

[No. 25.] From W. S. ATKINSON, Esq., M. A., Director of Public Instruction, to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal,—(No. 4394, dated Darjeeling, the 15th October 1868.)

IN reply to your No. 3758, dated 31st July, forwarding for report a letter from the Government of India, in the Home Department, (No. 413, dated 13th July,) proposing an increase of the fee rates in the Presidency College and Schools, I have the honor to forward a communication, with enclosures, from the Principal, Mr. Sutcliffe,* and at the same time to submit the following observations, which I trust will receive the support of His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor.

2. The main ground on which the Governor General in Council bases the argument in favor of a large increase of the present fee rates, appears to be that "the College is very generally believed to be frequented by the sons of very wealthy men," to which is added, as a further argument, that "the instruction given at the Presidency College is of a very high order, so that it possesses considerable pecuniary value in Bengal Proper." From many recent indications, it is clear that the Government of India has come to believe that it is a truth, possessing the full authority of an undisputed axiom, that the Lower Provinces of Bengal are peopled by large classes of landholders and others possessing vast incomes and all the superfluities of wealth, and that these are the classes which supply our higher schools and colleges with the students who throng them. What may have been the origin of this belief, I know not, nor is it of consequence to enquire; but that it is in every respect a misconception and delusion is perfectly well known to all the Officers of Government in these Provinces, and the Lieutenant-Governor will certainly bear me out in impressing this fact upon His Excellency the Governor General in Council.

3. There are undoubtedly in Calcutta a fairly large number of wealthy Merchants, Bankers, Professional persons, and Landholders, and there are a few families who may be ranked along with them in the country districts as possessors of considerable incomes; but this monied class is an exceedingly small one, and may be counted by hundreds amongst the millions of the population that surround them. The Zemindars of Bengal in particular, instead of rolling in wealth, as appears to be popularly believed, are, in reality, as a body, possessed of very moderate means, and large numbers of them are actually poor. Under the permanent settlement the Sub-division of beneficiary interests in land has been carried out with extraordinary minuteness, under a variety of most complicated tenures, and the result is that the wealth derived from proprietary rights in the soil is distributed amongst enormous masses of the population. These constitute the bulk of the large middle class of Bengal, and there is, probably, no country in the world where this class is so numerous, in proportion to the entire mass of the community at large. It is this middle class which almost exclusively supplies the population of our schools and colleges of every rank and standard, and it is in behalf of this class that I venture to plead, most earnestly, against the views which seem to be now in the ascendant in the Supreme Government of India.

4. In opposition to the creed which at present governs all financial measures bearing on Public Education, I venture to maintain, unreservedly, that no item of State expenditure is capable of more complete justification, on every ground of a liberal and enlightened policy, than that which is devoted to the maintenance of schools and colleges of a high order, for the benefit of those classes of the population who value superior education and will avail themselves of the means of obtaining it. That it is for the good of the State that such education should be placed within the reach of the wealthy classes alone, appears to me a proposition that cannot be maintained by any ingenuity of argument. Those at least who have some thing more than a lip belief in the civilizing and elevating power of an education which goes beyond a mere introduction to the first elements of knowledge, will feel that it is impossible to spread its blessings too widely, and that, as every class of the community will

benefit, directly or indirectly, by its powerful influence, their common contributions to the public purse may be justly and most wisely employed in enabling all who will, the poor and rich alike, to avail themselves of the means of obtaining the highest culture which it is possible, in the circumstances of the country, to supply. It seems clear, however that the justice of devoting the public funds of the State to the promotion of the higher education is largely dependent, on the extent to which the opportunities of obtaining this education are offered to all who wish for it. If it is to be restricted to the rich, the public funds are wrongfully employed in its support. They are rightly and wisely employed when they place it, as far as possible, within the reach of all. If this view is sound, and I have the profoundest conviction of its truth, it follows that the maximum fee rates in our colleges and schools should be scrupulously kept within such moderate limits, that they can be paid without difficulty by the great bulk of those classes of the people who are willing and anxious to resort to them.

The early adoption of this view in America has led in many of the Northern States to the establishment of a system of schools and colleges of every standard, maintained out of State income, in which the instruction given is absolutely free; and on the same principle, in all the foremost countries of Europe where Public Education has been organized by State authority, the maximum fees are fixed by law at exceedingly low rates, while aid is largely given to poor students to support themselves during their course of study. In England at the present time one of the most prominent questions of the day is the means of inducing the middle classes to obtain for themselves an education worthy of the name; and it is not a little remarkable that at the very time when the Government of India is pressing for an increase of fee rates, which are already larger than any corresponding rates in any country in the world, the University of Oxford has promulgated a new Statute opening its doors to all comers for the almost nominal fee payment of £3-10-0 per annum.

