number Presented
1921	452
1931	837
1939	3,122
1943	3,998
1947	3,654

3. In so far as local examinations at the school level were concerned, the School Leaving Certificate Examinations which were held as from 1916 were re-named the Junior School Certificate Examinations in 1933. They could be taken in three media, namely, English, Sinhalese and Tamil. They were, however, abandoned as from 1944. A Teacher's Preliminary Examination, held for the first time in 1926,

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was re-named the Senior School Certificate Examination, and it could also taken up in one of the three media mentioned above.

4. In relation to Ceylon, one of the beneficial effects of the Second World War was that it initiated the process of weaning the country away from its dependence on examinations conducted in Ceylon at the school leaving level by examining bodies in England. The Cambridge examinations were on their way out after 1935, but the London Matriculation examination occupied a position of prestige, and the best known schools preferred to prepare their students for the London Matriculation examination rather than for the Senior School Certificate examination which was conducted by the Education Department of Ceylon. With the outbreak of the war, the despatch of examination papers to Ceylon from England as well as the despatch of answer scripts from Ceylon to England became uncertain and difficult. As a result of negotiations conducted between the Education Department and the University of London, it was agreed that with effect from December 1941, a special Senior School Certificate Examination (English) should be held on the same syllabus as that for the London Matriculation examination. The examination papers were to be prepared by a local panel of examiners, and the answer scripts of the students were to be assessed by local examiners. Students who pass the examination fulfilling certain conditions were to be allowed to obtain exemption from the London Matriculation examination. This was essentially a war-time emergency measure, but it did serve to make the prestigious schools reconciled to having their students prepared for local examinations. Along with the special Senior School Certificate examination on the London Matriculation syllabus, the usual Senior School Certificate examination (English medium) continued to be held based on its usual syllabus which was perhaps a shade lower in standard than the London Matriculation examination syllabus. In 1942, a committee consisting of the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ceylon, and representatives of heads of schools and of assistant teachers was appointed to frame a new syllabus that would do away with the need to hold two examinations based on two syllabuses. A syllabus that received wide acceptance not only from local educationists but also from the London University authorities was drawn up to come into effect for examinations to be held in and after December 1944. The University of London agreed to grant exemption from the London Matriculation to students attaining a certain standard in the Senior

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School Certificate examination based on the new agreed syllabus. Until December 1944, however, the Special Senior examination was to continue, along with the usual Senior examination, but thereafter only one examination based on the agreed syllabus was to be held. The agreed syllabus applied only to the examination in the English medium, but the Senior School Certificate examination was held in the Sinhalese and the Tamil media based on a different syllabus. This situation was rectified in 1948 by making the agreed syllabus applicable to these two media as well, and the questions set in the different media were the same except, of course, for the language and literature papers as such. Candidates were also given the option of answering the papers of the examination in any language medium preferred by them. After June 1943, the London Matriculation examination was not held in Ceylon during the next three years; it was again held in 1947 and finally abandoned thereafter.

5. The introduction of an Advanced School Certificate (Bilingual) examination with effect from 1943 was a step in the right direction, but very few appreciated its significance. This examination was open only to those who had already passed the Senior School Certificate examination in English, Sinhalese or Tamil, and it gave an opportunity to students to offer the usual school subjects at a more advanced level than the Senior and also certain other subjects, such as Government and Psychology, which were not available for the Senior. Besides, the subjects of the examination could be taken in any language medium preferred by the student. This examination thus paved the way for the study through the Sinhalese and the Tamil media of certain subjects which had never been available at all, or at a comparable level, through these media. In fact, the Advanced School Certificate examination could have cleared the ground for university studies through the national language media many years before the universities were forced to use them for Arts subjects. In spite of the potential usefulness of the Advanced School Certificate examination, the Examination received very little support from the schools and it was abandoned after a few years. A declaration that it would serve as an entrance examination for admission to teacher training colleges in due course was never translated into action and remained a pious hope.

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CHAPTER 63

EDUCATIONAL STATISTICS AND FINANCE
(1920 - 1948)

1. The progress of literacy in Ceylon may be seen from Table 1.

Table 1 [1]

Percentage of literates relative to population aged five years and over for selected years

Year	Persons Per cent	Males Per cent	Females Per cent
1881	17.4	29.8	3.1
1891	21.7	36.1	5.3
1901	26.4	42.0	8.5
1911	31.0	47.2	12.5
1921	39.9	56.4	21.2
1946	57.8	70.1	43.8

By the year 1946, the rate of literacy in Ceylon was quite high in comparison with other Asian countries, being exceeded only by Japan. In regard to female literacy, a fairly rapid improvement was recorded during the period after 1911.

The increase in female enrolment in schools is also of interest. In 1925, the enrolment in schools consisted of 65.4 per cent boys and 34.6 per cent girls.[2] In the year 1948, the student enrolment consisted of 55.8 per cent boys and 44.8 per cent girls, the increase in the percentage of girls being an indication of the progress made in female education.[3] Reference should also be made in this connection to Table 7 which gives the distribution by sex of students enrolled in the University of Ceylon.

2. Table 2 indicates the progress of education during the last twenty years or so of British rule. With greater participation by the representatives of the people in the business of government, and with the introduction of universal adult franchise in 1931, the need for educational expansion was keenly felt. While the population increased by 40 per cent over the years 1926 to 1947, the number of pupils in school increased by 110 per cent.

