

“Paragraph 8.—Views of Court on the expediency of educating the upper classes.—Equally wise, if we may be permitted, to use the expression, do the indications of the Hon. Court appear to us to be as to the quarters to which Government education should be directed, and specially with the very limited funds which are available for this branch of expenditure. The Hon. Court write to Madras in 1830 as follows: “The improvements in education, however, which most effectively contribute to elevate the moral and intellectual condition of a people, are those which concern the education of the higher classes—of the persons possessing leisure and natural influence over the minds of their countrymen. By raising the standard of instruction amongst these classes, you would eventually produce a much greater and more beneficial change in the ideas and the feelings of the community than you can hope to produce by acting directly on the more numerous class. You are, moreover, acquainted with our anxious desire to have at our disposal a body of natives qualified by their habits and acquirements to take a larger share and occupy higher situations, in the civil administration of their country than has been hitherto the practice under our Indian Government; ‘Never-the-less, we hear on so many sides, even from those who ought to know better of the necessity and facility for educating the masses for diffusing the arts and sciences of Europe amongst the hundred or the hundred and forty millions (for numbers count for next to nothing) in India, and other like generalities indicating cloudy notions on the subject, that a bystander might almost be tempted to suppose the whole resources of the State were at the command of Educational Boards, instead of a modest pittance inferior in amount to sums devoted to a single establishment in England.

“Paragraph 9.—Retrospect of principal Educational facts during the last ten years necessary.—The arguments adduced in the few last paragraphs appear to show that a careful examination of the real facts, and an analysis of the principal phenomena which have displayed themselves in the course of educational proceedings in the Presidency, would not be without their uses, if made with sufficient industry and impartiality to ensure confidence, and with a firm determination to steer clear of bootless controversy and all speculative inquiries. The present epoch, also, appears especially to commend itself for such a retrospect, as in 1850 the second decennial period commenced, during which the Schools of the Presidency have come under exclusive control of a Government Board ; and it is obvious that as a considerable body of information ought now to have been accumulated, and as the majority of the present members have had seats at the Board during the greater portion of that time, they would fain hope that by recording their experience, they may shed some light on certain obscure but highly interesting questions, which are certain to arise from time to time before their successors at this Board.

“Paragraph 10.—A uniform system developing itself spontaneously both in Bengal and Bombay.—We now proceed to give as minute a detail as comports with our limits, of the principal educational facts which have forced themselves upon our notice, and we think it will clearly appear, when those facts are duly appreciated, that many of the disputed questions, which arise in the Indian field of education, will be seen to solve themselves and that a system is generally evolving itself in other Presidencies as well as in Bombay, which is well suited to the circumstances of the country, and which, as the growth of spontaneous development, denotes that general causes are at work to call it forth.

“Paragraph 11.—Statistics of education in Bombay.—In the return on the following page, a comparative view is given of the number of schools and of pupils receiving education under Government at the period when the Establishments first came under the control of the Board, in 1840 and in April 1850. It shows, in the latter period, an addition of four English and 83 vernacular schools and a general increase in pupils of above a hundred per cent. The total number receiving Government education at present is 12,712 in the following proportion :—

English Education	..	..	..	1,699
Vernacular Education	..	..	..	10,730
Sanskrit Education	..	..	..	283

(comparison from tables: in 1840 there were 97 schools, number of pupils 5,491 ;. number of schools 185 and number of pupils 12,712).

“Paragraph 12.— Same Subject.—But the population of the Bombay Presidency is now calculated by the most competent authorities to amount to ten millions. Now on applying the rule of statistics deduced from the Prussian census as noticed in a former Report (1842-43 page 26) a population of this amount will be found to contain no fewer than 900,000 male children between the ages of seven and fourteen years and of course, fit subjects for school. It follows, therefore, that Government at this Presidency has not been able to afford an opportunity for obtaining education to more than one out of every sixty nine boys of the proper school going age.

