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THE
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11/21, Inuvil West
Chunnakam

A. S. KANAGARATNAM

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THE CONTROL OF OUR SCHOOLS

Control over Teachers:

The administration of schools deals with the appointment, transfer, promotion, discipline and discontinuance of teachers, and the disposal of school funds. On every one of these six items, a dishonest manager can make easy money, not to speak of the power and prestige attached to the management of other people. No wonder then, that ambitious men, both ecclesiastical and lay, want to be managers of schools.

Today the law of the land vests this control in respect of assisted schools, in the so-called owner, private or corporate, of the land, buildings and furniture of the school, with certain restrictive and discretionary functions in the state.

The proprietor of the school or his nominee is generally approved as manager by the state, and in that capacity becomes 'employer' of the teachers there. In actual fact, the assisted school teachers are employees of the state: they work under regulations framed by the state, and are paid from the public revenue, on scales fixed by the state. But in law they are 'employees' of the school manager. This is an anomalous situation carried over from the earlier phases of our educational system, and has not yet been corrected by suitable legislation. Therefore the courts today cannot guarantee to the assisted school teacher the same security that the other recipients of regular government salaries enjoy. However, the state has extended some measure of protection to

the assisted school teacher, through administrative regulations that do not rest in law, but in the goodwill of the Minister of Education. Hence a victimized teacher cannot appeal to the Judiciary for redress when the Minister declines to apply the protective regulations. A minister is a party man, subject to political pressure, and cannot be trusted to adhere impartially to regulations, as has been shown in the three cases recently publicised by the A. C. U. T. in which Minister Dahanayake had violated the regulations which he himself had framed to protect assisted school teachers.

The present system of school control distributed among hundreds of private proprietors and nominees of religious agencies, can hardly win the goodwill and support of the 28,700 teachers in assisted schools. Today there is considerable dissatisfaction among these teachers over appointments, transfers, promotions, discontinuance and levies. These teachers will continue to agitate for a system that will unequivocally guarantee to them security of tenure, fair promotions and the right to work without the fear of victimization. Until these are assured by law, this multiple control of our schools will be a source of frustration and irritation among the ranks of the teaching profession: and this assurance can only come when in law the state becomes the employer, as in fact it is, and not the so-called proprietor of the school — i. e. when certain aspects of the present control are taken over by the state.

It is true that some teachers unions, mine included, have passed resolutions in support of

the existing system of dual control of schools by the state and by voluntary agencies. But even among the organized teachers there is a substantial body of minority opinion against. Only last year a Protestant group of teachers under a Protestant denominational management met at Kandy and resolved to support the state take-over. There are more teachers outside the union than in, and a poll on this issue will, I believe, definitely go against vesting any sort of teacher-control in the private sector.

Control over Employment :

The Code of Regulations for Assisted Schools permits these private and denominational managers to appoint teachers: the state has only a nominal authority. The Director of Education has to approve the manager's choice, if it conforms to regulations. One cannot object to this system of teacher recruitment if the salaries of these teachers also come from the private sector. But it is the state that pays them from the public revenue. The education service accounts for hundreds of jobs in the country every year, perhaps the largest single avenue of employment today. Does this system of recruitment make for a fair distribution of employment opportunities?

'The maintenance of denominational schools ensures protected sources of employment for teachers who belong to those denominations.'†

How do these priestly and lay managers exercise their power of employment? Private schools

† Dr. Niles, Principal, Central College, Jaffna—Prize Day Report, 1959.

are often packed with the proprietor's kith and kin, or jobs are sold to the highest bidder. The Bribery Act does not cover the assisted schools. Not seldom these practices take place in the denominational schools too. Personal influence, wealth and religious affiliations account for many of the appointments in the denominational schools. The Christian denominations, as a result of their having come into this 'business' first, today command a patronage quite out of proportion to their numbers. Till very recently the Christians kept out of their schools, especially the big schools, teachers of other denominations, quite openly claiming that their schools were the preserve of the 'faithful'. However, public pressure has now forced most of the Christian managements to open their doors partially to non-Christian teachers. The Buddhist and Hindu denominations copying the Christian example, have also kept their schools closed to Christian teachers wherever they could. In the English schools under denominational control, the need for specialist teachers has to some extent limited the management's freedom of appointment. But in the Swabasha schools religious conformity is a crucial consideration. If this is not discrimination, what is?

If this method of recruitment on religious affiliations is resorted to in the public service, wouldn't we call it discrimination? But in the education service one has somehow come to accept this openly discriminatory system as natural. But one can sense a rising bitterness over this weightage in favour of one section of the community,

and this bitterness will grow with the growing unemployment figures.

Incidentally, people are furious, and rightly so, over the allocation of employment on the basis of language, but strangely enough, this discrimination on the basis of religion doesn't seem to matter at all.

This same discriminatory selection attends the appointments to special posts and head teachers' posts. A Hindu in a Christian school, however competent or qualified, has little chance of being appointed head of the school, though lately, there appears to be a relaxation in the matter of special posts. A competent biology master may not believe in the immaculate conception; is he on that account unfit to teach biology in a Christian school? As a matter of fact thousands of very able people don't care for any particular religious dogma. Are they for that reason incapable of running a school? Hardly any non-Christian is head of a Christian school; nor is it common for a Buddhist or Hindu management to appoint as headmaster one who does not profess their religion. On what grounds can the state that foots the bill condone this?

Clerical Control:

The control of schools by priests is a hang-over from the Middle Ages. National governments as we know them today, had not come into being and education was anybody's business. Priests fortunately, had the will and the leisure for it, and performed this service and kept culture alive. But today when every modern state has a

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Minister of Education whose business it is to provide the best education possible on a national scale, for which the state votes huge annual supplies, priestly control of public instruction is an indefensible anachronism.

The current controversy in Ceylon over the take-over of schools is at bottom the struggle between two sets of priests to get control: to put it briefly, the late-comers want to take over from the old-timers. Though the Buddhist Commission asks for state monopoly, their insistence on compulsory religious education is suspect, as also their demand for posts and headships in proportion to the denomination of the school children.

The Report makes little mention of the teacher's status, though there is quite a lot about much that is irrelevant to today's education. Apparently the teacher is to move from one kind of ecclesiastical boss to another—only a change of labels.

The men behind these rival demands are either priests or laymen who have climbed to power with the backing of priestly or religious organizations. What right has a priest, be he Buddhist, Hindu, Christian or Muslim, directly or indirectly to control teachers and teaching, a teacher might well ask.

A priest may have something to say on the content of religious education: his contribution to education ends there. As priest, he is not an educational expert. True education breeds tolerance, fellow-feeling, human sympathy, inter-communal understanding, civic consciousness and such other

social virtues, qualities that we in Ceylon require urgently for national survival. But some of these men from the churches and temples genuinely believe that their own faith is the only true faith and can little appreciate what these ideals mean in education. Their faith, a euphemism for bigotry, inevitably circumscribes their horizons.

With priests in control of recruitment and promotions, how much of the teacher's freedom from extraneous religious duties remains? The plums in school will continue to be distributed not solely on merit and educational factors, but on other considerations of which a priest will be the judge. Appointments will also follow the present discriminatory pattern.