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Table 2 [4]

Population, Number of pupils in school, Percentage of population in school

Year	Population	Number of pupils	Percentage of population in school
1926	4,928,000	494,000	10.0
1930	5,253,000	579,000	11.0
1939	5,897,000	828,100	14.0
1944	6,308,000	833,700	13.2
1945	6,516,000	867,300	13.3
1946	6,719,000	944,500	14.1
1947	6,903,000	1,036,134	15.0

3. Table 3 shows the phenomenal increase in enrolment in English schools following upon the introduction of the free education scheme. The government for its part converted a large number of its vernacular schools to Central schools and English schools, and the recorded increases were owed more to the change in nomenclature of schools than to an immediately operative change in medium in the case of very many students. This was not the case with assisted English schools, and real increases in enrolment of students receiving instruction in English were recorded. Altogether, the increases were of unprecedented dimensions, and the free education scheme brought within reach of thousands of children the opportunity of an education in English that would have been denied to them had education not become free in a large number of schools.

Table 3 [5]

Enrolment in English schools, 1944 - 1947

Year	No. of pupils in government English schools	Percentage increase in enrolment over previous year	No. of pupils in assisted English schools	Percentage increase in enrolment previous year
1944	5,662	—	87,616	—
1945	8,121	43.4	92,361	5.4%
1946	23,280	186.8	104,271	12.8%
1947	44,457	90.9	119,812	14.9%

4. Table 4 shows the quite sharp increase in educational expenditure after 1930. It also shows that the percentage of the total governmental expenditure devoted to education was quite considerable by the financial year 1947-48.

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Table 4 [6]

Government expenditure on education and total governmental expenditure

Year	Expenditure on education Rs. million	Total governmental expenditure Rs. million	Expenditure on education as a percentage of total expenditure
1925—26	7.8	110.0	7.1
1930—31	12.6	100.3	12.6
1939—40	19.5	122.4	15.9
1940—41	20.1	127.3	15.8
1941—42	22.3	153.3	14.5
1942—43	24.8	185.0	13.4
1943—44	29.6	210.7	14.0
1944—45	34.9	254.4	13.7
1945—46	42.9	312.9	13.7
1946—47	61.0	405.4	15.0
1947—48	84.7	447.6	18.9

5. Tables 5 and 6 show that the Christian denominations, the Roman Catholics most of all, continued to hold a position of dominance in the field of education.

Table 5 [7]

Grant-in-aid English Schools, 1925 and 1948

	1925	1948
American Mission	10	8
Baptist	4	4
Buddhist	25	22
Church of England	50	42
Hindu	5	19
Muslim	1	3
Presbyterian	5	5
Roman Catholic	65	117
Wesleyan	20	23

An interesting feature highlighted by this Table is the great increase in the number of Roman Catholic schools during the period 1925 and 1948. The denominational school system came under severe criticism in the years preceding 1920, and it was hoped that the legislation of 1920 would contain its expansion. The system was again severely criticized in the post-1920 period, and though a new Education Ordinance was promulgated in 1939, the system continued to flourish

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with the largest gains being made by the Roman Catholics. The Roman Catholics had a very powerful organizational structure for the promotion and management of education, and they forged ahead of the other denominations. This outstanding success was, however, counter-productive in the sense that it provoked a severe backlash and led to the eventual abolition of the denominational system in 1961.

Table 6 [8]

Percentage of government grant paid to religious denominations

	1925	1939
Buddhist	18.5	18.2
Christian	72.6	75.3
Hindu	8.2	4.9
Muslim	0.8	1.6

Details for the year 1939 are given as comparable data was not available for the years after 1939. As at 31 December 1941, the Christians constituted only 9.9 per cent of the population, while the Buddhists constituted 61.6 per cent, the Hindus 21.8 per cent, and the Muslims 6.7 per cent. The advantageous position which the Christians occupied in the field of education may be seen from the fact that although they constituted less than 10 per cent of the population, they enjoyed over 70 per cent of the government grant. Reference may also be made to Table 8 which shows the advantageous position the Christians occupied in the University of Ceylon.

Enrolment data relating to the University of Ceylon

7. It has been noted (chapter 60 paragraph 9) that the University of Ceylon was established in 1942. Table 7 shows the progress in student enrolment between 1942 and 1947.

Table 7 [9]

Number of university students in 1942 and 1947

	1942		1947	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Men	813	90	1,312	84
Women	91	10	242	16
	904		1,554	

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It will be observed that the total enrolment increased by 650 or, in other words by 73 per cent over the period 1942 to 1947. In spite of this increase, the enrolment was only 1,554 for a population of nearly seven millon. Only about .02 per cent of the population was enrolled in university education, and from this point of view the progress made by the country in primary and secondary education was not accompanied by a reasonably high enrolment in tertiary education. It is of interest that while the enrolment of males in the university increased by 62 per cent, the enrolment of females increased by 166 per cent. This is indicative of the progress that was being made in the education of girls.

8. Table 8 shows that as a result of the favoured position that the Christian denominations had enjoyed over the years in the field of education, the enrolment of Christians in the university was quite out of proportion to their representation in the population.