“Paragraph 13.—Same Subject.—Further, it is admitted that education afforded in the Vernacular School is far from efficient. A great portion of the strictures of Mr. Willoughby’s Minute is directed against the defective character and insignificant results of these schools. The Board, not only acknowledge this fact, but they have been studious to point it out prominently for many years past, and indeed, in the opinion of some competent observers, have drawn too unfavourable a picture of the vernacular schools. But what are the obvious remedies for the defects indicated ? Mr. Willoughby describes them very correctly :—“a superior class of school masters, normal schools, more efficient supervision, additions to the vernacular literature.” These are all subjects

however, which have occupied the attention of the Board for many years past, and as to which not a step can be made in advance without additional expenditure. But we are given to understand from the letter of your Lordship in council that "it is not probable that the Government will have the power, for a considerable time to come, to afford the Board additional pecuniary assistance."

"Paragraph 14.—Conclusion that no means exist for educating the masses: It results most clearly from these facts that if sufficient funds are not available to put 175 Vernacular schools into a due state of organisation, and to give a sound elementary education to 10,730 boys, all question as to educating "the masses" the "hundred and forty millions" the 900,000 boys in the Bombay Presidency disappears. The object is not one that can be attained or approximated to by Government ; and Educational Boards ought not to allow themselves to be distracted from a more limited practical field of benevolence.

"Paragraph 15.— Views of Court of Directors as to the best method of operation with limited means.—The Hon'ble Court appear to have always kept the conclusion which has been arrived at in the last paragraph very distinctly in view. Perceiving that their educational efforts to improve the people could only be attempted on a very small scale, they have deemed it necessary to point out to their different Governments the true method of producing the greatest results with limited means. We have already cited their injunctions to the Madras Government on the head, (Para 7) and their despatch to the Government on the same date enforce sentiment of exactly the same import:— "It is our anxious desire to afford to the higher classes of the Natives of India the means of instruction in European sciences and of access to the literature of civilised Europe. The character which may be given to the classes possessed of leisure and natural influence ultimately determines that of the whole people."

"Paragraph 16.—Inquiry as to upper classes of India.— It being then demonstrated that only a small section of the population can be brought under the influence of Government education in India, and the Hon'ble Court having in effect decided that this section should consist of the "upper classes" it is essential to ascertain who these latter consist of. Here it is absolutely necessary for the European inquirer to divest his mind of European analogies which so often insinuate themselves almost involuntarily into Anglo-Indian speculations. Circumstances in Europe, especially in England have drawn a marked line, perceptible in manners, wealth, political and social influence, between the upper and lower classes. No such line is to be found in India, where, as under all despotisms the will of the Prince was all that was requisite to raise men from the humblest condition in life to the highest station, and where consequently great uniformity in manners has always prevailed.

A beggar, according to English notions, is fit only for the stocks or compulsory labour in the workhouse ; in India he is a respectable character and worthy indeed of veneration according to the Brahminical theory, which considers him as one who has renounced all the pleasures and temptations of life for the cultivation of learning and undisturbed meditation of the Deity.

“Paragraph 17.—Upper classes in India.—The classes who may be deemed to be influential and in so far the upper classes in India may be ranked as follows:—

1st.—The landowners and Jaghirdars, representatives of the former feudatories and persons in authorities under Native powers and who may be termed the Soldier class.

2nd.—Those who have acquired wealth in trade or commerce or the commercial class.

3rd.—The higher employees of Government.

4th.—Brahmins, with whom may be associated, though at long interval, those of higher castes of writers who live by the pen such as Parbhus and Shenvis in Bombay, Kayasthas in Bengal provided they acquire a position either in learning or station.