5. The statement that education of a high order, possesses considerable pecuniary value in Bengal is true beyond dispute, and it is undoubtedly the prospect of individual advantage, which, here, as elsewhere, is the most powerful incentive in inducing young men to devote their time and labor and money to the acquisition of knowledge; but it will be admitted that the motive is not the highest one conceivable, and I trust it may not be thought unreasonable to urge that, instead of grounding its policy on this low commercial basis, the Government should look at the question from a somewhat higher point of view, and recognize the general advantage to the State of a wide diffusion of knowledge through all ranks of the community; instead of urging upon a few the probable gains to be derived from a speculative outlay of capital, and making the promise of individual success a means of exacting the last farthing from those who are attracted by the venture. I cannot but think that there is something more worthy of respect in the diametrically opposite view which has universally prevailed throughout the east, and is common to Hindus and Mahomedans alike, that such is the dignity and national value of learning, and such the merit of those who will devote themselves to its acquisition, that the student has a rightful claim, not only to free instruction, but also to a gratuitous supply of the means of subsistence during the whole period of his tutelage.

6. I have already pointed out that it is the large middle class of the country, which is possessed of very moderate means, that mainly peoples our College class rooms, and the statistics supplied by Mr. Sutcliffe conclusively show that this is the case even in the Presidency College, notwithstanding its fee rate of £14-8-0 per annum, and the heavy expenditure entailed on students from a distance by the high cost of living in the crowded Metropolis of India.

When in 1866 the Government of India raised the same question regarding the propriety of increasing the then fee rate, which was already £12 per annum, an enquiry, similar to that which has now been made, convinced me that the proposal was inexpedient I opposed the increase which was then enforced. I thought the measure an error then, I think it an error still, and if such

a course were open to me, I would return to the £1-0-0 rate per mensem which was previously in force. The views at present held by the Government of India make this recommendation hopeless, but I would plead against any further enhancement with all the force of which I am capable. I believe that such a step would be one of the most justly unpopular measures which the Government could adopt. I hold that it is recommended by no ground of equity or expediency and I feel sure that if insisted on now, it will inevitably be revoked at no distant day by the growing force of public opinion in this country and in England.

7. To the establishment, as an independent measure, of a system of bursaries, on the plan adopted for the French *Lycées*, to enable poor students from the country districts to maintain themselves during their college career, I have no objection whatever to offer. On the contrary I think the suggestion a good one. There might be some practical difficulty in selecting the individuals to

* Not a mere land cess levied on Zemindars which would be alike unjust and impracticable.

whom such aid should be properly given, but under an equitable and general system of district rating* administered to a great extent, as it should be by the people themselves, this difficulty might probably be overcome, and if we could depend on the local boards to make suitable selections, I believe that a portion of the proceeds of Zillah Taxation might be very properly and wisely employed for such a purpose. Any measure of this kind should here, however, as in France, be supplementary to moderate rates of regular tuition fees, and should mainly be directed to the *maintenance* of the students during their course of study, which no less in Bengal than in all other countries must always involve a vastly larger outlay than the mere fee payments for instruction in the lecture room.

8. I have still to remark on the alternative suggestion that has been made, proposing a graduation of fees according to the supposed wealth of the students who pay them. The proposition is an extraordinary one, and in my humble judgment altogether inadmissible. The arrangement appears indeed to be actually in operation in the Agra College, but I should suppose that this must be the only institution of the kind in the world where it could be found in force. The Government of India has however practically disposed of its own suggestion, by the admission that it is possible that "in a Province like Lower Bengal, there may be difficulties in enquiring into the income of the parents and regulating their payments accordingly." There would unquestionably be the very greatest possible difficulty in arriving at the truth in such an enquiry, and I can imagine few propositions more open to serious objection than one which would assign to the Principals of our Colleges the duties of an Assessor of Income Tax, involving minute and offensive investigations which must extend to the most distant parts of the country. But my objection to the proposal goes much further than this. To my apprehension the exaction of payments assessed according to income is radically vicious in principle. What, it may be asked, would be thought of a similar scheme applied to the administration of justice in the Civil Courts, providing that the rates of fees payable should be determined, not by the value of the interests in dispute, but by the supposed wealth of each several litigant? Most economists would probably call this confiscation. The word has an ugly look, but to my mind it correctly describes the effect of such a measure. I can see nothing to recommend this alternative plan on any ground, either of abstract justice or practical expediency, and I sincerely hope that the Lieutenant-Governor will decline to sanction so novel an expedient.