It was for these reasons that the National Union of Teachers in England, (N. U. T.), consistently opposed the extension of ecclesiastical authority into the county schools. The churches claimed the 'right of entry' into those schools and 'religious tests' for teachers to ensure effective Christian teaching. In 1941, a deputation of many churches led by the Archbishop of Canterbury waited on Mr. R. A. Butler, President of the Board of Education, to press these claims. The minister could only promise legislation after consultation with the Local Education Authorities (L. E. A.'s), and the teachers. The '*Schoolmaster*,' the organ of the N. U. T., commenting on the incident, wrote that Mr. Butler's reply

'will serve as a useful reminder to the very distinguished members of the Archbishop's deputation that the council schools of the country belong to the nation, that the people responsible

for their administration are the Local Authorities, and that any arrangements made with regard to religious instruction have to be carried out by the teachers.†

Not that the English teachers opposed religious instruction in schools; but they considered it demeaning for any teacher to have to submit to inspection, supervision and related control by priests. It was a loss of status. Nor did they want any teacher to suffer professional disadvantage on religious grounds. They suspected the churchmen of attempting to sneak into administrative control of communal schools. This was a controversy that began in 1870, with the Compulsory Education Act, and it was only in 1942 that peace was finally made when the Archbishop of Canterbury declared in the House of Lords that he 'was willing to trust the teachers in the matter of religious teaching.' This episode in the history of the English teachers is mentioned here as an illustration of the temporal ambitions of those who profess to guide the spiritual affairs of men.

In Ceylon rival religious interests seeking to extend their control of schools to other areas have not infrequently clashed, particularly in the villages. Priestly control has not always made for peace.

Religious Education:

What is this nebulous something called religious education over which so many people in Ceylon appear to be agitated? Before and/or after school

† The 'School Teachers' by Asher Tropp—Heinemann, p. 237

opens children of the denomination assemble for worship,—prayers, pirith or pooja—according to the religion of the managing body. There are also extra-curricular religious organizations or activities, and two or three periods a week assigned to 'religion' in the time table.

As a school subject the place of religion is low down in the list. The parents are much more interested in the science subjects and English. The most qualified staff are reserved for the other subjects of the time table. The University doesn't encourage the study of religion by providing a chair, or a syllabus for the Entrance Examination. The subject has to live on the encouragement given by the management. From this is it correct to infer that this interest in religious education is being artificially built up by those that trade on it? Is it an excuse for the Christian managements to hang on to their control of schools, and for the others to take over from them? Because of the multiplicity of religions in this country, this is a vote-catching slogan easy for the masses to swallow, and every would-be politician is greatly concerned about religious education.

A statistical examination of the public funds made available to the different denominational bodies as state grants alone will reveal the extent of the economic basis behind this rival demand for school control:

The Christians,	6 %	of the population,	get Rs. 44,000,000/-
„ Buddhists,	66 %	„ „ „ „	22 000,000/-
„ Hindus,	22 %	„ „ „ „	6,000,000/-
† „ Muslims.	5 %	„ „ „ „	795,000/-

† Figures supplied by the Minister in Parliament, quoted by Mr. L. M. de Silva in a letter to the 'Daily News' of 11-11-59

Apart from the discriminatory allocation—the result of historical circumstances, over which neither this nor any earlier government had any control—one cannot get over the fact that these rival religious groups are fighting to get control over the millions behind school management. Is it the money or religion?

For some years now the Christians have given up all overt efforts at proselytizing through their schools, a concession to adult suffrage. They are afraid to. To fling that charge at them today is unfair. But that was one of the aims with which their schools were originally started. Still, there are a few who believe genuinely that it is their duty to convert the 'heathen', but that is only the feeble-minded among them. Unfortunately, this itching for evangelism among the less intelligent pillars of the Christian churches merely provides convenient ammunition to their opponents to storm the Christian positions. However, though they have ostensibly abandoned their missionary ambitions in the field of education, or postponed them, they are still somewhat squeamish about teaching other religions in their schools, a singularly intolerant attitude in the twentieth century, particularly among those who claim to be educationists. It only irritates the non-Christians who rightly feel that they had been neglected during the British period. It is a perfectly legitimate demand for a parent to make of a government-subsidized institution that his religion be taught to his child on the same terms as any other religion. In the end, perhaps all the Protestant churches will bend before the popular demand in order to save

themselves from breaking. Signs are not wanting: Rev. Dr. Niles, a Wesleyan evangelist and Principal, very aptly quoted Marxist Mao, — 'let a hundred flowers bloom'† — to herald this welcome change of attitude among the Protestant managing bodies. But the Roman Catholics will not compromise on this issue.

Secular Education :

The diversion of public funds to educational institutions teaching religion is forbidden by law in certain countries. The more important of these are U. S. A. where a constitutional provision blocks Federal funds to non-secular schools,—and all state constitutions except one or two, have copied the Federal example,—Australia, India, New Zealand and U. S. S. R.* and other Socialist countries.

Catholic France had a long secular tradition in education, with provision for religious instruction being given out of school hours on a specified afternoon, under strict state neutrality. But after the French surrender to Hitler, the stooge government at Vichy introduced religious instruction as a compulsory subject into all public schools, ap-

† Jaffna Central College, Prize Day Report—1959, p. 8

* It is commonly believed that secular education was first introduced in Russia after the Bolshevik Revolution. Catherine II in 1783 founded a state system of education for Russia, free, secular, co-educational and common to all, including serfs, and nine years later, the Czar Alexander I extended it to the University by the provision of many scholarships. Though some of these concessions were withdrawn by later reactionary czars, the general tradition of secular education continued to 1917. ('Comparative Education'—Nicholas Hans, pp. 291&292.)—

pointed school chaplains and paid them from public funds, and gave state grants to Catholic denominational schools. It was an open violation of the constitution of the Third Republic and aroused strong opposition among teachers and parents. After liberation France was divided on this issue and as a compromise the new government proclaimed a return to the secular system, but continued to pay grants to the Catholic schools, reverted to religious instruction out of school hours as before, and suspended the salaries of school chaplains, although they were allowed the right of entry.†

As against these secular states, England, the Netherlands, Belgium and the Scandinavian countries permit even schools subsidized by the state to give religious instruction. England has an 'agreed syllabus' in religion, undenominational and approved by all the Protestant churches and the L. E. A.'s. An agreed syllabus is taught in all the maintained schools, except those controlled by the Catholic Church.

In a country like ours where many religions are professed by the people, the state must provide equal opportunities for worship to the children of all denominations in a school so long as public funds are expended on its maintenance: i. e. provide a shrine for each religion, conduct worship and classes for each under priests and teachers of each religion, and extend all other religious facilities on an equal basis. It is the only fair and democratic way. But such a venture

† 'Comparative Education'—N. Hans. pp. 291&292

will lead to no end of complications within the school. Our five religions will want five different places of worship and that at a time when every bit of available space has to be used to accommodate the annually rising enrolment. Then of course, teachers of the five different creeds will have to be employed, maybe keeping out specialists in the more important subjects. Holy days and rituals, different for every religion will frequently dislocate the school work.

Language differences have introduced a rift into our national life which will take some years to heal. Already many of our city schools have two streams, which unless carefully encouraged to mix, will harden into two separate groups—a very unfortunate development from the national point of view, but perhaps unavoidable in the context of democratic education through the national languages. But to introduce our religious differences also into our schools will only aggravate the problem and put back for all time the evolution of a Ceylonese nation. The school will become the breeding ground of partisan religious loyalties, at the expense of the more essential loyalty to the school and country. Teachers of the different religions, unless they are extremely tactful, may precipitate dangerous incidents at school.