“Paragraph 18.—Brahmins, the most influential.—Of these four classes, incomparably the most influential, the most numerous, and on the whole easiest to be worked on by the Government, are the latter. It is a well-recognized fact throughout India that the ancient Jaghirdars or Soldier class are daily deteriorating under our rule. Their old occupation is gone, and they have shown no disposition or capacity to adopt new one, or to cultivate the art of peace. In the Presidency, the attempts of Mr. Elphinstone and his successors to bolster up a landed aristocracy have lamentably failed ; and complete discomfiture has hitherto attended all endeavours to open up a path to distinction through civil honours and education, to a race to whom nothing appears to excite but vain pomp and extravagance, of the reminiscences of their ancestors’ successful raids in the plains of Hindusthan”. Nor among commercial classes, with a few exceptions, is there much greater opening for the influences of superior education. As in all countries, but more in India than in the higher civilized ones of Europe, the young merchant or trader must quit his school at an early period in order to obtain the special education needful for his vocation in the market or the counting house. Lastly, the employees of the State, though they possess a great influence over the large numbers, who come in contact with Government, have no influence, whatever, with the still larger numbers who are independent of Government ; and, indeed, they appear to inspire the same sort of distrust with the public as Government functionaries in England, who are often considered by the vulgar as mere hacks of the State.

“Paragraph 19.—Poverty of Brahmins.—The above analysis, though it may appear lengthy, is nevertheless, indispensable, for certain important conclusions deducible from it. First, it demonstrates that the influential class, whom the Government are able to avail themselves of in diffusing the seeds of education, are the Brahmins and other high castes Brahmins proximi. But the Brahmins and these high castes are, for the most part, wretchedly poor: and in many parts of India, the term Brahmin is synonymous with “beggar.”

“Paragraph 20.—Wealthy classes will not at present support superior education.—We may see, then, how hopeless it is to enforce what your Lordship in council so strongly enjoined upon us in your letter of the 24th April 1850—what appears, *prima facie*, so plausible and proper in itself—what in fact, the Board themselves have very often attempted, *viz*, the strict limitation of superior education “to the wealthy, who can afford to pay for it, and to youths of unusual intelligence.” The invariable answer the Board has received, when attempting to enforce a view like this, has been, that the wealthy are wholly indifferent to superior education and that no means for ascertaining unusual intelligence amongst the poor exist, until their faculties have been tested and developed by school training. A small section, from among the wealthier classes, is no doubt displaying itself, by whom the advantages of superior education are recognized, it appears larger in Bengal, where education has been longer fostered by Government, than in Bombay, and we think it inevitable that such class must increase, with the experience that superior attainments lead to distinction, and to close intercourse with Europeans on the footing of social equality; but as a general proposition at the present moment, we are satisfied that the academical instruction in the arts and sciences of Europe cannot be based on the contributions, either of students or of funds, from the opulent classes of India.

“Paragraph 21.—Question as to educating low castes.—The practical conclusion to be drawn from these facts which years of experience have forced upon our notice, is that a very wide door should be opened to the children of the poor higher castes, who are willing to receive education at our hands. But here, again, another embarrassing question arises, which it is right to notice: If the children of the poor are admitted freely to Government Institutions, what is there to prevent all the despised castes—the Dheds, Mahars etc., from flocking in numbers to their walls?

“Paragraph 22.—Social Prejudice of the Hindus.—There is a little doubt, that if a class of these latter were to be formed in Bombay, they might be trained, under the guiding influence of such Professors and masters as are in the service of the Board, into men of superior intelligence to any in the community; and with such qualifications, as they would then possess, there would be nothing to prevent their aspiring to the highest offices open to Native talent—to Judgeship the Grand Jury, Her

Majesty's Commission of the Peace. Many benevolent men think, it is the height of illiberality and weakness in the British Government, to succumb to the prejudices, which such appointments would excite into disgust amongst the Hindu community, and that an open attack should be made upon the barriers of caste.

“Paragraph 23.—Wise observations of the Hon. Mount Stuart Elphinstone cited.— But here the wise reflections of Mr. Elphinstone, the most liberal and large minded administrator, who has appeared on this side of India, point out the true rule of action. “It is observed” he says, “that the missionaries find the lowest castes the best pupils; but we must be careful how we offer any special encouragement to men of that description ; they are not only the most despised, but among the least numerous of the great divisions of society, and it is to be feared that if our system of education first took root among them it would never spread further, and we might find ourselves at the head of a new class, superior to the rest in useful knowledge, but hated and despised by the castes to whom these new attainment would be desirable, if we were contented to rest our power on our army or on the attachment of a part of the population but is inconsistent with every attempt to found it on a more extended basis.”

