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PUBLISHED EVERY TUESDAY AND FRIDAY

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VOL. LXI. NO. 2

JAFFNA, TUESDAY, APRIL 5, 1949

PRICE 10 CENTS

BASIC EDUCATION— INSTRUCTION THROUGH WORK

Gandhiji's Greatest Contribution

THE visit of Mr. G. Ramachandran, M. L. A. an educationist closely associated with Mahatma Gandhi the idealist who planned the most practical scheme of Education seen in the world so far, has roused considerable interest in Jaffna in Basic Education. A beginning had been made at Ailly Tamil Mixed school at the instance of Mr. Navaretnam and under the enthusiastic guidance of the Education Officer, Mr. S. U. Somasegaram. One class had its curriculum planned according to the Basic Plan and it was proposed to change the whole school over into the Basic Scheme during the course of eight years. The experiment was watched with considerable interest by the Teachers and when Mr. Ramachandran the hot gospel for Basic Education came to Jaffna hundreds of teachers attended the Conferences which were held for two consecutive days at Karainagar presided over by Mr. S. U. Somasegaram.



(He Presided at the Basic Education Conference)

Mahatma—the Educationist

Mr. Ramachandran described Basic Education as the greatest contribution made by Mahatma Gandhi to the World. India was in the unique position of a subject Nation breaking off her shackles gradually and preparing herself to tackle the problems that were bound to pester her in the wake of her New Freedom. Gandhiji had given considerable thought to this problem. He was more an educationist than a politician and he made a number of ardent converts to his scheme. Dr. Zakir Hussein an educationist of international reputation, Dr. Ariyanayagam and a number of other eminent educationists have taken up the scheme with enthusiasm and worked it with considerable success all over India. Both the Central and Provincial Governments are committed to the progressive introduction of the Basic Education Scheme and within the next fifteen years all the schools in India will be in the Basic Plan.

The Government being fully convinced that they are on the right track they are now proceeding in the correct way by first training the teachers they need for work in the schools that are taken over into the new scheme. Training schools have been established in large numbers on the Basic Plan and the existing schools also are changing over. His Excellency C. Rajagopalachari the Governor General of India had once declared that "If I had my wish and if I was allowed to do one thing I want to do most in the world, I would be a Basic teacher".

Work-Centred Instruction

Those educated in the present book-centred examination-ridden system may entertain doubts about it but the common man

will understand Basic Education in its inactivity. The farmer and the worker will consider this by far the best system of education. Basic education has been defined as education in and through work. The present system is book centred and helps to make the pupils strangers in their own country. There is no touch with reality. It is just this problem that had to be tackled effectively by making education activity based on the natural instincts of the child and consonant with the conditions prevailing in the environment. The Basic Plan will go one step further than America or Russia and fill them with the gladness of creative activity. The pupils want to do something and the teachers to teach something. Unity of purpose can be secured by the teachers teaching through doing. The nature of the activity of the child will depend entirely on its environment.

Development of Peaceful Civilisation

The ideal of Basic education is the development of a peaceful civilisation and Society. Those who think that Society will continue as it is today are living in a fool's paradise. The political and economical factors are accelerating the change rapidly, in Jaffna in particular. If we do not plan and regulate the change, our complacency will create other Frankenstein monsters that will grow beyond our control and destroy us. We want a peaceful economic regeneration of our country. The value of co-operation has to be realised against the value of competition. If we watch the political and social currents in the world it is clear that Society has only two alternatives in modern times—either violent communism or peaceful Socialism. It was to counter the former effectively that Gandhiji and his workers planned the Basic education scheme which strove to tackle the problem right at the fountain head, the hearts and attitudes of

(Continued on Page 3)

Industrialist Invents Wateroleum

Substitute For Petrol Prepared From Water

A cheap substitute for petrol called "Wateroleum" has been invented by a Madras Industrialist. It is prepared by a special chemical process from ordinary sea water.

A demonstration of the use of "Wateroleum" was given by its inventor, Mr. C. R. Bhaktavatsala Reddi in Madras on March 30 when a motor car was driven with the product. The function was presided over by the Speaker of the Madras Legislative Assembly, Mr. J. Shivasanmukham Pillai.

Mr. Reddi stated that he was in correspondence with the Government of India on the subject of patent rights for his product. He said he would be giving a demonstration of his process in Delhi shortly.