It is an accepted democratic principle that the state should be neutral in all religious matters. The 'Agreed Syllabus' is the British form of neutrality evolved among the non-Catholic denominations in England. In Ceylon the Buddhist Commission's demand for compulsory religious edu.

cation is an invitation to the state to abandon any neutrality it had followed. If the government bows to that demand, it will lead to more and more control of teachers by priests and further social disintegration.

Mention has been made of European countries like the Netherlands where denominational religious teaching is permitted in state-aided schools. But since only one kind of denominational teaching is possible in one school, children of other denominations there have to suffer a religious disadvantage, exactly as many of our children do here in Ceylon. An agreed syllabus on the British pattern could have solved this, but no other country appears to have agreed on a common syllabus for religious instruction. Where different branches of the same religion cannot agree as to the basic concepts to be taught to children, it is too much to hope for any kind of agreement among school managing denominations in Ceylon where four different religions rule the roast. The only fair solution, as also the simplest, is secular education.

A certain degree of indoctrination is inevitable in all education. Religious education itself is a form of indoctrination. By its nature education is a conditioning of the child's mind. Instead of the morning prayers with which schools start their day's work, wouldn't it be better to start it with our national anthem, or work out secular, non-sectarian ways of instilling into our children social attitudes, respect for other religions, cultures and languages, love of work and contempt for

the dishonest practices so common in our public life?

This popular feeling for their religion is something worked up among the unthinking masses by scheming people. Most people are so much interested in this world that left to themselves, they won't have more than a casual interest in the affairs of the next. Freed from fear, most of them would forget religion. Yet these men are not by nature wicked, ill-mannered or crooks. Under normal living conditions they love their children, are friendly towards their neighbours, are generally moved to help others in distress and willing to do an honest job of work. The attitudes they develop are a reflection of and a reaction to their social environment, so that their economic background is much more important in character building than the tenets, credos and rituals that pass for religion. This is relevant to the present inquiry, because it is not the people that demand religious instruction in schools, but only those leaders who want to use 'religion' and the people for their own ambitions. There is a common core of human and social virtue in all religions. That essence, freed from all the external embellishments, different in different religions, can be taught under a secular control.

'Buddhist education requires a mode of training, a curriculum and a system of discipline inspired by the Dhamma.'†

The champions of Hindu education also insist on a Hindu mode of training, &c., and the

† Bud. Com. Report, p. 66.

Christians, Catholic and Protestant, on their special modes, and the Muslims, the latest in the field, on theirs. Are all these modes of training in their particular ways of life the exclusive monopoly of each religion, antagonistic to and intolerant of each other's ways of life? Is it wrong to think that all these different ways of life are basically one and the same, because they are all inspired from God, the loving Father of all Buddhists, Hindus Christians and Muslims?

If secular education is alien to Ceylon culture, or a Marxist invention, is it not possible to agree on a system similar to the one followed in France before the Vichy regime, when religious instruction in state-aided schools was given out of school hours, on a particular day of the week, organized and financed by each denomination?

Mr. T. U. D. Silva, Hon. Joint Secretary, Buddhist Commission, writing in the correspondence columns of the Daily News of 27-7-59, says:

'The use of different languages as the medium of instruction from the kindergarten to the university has given our children a racial bias. Segregating children according to religion will accentuate evils furthermore and bring about disharmony and strife in the country.'

To underline his thesis, he quotes Bishop Weldon of the Church of England:

'Children who are educated as it were, in water-tight compartments, who regard the children of other churches than their own as bitter aliens, heretics, and who live all their lives in a certain denominational atmosphere, may become in future years good Catholics or good Christians, but they

will certainly not become the best citizens as they will not have learnt to appreciate the value of the unity which the state naturally desires and pursues in the training of its citizens.'

There is only one conclusion possible from Mr. Silva's statement and quotation-viz: our schools should not be controlled by the clergy, Christian, Buddhist or any other. The only way to save Ceylon from the evils flowing from the segregation of children according to religion, is to introduce secular education.

To Whom Do the Schools Belong?

Private proprietors of schools as well as denominational managing bodies claim the right to control schools and teachers on the ground that the land, buildings and furniture are their private property. In law they belong to them.

To examine the validity of this claim it is relevant to go into the origins of our schools. Corporate religious bodies and private persons originally built our non-state schools. The land was their private or purchased property, in many cases even property gifted by philanthropic individuals for a communal need. Nor were the donors always Christians. The early buildings too were put up partly on the contributions of public-spirited persons in the community who were not all Christians.

In course of time these schools grew with private and public contributions, as many of our other communal concerns have developed. Generous building grants from the government, over and above the maintenance grants, were given to some

of these schools. Those who were in positions of power influenced the allocation of these building grants to their own schools, or to those denominational schools in which they were interested. Endowments from public spirited men and contributions from parents of children and others by way of land, cash and kind, through the years, built up these schools to their present position. Above all our schools were built up by the devoted service of the headmasters and teachers attached to these schools, many of them working on a pittance before the salary scales were regulated by the government, and afterwards on what was left over after the tithes and other managerial deductions from their paysheets.

Built up largely from public donations, state subsidies, levies from the teachers' salaries and the devoted service of the teacher, can these assisted schools be justly considered as private property in the same sense as a man's house or garden, acquired with his private and personal resources? All over the island these schools have grown through a generation or two, many men and women, within and without the schools, contributing to their growth in money and service. Can any proprietor controlling any of these schools, or any board of trustees or management, claim an inalienable right to it? Can they close these schools as they can their private homes or workshops? Isn't there an implied contract that they must keep their schools open, and running efficiently as public institutions? Is it unreasonable of the government to look upon these schools as a public utility service, in as much as they serve a

public need, and the public have contributed in substantial measure to their development—in a number of cases, much more than the so-called owner and proprietor?

A more urgent consideration is the need to the community. As an analogy one may ask whether anyone can forbid the use of his well, the only source of drinking water for the entire community, on the ground that it is his private property?

Today the law may make no distinction between school property and private property. But new laws can be made to correct the injustice, as they have been made in other countries.

The service rendered in the past by these private and denominational schools, and being performed today, is gratefully acknowledged by most people. But that is not to say that the control should continue in the hands of the present incumbents, or that schools are their private property. The background has changed and is fast changing under the impact of the electoral reforms of 1931. Educational objectives also have shifted widely. Then it was an unequal society, and school managers were at best patriarchal, occupying a privileged position, carrying considerable patronage and influence in the school area, and the benefits flowing from the school were channelled out to particular sections of the population only. The people today will not agree to the perpetuation of these educational privileges. Democratic pressure from below will not permit the privileges currently enjoyed by any group as a result of their ownership of schools.

Besides, the Christian managements have had their reward. They started their schools with the avowed object of propagating their religion, and in that aim they have been successful to a considerable extent. They have built churches where there had been none before, and today these churches are a going concern, thanks to the contributions of the teachers attached to the schools of the parish. Almost all their headmasters are Christians, and that too of that particular variety in control of the school. In return for this promotion the headmasters take care that their churches are maintained. They take a personal interest in all ecclesiastical affairs, and collect the church subscriptions from their assistants, organize church functions and festivals, and act as general handyman to the pastor in charge of the parish. Aspirants for promotion in their schools do likewise. An inquiry into the incomes of the Christian churches will reveal the extent of the financial dependence of the churches on schools. By the judicious distribution of teaching jobs and promotions, the Christian managements have been able to build up a Christian community in every village where they planted a school. It has not been a bad investment for them.