5. It is, therefore obvious, that if no schools were opened for Depressed classes before 1855 in the Bombay Presidency, it was because the deliberate policy of the British Government was to restrict the benefits of education to the poor higher castes, chiefly the Brahmins. Whether this policy was right or wrong is another matter. The fact, however, is that during this period the Depressed classes were not allowed by Government to share in the blessings of education.

II.—From 1854 to 1882

6. In their Despatch No. 49 of 19th July 1854, the Court of Directors observed :—

“Our attention should now be directed to a consideration, if possible, still more important, and one which has hitherto, we are bound to admit, too much neglected, namely, how useful and practical, knowledge suited to every station in life, may be best conveyed to the great mass of the people who are utterly incapable of obtaining any education worthy of the name by their own efforts ; and we desire to see the active measures of Government more especially directed, for the future, to this object, for the attainment of which, we are ready to sanction a considerable increase of expenditure.”

This despatch is very rightly regarded as having laid the foundation of mass education in this country. The results of this policy were first examined by the Hunter Commission on Indian Education in 1882. The following figures show what was achieved during the period of 28 years.

PRIMARY EDUCATION

1881-82

				No. of scholars at School	Per cent on total
Christians	..	..	..	1,521	.49
Brahmins	..	..	..	63,071	20.17
Other Hindus	..	..	..	202,345	64.69
Mohammedans	..	..	..	39,231	12.54
Parsis	..	..	..	3,517	1.12
Aboriginal and Hill Tribes	..	..	..	2,713	.87
Low caste Hindus	..	..	..	2,862	.87
Jews and others	..	..	..	373	.12

SECONDARY EDUCATION

1881-82

				Middle Schools		High Schools	
				No. of scholars at schools	P. C. on total No. of scholars	No. of scholars at schools	P. C. on total No. of scholars
Christians	..	1,429		12.06		111	2.26
Brahmins	..	3,639		30.70		1,978	40.29
Other	[	Cultivators	624	5.26		140	2.85
Hindus		Low Castes	17	.14		..	..
		Other Castes	3,823	32.25		1,573	32.04
Mohammedans	..	687		5.80		100	2.04
Parsis	..	1,526		12.87		965	19.66
Aboriginal and Hill Tribes		6		.05		..	..
Others (including Jews etc.)		103		.87		92	.86

COLLEGIATE EDUCATION

1881-82

				No. of Scholars	P. C. on total No. of Scholars
Christians	..	..	..	14	3
Brahmins	..	..	..	241	50
Other	[	Cultivators	..	5	1
Hindus		Low Castes	..	0	0
		Other Castes	..	103	21.3
Mohammedans	..	..	..	7	1.5
Parsis	..	..	..	108	21.5
Aboriginal and Hill Tribes	..	..	..	0	0
Others (including Jews etc.)	..	..	..	2	0.4

7. What do these figures show ? They show that although mass education was the policy of the Government, the masses were as outside the pale of education as they were before the year 1854 and that the lowest and aboriginal classes of the Hindus still remained lowest in order of education; so much so, that in 1881-82, there was no student from that community either in the High Schools or in the Colleges of this Presidency. What can this failure to bring the Depressed Classes to the level of the rest in the matter of education be due to ? To answer this question, it is necessary again to go into the history of the educational policy of the Government of this Presidency.