Table 8 [11]

Distribution of university students according to religion

	1942		1947	
	Number	**Percentage**	**Number**	**Percentage**
Buddhists	345	38.2	686	44.4
Christians	328	36.3	514	33.0
Hindus	201	22.2	287	18.5
Muslims	27	3.0	47	3.0
Others	3	0.3	20	1.3
	904		1,554	

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CHAPTER 64

REVIEW OF EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

(1920 - 1948)

1. The enactment of the Education Ordinance of 1920 marked the beginning of the period under review. Its real achievements fell short of expectations, but what it did achieve was of some significance. The Department of Education received statutory recognition, and through the management of its own schools as well as its control over the disbursement of grants to assisted schools the Department came to be the repository of a great deal of power and authority in regard to education. The Ordinance resolved the unsatisfactory situation that had prevailed for about fifteen years regarding the financing of vernacular education. The attempt to put responsibility on local government bodies for the financing of vernacular education was a total failure, and the central government took over this responsibility with the enactment of the Ordinance. In regard to the existence of a dual system of schools—government and denominational—the power vested in the Board of Education to frame regulations relating, *inter alia*, to "the establishment, taking over, transfer, recognition, maintenance, continuance, or discontinuance of elementary and secondary schools" held out the promise that there would be a rationalization of the school system by the elimination of unnecessary schools and the planned establishment of new schools. The promise proved to be illusory, as the denominational interests that were entrenched in the Board of Education were averse to taking any action that put their own position in jeopardy. Thus, the duplication of schools through the efforts of competing denominational bodies continued unabated, and the provision of education expanded in unplanned fashion. The Ordinance failed to resolve with any degree of finality the issue of religious instruction. It did bring assisted English schools for the first time under the provisions of a conscience clause of the sort that had hitherto applied to assisted vernacular schools. The clause did not fully satisfy the indigenous religious groups as it placed on parents the onus of objecting to religious instruction, if they disapproved of it; what these religious groups wanted was a clause that placed on the school the responsibility for seeking parental consent in order to provide a child instruction in religion if the parents professed a religion different from that of the management. In so far as government

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schools were concerned, the Ordinance specified that religious instruction would not be part of the curriculum. It was, however, provided that religious bodies could apply for permission to use the school buildings to give religious instruction to their own adherents. The so-called neutrality of the government in religious matters, as exemplified by these provisions pertaining to government schools, was not convincing in view of the government's support of denominational schools that provided religious instruction. In regard to the education of the children of estate labourers, the Ordinance promised much but achieved little as its provisions were not enforced. Finally, the greatest shortcoming of the Ordinance was its failure to make education compulsory for non-estate children.

2. Several of the issues that were partially resolved or unresolved came up for discussion during the years following 1920. The denominational system of schools was one of them. The number of denominational schools increased, undisturbed by the fact that the system was criticized both in the legislative bodies and outside by the spokesmen of the Buddhists and the Hindus from time to time, and also by a distinguished foreign educator, W. H. Kilpatrick, at a meeting of the Macrae Commission of 1929. In 1939, in the debate on the Education Bill, and again in 1944 and 1945 in the debate on Education: Reform of System there was much acrimonious discussion. A motion to the effect that the system of state and denominational schools should continue in respect of existing schools subject to certain conditions was passed on 5 June 1945. A Bill that was moved in 1947 to give effect to the decisions of 1945 became a matter of acute controversy. It was resolved by a clause to the effect that in the registration of schools after 1 July 1947 grants would be paid to denominational schools only in respect of pupils whose parents profess the same religion as the management. The issue of denominationalism was settled for the time being, but it came up again in the post-Independence era.

3. The conscience clause was another issue that was only partially resolved in 1920 and came up for debate again and again. The Macrae Commission of 1929 recommended the introduction of a conscience clause requiring parental consent before giving religious instruction to children, but the government took no action to implement the recommendation. When a new Education Ordinance was mooted in 1939, the issue came up again and was finally resolved by the incorporation

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of a clause in the manner indicated above in the Education Ordinance of 1939.

4. The provision of religious instruction in government schools also came up for discussion again. By the Education Ordinance of 1939 instruction in religion could be given in a government school at any time either before or after the hours appointed for the ordinary session (or on any day on which a school session was not held), but such instruction could not be part of the ordinary course of studies. Teachers authorized by the Director of Education could give religious instruction. These provisions did not go far enough in the view of many. The *raison d'etre* for denominational schools was that religion was an essential ingredient of a complete education, and if that were so religion deserved its due place in government schools as well. There was much debate about this in 1944 and 1945, and finally the Education (Amendment) Ordinance of 1947 ended the controversy by means of a provision to the effect that in a government school instruction in the religion of the parent of each pupil would be given to the pupil as part of his course of studies in the school.

5. Although there was a great deal of discussion about the place of English and the indigenous languages in education in the years prior to 1920, the language issue did not come up in connection with the Education Ordinance of 1920. However, in 1926, the language issue was the subject of a motion passed in the Legislative Council. The Macrae Commission which was appointed to report on the motion came out with recommendations of an inconclusive nature, and nothing of significance happened during the next fifteen years or so. As from 1943, the language issue became a matter of public attention again. A motion was moved in the State Council in June 1943, but it did not come up for discussion until May 1944. Meanwhile, the report of the Kannangara Committee issued in November 1943 expressed the view that the ideal medium of instruction was the mother tongue at all stages of education, adding, however, that while the change from English should be phased over a number of years it should be immediately implemented in primary schools. A recommendation to this effect came up for discussion in the State Council in May 1944. Finally, in January 1945, the State Council decided that (i) in primary schools the medium would be the mother tongue (ii) in the lower division of post-primary schools the medium would be the mother tongue or

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a mixture of English and the mother tongue, (iii) in the upper division of post-primary schools the medium would be English or the mother tongue. Logically, children receiving their primary education in the mother tongue should have been made to continue in the same medium in the post-primary school. The requirement of transfer to English in many post-primary schools led to a great deal of hardship and the denial of opportunities of secondary and higher education to those who could not make the grade in English. It was not until long after 1948 that this issue was resolved by recognizing the national languages as media of instruction in secondary and higher education.