It is a little different story with the non-Christian managements. To begin with they did not have the same well-knit organizations as the Christians had, nor any financial support from foreign religious agencies. But they could appeal to the popular feeling for the national religion, and could also influence the government by their greater pull with the majority of voters, and in time

they successfully halted the Christian inroads into their religious fold. Very few Christian schools have been registered recently. That is the measure of the success of the campaign against the Christian schools.

But this crusading spirit among the national managements was short-lived. Some of the men in control sought to levy exactions on the salaries of the teachers under their control. The politician also took a hand, so much so that most of the members of our old State Council were also managers of schools. The men in control of these schools were not all priests, as their Christian counterparts were. These men were mostly lawyers, with a sprinkling of other professional men: and lawyers are not all saints. These new managers had little qualms about bullying the poor teacher for funds, generally to build up their school empire, but now and then for their private needs too. The schools, originally starting with a blackboard and a few desks under a temporary shed, had to expand in time to satisfy departmental requirements, and to keep their jobs teachers collected from the public and from themselves.

In this war for school control by rival religious and private interests there was only one casualty—the teacher. The teacher's status fell and education suffered. Proprietary rights over schools have commercialized education.

So much about the managing religious bodies: as for the private proprietary manager, it is a case of hereditary succession to the throne.

Levies on Teachers' Salaries:

Section 26(vi) of the Code of Regulations for Assisted English Schools, and Section 32(vi) of the Code for Assisted Vernacular and Bilingual Schools, both prohibiting the manager from levying moneys from their teachers, were amended in September '58 to add the following paragraph:

'and no contribution from the salary of a teacher shall be given by the teacher to the manager or accepted by, or on behalf of, the manager from the teacher, for any purpose whatsoever, except with the prior approval of the Director.'

Where was the need for this particular code amendment if private and denominational managements were free from blame? Direct payment was provided to prevent this form of graft; but the assisted school managers resorted to so many devious ways of circumventing direct payment and enforcing 'voluntary contributions', that the government had to take further steps to protect the teacher. Hence the above amendment.

But this section has always been, and still is, a dead letter. Most school managers, private and denominational, still collect levies under several subterfuges, some even with open threats of victimization. It is not difficult to substantiate this. An examination of the school accounts, the school assets and the sources of their funds will prove it beyond a shadow of doubt. Incidentally, the assets of the Christian churches and their current income may be investigated to find out what percentage of their funds are derived from the teachers under their employ. Of course, it is

always open for the beneficiaries of this form of graft to plead that the teachers contributed *voluntarily*. Some of our schools are free from this form of blackmail. They are the well-established schools with sufficient endowments. But the vast majority of our assisted schools have absolutely no funds and depend substantially on the teachers' contributions for additions to school buildings, maintenance and movable assets, where government grants cannot cover them.

The threat of transfer to unhealthy places, or other forms of victimization, as also prospects of promotion, will bring to heel most teachers who refuse to contribute to managerial funds. It is not quite fair to blame the teacher for yielding to this exploitation without protest. The government gives him little protection against discontinuance or penal transfer, and none at all against discriminatory promotions. If the manager frames charges against a teacher, the defence is a troublesome and expensive process, involving no end of bother and risk, and most teachers would rather pay and escape the wrath to come.

A well-known denominational manager was found guilty, in an official inquiry, of levying monies from the teachers under his management. He was removed from office and disqualified from ever holding a managerial appointment. That took place over 15 years ago, but the Director's order has made no difference; ever since, he has been continuing to manage the same schools from behind the scenes with a 'dummy' manager for official purposes.

Under these conditions no teacher will come forward to testify against these unscrupulous employers. Blackmail is not easy to prove, and in this case, failure to prove may mean certain dismissal.

During my year of office as President of the A. C. U. T. nine cases of such victimisation over levies, or over similar financial considerations, were reported to me. Some of the victims were non-members for whom our union could do nothing. We did what we could for our members; where managers were recalcitrant, the Director took over and managed the schools. But departmental officials do not want to add to their official burdens, and M. P.'s take a hand and finally the old manager comes into his own. That is a threat to the security of the teacher who had stood up to him and in time that teacher also learns to placate the gods.

It is hard to believe that such a system of school control, so open to corrupt practices, can ever raise the status of the teacher, or strengthen the tone of his school or build a nation. It is my firm conviction that private and denominational control will be always open to this kind of abuse. The state take-over alone can put a stop to this species of graft.

In this context it is relevant to inquire into the reasons why certain denominational managements still cling to their pre-Kannangara system of payment through their own offices, when the government allows them the option to pay direct by government cheques to their teachers. There

can be only one explanation. Payments through the manager's office make it convenient to make deductions from their teachers' salaries. Only two years ago the Teachers' Guild of a Grade I Christian College in the North appealed to the Director for direct payment by the government and got it in the teeth of the Principal's opposition. Not that direct cheques are proof against illegitimate levies, but that makes it somewhat easier to evade them. Most of our Christian managements continue to hang on to this system of managerial payment from quarterly government grants. Why?

It must be admitted that this abuse is very common in the Swabasha schools, though not rare among the English schools. The personnel of the Swabasha schools are not, considering their numbers, sufficiently well organized professionally to fight this successfully. Because of the step-motherly treatment meted out to the Swabasha schools by the government in the past, and even today, the traditions and background of these schools are not the same as those of the English schools. If those schools are inferior it is not the fault of the teachers who staff those schools. It is due to the 'casteism' in school organization, characteristic of a colonial era, still carried over into independent times. When Teachers' Organizations penetrate into these inferior schools one might hope for more resistance to managerial exploitation. Until then, the children in the Swabasha schools will receive an inferior education because of these unhealthy and underhand practices that corrode education and strip the teacher of all self-respect.

A quicker way to clean up this stink is to take away the manager's powers of appointment, promotion and disciplinary action. These are powers that ought to be vested in the paymaster; and the paymaster is the state.

As for the private manager, now in hereditary control of several schools in the island, few of them are above living off the earnings of the teachers in their employ. Some of them do not even know that it is immoral of them to collect levies from the teachers under their control, so low is their level of cultural attainment. Their forebears who founded their schools were no doubt moved by lofty ideals when they laboured to build them. But idealism is not always transmissible in heredity, as private property is in law.

State Control or Dual Control ?

The present system of schools in Ceylon is a copy of the English system, prior to the Education Act of 1944, except for the absence in Ceylon of any element of local government support for, or interest in education. The Education Act of 1870 introduced compulsory elementary education in England. It set up School Boards elected by the ratepayers to build and administer schools in districts not served, or inadequately served by the churches. Thus arose a 'Dual System' of control: a popular control exercised over some schools provided and administered on state and local funds, and an ecclesiastical control exercised over other schools built and administered by the different denominations. Both these kinds of schools received government grants for mainten-

ance. A dual system, basically similar, prevails in Ceylon today.

In England this system of divided control prevented the uniform development of schools. Historically and legally, the churches were the proprietary owners of over 10,000 schools and controlled the teachers there. Their headships were not open to all, but only to those teachers conforming to church discipline. Their financial resources were far from adequate to provide for the growing needs of secondary education, whereas the 'provided schools', built from public funds and fed by the rates and grants, could freely spend on expansion of educational facilities — larger playgrounds, bigger buildings, more modern equipments and better qualified staff. The state could not step in and provide the needed land, building, equipment and staff so long as the churches refused to surrender their proprietary rights. Under these conditions re-organization and re-construction on a national scale, under a single direction were impossible, and the disparity in school standards continued. This was the problem posed by the Hadow Report of 1926 which recommended re-organization towards a common, national system of education.