8. The Despatch of the Court of Directors of the year 1954, for the first time recognised after a lapse of full 40 years that the duty of the State was to undertake the education of the great mass of the people. But there were still die-hards, who had great misgivings as to the wisdom of the principle laid down in that Despatch and who were agitating for a reversal of that policy. The fears of dire consequences to the British Rule arising from elevating the Backward Classes above their station in life, still haunted men like Lord Ellenborough, President of the Board of

Control, who in a letter to the Chairman of the Court of Directors dated 28th of April 1858, did not hesitate to strike the following note of caution :—

“Gentlemen:—Many letters have been lately before me, reviewing the state of education in different parts of India, under the instructions sent by the Court of Directors in 1854, and I confess, that they have not given me the impression that the expected good has been derived from the system which was then established, while all the increase of charge which might have been expected, appears to be in progress of realization.

*

*

*

*

“Paragraph 11:—I believe, we rarely, if even induce parents above the lower class to send their children to our schools, and we should practically, if we succeeded in intending education as we desire, give a high degree of mental cultivation to the labouring class, while we left the more wealthy in ignorance.

“Paragraph 12:—This result would not tend to create a healthy state of society. Our Government could not offer to the most educated of the lower class the means of gratifying the ambition we should excite.

“Paragraph 13:—We should create a very discontented body of poor persons, having, through the superior education we had given to them, a great power over the mass of the people.

“Paragraph 14 :—Education and civilization may descend from the higher to the inferior classes, and so communicated may impart new vigour to the community, but they will never ascend from the lower classes to those above them ; they can only, if imparted solely to the lower classes, lead to general convulsion, of which foreigners would be the first victims.

“Paragraph 15:—If we desire to diffuse education, let us endeavour to give it to the higher classes first.

“Paragraph 16:—These are but two ways of doing this—by founding colleges to which the higher classes alone should be admitted, and by giving in the reorganization of the army, commissions at once, to such sons of native gentlemen as may be competent to receive them.”

9. This antipathy of the European officers towards the untouchable classes was finally corrected by the Secretary of State for India in his despatch of 1859, which again reiterated the responsibility of Government for mass education.

10. Singular as it may appear, the recognition by the Government of its responsibility for mass education conferred upon the Depressed classes a benefit only in name. For, although, schools

were opened for the masses in the various districts, the question of the admission of the Depressed classes to these schools had yet to be solved. Such a question did practically arise in the year 1856. But the decision of the Government was not favourable to the Depressed classes as will be seen from the following extracts from the Report of the Director of Public Instruction for the Bombay Presidency for the year 1856-57 :—

“Paragraph 177.—Schools of Low castes and wild tribes.—There are no low class schools established directly by Government and the Supreme Government has expressed disapproval of such schools. The ordinary schools entirely supported by the state are in theory open indifferently to all castes. In the course of observation of my Report 1855-56 the Government issued the following order:—“The only case as yet brought before Government in which the question as to the admissions of the pupils of the lowest class to Government schools has been raised was that of a Mahar boy on whose behalf a petition was submitted in June 1856, complaining that though willing to pay the usual schooling fee, he had been denied admission to the Dharwar Government School.

“On this occasion, Government felt a great practical difficulty which attended the adjudication of a question in which their convictions of abstract right would be in antagonism to the general feelings of the mass of the natives, for whose enlightenment, to the greatest possible extent, the Government Educational Department has been established; and it was decided, as will appear from the Resolution* passed at the time with some hesitation, that it would not be right, for the sake of single individual, the only Mahar who had ever come forward to beg for admission into a school attended only by the pupils of castes and to force him into association with them, at the probable risk of making the institution practically useless for the great mass of natives”.

*Text of the Resolution passed by Government on the 21st July 1856 :—

1. The question discussed in the correspondence is one of very great practical difficulty.
2. There can be no doubt that the Mahar petitioner has abstract justice on his side; and Government trust that the prejudices which at present prevent him from availing himself of existing means of education in Dharwar may be ere long removed.
3. But Government are obliged to keep in mind that to interfere with the prejudices of ages in a summary manner, for the sake of one or few individuals, would probably do a great damage to the cause of education. The disadvantage under which the petitioner labours is not one which has originated with this Government, and it is one which Government summarily remove by interfering in his favour, as he begs them to do.