6. The existence of two types of education, namely a low quality education available in the mother tongue at no cost to the parents and a superior education available in English in urban areas for those whose parents had money to pay for it came up for serious review in the early 1940's. The first step in the direction of making an English education available free to rural children in some areas took the form of the establishment by the government of a network of central schools in certain rural areas. The second was the decision of the State Council in June 1945 that no tuition fees should be levied in assisted or state primary and post-primary schools and training colleges, in the state technical, agricultural and trade schools, and in the university. English medium assisted schools which were all fee-levying were given the option of entering the free education scheme or remaining outside it, a period of three years being allowed for making the decision. Many entered the scheme immediately, some others within the period of the moratorium, while yet others succeeded in getting the moratorium extended. The free education scheme opened the doors of English education to thousands who could not have afforded such an education. Not all those who sought English education profited from the new opportunities. The immediate beneficiaries were those whose background facilitated the use of the English language. Others treaded a thorny path and generally collapsed by the wayside. In 1944, the number of pupils receiving an English education was 93,278 but by the year 1947 the number soared to 164,264.

7. Attempts to diversify the curriculum were short-lived and altogether unsuccessful. As the structure of economic rewards favoured those who received an academic education through the medium of English, there was very little incentive for the pursuit of any other

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type of education. As long as an academic education through the medium of English was available only to a relatively small number, there was no problem regarding the provision of employment. The phenomenal increase in student enrolment as a consequence of the free education scheme saturated the employment market with school leavers who had received an academic education, and it was in the nature of things that an unemployment problem was created. Though it is usual to blame the educational system for this state of affairs, it is important to remember that economic policies are equally to blame for their failure to change the pattern of economic rewards, and their haste to emulate the capital intensive technologies of the developed world regardless of their impact on employment generation.

8. The period under review was marked by an important development in higher education. The Ceylon University College was established in 1921 as a teaching institution for the degree examinations of the University of London. Twenty one years later, in 1942, the University of Ceylon was established as a teaching and degree granting institution.

9. In regard to examinations at the school level, the period under-review saw the abolition of the Cambridge Junior and Senior School Certificate examinations in 1936 and 1942 respectively, and the abolition of the London Matriculation examination which was held for the last time in 1948. They were replaced by the Senior School Certificate examination conducted by the Department of Education. In theory, this opened the way for the introduction of a more socially relevant curriculum; in practice, however, the opportunity was scarcely utilized.

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Section VII

Epilogue

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CHAPTER 65

THE BRITISH PERIOD IN EDUCATION IN RETROSPECT

1. British educational policies were by and large in the nature of pragmatic responses to constellations of needs, firstly Britain's and only secondly Ceylon's, and realities that manifested themselves from time to time. As from 1799, the British became committed, as a result of pressure from schoolmasters and parents and the need to have a contented populace, to the support of an extensive network of parish schools inherited from the Dutch. The schools taught little more than Christianity but were nevertheless expensive to maintain and supervise. The commitment was undertaken with some hustle and bustle, and it was quite a novel experience for British administrators in that in Britain itself the support of education in a comparable manner was not a responsibility of the government. However, in a matter of four years, having had time to take stock of the situation, the British divested themselves of most of this responsibility on the ground that it was a great drain on the finances.

2. Three factors were in the main responsible for the limited revival of the parish school system from about the year 1810 for the next twenty years or so. One was the pressure from the evangelical movement in England, which was concerned that as a result of the abandonment of the parish schools, converts to Protestantism were reverting either to the indigenous religions or to Roman Catholicism. Secondly, from the point of view of Britain's imperial interests, conversion to Christianity was of strategic importance as a means of building up a citizenry not attached by the bond of religion to the King of Kandy, whose influence was seen as being founded on Buddhism. Even after the secession of the Kandyan kingdom to the British by the chieftains in 1815, this strategic motive did not completely disappear, for conversion served the purpose of eroding the influence of Buddhism which, as evidenced by the rebellion of 1818, provided a rallying point for opposition to British rule. Thirdly, there was pressure from teachers and certain parents for the revival of the parish schools. They were potential loyalists and important to placate, though the factors underlying their agitation were economic rather than ideological. The

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teachers were interested as it meant the restoration of a source of income; the parents were interested because of the advantages that Christianization offered, both independently of and in combination with education. For example, inheritance of property was confined to those who could provide evidence of baptism, and employment under the government was almost exclusively reserved for Christians, especially for those whose education included some knowledge of English.

3. The basic commitment of the British government in Ceylon to the promotion of education was quite limited in scope, though for pragmatic reasons it often purported to do more, and in fact sometimes did more. The real interest of the government was in the provision of education in English for a small number of persons. The British occupation of Ceylon required for its political stability, administrative needs and for the advancement of commercial interests a nucleus of native loyalists to be employed in the middle grades of the government service and commercial establishments. An education in English and Christianization were considered to be the means of providing the essential intellectual and attitudinal preparation for these tasks. The case for education in English and for Christianization was compelling in its philosophy and promise of success for it was the means of achieving not only the dominantly utilitarian objectives of British colonial policy but also the humanitarian objective, in British eyes, of civilizing the native population by making it imbibe Western culture and embrace Christianity. In achieving these objectives, the British government found enthusiastic partners in the Christian missionary societies that began to function in Ceylon as in other colonies.