The N. U. T. spearheaded the attack on this 'dual system' of school control. They were supported by the Labour Party whose platform included 'secondary education for all'. The N U. T. wanted equality of opportunity for all children, wise and generous distribution of maintenance grants, abolition of school fees, public control of schools maintained from public funds, fewer

and larger administrative units and teaching posts including headships open to merit. None of these could be guaranteed under a dual system of control.

Sir Frederick Mander, General Secretary of the N. U. T. from 1931 to '47, writing in the Union's journal, '*The Schoolmaster*' in 1942, declared:

'Every Minister of Education, every administrator, every teacher, every intelligent churchman and honest politician knows quite well that the dual system lies like a tank trap across the highway to educational advance. Until the administrative impotence resulting from this weird, outmoded yet persistent dichotomy is removed, there will be no real advance, no real equality of opportunity for the ordinary children in the schools.'†

To quote again from the same writer in '*the Schoolmaster*' of 29 January, 1942:

'The teachers in the schools — want a general educational advance. They know that this can only come with the achievement of a national system of schools within which the local authorities can provide, maintain, re-group, re-organize, close or replace and generally control all the schools and teaching staffs in their respective areas. They see no reason whatsoever why the Archbishops and their Anglican colleagues should continue to call the tune in schools maintained, although not provided, by the local authorities, and in addition, with the help of Free Churchmen, call the tune in the schools both provided and maintained out of public money.'*

† *The School Teachers* — A. Tropp. p. 238.

* *ibid.* p. 231.

Characteristically enough, the final solution came in the compromise embodied in the Education Act of 1944, by which the organizational defects of the dual system were mitigated. Those schools managed by the churches, which could not provide a half of the cost of reorganization passed under the control of the L. E. A.'s. Those which could, received the other half as grant from the government, and still retained their voluntary status. The religious instruction controversy, the pretext for retaining control, was solved by the 'Agreed Syllabus'. The Catholic schools remained and still remain outside this compromise.

It may be further mentioned that the reforms of 1944 failed to touch the great Public Schools catering to the very wealthy and aristocratic few and conferring on a class an enormous privilege at the university level: this upsets the principle of equality of opportunity for which the N. U. T. and the Labour Party had worked so long. However, the Fleming Committee appointed during the war, recommended the admission up to 25% of the children who ordinarily would have been out of the Public School range, and the reimbursement from public funds of all loss of revenue resulting from this influx of children who could not pay the high fees charged by these schools. Some of the Public Schools have accepted the system on a voluntary basis.*

This dual system transplanted in Ceylon has developed in more or less the same way as in

* Comparative Education — N. Hans. p. 266.

England. There are a score or so of very good big schools under denominational control. But the vast majority of their schools, particularly the Swabasha schools in the rural areas, cannot for financial reasons, aspire to the same level of development as the government school of the type. The non-state schools provide inferior buildings and equipment, collect levies on their teachers' salaries and indirectly compel them to provide for expansion through their powers of appointment, promotion and discontinuance. This exploitation of the teacher is inherent in a system where religious bodies and private persons with slender resources are permitted to control school administration.

A uniform development in the environmental standards of the Swabasha schools - those step-children of the Education Department - will become possible only when the resources of the state can be channelled out directly to them for capital expenditure, without voluntary associations to act as middlemen. Will vested interests behind 'religious education' agree to even a compromise solution on the English pattern of 1944?

Local Control

The publicly administered system of education in Ceylon differs from that of any other enlightened country in the world in one important respect. Here in Ceylon our local government authorities have no voice at all in education: that is to say, the people of the school area cannot influence the development of their schools. In England, in France and most other West European

countries, in U. S. A., in U. S. S. R. and other Socialist countries, in Japan, India, Indonesia and some other Asian countries, their governments share the responsibility for education with the local government bodies. This devolution of educational control to the people, the direct beneficiaries of the school services, promotes active popular interest in their schools and ensures a measure of decentralization and autonomy that make for a truly democratic set-up.

Democracy in practice involves very wide decentralization of administration. It is not enough merely to cast your vote and elect a representative to parliament. The people must directly participate in the actual administration of their areas. The educational service should not be taken out of the lists of local affairs over which the people exercise direct control. It is a strange democracy indeed, where the local bodies can neither provide nor maintain schools.

The English system of school control is one of the best in the world — free and fully democratic. The Act of 1944 provides for the effective control of all primary, secondary and further education by local bodies, except in the case of the independent, fee-levying schools catering to the very rich, and the Direct Grant Grammar Schools; and even here state intervention is slowly coming in. The County Councils elected to administer the rural areas and small towns, and the County Borough Councils (over 50,000 people) are the L. E. A.'s. Education is one of the services they provide. Every council divides

itself after election into committees to carry out its several duties; and one of them is the Local Education Committee. Every Education Committee is required to co-opt in itself persons of experience in education. Every Primary School has its own local body of 'managers' (not less than six), and every Secondary School, its body of 'governors' (in practice, more than six), appointed by this Education Committee. The dual system has been modified by the Act of 1944 to enable the L. E. A.'s to share a third or two-thirds of the control of Voluntary Schools by appointing that proportion of the 'managers' or 'governors'

Unlike in Ceylon, the Minister of Education in England does not provide, own or directly control any educational institution or employ or pay the teachers. The Ministry only supervises the work of the L. E. A.'s by statutory regulations, inspection and conditional grants, which amount to over 60% of the national cost of education. The balance comes from the local rates. It is the L. E. A. that is responsible for appointment, promotion and discontinuance of teachers. The Local Government control extends even to the Voluntary Schools — comprising a little over a third of all the maintained schools in England — depending on each school's capacity to meet its capital requirements.

Local control exercised through the local authorities would ensure public support for every school and rally to its development parents, teachers and all voluntary associations in the local community. Any system of control that

fails to evoke popular interest in the school fails to make the fullest use of the goodwill potential available in the area for education. Those who have a stake in education — the parents and the teachers — must participate directly in its provision and maintenance, and this partnership involving a sharing of control, as well as finance is pivotal to the success of any school.

Regional needs in education, as in other affairs, can be best satisfied by the people's direct control of the schools that serve them. Neither popular interest in their schools nor the unofficial advice and support which are necessary for free and healthy school development, have ever been seriously canvassed for our schools in the public sector. Centralized control inhibits the normal growth of our state schools. There are about 4040 English and Swabasha schools under state management. It is impossible for any Director to give his personal attention to such a large number of schools; nor can the E. O.'s who deputize for the Director bring sufficient personal interest to bear on all the schools in their divisions. To them it can never be anything more than mere routine.

It is the policy of the government to transfer teachers to their home stations after a four year period of service 'abroad.' This moving of pieces on an island-wide chess board, according to regulations — also occasionally to suit an M. P.—, has hindered the growth of a sense of loyalty for or permanent interest in the school, among the teachers there. The frequent transfer of headmasters is particularly harmful. When the

government schools come under the control of local bodies, transfers will be within the local area.

Every good school owes much of its success to the devotion of the local personnel behind it. The English practice of appointing local men as 'managers' and 'governors', to whom the L. E. A.'s delegate considerable powers, if followed in our country, will make for immediate improvement in tone, discipline and efficiency. Local initiative in any form is nil in our state schools. The school team must wait for instructions from the circuit officers, who must wait for instructions from the E. O., who must wait for instructions from the Director, and in this avoidance of responsibility all along the line, the local school is stifled.