The proceedings of the Government of Bombay in this matter were noticed in the following terms by the Government of India, in a letter No. 111 dated 23rd January 1857 :—

“Governor General in Council thinks it very probable that the Bombay Government has acted wisely in the matter; but it desires me (i. e. Secretary to the Government of India) to say that the boy would not have been refused admission to any Government school in the Presidency of Bengal”.*

On receipt of this letter, it was resolved that Government of India should be assured that this Government would be most unwilling to neglect any means of rendering the schools throughout the country less exclusive than they practically are in the matter of caste; provided this could be effected without bringing the Government school into general disrepute, and thus destroying their efficiency and defeating the object for which they were intended. It was also determined that an enquiry should be made as to the practical working of the principle which was said to prevail in Bengal as affecting the general usefulness of the Government schools.

11. Inquiries as to the practice prevalent in Bengal revealed that the Bengal authorities, contrary to the supposition of the “Government of India” had left it to the District Committees of Instructions to grant or refuse admittance to candidates of inferior castes, with reference to the state of local native feeling in each case. The result of this was that the Depressed classes were left in the cold, because the touchable classes would not let them sit at the fire of knowledge which the Government had lit up in the interest of all its subjects.

*In a Despatch No. 58 dated April 28th 1858, the Court of Directors passed the following order on this subject:—

“The educational institutions of Government are intended by us to be open to all classes, and we cannot depart from a principle which is essentially sound, and the maintenance of which is of first importance. It is not impossible that, in some cases, the enforcement of the principle may be followed by a withdrawal of a portion of the scholars ; but it is sufficient to remark that those persons who object to its practical enforcement will be at liberty to withhold their contributions and apply their funds to the formation of schools on a different basis”.

12. Under these circumstances, mass education as contemplated by the Despatch of 1854 was in practice available to all except the Depressed classes. The lifting of the ban on the education of the Depressed classes in 1854 was a nominal affair only. For, although the principle of non-exclusion was affirmed by the Government, its practical operation was very carefully avoided; so that, we can say, that the ban was continued in practice as before.

The only agency which could take charge of the education of the Depressed classes was that of Christian Missionaries. In the words of Mount Stuart Elphinstone they “found the lowest classes the best pupils”. But the Government was pledged to religious neutrality and could not see its way to support missionary schools, so much so that no pecuniary grant was made in this Presidency to any missionary school in the early part of this period although the Educational Despatch of 1854 had not prohibited the giving of grants to missionary schools.

13. To find a way out of this *impasse* the Government adopted two measures: (1) the institution of separate Government schools for low caste boys, and (2) the extension of special encouragement to missionary bodies to undertake their education by relaxing the rules of grants-in-aid. Had these two measures not been adopted, the education of the Depressed classes would not have yielded the results, most meagre as they were, at the stock-taking by the Hunter Commission in 1882.

III—From 1882 to 1923

14. After the year 1882, the year 1923 forms the next landmark in the educational history of the Bombay Presidency. That year marks the transfer of primary education from the control of Provincial Governments to the control of local bodies. It will therefore be appropriate to take stock of the position as it stood in 1923. The position of the different communities in the Bombay Presidency in 1923 in the matter of educational advancement may be summed up in a tabular form as follows :—

Classes* of population in the Presidency		Order in respect of population	Order in respect of education		
			Primary	Secondary	Collegiate
Advanced Hindus	..	4th	1st	1st	1st
Intermediate Hindus	..	1st	3rd	3rd	3rd
Backward Hindus	..	2nd	4th	4th	4th
Mahomedans		3rd	2nd	2nd	2nd

15. From this table, one notices a great disparity in the comparative advancement of these different communities in the matter of education. Comparing these classes of people according to the order in which they stand in respect of their population and according to the order in which they stand in respect of their educational progress, we find that the Intermediate class, which is first in order of population is third in order of college education, third in order of secondary education and third in order of primary education. The Depressed classes who are second in order of population, stand fourth i.e. last in order of college education, last in order of secondary education and last in order of primary education. The Mahomedans who are third in order of population are second in order of college education, second in order of secondary education and second in order of primary education ; while the “Advanced Hindoos” who occupy the fourth place in order of population stand first in order of college education, first in order of secondary education and first in order of primary education. From this we can safely say that in this respect there has been no improvement over the situation as it stood in 1882 relatively speaking.