4. A partial lack of congruence between the interests of the government and the interests of missionary organizations was evident in regard to certain aspects of education. The provision of schooling on an extensive scale was not a matter of any great importance to the British government for its purposes, though it was politic to pay lip service to this kind of idea. For the missionaries, however, an approach to the masses through some form of schooling was vital for missionary purposes in order to achieve the objective of conversion on a worthwhile scale. In regard to the medium of instruction, in so far as the government was concerned not only was education other than in English useless for its own purposes but it was also axiomatic, at least

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during the greater part of the nineteenth century, that nothing worthy of being called education was capable of being imparted in Sinhalese or Tamil. The missionaries looked upon the medium of instruction in a different light. They were sufficiently realistic to appreciate that mass conversion was possible only through the languages of the people, firstly because of the inevitable difficulties that the masses would have in mastering an alien tongue and secondly because teachers were not available in sufficient number to provide mass education in English. The greater part of the efforts of the missionaries was devoted to providing education in Sinhalese and Tamil, and making conversions to Christianity, but the missionaries also saw the advantage of establishing a few English schools for Christianizing and educating in English children of the higher social classes. The perpetuation of social privilege was not considered as being alien to the religious ideal, and in this regard there was perfect harmony between the policies of missionary organizations and the government.

5. The residual effects of the Dutch heritage in education and the factors considered in paragraph 2 compelled the government to support for about thirty years a school system that provided only a little English. The Colebrooke recommendations of 1832 deftly ended this support by making it a requirement that no one who did not know English could be employed as a teacher. At the same time, a firm intent to support education in English was expressed. The assertion of support for education, in as much as it implied that education was of value and worthy of support, was commendable in spite of the snags that lay hidden. The motivation for the promotion of education in English was more a matter of practical utility than of culture or philosophy. The employment of a larger number of recruits from Britain in the public service was an intolerable burden on the exchequer, and the expenditure on personal emoluments had to be reduced by educating a certain number of Ceylonese in the English medium to enable them to occupy certain posts leaving the higher and more responsible posts to be filled by recruits from Britain. Only a few needed to be educated in English for this purpose. The clever destruction of a somewhat extensively spread system of vernacular education was not with a view to its replacement by an equally widespread system of Engish education. Support for English education was altogether

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on a low key and hardly exceeded the extent to which it was necessary to supply the needs of the government. Thus the aftermath of the Colebrooke recommendations saw the creation of an educational vacuum. In course of time, in order to fill this void some financial assistance was extended by the government to Christian missionary organizations for the support of both vernacular education and English education though the assistance was limited by the fact that the government placed restrictions on the kind of religious instruction that should be imparted. The support of vernacular education in this manner, taken along with the fact that the government itself started a number of vernacular schools as from 1847, made patent the duplicity of the government's policy. Finding that its early support of vernacular education had extended too far, costing the government good money with no return because it supplied no man power needs and was moreover axiomatically useless, it had to be done away with. It was a good pretext to appear to fill the void with an equally widespread system of English education with no real intention of doing so, for English education was even more expensive and would have turned out persons far in excess of the government's needs, not to speak of the fact that no teachers were available to man an extensive network of English schools. Therefore, while filling the void with a limited provision of or support for English education, the government notwithstanding its denigration of vernacular education acted pragmatically by first supporting vernacular education by the missionaries and later establishing a few schools itself.

6. The Dutch government's parish schools and their successors the British government's parish schools essentially constituted a system of government Christian schools. The Colebrooke recommendations basically institutionalized the principle of Christian governance of education by vesting the supervision of all education in general and of government schools in particular in a School Commission in which pride of place was given to the Anglican hierarchy, while the interests of the secular purposes of the government were safeguarded by the inclusion of a number of government officials. The Anglican hierarchy acquitted themselves with no great credit in the School Commission, quarelling among themselves and with the government officials on the Commission, and also incurring the wrath of Christian denominations not represented on the Commission. The School Commission was abolished after an inglorious existence of 8 years (1834-1841), and was

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replaced in 1841 by the Central School Commission in which there was more broad Christian representation, while the indigenous religious groups (the Buddhists, Hindus and Muslims) continued to be ignored. Inter-denominational squabbles among the Christians were a regular feature of the Central School Commission, and educational expansion suffered as a result. Furthermore, the rivalry among Christian denominations reduced the proselytizing power that a united group would have presented.

7. Certain major changes in education took place in the year 1869 as a result of the recommendations of the Morgan Committee. The Committee's thinking was influenced to a large extent by educational developments in India after Wood's *Despatch* of 1854, and changes in educational thinking and practice in England itself. The importance of providing elementary education on a mass scale was explicitly recognized as a principle, though fulfilment fell far short of promise. It was also recognized that any extensive diffusion of education would have to be through the vernacular languages, and that it was only a small number who would need to be educated in the English medium. An active partnership between the government and missionary societies was envisaged by means of a grant-in-aid scheme providing grants for secular instruction, complete freedom being given to the missionary societies to provide religious instruction as they thought fit, with no safeguards whatever to protect children who subscribed to a religion other than that of the management. The fact that a conscience clause was introduced in England in 1870 did not prevent the missionaries in Ceylon from opposing the introduction of such a clause in Ceylon, and the British government for its part considered it more important to enlist missionary support for education than to alienate the missionaries by introducing a conscience clause. Thus, the Buddhists, Hindus and Muslims were left to the mercy of the Christian missionaries who redoubled their efforts at proselytization. An important administrative change introduced in 1869 was the abolition of the Central School Commission. Overall administrative responsibility for education was vested in a government official, known as the Director of Public Instruction. The first holder of this office. J. S. Laurie, lasted only for one year as he committed the cardinal sin in colonial circles of taking to heart too seriously the educational needs of the people and preparing to meet them in a planned manner without placating the Christian missionary interests that were