'If a school is to have a life of its own, and not become a mere unit in a system, it is essential that it shall be the particular care of a body of people charged with looking after its interests.' †

It is true that local personnel are associated to some extent in the management of some of our denominational schools. Though poor in resources, they have tapped local interest and support and to that extent they deserve to be called 'people's schools.' But there is one snag. A section of the local people consider one school as theirs and another section another school. This divided interest has led to much local friction in the past, particularly in the rural areas, when rival groups sought to establish schools under their control. Local control must be social

† H. C. Dent: The Education Act of 1944: p. 28.

control. There are also quite a number of denominational schools run by remote control, though perhaps, not to the extent to which the state administers its schools.

If all the schools in a local area are taken over and put under the administrative control of local authorities, with sufficient statutory safeguards to regulate their management on lines similar to those in force under the English system, a distinct improvement in standards may be expected. Much of the current friction among neighbouring schools under rival denominational and private managements will disappear, as also the nepotism and corruption in appointments and promotions. The government schools that languish under official apathy and red tape will take a new life when the people of the local area are vested with the power and the means to run them for their children's education. To say that the people are not ready for such a responsibility is just nonsense. It is the time-worn excuse with which reaction and privilege at every epoch of history have sought to block the devolution of power to the common people.

How much educational responsibility can be handed over to our local bodies? Are the village committees, for instance, enlightened enough to handle education? True, there are V. C.'s floundering with their normal responsibilities; still, with official guidance and restrictions they are making a brave effort to build up rural Ceylon. No one has so far made out a case for scrapping the V. C.'s and handing over village administration to government officials — or even to religious

agencies—just because a few V. C.'s have bungled. Why should only education be taken out of the control of the people on the presumption that they are incapable? Is it to protect the vested interests in religious education? Even our worst V. C.'s can be trusted to run schools better than some of our denominational and private managers that make a 'business' of their schools, with a price on jobs and regular levies on their staff. Not all the schools in the denominational sector can be held up as models of administrative efficiency. The V. C.'s, as also the other local bodies, represent the people, and in any democratic society they must have the right to provide and control their schools, of course, with central grants and expert guidance. As in other countries, the local authorities will have no control over the curriculum or the internal administration. That is a specialist's job, for the headmaster and his staff.

Reorganization :

The number and the siting of schools, particularly the primary schools, must be governed by the distribution of population and the distance the children have to walk to attend school. This elementary condition governing the establishment of schools has not been always observed in Ceylon, because of the unplanned and uncontrolled growth of the school system under competing denominational agencies and private proprietors.

Before the state stepped in to control the opening of new schools there was a scramble for

school control among rival religious denominations, so much so, that today we find Christian schools located cheek by jowl with non-Christian, even in villages where the number of school-goers can justify only one. In some areas even separate schools have been provided for special castes: in the North they used to be called 'ragged schools,' but judging from the environmental standards provided, many of our high caste schools too may well deserve that description.

This promiscuous siting of schools without much relation to the needs of the community was due to the British government's policy of delegating its educational obligations to private persons and denominational agencies, neither of whom were purely altruistic or free from ulterior motives in opening schools. Nor did they command the financial wherewithal for founding and managing schools. This policy has not yet been replaced by a planned national system of education by the national governments that took over since 1931. Consequently our rural schools are more job-centred than child-centred. The country's educational service, instead of being the co-operative effort of all the educational agencies for the attainment of high educational standards that it ought to be, is today marred by a spirit of competition and mutual distrust. Any co-operation that exists today is due to the growth of Teachers' Associations.

Schools without enough financial resources to provide reasonable environmental conditions—sufficient floor space, well-lit, roomy and healthy buildings, suitable and adequate furniture, clean

and pleasant surroundings, well-stocked libraries, rest rooms for the staff and spacious playgrounds—should in the national interest be taken over immediately and transferred to the control of local bodies. It won't do to get scared over the word 'take-over'. Bad schools and poor schools have no business to exist. Such schools are being taken over in England today and given over to the L. E. A.'s. The superfluous, the unwanted and the inefficient schools are being closed.

One or two open halls, really sheds, with several classes in such close proximity that the teachers have to out-shout their colleagues in the other classes to be heard by their pupils; these are the *amenities* provided in many of our Swabasha schools, even in some of our English schools, in the denominational sector. Such schools must go, and go quickly.

A radical change of this nature is inevitable if we are to improve the quality of our Swabasha schools, and quite a number of our English schools too. The pattern of school development in the countryside was conditioned by the rival ambitions of religious denominations to establish their own schools in as many villages as they could. The Christians had already established a network of schools under their control, and then the non-Christian agencies sought to dislodge them. In the decade or two before the war there was a struggle between these rival denominations for school control—the Christians to retain what they held, and the others to oust them and extend their area of school control. Qualified teachers wanting jobs

were employed to open new schools and work there without remuneration until sufficient units were built up for recognition and grant. The religious cry was raised to attract pupils, and men of local influence were canvassed or bribed with jobs to divert the students from the old to the new schools, all in the name of religious education.

In these village wars for school control the rival managements had not scrupled to adopt the methods of the market, with the result that the school morale is today very low in those areas where teachers and parents had divided into opposing factions in support of rival managements.

With the extension of free education, direct payment to teachers, the growth of Teachers' Associations and the increase of employment opportunities with the war, this struggle for school control abated somewhat, with the new-comers in possession of a larger area of control at the expense of the Christian managements. The ill-feeling left by this cut-throat competition has not completely died down and there is still an undercurrent of hostility between competing managements, euphemistically called 'healthy rivalry'. The growing unemployment among qualified teachers is bound to bring this conflict into the open once more, as long as competing private agencies control education.

A further complication has now developed: the castes discriminated against in appointment to teaching posts at these schools have begun to idvert their children to provide units for the

employment of teachers of their own castes in rival caste schools. Members of Parliament too have added to the mess by opening new state schools in strategic areas in their constituencies.

If two rival schools share a school population of, say 300 children in a village, obviously neither can develop into a bigger and better unit. If their finances are adequate—which is hardly ever the case in the denominational sector—they can be two good primary schools. As separate units neither can have the numbers to justify a well-staffed and equipped post-primary section. Each might have a handful of pupils in the post primary class. However, if the two schools could be amalgamated under a single control, that school could be developed to provide for higher education even to the secondary classes, or even one of the schools could be developed to provide the post-primary needs of the entire village. But such collaboration in education is impossible under the present system of competing managements. The funds, mostly state, spent on the provision of education for the children of that village, are therefore uneconomically expended. This divided control permits the establishment of two small schools where one big school can better serve local needs. This is typical of several village schools.

The economic and social consequences of this divided responsibility for providing education need detailed consideration. The financial resources of these village schools are poor. Most managing boards simply do not have any funds beyond what they collect from their own teachers and an un-

interested public. An examination of their books will show it. They dare not levy any fees to provide extra facilities for fear that the children will be diverted to the other school. All that they receive as maintenance grant is not always spent on the school either. These schools just manage to provide minimum requirements by the grace of the inspector of the department who comes to check up. Some of them, under cramped and insanitary sheds, without even a small playground or even enough furniture, just hang on, their main aim to provide jobs for the teachers, and patronage, and not seldom, illicit incomes to their managers. This set-up consigns these schools for ever to this inferior status, so that better teachers prefer to teach elsewhere.