[No. 26.] From J. SUTCLIFFE, Esq., M.A., Principal, Presidency College, to W. S. ATKINSON, Esq., M.A., Director of Public Instruction, — (No. 862, dated Presidency College, the 11th September 1868.)

WITH reference to the letter No. 412 of 13th July, from the Government of India, and the letter No. 3758 of 31st July, forwarded with your Memorandum No. 3623 of 10th August, I have the honor to submit the following report.

Department.]

2. Before any change of the kind indicated in paragraph 6 of the letter from the Government of India can be fairly discussed, it is obvious that a statement should be prepared, in which the social position and incomes of the parents or guardians of the students of the College are set forth, with the utmost accuracy attainable. Accordingly, on the receipt of the letters of Government, I proceeded to make personal enquiries on these points from every student of the General Department, and the results are embodied in the tables given below. I do not claim for these statistics absolute accuracy, but I have spared no pains to get at the truth, and I believe that I may submit them as being as approximately correct, as it is possible to ascertain in an enquiry of this nature. My enquiries were confined entirely to the students of the General Department, as the Law Department is already self-supporting, and the Civil Engineering Department is admitted to be one, which, if retained at all, must be mainly supported by the State.

3. The following statement shews the number of students at present on the Rolls, the Circles from which they come, and the number of Scholarshipholders in each year:—

		Total number of Schools.	From Calcutta Circle.		From Mofussil Circle.	
			Pay Students.	Scholars.	Pay Students.	Scholars.
1st Year	...	96	41	30	5	20
2nd "	...	105	51	36	11	7
3rd "	...	38	21	10	2	5
4th "	...	41	21	4	12	4
5th "	...	10	1	5	1	3
Total		290	135	85	31	39

In the first and second year classes scholars pay only half the regular fee. In the third and fourth year classes scholars pay the same fee as other students.

4. The following is a classification of the students according to the social position of parents or guardians.—

		1st Year.	2nd Year.	3rd Year.	4th Year.	5th Year.	Total.
Zemindars	...	15	21	3	10	2	51
Talookdars	...	7	4	...	1	...	12
Owners of Brahmutter Land	...	2	...	1	...	...	3
House Owners and Fund holders	...	3	3	2	...	1	9
Government Pensioners	...	4	5	1	2	...	12
Merchants	...	2	4	3	2	...	9
Banians	...	5	1	3	1	...	10
Brokers and Petty Traders	...	6	7	1	1	...	14
Tradesmen	...	6	9	1	3	2	21
Judicial Officers	...	1	4	3	2	1	11
Sub-Assistant Surgeons	...	...	4	1	1	...	6
Professors	...	...	4	1	1	...	5
School Masters	...	1	3	...	1	...	5
Police Officers	...	2	3	...	1	...	6
Pleaders	...	...	3	1	...	4	6
Priests	...	5	3	2	2	1	13
Mookhtears	...	1	1	1	...	...	2
Clerks in Government Offices	...	1	1	...	...	...	2
Clerks in Private Offices	...	12	16	3	8	3	42
Others	...	16	11	10	9	...	46
	Total	96	105	38	41	10	290

5. A classification of parents or guardians according to monthly income gives the following result:—

Amount of monthly income.		1st Year.	2nd Year.	3rd Year.	4th Year.	5th Year.	Total.	
Rupees 5,000	...	..	1	1	..	..	2
„ 4,000	...	..	1	..	..	..	1
„ 3,000	...	3	2	..	..	..	5
„ 2,500	...	1	1	..	1	..	3	
Rupees 1,500 and less than	„ 2,000	..	..	..	1	..	1
„ 1,000	„ 2,000	2	4	..	..	..	6
„ 500 „ „	„ 1,500	6	7	1	4	1	19	
„ 200 „ „	„ 1,000	5	10	3	2	..	20	
„ 100 „ „	„ 500	6	16	8	3	3	36	
Below Rupees 100	„ 200	15	23	6	10	3	57	
		58	40	19	20	3	140	
	Total	...	96	105	38	41	10	290

6. An analysis of the statement regarding the incomes of the guardians of students holding Junior and Senior Scholarships show that—

Of the 93 Junior Scholars in the first and second year classes, there are 59 whose guardians have incomes below Rupees 100, and 20 whose incomes are between Rupees 100 and Rupees 200 a month.