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paramount. He even advocated a conscience clause, and it was enough provocation to make him *persona non grata*. His successors were by and large compliant stooges who served the interests of colonialism and proselytization rather than the educational needs of the people. The indigenous religious groups had to wage a bitter struggle to obtain grants in aid of their schools, and every possible obstacle was placed in their way by unsympathetic officials wedded to the Christian cause through evangelical zeal or political sagacity. The policy of the government was to rely extensively on the grant-aided system for the provision of education, and in this regard the missionaries were not only the first in the field but were also a specially favoured group. In the case of vernacular education which was limited in scope and did not extend beyond the elementary level, the government did provide some schools under its management but at the same time preferred whenever possible to close them down and let children attend grant-aided schools conducted by denominational bodies. English education was available only in urban areas, and except for a single government school with prestige and a handful of schools of indifferent quality, English education was almost wholly provided by denominational bodies. An attempt in 1884 to transfer its less prestigious English schools to local government bodies ended in failure, with the closure of the schools or their transfer to missionary bodies. In regard to the quality of education in English schools, a development of note that took place in 1880 was the introduction into Ceylon of examinations conducted by examining bodies in England. Another was the award of a couple of scholarships annually for study at British universities. On the credit side, the standards achieved and the successes gained by Ceylon students served to dispel the sense of inferiority experienced by the people of the country in their relations with the colonial masters, and gave them confidence in their intellectual abilities. On the debit side, the system of British examinations thrust upon the country a curriculum that was designed for students in England and made the world of education quite alien to the world in which the people of Ceylon lived their daily lives. Furthermore, the British examinations discouraged the study of local languages and it took nearly 40 years to persuade the British authorities to give some recognition to the local languages.

8. The meagre provision of education in Ceylon received wide publicity both locally and in England as a result of the Census Report of 1901, and much concern was expressed in the British parliament.

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Legislation enacted in 1906 and 1907 to expand the provision of education through the participation of local bodies was a failure, and things continued in much the same way as before. The inclusion of a conscience clause, allowing parents to withdraw their children from religious instruction, made it more comfortable than before for the government to support the denominational school system through grants-in-aid, a great attraction of the system from the point of view of the government being its relative cheapness in comparison with government schools. Educational expansion did continue to take place, but it was unplanned with the result that while there was an excess of facilities in certain urban areas, rural areas were by and large poorly provided. In any case, a quality education was available only in cities and a few major towns, and even in them only to a minority of students.

9. The Education Ordinance of 1920 divested local government bodies of responsibility for education. It also brought English schools run by the denominational bodies within the provisions of a conscience clause such as that which was applicable to vernacular schools after the legislation of 1906 and 1907. The introduction of universal adult education in 1931 set the stage for major changes in education. Expressions of dissatisfaction with the existing state of affairs mounted as the years went by, and it was in 1939 that new legislation to set right some of the deficiencies of the educational system was mooted. For this reason, the educational scene as at 1939 is of more than ordinary interest. The school system that had evolved over the years was characterized by a number of important dualities. The first was in respect of management and control, with the existence side by side and in unco-ordinated manner of schools under the management of the government and schools under the management of denominational bodies and private individuals. The second duality arose from the fact that schools under all managements were divided linguistically, being classified in two broad categories as English schools or as vernacular schools, according to the medium of instruction. The third duality was that by and large urban areas were served by both English and vernacular schools whereas rural areas were served almost exclusively by vernacular schools. The fourth duality was that English schools provided a curriculum that led to lucrative employment opportunities as well as to opportunities of higher education, while vernacular schools led to low level employment and to no opportunities

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of higher education. The fifth duality was that English schools were fee-levying and could be patronized only by the well-to-do while vernacular schools were free and intended for the masses. The sixth duality was that assisted English schools received more generous grants from the government than assisted vernacular schools, and that in so far as government schools were concerned, the government spent more money per student in an English school than in a vernacular school. The combined effect of these dualities was that educational provision was unplanned, unevenly distributed, wasteful of human and financial resources, and that, above all, access to a quality education was by and large denied to the mass of the rural population and the urban poor. For the replacement of the multi-dimensional dualistic structure of education, with its institutionalization of discriminatory practices and its enthronement of an elitism that conferred unfair advantages on the socially and economically privileged, by a unitary structure that was fair, democratic and egalitarian certain changes of an important character were needed. They were, firstly, the elimination of the competitive and wasteful system of government and denominational schools and the substitution in their place of a system of schools rationally planned and organized under the management of the state which was after all financing the competitive denominational system; secondly, the dethronement of English from its position as the medium of instruction for a privileged few, and the substitution in its place of the national languages as the media of instruction; thirdly, the elimination of qualitative differences among schools purporting to serve the same age groups; and fourthly, the abolition of the requirement of fees for access to a quality education. Agitation for these changes acquired a new momentum in the 1940s. The motive force behind the agitation for change was derived from a predominantly egalitarian ideology that set its sights on the greatest good of the greatest number. The leadership for it came largely from that sector of the elite which, while it had received a high quality education through the English language assimilating thereby liberal ideas from wherever they came, had its roots planted firmly in the national ethos. Pre-eminent among them were certain political personalities of whom some espoused the cause of the common man through a nationalistic orientation and value system, while others espoused the cause of the common man through a socialistic value system. In regard to the inequities of the educational system, there was a fortunate congruence of interests