29,000 Centenarians in Russia

Russia claims that the Soviet Union had 29,000 citizens over hundred years of age—more than any country. A new scientific documentary

New Leader For Madras Ministry

Mr. P.S. Kumaraswami Raja Chosen

The contest between Mr. P. S. Kumaraswami Raja and Dr. P. Subbarayan for the leadership of the Congress Parliamentary party ended in a victory for the former. Thus Mr. Kumaraswami Raja becomes the Premier of Madras.

The New Premier has left for Delhi to consult the Congress High Command in the question of forming a strong, stable and popular Ministry. **Mr. Reddiar Seeks Rural Quiet**

Mr. O. P. Ramasamy Reddiar, the out-going Premier in expressing his intention to return to his village in South Arcot said "I am a villager and I have always been one. I want to go back to my village and spend my time there quietly".

film, just released, portrays the lives of the world's oldest humans, a large proportion of which are in the Soviet Caucasus, though Moscow likewise boasts of several dozens of centenarians. One of the film's heroes is Mansyr Kiyut, a farmer who is credited with being 147 years old.

PRIME MINISTERS' CONFERENCE

Nehruji's Statement in Indian Parliament

Prime Minister Nehru announced in the Parliament that he proposed to leave India on April 19 to attend the Commonwealth Prime Ministers meeting in London on April 21. He hoped to be back in India by the beginning of May.

The Prime Minister said that the suggestion to hold such a Conference originated from the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom as he felt that personal talks between the Prime Ministers of various Dominions of the Commonwealth would help to clear up the situation in regard to future constitutional arrangements. "I decided in consultation with my colleagues to accept this invitation."

He added: "The Prime Minister of United Kingdom is making the following statement in regard to this Conference in the House of Commons in London today!

"Commonwealth Prime Ministers will meet in London on April 21. The Prime Ministers of Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, India, Pakistan and Ceylon will be able to attend. The Prime Minister of Canada is doubtful whether he will be able to come himself. But if not, Mr. Pearson the Secretary of State

for External Affairs will represent Canada.

Constitution Questions

Matters not fully discussed at the October Meetings of Prime Ministers involving certain constitutional questions will be considered at a short series of private meetings. They are expected to last a week."

As had been indicated in the U. K. Prime Ministers' statement Nehru explained that the chief subject for discussion would be certain constitutional questions relating to the Commonwealth. "No other subject so far as I know, has been included in the agenda. I need hardly add that the general line to be pursued by us at these talks in London will necessarily be in conformity with the policy which I have repeatedly laid before this House and the country.

"The House is aware that U. K. Prime Minister has sent a personal representative of his, Mr. Gordon Walker, the Under Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations in the United Kingdom to Delhi for some preliminary conversations on this subject. I have already met Mr. Gordon Walker and expect to meet again before he leaves Delhi."

Progress of Communism in Asia

Economic and Social Betterment—the Remedy

RUSSIA has turned her eyes to the East. Throughout Asia revolt is under way. People of every class and political conviction are rising to make sure there is no return to their prewar colonial status.

In every case this movement toward independence has been accompanied by an overwhelming demand for economic and social betterment, for self-government, land for the peasant, and the establishment of locally-owned industry. This is the situation which Moscow is ready to exploit for her own ends.

Communist Conclave

Is there an eastern comin-form? Although there is no absolute proof of its existence, there is evidence that Communist agents from all countries of South-East

Asia met secretly in Calcutta in February and March, last, behind the screen of the South East Asian Youth Conference and the Indian Communist Party convention, and there received instructions.

It was after this that the party line in India took a new turn against the Nehru Government and that unrest grew in Malaya, Burma and Siam. And shortly after this, new staff additions arrived for the Soviet Embassies in Bangkok, Rangoon, and elsewhere.

This does not mean that Russian agents swarm over the Far East. It does mean that Communist propaganda is making a successful play with the independence movement of each country.

(Continued on page 3)



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WE UNDERTAKE CHARTERS AND NON-SCHEDULE FLIGHTS

(C. 6, 5 & 21)

A PROLOGUE AND AN EPILOGUE

(BY A SCIENCE GRADUATE)

(Continued from our issue of 29-3-49)

Both Divinely Inspired

We desist from making more quotations here. If the first Child who had his inspiration from the Divine Father through the Lady of Grace, the Divine Mother, was able to utter the Vedic Mantiras untaught and explain all doubtful points to the learned brahmins at the age of seven...

(புத்தகத்தைப்பற்றி) by way of further explanation.

Pure Tamil and Mixed Tamil

We said that Meykanda Devar makes free use of Sanscrit terms in his Siva Gnana Bodham. This however is no disqualification. Greatness does not consist in ransacking the pages of the Tamil vocabulary and finding out equivalents, good, bad or indifferent, to replace long-accepted, naturalised and well understood words of non-Tamil origin...

