

No. 293

From

R. B. Ramsbotham, Esq., M.B.E., M.A., B. Litt., I.E.S.

Principal, Presidency College (Offg).

To

The Secretary, Council of Post-Graduate Teaching in Arts,
Calcutta University.

Dated Calcutta, the 25th January 1929.

Sir,

I have the honour to acknowledge your letter dated the 22nd January 1929 conveying a request for me to reply to the University Organisation Committee's Questionnaire. A formal reply is being sent from this College, but I understand that you wish for my personal opinion on certain subjects as a University ^{Lecturer} Professor.

I will take the questions in the order of their submission.

1. Yes.

2(a) Each Board should only contain, in my opinion, teachers of the actual subject which the Board control.

(b) I consider that the course of study in Modern History for the B. A. Pass requires modification. I would suggest three papers :

Paper 1 -- Indian History

Paper II -- European History, 1600-1815.

Paper III -- General History with special reference to Europe, 1815 - 1920.

For the Honours course I would suggest two additional papers,

Paper IV -- A special period in Indian History.

Paper V -- A special period in European History.

Paper VI -- A special period in Greek & Roman History.

Each of these Honours papers to be studied with some reference to the original sources.

In each of the Honours papers I suggest that three special subjects shall be prescribed, from which candidates would be at liberty to choose one and that this list should be open to revision by the Board of History from time to time.

2 (c). My answer to this is included in my answer to (b).

(d). I do not think these developments, as outlined, affect my answer to Q. 1.

3. (a) As a University Lecturer I consider the present system of teaching unsatisfactory. I am not prepared to comment on the standard of teaching, but I consider the present system of large classes, both in the University and in affiliated colleges, most detrimental to efficient teaching. The classes are much too large and a better system of tutorial teaching in the University classes is urgently needed.

(b) I am not prepared to say how a satisfactory tutorial system could be devised, but, in my opinion, it is work that should be undertaken by the members of the Post-Graduate Teaching Department, while the University lectures could be delivered under the same system as at present obtains.

(c) I consider the present standard of examination satisfactory, but I would suggest that a third class should be introduced in Honours, as, in my opinion, several second class Honours are awarded which do not deserve that distinction, and that some questions on Historical Geography should be a ^{compulsory} ~~optional~~ feature of all examinations, Pass or Honours, for the B. A and also for the M. A.

(b) I have no objection to the present appointment of examiners, but I consider that the results of examinations should be published more speedily. I also consider that no examiner should be permitted to take scripts for examination out of India ~~and~~, that the fines for lateness should be rigidly enforced, and that appeals for exemption ^{from such fines} should be only granted after scrutiny by the Syndicate.

4. So far as my experience in Government Colleges go, I consider that full facility is given to teachers for the proper discharge of their duties.

5. (a). I think that a closer relationship between the colleges and the Post-Graduate Department is desirable.

5.(b). I consider that it might be desirable, if possible, for the Post-Graduate Department to co-operate with the affiliated colleges in Calcutta by the use of the Post Graduate Department in Pass lectures to prevent at present unduly large classes. I should like to see no classes, Pass or otherwise, of the ordinary lecture in History exceeding 40 and some -- system might be appointed, by which the combined teachers of History in the University, resident in Calcutta, might divide the lectures of the under-graduate classes in order to produce this result.

(c). I have no remarks to offer.

6. I consider that ~~present~~ Post-Graduate work should be confined to persons in the teaching profession, the only exceptions being made in the case of occasional lectures by men of eminence in their respective subjects.

11. I do not consider the grades of pay of University Lecturers & Assistant Lecturers to be adequate, nor do I consider that the terms of their appointments are satisfactory. At present the University is not able to offer such satisfactory terms as Government, which means that the University must either be content with such men as cannot obtain Government appointments and presumably therefore of inferior qualifications to Government officers or else ^{with} ~~on~~ those few men who deliberately place their love for the University before their material prospect. This is not a satisfactory situation for the University and, in my opinion, it is essential that the Post-Graduate Lecturers, Assistant Lecturers and Demonstrators should be given ~~the~~ terms at least as attractive as those offered by the Bengal Provincial Service.

I am not prepared to say how this can be done, but the present system places the University at a great disadvantage in obtaining the services of scholars. Service in the University as a Lecturer should rightly be more attractive than service in any college and such an appointment should be

be regarded as a prize only open to men of exceptional attainments.

17. Corporate life among the Post-Graduate students is a matter of considerable difficulty in Calcutta, because there is no University quarter in which students, teachers and Professors live grouped round the University buildings. The same problem exists in London University and I suggest that the time has arrived to consider whether the Calcutta University shall not follow the example of the Rangoon University and transfer its environment into a more academic situation where students and Professors can come in closer contact socially with each other. A most satisfactory result is being obtained in Rangoon from this readjustment of the environment of teachers and students.

Physical instruction.

In the matter of physical instruction I consider that the University can undertake no direct control. This is the work of colleges and the Post-Graduate students have reached an age in which they must be permitted to be judges of what they consider necessary. At the same time the University would do well to encourage a periodical medical examination for the purpose of advising students. *In view of the urgency with which my reply has been required, this letter is written with but little deliberation than I should like.*

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

R.W. 26/29

Principal, Presidency College.

Principal

I understand this has been addressed to the Pl. in his personal capacity, as a member of the Syndicate, Board of Higher Studies &c. and a P. G. lecturer. Other gentlemen here have ^{also} rec'd these.

It does not therefore appear necessary to circulate these papers. The Principal's personal views & opinions may be sent to Secy.

Ans. Mr
24/29