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between politicians of a nationalistic orientation and those of a socialistic orientation, and when they combined forces they constituted very powerful agents of change. A handful of public men, including educationists, also supported the changes, and along with the politicians shared the leadership at the elite level. The numerical strength of the leadership was never large, but it could count on two layers of support. One of them was a second level elite in as much as it consisted of those who had received an education in the Sinhalese and Tamil languages, the best available in these languages and yet limited in scope in comparison with education in English. They shared the national ethos in its fulness, and their academic and cultural background was such that they were well represented on the editorial staffs of the newspapers that came out in the national languages. Leadership at the topmost level was not theirs to claim, and they generally played a secondary role. But when there was congruence on some issue between the English educated elite and this second level elite their united strength was a force to be reckoned with. The other layer of support for change consisted of the masses, and when they were activated on some issue by the two elite groups mentioned above, their combined strength was overwhelming and politically decisive, for after universal adult franchise was granted in 1931, the masses could very well call the tune by the power of the votes they held. In educational and social change, the thinking often originated within the nationalist or socialist sectors of the English educated, percolated thence to the vernacular educated elite being embraced by them with as much enthusiasm as if it were their own creation, and was finally taken up by the masses in the form of a slogan which called for acceptance at the whip hand of the vote. In this manner, the idea of free education from the kindergarten through the university was born in the minds of a handful among the nationalist and socialist sectors of the English educated elite, then taken up enthusiastically by the second level elite comprising largely of Buddhist monks, ayurvedic physicians and vernacular teachers, and the editorial staffs of the vernacular newspapers, who harnessed mass support for the campaign and saw to it that there was acceptance by the legislature. The immediate consequence of the principle of free education accepted in 1945 was to give a bonanza to the well-to-do by making available to them without payment the good education that had hitherto been paid for by them. The masses continued to receive free the poor quality education that had all along been free to them. The

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Central school idea represented a genuine attempt to extend the benefits of a good quality education, but the establishment of Central schools could proceed only at a snail's pace as the lion's share of the finances of the government was taken up by grants of great liberality to the few prestigious schools which had been earlier fee-levying but had now become free. The Junior school came as a half way measure in the government sector between the old, bad, free school for the masses and the new and better Central school for a few of them, but even Junior schools were not established in sufficient number. Such small mercies as did come their way placated the masses, and they were too inarticulate to ask for full scale justice. For its part, officialdom was content to programme changes at the minimum rate of disturbance to its own lethargy and complacence. The policy that had been accepted was free education from the kindergarten to the university. Education became indeed free for all, but what was free was a good education for the few and a bad education for the many. In other words, from the point of view of quality, free education was more a mirage than a reality in so far as the masses were concerned.

10. As in the case of the free education scheme, the motive force for the dethronement of English (which, after a century and half of British rule was spoken by less than 10% of the population) and the substitution of the national languages in its place came from the egalitarian ideologies of the handful of nationalists and socialists among the English educated elite whose sensibilities had not been alienated from the roots of national culture and from the aspirations of the mass of people. As described in the preceding paragraph, the second level elite added their support to the movement and mass participation was enlisted. Against the opposition of a microscopic minority which argued that the English medium should not be replaced by the national language media, the legislature decided in 1945 that Sinhalese and Tamil should be used as the media of instruction in the primary school for Sinhalese and Tamil children respectively. At the same time, the legislature was guilty of a serious illogicality and committed a blunder, as demonstrated by subsequent events, by giving Sinhalese and Tamil children educated through these media the option of receiving their post-primary education through the medium of English. This proviso, in conjunction with the great illusion of compulsory English as a second language for all, not only threw the language situation into a welter of confusion from which recovery was not

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possible for about two decades but also prevented the establishment of a democratic system of education by making large sectors of education the monopoly of the socially and economically privileged strata which alone were able to give their children adequate proficiency in English. To say this is not to deny that there was indeed some increase in the availability of a reasonably good education for a small minority of the under-privileged. The point, however, is that it was not as widespread as it should have been. The social demand for education generated at the grassroots level in the process of implementing the egalitarian policies conceived of by the nationalist-socialist groups was by and large limited to the quantitative dimension, and there was a lack of sensitivity on the part of the masses to the importance of the qualitative dimension. Not having experienced the good, the idea of agitating for the good was alien to their way of thinking and they were satisfied with the morsels that fell their way.

11. British colonial policies in Ceylon, of which educational policies were an integral part, also need assessment from a broader perspective than their impact on the educational scene *per se*. Quite understandably, in spite of the assurances given in 1815, the British government in Ceylon was not interested in seeing to it that the temples enjoyed the temporalities and prebendial services to which they were customarily entitled. This attitude of neglect weakened the position of the temple, reduced the support that the monks received for their religious and educational activities, thereby diminishing also the capacity of the monks to contribute to the well-being of the Buddhist community. The traumatic change in their position unsettled the monks for several decades, and they went about their work on a low key until the public debates between the Christians and the Buddhists during the third quarter of the nineteenth century, when a surprising amount of militance was shown by the Buddhists in meeting the Christian challenge. Not long afterwards, organizational and psychological inputs from the theosophical movement, notably from Colonel Olcott, the American theosophist, braced up the Buddhists to meeting the religious and educational challenges of the Christians. The struggle was quite arduous on account of the opposition from Christian missionary bodies which were already firmly established, and from many officials of the British government who looked askance at the Buddhist revival firstly because of their Christian background, and secondly and more importantly because they saw in it the seeds of nationalism carrying with them a threat to the peaceful continuity of

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British rule in Ceylon. The Buddhist cause gained in strength with every increase of political responsibility granted to the people, and the early successes of Christianity were contained, with only negligible gains being recorded in the later years. It is undeniable that under British rule and the pressures of Christianization, Buddhism in Ceylon acquired a militance that had not characterized it during the several hundred years that had passed since its introduction into the country.