16. The above statement which is based upon the Report of the Director of Public Instruction, Bombay Presidency for the year 1923-24 merely reveals the disparity that exists in the educational

* The Education Department of the Government of Bombay has divided the population of this Presidency for departmental purposes into four different classes. In one of them are put the Brahmins and allied castes, who are collectively called “Advanced Hindus”. The Marathas and allied castes are put in a separate class called the “Intermediate Hindus”. The rest of the population comprising the Depressed classes ; hill tribes and the criminal tribes are placed in a class by themselves and are designated by the term “Backward class”. To these three classes there is to be added a fourth class which comprises the Mahomedans of the Presidency and Sind.

advancement of the different communities. But the disparity in the level of education among the different communities would be a very small matter if it be not very great. We can form no important conclusion unless we know the degree of disparity. To make this position clear from this point of view, the following table is presented:—

TABLE

Classes of Population		Primary Education, Students per 1000 of the population of the class	Secondary Education, Students per 100,000 of the population	College Education, Students per 200,000 of the population
Advance Hindus	..	119	3,000	1,000
Mahomedans	..	92	500	52
Intermediate class	..	38	140	24
Backward class	..	18	14	Nil (or nearly one if at all).

17. The above figures give the lengths, as it were, by which each community is ahead of the rest in the matter of primary, secondary and collegiate education. They reveal a range of disparity between the different communities in this Presidency which shows that the position of some of the communities in the matter of education is most shocking. From the statistics as given above, two facts stand out to be indisputable. (1) That the state of education of the Backward classes in this Presidency is deplorable. In the matter of population they occupy a place as high as second. But in the matter of Education, they occupy a place which is not only last but which also is the least; (2) That the Muhammedans of the Presidency have made enormous strides in education ; so much so that within the short span of 30 years, they have not only stolen a march over other communities such as the Intermediate and the Backward class, but have also come close to the Brahmins and allied castes.

18. What can this be due to ? To the policy of unequal treatment adopted by the Government must again be our reply to this ever present question. How unequal was the treatment of the two classes will be evident from the following extracts from the Quinquennial Reports on Education. With regard to the treatment of the Mahomedans in the matter of education, the following observations in the third Quinquennial Report (1892-96) are noteworthy:—

“Concerning the figures for Mahomedan Education in Bombay the Director remarks that the increase would have been larger “but for adverse circumstances”. It has long been recognized in Bombay that Mahomedans make a larger use of Public Institutions than the rest of the population On the general question of what has been done to encourage Mahomedan education, the Director writes:—

“In the first place, a Mahomedan officer is appointed to every District, either as Deputy or Assistant Deputy Inspector; and we have three Mahomedan graduates as Deputies, at Kaira, Sholapur, and Hyderabad, while a fourth has been drafted into the higher grades of the Revenue Department. There is thus, not a District where the staff is out of touch with the Mahomedan population. Again at Bombay, Karachi and Junagadh (a Muhammadan State in Kathiawar), special efforts have been made to provide High Schools for Muhammadans with low fee rates, and smaller schools have been opened by other Anjumans (Muhammadan associations) elsewhere. The Department also provides for their benefit, special standards and maintains special schools in certain localities, and reserves for them one-third of the Provincial and Local Boards scholarships. Then, there are the special scholarships founded by Khan Bahadur Kazi Shahbuddin (at one time Diwan of Baroda); and in Sindh, a certain number of food scholarships have been given by the heir of the Native State of Khairpur for students attending in Arts College. (I had great difficulty in filling these up last year, though they are of the value of Rs. 25 a month). In Primary schools, Muhammadans are very leniently treated in the matter of fees. They are encouraged to come to the Training Colleges by special rules which (regime)* from them an easier test than from Hindus; The Joint Schools Committee at Bombay has lately made special efforts to encourage Muhammadan education by the appointment of a Mahommadan Deputy Inspector”

* The word may be ‘require’—ed.

