

APPEAL FOR FUNDS TO PROVIDE AN ASSEMBLY HALL,
STUDENTS' COMMON ROOMS AND PHYSICAL
TRAINING CENTRE FOR PRESIDENCY
COLLEGE.

Dear Sir,

As a distinguished Old Boy of the Presidency College, who has always taken the keenest interest in the affairs of his Alma Mater, you are certainly aware of the disadvantages with which Presidency College has had to contend with for many years past.

2. Accommodation was extremely limited: there was no compound worth the name, no boundary wall, no play ground whatsoever within the College area. You know how the pressing need for an Assembly Hall was first mentioned by the then Principal, Mr. James, in 1907-08, and that Govt. accepted the proposal as one of the items of the Presidency College Improvement Scheme then formulated: how the Baker Laboratories were opened early in 1913; and how just when further improvements were about to be taken up, the War came and laid the axe at the root of all our hopes. You remember how, on Mr. Stapleton taking over charge of the College in 1924, the Scheme was revised with certain modifications, suited to the altered conditions, and that we were then fortunate enough to enlist the sympathy of H.E. Lord Lytton: and how as a result of the Report of the Committee appointed by Govt. of which Mr. S. N. Mallik was a member, a considerable increase in the Staff of the College was sanctioned along with an increase in the number of students.

3. The most important items of the College Improvement Scheme formulated by me in 1925 were -

- 1) Acquisition of land at a cost of Rs.6,70,000/-.
- 2) Construction of a building for Library, Common Rooms, Honours and Tutorial Classes and Principal's quarters at Rs.4,37,000/-.
- 3) Construction of an Assembly Hall at a cost of Rs.263,000/- (to accommodate 1200 students).
- 4) Other miscellaneous items (Compound wall, roads, lay out and cost of removing Chemical Laboratory and Astronomical Observatory to a better site etc.) Rs. 80,000/-.

4. Since then, a little over an acre of land has been acquired at a cost of Rs.3,50,000/- and some minor improvements (e.g. the building of a new Astronomical Observatory/^{the} clearing away of the old one, as well as of the old boundary wall - by which a clear open space was secured from College Street to Central Avenue and provision of steel shelving for the Library) have been effected. But the two most important and pressing needs, viz., an Assembly Hall and a well-equipped Gymnasium have yet to be provided for. The Assembly Hall itself alone will cost Rs.2,63,000/- and if we include in the project the proposal worked out by Mr. Beall of the Y.M.C.A. before he left India last February, for a Gymnasium on the ground floor, with students' Common Rooms built to the West, (Vide copy of his report dated 1928, February 3rd, Annexure A) the total cost is likely to be in the neighbourhood

of 4½ lakhs. Govt. are helping and are prepared to help as far as possible, but there is limit to all Govt. subvention which depends on various factors. Mr. James had realised this from the very beginning; and you will remember that on the occasion of the opening of the Baker Laboratories by H.E. Lord Carmichael in January 1913, Mr. James and Sir D.P. Sarbadhikary dwelt eloquently on the urgent necessity of a College Hall in which all the members could assemble: and an appeal for funds was issued. On Founders' Day 1915, the appeal was renewed, and it appears that a sum of about Rs.3,000/- (including Rs.1500/- from H.E. Lord Carmichael) was promised: The War, however, had broken out; the Improvement Scheme was shelved for want of funds; Mr. James left in January 1916; and Lord Carmichael, a year later: and nothing further could be done for the next 8 years.

5. Those interested in the College have always realised that as Govt. has many other claims to satisfy, the completion of the Improvement Scheme was likely to be extended over more years than they personally could look forward to, unless some help could be obtained from private sources. All these schemes depend very largely on personal effort, and recognising this, Mr. James, who still maintains the keenest interest in the

College, forwarded to Mr. Stapleton an appeal which was issued on the Last Founders' Day (for copy vide Annexure B) to ex-students and past and present members of the staff to raise at least the money for the Hall (for copy vide Annexure B).

6. An excellent start was made in raising subscription (H.E. Sir Stanley Jackson headed the list with a donation of Rs.1,000/-): and now that the cold weather has again come round, we wish to appeal to all ex-students to come forward with the largest donations they feel they can afford to enable a satisfactory start to be made with the work.

7. There are two parts of the scheme to which Govt. may look to ex-students and other interested in the future development of Presidency College for assistance. The first, as we have already mentioned, is the long felt need for an Assembly Hall and adequate Common Rooms for the students. The other is that for an absolutely up to date Gymnasium and Physical Training Centre. Both are almost equally desirable, but at the present juncture, when few topics of greater interest to the people of Bengal than the imperative need for improving the school and college terribly low standard of physique among the students ~~of~~ ~~XXXXXX~~, we cannot but feel that that portion of our scheme which will enable Presidency College to carry a stage further its historic education work in Bengal by being made the centre for the physical uplift of the intelligentsia

of Bengal through the establishment of a Physical Training Institute, similar to the one, managed by the Y.M.C.A. that already exists in the sister Presidency of Madras, will possess for many ex-students an appeal equal in weight to that for the provision of an Assembly Hall. We, therefore offer to all well-wishers of the College the alternative either of subscribing for an Assembly Hall, or for the proposed Physical Training Institute.

8. The present moment is most auspicious for such a forward step in Physical Education. The Govt. of Bengal only last month recruited a young and enthusiastic Scotch Director of Physical Education: a revised scale of pay for graduate Drill Instructors in Govt. High Schools and Colleges has been sanctioned and moreover it is understood that Govt. is also favourably considering the project not only of acquiring 3 houses next to the College on Bhowani Charan Dutt's Lane for Post-Graduate Hindu and M'dan Hostels (so that they will ultimately be included in the College compound at a cost of over $2\frac{1}{3}$ lakhs (£17,500), but also for the additional land to the north necessary for the provision of a full sized north-south Playing Field, ~~and~~ Running Track, etc., as shown on the annexed blue print (Annexure C) at a cost of $1\frac{2}{3}$ lakhs (£12,500). This being so, everything

points to the desirability of pushing on the scheme for the provision of a Physical Training Institute through which the new ground will be utilised to the full.

9. As we have already stated, the combined block for Gymnasium (on the ground floor), Hall for 1000 or 1200/- students (on the 2nd floor) and students' Common Room and Library at the back to the west, is likely to cost 4½ lakhs, exclusively of equipment and for safety's sake, we/ may call it 5 lakhs (£37,500). There are other items such as tutorial rooms and quarters for the Principal, and a block of much needed servants' quarters which will also have ultimately to be considered by Govt., and for which Govt. will have to pay. In the present state of finances of Bengal, however, it will be long before any further development - even the additional acquisition of land and buildings referred to in the last paragraph - can be expected to be financed unless we get a move on by determined personal effort among those who have the interests of the College at heart: We accordingly confidently appeal to all those who are able to help for the greatest possible financial support in this important forward move on behalf of the College.

10. We have tentatively appointed Mr. -----, Treasurer of the Improvement Fund, and any subscription will be promptly acknowledged by him. As soon as the first results of the appeal are known, steps will be taken, to form a strong committee to negotiate with Govt. for the expenditure of the funds collected on the objects outlined in this letter.

Very
Yours/sincerely,