Of the 23 Senior Scholars in the third and fourth year classes there are 14 whose guardians have incomes below Rupees 100, and five with incomes between Rupees 100 and Rupees 200 a month.

Of the seven graduates, who hold foundation scholarships, there are four whose guardians have incomes below Rupees 100, and one with an income of Rupees 150.

7. The preceding statements show that very few of our students belong to the wealthy families of Calcutta and the Suburbs; in fact, that only 12 students, or less than 5 per cent. of the entire number, have monthly incomes of Rupees 2,000 and upwards. This may at first sight seem to be incredible, but I believe that it represents the actual case. I have had the advantage of being assisted by the two Native Professors of the College, and the experienced Assistant Secretary in framing these returns, and from a list of about 60 notoriously wealthy families of Calcutta and the Suburbs which they have prepared, I find that only five of these have representatives in the College classes. I think, therefore, that the statistics are perfectly reliable, and that you would be justified in making any recommendation to Government on the question of fees which you may think they warrant.

8. One fact appears prominently in these returns, *viz.*, that the holders of Scholarships are almost entirely the sons of poor men. These Scholarships are gained by public competition amongst the Schools and Colleges of each circle, and the liberality of Government in awarding so many annually forms one point, amongst many others, in which the system of public instruction in Bengal very closely resembles that of France. Any present increase in the number of these Scholarships or Bursaries is, I think, unnecessary, and I would equally deprecate any increase in the general fee payable by students irrespective of the income of their guardians, I have not the means of ascertaining precisely the necessary expenses of a student at one of the French or Prussian State, supported Institutions of the same class as the Presidency College, but I believe that the amount is nearly the same in India and Europe. You probably have the means of instituting a comparison of this kind, and to enable you to estimate correctly the cost to a Mofussil student of coming to this College to be educated, I forward a report on this point from Baboo Peary Churn Sircar, who has had considerable experience in the management of Hostels for students.

9. I quite concur in the propriety of levying the highest fee in this College which circumstances warrant; but probably there is a misapprehension as to the position in life of the parents whose sons are chiefly found in our class-rooms. If so, perhaps the Government of India may, on representation of the actual state of the case, determine upon not enforcing any present change in the amount of the College fee. It seems to me that two-thirds of our students are drawn from ranks of society, which in any part of Europe, where a system of State supported collegiate education prevails, would form precisely the classes the State desired and intended to benefit. In Great Britain there are no Institutions (with perhaps the single exception of the Queen's College in Ireland) which can be compared in their aim and object with our Indian Colleges, but on the Continent there are ample materials for a fair comparison, and unless I am greatly mistaken, India will compare favorably with Europe in the cost to the State of the highest order of education.

10. The statistics embodied in this letter will enable you to comply with the request contained in paragraph 6 of the letter from the Government of India, and I hope you will agree with me in the opinion that a "considerable elevation" of the general fee payable by all students is not a desirable measure. To the principle of the graduation of the fee according to income, I see no great objections if carried out according to some well-considered plan. It may seem to be drawing an invidious distinction to adopt a system of this kind in a State College, and possibly there would be no great increase in the amount of fees collected. But if the plan of levying a graduated fee be approved, I would suggest some such plan as the following:—

All incomes up to Rupees 500 a month should be charged with the present fee of 12 Rupees. There would be immense difficulties in adopting any lower sum for the minimum fee, and the fee in itself is not at all disproportionate to the income of a guardian. Indeed, it has been represented to me by several guardians, whose opinions I have asked on this question, that Rupees 10 would be a more appropriate minimum fee; for incomes between Rupees 500 and Rupees 1,000, a fee of Rupees 15 might be levied; and for incomes between Rupees 1,000 and Rupees 2,000, the fee might be Rupees 20. For all incomes in excess of Rupees 2,000 a month one general fee of Rupees 25 might be charged, the plan of levying a fee graduated according to income was in force at Hooghly some time ago, but it was not found to work satisfactorily and was abandoned. Probably the main difficulty in carrying out a system of the kind results from fixing upon too low an income for the minimum fee. In Calcutta and the Suburbs men with incomes in excess of Rupees 500 a month are generally well known; but if an income of Rupees 100 or Rupees 200 were fixed upon as a starting point, there would be considerable difficulty in assessing a guardian correctly.