The effect of all this is that the parents who can afford it, send their children to the town or city schools, and thus the richer and better citizens lose all contact with, or interest in their local school—a very serious drawback. Today considerable numbers of village children are transported by buses, vans and cars to the schools in the towns, all of them English. Some parents send their children to the hostels attached to the big English schools, incidentally providing them with an opportunity of making rich profits on their boarding establishments. Some of these town schools are not above making illegitimate levies on admission. But the majority of village children, since they cannot afford this educational luxury in a town school, have to be satisfied with the inferior education provided in the village Swabasha school. This makes our vaunted 'equalization of

educational opportunities' a mockery and a sham. The ordinary village child will never get a fair deal until the state intervenes to provide comparable school standards in the village areas.

The English schools sited mostly in the cities and small town areas, have developed differently. They had received preferential treatment from our British rulers, and still continue to receive it from the government of independent Lanka, to the disadvantage of the Swabasha school. Their staffing is superior because the grant regulations do not permit the employment of graduates, admittedly the elite of the teaching service, in the Swabasha schools. A Junior English school can have graduates on its staff whereas a Senior Swabasha school cannot. This discriminatory restriction alone—to say nothing of the others—consigns the Swabasha school to a perpetual status of inferiority.

Then, as now, the law favoured the English school. It received more grants: it could employ better trained and better qualified staff: it could collect fees: it could thus provide better facilities with the fees and the bigger grants and attract the richer and the better students: above all, it had a monopoly of English teaching, the passport to wealth and jobs. This is the historical background behind the superiority of the English school, and these advantages continue to this day, even though the English and Swabasha schools follow the same curriculum of studies in the mother tongue, except for post-junior science and mathematics. Nothing serious has been done yet to lift the Swabasha school to the level of the

English school, though successive governments have made much ado about providing education in the Swabasha.

In all there are about 350 English schools in the private and denominational sector, and about 400 under government control. It is the fashion to decry the government school for inefficiency; but people don't seem to be aware that quite a number of these 350 English schools, in fact over two thirds of them, present very poor standards, in spite of all the advantages they have had through the years. Generally the newspapers spotlight the badly-run government schools, but rarely hold up the inadequacies of so many of our English schools under denominational control.

Like the Swabasha schools, these English schools also suffer from one drawback, the lack of funds for capital expenditure, and the headmaster and staff have their hands full carrying the begging bowl and their own pockets empty with voluntary contributions to their own school, pinching and starving on several essentials. There are a surprising number of even A-grade schools under denominational control that suffer from 'shed' standards and inadequate equipment.

It is the responsibility of the government to help these schools to provide minimum standards. But then the state cannot build in premises that belong to a private party: and these poor managements will not give their schools over to the state, nor will the state take over, and the result, the poor children continue to have sub-standard education.

Managements that have no endowments of their own, and have to scrape on government grants and fees and public charity for all their requirements have no right to manage schools. Let them not flatter themselves that they are doing a service to the community. It is a deceit.

Now, most of the English schools, even the poor ones, are generally in the urban and semi-urban areas, so that the rural children unless they are rich, cannot normally aspire to English education in an English school, a commodity somewhat different from English education in a Swabasha school. A take over under a common control will make it possible to re-allocate, zone or otherwise modify the existing school distribution under a more equitable system, and build them up from public funds without having to tax the parents, as the English school does. Under careful planning and common control the state can stop this annual exodus of school children to the urban school, with its erosive social and economic effects on the country.

These city schools also sprang up and grew without sufficient regard for the needs of the community as a whole, so that some of the richer areas had more schools and better, while the others fewer and inferior. Their founding and management were left to private and denominational interests and they were not bothered about needs or equal opportunities, so that here again the system carries the defects of siting and poor standards.

This multiple control has produced many schools serving the same [or contiguous areas — a wasteful and unplanned growth, unrelated to local geography and requirements. For instance, Jaffna city has 11 collegiate schools: 2 Wesleyan, 2 Church Mission, 2 Hindu (Board), 1 Hindu (Private), 2 Roman Catholic, 1 Ramakrishna Mission and 1 Government, all within 3 miles of one another, and another (Hindu) on the Northern fringe of the city. With the Muslims wanting another, there will shortly be 12 in close proximity to one another. The strength of the University Entrance classes in these schools ranges from 5 to 40, and facilities vary. When the numbers in the University Form are too small some of the best qualified teachers have little work. There sufficient specialist teachers are not available in one school specialists in excess [of requirements in another school cannot be transferred to fill the need. For instance, if there are 3 biology specialists in one school and none in another, it must be possible to transfer one without delay or loss of seniority to the teacher. The present multiple control provides for the teacher, if he is willing, to resign from one school and get re-appointed in the other.

This surely is not the best way of ordering our educational potential. This lop-sided development is due to the laissez faire educational policy of our government. Conditions are much worse in the small towns with one or two collegiate schools, and this again produces an annual exodus to the city schools at the University Entrance level, resulting in the crowding of city schools

unequal development and profiteering boarding establishments.

Re-organization under central control alone can bring order into this confusion. But that is impossible with private vested interests fighting for inalienable rights to manage *our* schools on state funds. The dual system of school control stands in the way, as in England before the Act of 1944. To re-quote Mander, a general educational advance 'can only come with the achievement of a national system of schools, within which the local authorities can provide, maintain, re-group, re-organize, close or replace and generally control all the schools and teaching staffs in their respective areas.'

Patronage or Partnership?

One of the best and oldest of our schools, ripe in traditions,—founded 1812, and still young,—has a Managing Committee where a seat is reserved for an elected representative of the staff. The committee never sits unless the staff representative is present. There is another old denominational school in the North, providing for two staff representatives in the management.

I do not know if a similar partnership between the management and the staff prevails in many other schools. This appears to me to be a very healthy and democratic manager-teacher relationship, which ensures the teacher's full and genuine co-operation. In industry too, worker-employer partnership has been found to make for efficient production—a commonplace in Socialist countries. In the education service where the

teacher is everything, and the manager nothing, this partnership is a guarantee of good and efficient work. Is the present system of patronage by churchmen or by others whose educational qualifications are generally much inferior to those of the teachers they control, likely to win their fullest co-operation?

Starting from scratch, in spite of lack of funds, some of our assisted schools have, during recent years, attained high standards. Every one of them owes its success to the headmaster and his team. These schools have been fortunate in that the management was wise enough to leave the entire management to the staff. The best school managers are, without question, those that manage least. If this system works so well in practice, is it not wise to make statutory provision for the association of teachers in the management of every school?

We have two kinds of school management in Ceylon: the government official over the state schools, and the various school boards over the assisted schools: — for the moment we will forget that anomaly called a private manager. — In neither generally, are teacher-manager relations cordial. That is the measure of the success that attends our two types of management. The Government Teachers' Trade Union had its relations with Minister Dahanayake fouled for a long time, and the Assisted Schools Teachers' Associations have been spotlighting disputes with their managers almost continuously for the last 25 years, and recently the situation has deteriorated to such

an extent that teachers have seriously considered resorting to strike action, and the managers actually closed a few schools for a day or two and locked out the teachers and students. These disputes are not likely to disappear from the educational scene until and unless the teacher is associated in the control of his school.

From the Minister's figures in Parliament, over 75 million rupees of public money are spent annually on government grant to the assisted schools. Few managers or headmasters discuss either their budgets or their accounts at their staff meetings. It is not obligatory under existing regulations. The teacher's status in the school is only that of a paid servant. He neither knows how the money is spent, nor is he encouraged to know. The rather perfunctory accounting and auditing for departmental purposes that we have now, can cover a multitude of sins. The teacher's participation in the management will certainly make for a cleaner, more reliable and more economical spending of public money.