Meykandan's brevity of expression

There are many points of resemblance between Tiru Gnana Sambandar and Meykanda Devar. But there are dissimilarities too. Sambandar was a prolific psalmist. He is said to have hymned 16,000 Devara Pathikams, making a total of some 700,000 lines of poetry...

Meykandan's Greatness

Greatness does not always consist in quantity. Quality too has to be considered. (We do not hereby mean any disrespect to the great Deva a Psalmists. They did invaluable service to the country both in quality and in quantity.) One of the most outstanding merits of Meykandan's work is his correct exposition of the doctrine of Advaitam.

பொய் கண்டவர் காண்பு புனிதமென்று அத்துவாய் மெய்கண்ட நாணார. மேவுமி நான் எத்தனோ

This book is not intended for (those) spiritually advanced souls (who require no book-knowledge), neither is it for the ignorant (and indolent and perverse who would not learn). It is intended for those inquiring (middle-class) students who are anxious to (know the truth and) find the pathway to Heaven...

It matters little what word we use. The essential fact that we are concerned with is that the Divinely inspired seer of Tiruvennai Nalloor came out with the Siva Gnana Bodha Sutras and commented on them in Tamil adding explanatory verses in the same way that the other Divinely inspired Child of Sreekali uttered the Vedic Mantiras and explained them to the brahmins adding the Five-lettered Devara Pathikam

reach (sure) The feet (of him) our Lord Truth Seer, Who saw the truth Advaitam pure, Not seen by men deluded here?

The Study Of Siva Gnana Bodham

It is unnecessary to single out here every one of the features of Meykandan's great work. Sincere seekers after truth will be able to discover them if they study the Siva Gnana Bodham with Meykandan's terse but thought-provoking commentary and the short and long commentaries thereon by Siva Gnana Muniavar under the guidance of a competent teacher. But such study should be preceded by the necessary preliminary training...

These articles have grown a bit too long, and we propose to stop here for the present. We believe we have said enough to convince all lovers of truth that the Payirams found appended and prefixed to the Siva Gnana Bodham are neither spurious nor fictitious compositions of designing persons of later times but are genuine statements of fact given expression to by our Lord Meykandan and by his chief disciple Arulnandi Devar, the illustrious author of Siva Gnana Siddhiyar.

Ceylon Government Railway TENDER NOTICE

The Chairman, Way & Works Head Office Tender Board, will receive, at the Chief Engineer's Office, C. G. R., Mac Callum Road, Maradana, tenders up to 2.30 p. m. on Friday, April 22, 1949 for the construction of Three Bungalows on Railway land at Dematagoda by Albion Lodge.

W. A. SHAW, Chief Engineer, C. G. R., P. O. Box No 370, Colombo, 18-3-49, (G. 131 29, 1 & 5)

Ceylon Government Railway TENDER NOTICE

The Chairman, Way and Works Head Office Tender Board, will receive, at the Chief Engineer's Office, C. G. R., Mac Callum Road, Maradana tenders up to 2.30 p. m. on Friday, April 22, 1949 for the construction of three Bungalows on Railway land at Dematagoda along side Loading Gang Overseer's Quarters.

For further particulars, Please see Government Gazette of March 25, 1949.

Sgd. W. A. SHAW, Chief Engineer, C. G. R., P. O. Box No 370, Colombo, (G. 132 29, 1. & 5)

Ceylon Government Railway TENDER NOTICE

The Chairman, Way and Works Head Office Tender Board, will receive, at the Chief Engineer's Office, C. G. R., Mac Callum Road, Maradana tenders up to 2.30 p. m. on Friday, April 22, 1949 for the construction of Four Bungalows on Railway land at Dematagoda, behind the Assistant Foreman Plate-layer's Quarters.

For further particulars please see Government Gazette of Friday, March 25, 1949.

Sgd. W. A. SHAW, Chief Engineer, C. G. R., P. O. Box No 370, Colombo, (G. 134, 29, 1 & 5).

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Printed and Published by S. P. KANDIAH, F. I. S. A. (Lond) residing at 245, Navalar Road, Jaffna, for and on behalf of the Proprietors the Saiva Paupalana Sabhai, Jaffna, at their Press, the Saiva Prakasa Press, Vannarponnai, Jaffna on Tuesday, April 5, 1949.

Chief Editor T. MUTTUSAMPILAI