11. With reference to paragraph 7 of the letter from Government of India, I beg to state that the two Calcutta Schools under my charge, the Hindoo School and the Hare School, are both self-supporting; I hope, therefore, that it may not be deemed necessary to raise the fee in either of these Schools.

[No. 27.] From BABOO PEARY CHURN SIRCAR, Professor, Fourth Grade, Presidency College, to J. SUTCLIFFE, Esq., M. A., Principal, Presidency College,— (dated Calcutta, the 31st August 1868.)

With reference to your enquiries as to the charges which the students of the Presidency College coming from the Mofussil have to incur for boarding and lodging in Calcutta, I beg to submit the following:—

Those that can afford to take separate houses individually have to pay for house rent Rupees 16 per mensem at the lowest. This sum gives them barely three or four small and ill-ventilated rooms, one or two of which may be on the second floor. The charges for food of ordinary quality amount to about Rupees 24 per month, including the wages and food of one servant and one cook. Adding to the above the pay of the sweeper and the washerman and the cost of bedding and every day clothing amounting in all to about Rupees 12 per month, the total expenses of a student in Calcutta is about Rupees 52 monthly, inclusive of tuition fees and the cost of books, stationery, &c. This, however, is a poorer style than what a Zemindar or Millionaire's son would like to live in. But there are not many in this College who can afford to expend even so much as Rupees 52 for lodging and boarding alone, most of them, I believe 90 per cent., being the sons of people belonging to the middle classes, who have hardly any other source of income than the salary they get as clerks, teachers, sub-assistant surgeons, native doctors, &c., or the proceeds of petty traffic as retail shop-keepers, money lenders, wholesale dealers in country produce on a small scale. Some of them call themselves *Talookdars*, but being entitled only to small shares of talooks, the net income of the whole of which ranges from Rupees 200 to Rupees 1,000 a year, they are actually the poorest of those who send their sons to any College.

By far the larger part of the students that come from the Mofussil lodge here in a sort of mess account, in parties of four or five, sometimes eight or ten, in small houses that can hardly be said to afford any proper accommodation. Their food also is poor, and the division of the house rent, and the wages of servant and cook, makes a very trifling amount for each to pay on that score. The total of their expenses, including tiffin, bedding, &c., is about Rupees 16 per month. There are some, again, who are still poorer and fare still more poorly and lodge in quarters not at all fit for their habitation. Their monthly total is about Rupees 12, generally, at the lowest. But such cheap living is reprehensible on the consideration that it is likely to injure their health; and I have personally known several instances in which the students so living have seriously suffered in respect of health. Some of these were so distressing cases that I felt it my duty to bring these to the notice of Mr. W. Gordon Young, and subsequently of Mr. W. S. Atkinson, and to suggest the expediency of making some provision for the convenient boarding and lodging of students in Calcutta with the lowest expenses possible. Mr. Atkinson, with the view of making such provision, established the Hindu Hostel in 1861. The lowest rate that a student has to pay for boarding and lodging in the Hostel is Rupees 10 per month, exclusive of charges for milk, tiffin, bedding furniture, washerman, clothing, &c., which at the lowest comes to another Rupees 15, so the total expense of a student in the Hindu Hostel is about Rupees 25 a month at the lowest, exclusive of tuition fees and cost of books, stationery,

&c. I must here observe that though the greater number of boarders in the Hostel pay the higher rates of Rupees 11 and 12, there has been all along, until the close of the last year, a deficit every month, which the Director of Public Instruction has paid from his contingent allowance, sometimes the deficit amounted to more than Rupees 100 for one month alone. Properly speaking, therefore, the total expense of a Hindu Hostel boarder is higher than Rupees 25 a month.

Some Native gentlemen have lately opened a boarding house near this College, where not only students but teachers and clerks also board and lodge. A first class boarder occupying the third part of a small upper room, divided by screens, and taking no better food than what a Native gentleman of ordinary respectability in Calcutta takes at home, has to pay Rupees 40 monthly, there are other rates, varying from Rupees 6 to 16, but those who avail themselves of the cheaper rates lodge and board in an indifferent manner, in a much poorer style than what the Hindu Hostel boarders live in.

In conclusion, I beg to observe, from the personal knowledge that I have of people in the Mofussil likely to send their sons to this College, that the high rate of tuition fees and the heavy expenses of lodging and boarding in Calcutta deter many of them from sending their sons to complete their education.