The English system permits teacher participation in school control. It is a partnership that has grown gradually through the years, largely through the work of the N. U. T. English teachers are barred from membership of the L. E. A.'s that control their own schools, on the ground that they are salaried servants of that body. But they contest local elections and get elected to L. E. A.'s outside their school area. But a teacher is not disqualified from sitting in an Education Committee which controls his own

school.† In this way through their membership of their own Education Committees and of L. E. A.'s outside their school area, and through consultative bodies statutorily and administratively constituted, English teachers have come to exercise considerable control over their schools. On the national level the Minister never fails to consult the teachers' organizations on all questions of policy. Fisher's reforms fostered the principle of consultation which finally led to the Act of 1944, the fruits of the N. U. T.'s campaign for better school standards on a national scale. Today the Minister, the L. E. A.'s and the Teachers carry a triple partnership for better educational standards.

The organization of education in France is highly centralized. The Minister directly controls the recteurs in charge of the 17 administrative regions called the Academies, which are further divided into departements and communes controlled under Inspectors of the Academie. This bureaucratic set-up does not however function without consultation with the teachers. At every level of administration the government officials are advised by councils and administrative bodies in which teachers are represented, and in the case of elementary education, the public too. All administrative decisions in regard to appointments, transfers, promotions and penalties are proposed to the Minister by administrative Joint Committees in which teachers are represented. This partnership of the teacher in educational administration, even within a bureaucratic framework, while ensuring

† Clause 17 of the Act of 1902.

smooth and efficient service, also confers on the teacher a genuine independence.

The U. S. S. R. has a state monopoly of education, as in all other Socialist countries. They claim that this is necessary for ensuring uniformity of standards, planning and material provision. The responsibility for education devolves on the Union Republics, and the Local Bodies, but the Supreme Soviet, the highest legislative body, has overriding powers. However, there is very close contact between the people and the schools through the role of the Young Communist Leagues, Trade Unions, Collective Farms, Parents' Committees, &c., all of which are statutorily provided for in the school system. Here too, as in France, in spite of a highly centralized control, local, popular and expert opinion prevents bureaucratic dictation. The success of this system of control can be measured by the spectacular advance of the Soviet Union in science, literature and art, not to speak of their agricultural and industrial expansion.

The teachers in the Soviet Union participate in the control of their schools through their trade union—a much more powerful and effective organization than their counterparts in the non-Socialist countries—and through the Parents' Committees and several other governmental and voluntary agencies that control the administration of education.

Conditions in the U. S. A. are not uniform. There are a few states where the professional status of teachers is high, and some states where the law extends protection to the teacher against

arbitrary dismissal, but generally 'the social status of teachers is very low and in many localities they are treated by members of the Boards worse than domestic servants and are dismissed on the least provocation.* This is due to the strong capitalistic bias in contemporary American thinking, which equates free enterprise and democracy with the inalienable rights of the employer.

The low school standards in many educational localities in the United States can be explained by the inferior social position of the teacher in such areas, which inhibits teacher participation in school control, with the result that the politician and the demagogue have it all their own way. The National Education Association of the U. S. A., though a very much richer teachers' organization than the English N. U. T., is yet powerless to influence national policy in education to the same extent as the N. U. T. The U. S. A. appears to be the only modern enlightened country where teacher-employer partnership has not been fully achieved. In countries like Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Denmark, Sweden, Indonesia and all Socialist countries, teachers today enjoy security, fair promotions, good salaries and some voice in educational administration.

In Ceylon the Education Amendment Act of 1951 provided for the setting up of a Central Advisory Council to advise the Minister of Education on all educational matters referred to it. Even this emasculated consultative body where

* N. Hans: Comparative Education p. 288.

teachers could have given expert advice, is moribund today, thanks to the late Minister who never cared to seek anybody's advice: so that today we don't have even a pretence of educational partnership between the teachers and the government: the result, to mention only a few, the education code is being revised since 1953, the number of disputes between the teachers and school managers is continuing to rise and a new feature has appeared in educational practice—the lock-out of teachers and students by school proprietors.

The teacher-manager partnership so fruitful in some of the more advanced countries of the world, can with advantage be transplanted in this country too, or introduced with suitable modifications. The Teachers' Unions must educate their members and the country for this change-over from patronage to partnership. The teachers must explore and work out the pattern that the actual collaboration will take. Education today has become a political question, and the social sector that controls schools will not easily surrender its privileged position. The violent opposition put up by those in control against the reforms in Kerala is a case in point. Even those teachers whose rights the bill was intended to safeguard, lined up in defence of managerial privilege. They were either fooled or blackmailed to support the old order.

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Suggestions for Re-organization:

Management: 1. All Swabasha and English schools without sufficient capital assets—buildings, playgrounds, furniture, equipment, and a minimum bank balance for current school expenditure—shall be taken over immediately, and their control vested in the local bodies. (If the present assisted school managements are given time to build up to requirements, there is always the risk of the teachers having to foot the bill.) An expert committee may determine the basic minimum of assets that will entitle any school to retain its present assisted status. The government schools shall also come under the administration of local bodies.

2. The local bodies will be statutorily compelled to set up Local Education Committees to which a certain number of persons experienced in educational affairs shall be co-opted. This Education Committee shall appoint a separate School Board to manage each school within the jurisdiction of the local authority. The details of the number and educational qualifications of the co-opted personnel may be determined by an expert committee.

A place shall be reserved for an elected representative of the staff in every school board.

3. The local body shall be vested with the power to open, close, amalgamate or otherwise reorganize the schools within its area, and to acquire land compulsorily for school extensions.

Finance: 1. The present system of central grants based on units of attendance will continue, and the salaries of teachers will be paid by the government.

2. To equalize educational opportunities for all children, the government shall subsidize the poorer local authorities to build, equip and maintain their schools to set standards.

3. The local authorities may, if they deem necessary, levy education rates. But no fees shall be collected from the pupils.

Religious Education: The Local Education Committee, in consultation with a Parents' Advisory Committee, may decide whether or not to impart religious instruction in their schools; and if they decide to provide religious instruction, a scheme of studies to suit their local conditions shall be prepared by them. All religious instruction and activities shall be carried out outside the school time table, with funds provided by those interested in such instruction, and parents of all religious denominations shall receive equal facilities for the provision of religious instruction to their children.

The Teaching Service: All teachers shall form a unified teaching service, governed by a single code of regulations and uniform salary scales guaranteed by the government. Their conditions of service, promotions and penalties shall be regulated by a permanent commission under the chairmanship of the Minister, composed of equal numbers of representatives of the teachers and the local bodies.

The Training of Teachers: All the training colleges shall be taken over, re-organized and centrally administered, with an Advisory Council of specialists.

The Inspectorate: The number and quality of the inspectorate shall be strengthened for supervisory

and guidance work within the schools. The transfer of the government schools to the control of local bodies will relieve the inspectorate of much of their quasi-clerical duties with which they are saddled today, and free them for specialist advice within the schools.

I cannot do better than to conclude this study of the educational situation in Ceylon, with the concluding paragraph of a paper read before the National Education Society of Ceylon by one of our eminent educationists:

'The methods of educational administration have also a bearing on the development of democracy in this country. We have yet to evolve a system of partnership in policy making between the state and the educationists, between the administrators and the professional bodies. Local self-governing bodies have yet to enter into partnership with the central authority in the provision of education and allied services. We have yet to think out methods of school government which would call forth of the best from the members of the school, staff and pupils. Indeed enlightened methods of educational consultation and administration could be a significant contribution to the art of government in a democratic state.'†

† 'The British Period and its Educational System'—K. Nesiiah,

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