12. Apart from the impact of Christianization on Buddhism in the manner discussed above, Christianization had social implications which were partly beneficial and partly harmful. Missionary endeavours brought into the country several missionary educators whose scholarship and qualities of character were outstanding and left their stamp on a few of the local population who in turn had considerable multiplier effect. Christianity was also socially integrative upto a point in the sense that such of the Sinhalese and Tamils as were converted to Christianity became bound by the bond of a common religion, sharing this common bond with the Burghers and the Europeans as well. At the same time, Christianity was socially disruptive in dividing the Sinhalese among themselves and Tamils among themselves. The attitude of Christian educators to the local languages was minimally supportive, and on balance prejudicial. There was support for the study of Sinhalese and Tamil, in fact for their use as media of instruction, to the extent that they served missionary purposes, for it was scarcely conceivable that the masses could be reached and converted in any other way. This was accompanied by an effort to produce a Christian literature in these languages, and an antagonism to the extant literature which, though quite voluminous, was saturated with Buddhist and Hindu ideology. The antagonism to the advanced study of these languages and to the study of their classical literature was understandable, as it was fraught with potential danger to missionary purposes. In any event, the enthronement of English and the devaluation of the local languages in the prestigious schools of the missionaries was socially disruptive. The enthronement of the English language and Western culture in the prestigious Christian schools set the model for the prestigious schools of the Buddhists, Hindus and Muslims, and the justification lay in that scholastic and examination results leadlng to economic rewards were in that direction. The distinctive feature of the prestigious schools of the indigeneous religious groups was that these religions found a place in them

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along with a modicum of Eastern culture. To the extent that the Buddhists, Hindus and Muslims emphasized the English language and Western culture in most of the work done in their prestigious schools, they contributed their share to the social cleavage mentioned above. The avenues of social mobility were not equally accessible to all, however. Both overt and covert favouritism towards Christians in the provision of employment, coupled with the fact that access to an English education was available more to Christians than to others conferred elite status on Christians quite out of proportion to their population numbers. The denial of fair play to the majority religious groups and the conferment of special advantages on a minority religious group quite understandably evoked a swift reaction from the majority religious groups when they succeeded in having their say in the affairs of the country.

13. The premium placed in education on the English language and Western culture had both beneficial and harmful effects socially. Even after nearly a century and half of British rule, only about 6 per cent of the population was literate in English but they constituted the elite. English gave them access to the literature of the West, and through this literature they imbibed ideals of Western humanism (that supplemented Eastern ideals of humanism), Western political ideologies, and became exposed to the science and technology of the West. While a few among the English educated lost their roots completely and became English in every respect but colour, finding fulfilment in psychological identification with the British rulers, others sought to derive lessons from Western humanism and political ideologies for the progress of their own country, and were in the vanguard of movements for social and political reforms. English was, however, socially disruptive in the sense that the country was divided into two nations, consisting of an English speaking minority that enjoyed a quality education, privilege and wealth, and a non-English speaking majority that enjoyed the status of second class citizens. It was no surprise that in course of time a reaction set in against the former. While English was socially divisive in the manner stated, it was partly integrative in the sense that it provided a medium of communication between the Sinhalese and Tamil elites. This, however, was in the nature of a short term benefit. In the long run, it created a vacuum in regard to a common language of communication between the majority of the Sinhalese and the Tamils. It was also an intolerable situation for the masses as they

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became enfranchised and articulate that a language known only by a microscopic minority should be the official language of the country, with all the social and economic advantages associated with mastery of the language. The decision to replace English with Sinhalese as the official language caused a sharp cleavage between the Sinhalese and the Tamils, and in this sense English proved to be divisive. On balance, therefore, it would seem that the divisions caused by the use of English as the official language and as the language medium for a prestigious education exceeded in nature and magnitude the advantages derived from the position that English enjoyed as the official language and as the language of choice for the education of the economically privileged.

14. In one of the many dualities of the school system, namely the existence side by side of government schools and grant-aided schools managed by a number of competing religious groups, with the Christian minority occupying a position of pre-eminence, the British handed down to the country at the time of political independence a hotly debated and unsolved problem that caused much acrimony and religious strife between the Christians on the one hand and the indigenous religious groups on the other hand until the government took the drastic step, twelve years after independence, of taking over the grant-aided schools and conducting them under the management of the government.

15. This review of developments in education during the century and half of British rule in Ceylon leads almost inexorably to the conclusion that the country was exposed to a mixture of policies, some of which were progressive and socially integrative while others were harmful and socially disruptive. Not all of the policies were formulated with sufficient forethought, and many were in the nature of pragmatic responses hastily made in the face of some immediate problem. Not every policy resulted in the consequences envisaged for it, and unexpected turns of events were not unknown. A low priority was accorded to educational expenditure throughout the nineteenth century, the high priority items of expenditure being military and other expenditure to strengthen British colonial rule in the East. A slightly better deal was accorded to education in terms of finance during the first four decades of the twentieth century, but it was only on the eve of the transfer of power to the nationals of the country that the British

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government thought fit not to stint on educational expenditure. In the economic sphere, the role envisaged for the colonies was that they should be producers of primary products to be processed in England for sale both in England and outside, and that they should be consumers of goods processed or manufactured in England. To give but one example, rubber grown in Ceylon was exported to England for the manufacture of rubber goods, including tyres, and the manufactured goods had then to be purchased by Ceylon. This philosophy led to a neglect of technical education, and only a small fraction of the emphasis placed on literary and humanistic studies was placed on studies in the field of technology. However, considering that in the history of colonial rule through the ages no colonial master ever ruled its colonies for the unadulterated benefit of the latter, the record of the British in the field of education is seen in retrospect as having been reasonably fair and praiseworthy, though by no means sufficiently distinguished in its contribution to the life and well-being of the people as to warrant bouquets of thanks.

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