19. Compare with this the observations regarding the education of the Depressed classes in the fifth Quinquennial Report (1902-1907):

“959. Bombay—In the Central Division of Bombay, the low caste children are admitted free into schools and receive presents in the form of books, slates etc In Kathiawar only three children of the Depressed castes are receiving education. In the Southern division there are 72 special schools or classes of them, most of which are under unqualified teachers.”

20. This unequal treatment has its origin in the recommendations of the Hunter Commission. How partial was the Hunter Commission to the Mahomedans will be evident, if we compare the recommendations it made in their behalf to those it made in the interests of the Depressed classes. With respect to the Mahomedans the Commission made seventeen recommendations of which the following are worthy of note:—

(1) that the special encouragement of Mahomedan education be regarded as a legitimate charge on local, on Municipal, and on Provincial funds.

(7) that higher English education for Mahomedans, being the king of education in which that community needs special help, be liberally encouraged.

(8) that, where necessary, graduated system of special scholarships for Mahomedans be established to be awarded (a) in primary schools, and tenable in middle schools; (b) in middle schools, and tenable in high schools; (c) on the results of Matriculation and First Arts examinations, and tenable in colleges also.

(9) that in all classes of schools maintained from public funds, a certain proportion of free studentship be expressly reserved for Mahomedan students.

(10) that in places where educational endowments for the benefit of Mahomedans exist and are under the management of Government, the funds arising from each endowments be devoted to the advancement of education among the Mahomedans exclusively.

(11) that where Mahomedans exist, and are under the management of private individuals or bodies, inducements by liberal grants-in-aid be offered to them to establish English leaching schools or colleges on the grants-in-aid system.

(12) that, where necessary, the Normal Schools or classes for the training of Mahomedan teachers be established.

(16) that Mahomedan Inspecting Officers be employed more largely than hitherto for the inspection of primary schools for Mahomedans.

(17) that the attention of Local Governments be invited to the question of the proportion in which patronage is distributed among educated Mahomedans and others.

21. Every one of these recommendations made by the Hunter Commission was necessary in the interests of the Depressed classes also. But when we come to analyse the recommendations made by the Commission in The interest of the Backward classes, we do not find them directing that education of the Backward Classes be regarded a legitimate change on Government funds, that scholarships and proceedings be reserved for them, that special inspecting staff be kept to look after their educational needs or that public patronage be given to them by way of encouraging the growth of education amongst them. All we find the Commission saying is that (1) the principle that “no boy be refused admission to a Government College or school merely on the ground of caste”, be now reaffirmed as a principle and be applied with due caution to every institution, not reserved for special races, which is wholly maintained at the cost of public funds, whether provincial, municipal or local. (2) that the establishment of special schools or classes for children of low castes be liberally encouraged in places where there are a sufficient number of such children to form separate schools or classes and where the schools already maintained from public funds do not sufficiently provide for their education. “As a matter of fact the recommendations made by the Commission for the Mahomedans were far more necessary in the interests of the Backward classes than in the interests of the Mahomedans.” For even the Hunter Commission, presided as it was by a chairman of pronounced sympathies for the Mahomedans, had to admit that “the inquiries made in 1871-73 went to prove that except in the matter of the higher education, there had been a tendency to exaggerate the backwardness of the Muhamadans.” Notwithstanding this the only recommendations made by the Hunter Commission were the two mentioned above. Even these two recommendations made by the Commission regarding the Depressed classes were not calculated to do much good. They were bound to be futile. The reaffirmation of the principle even

if it be for the fifth time was useless. For under the proviso inserted by the Commission, the enforcement was to be avoided in practice. Similarly, the opening of the separate schools for the Depressed classes was hardly possible, which again was bound to be sterile. Separate schools involving additional expense could hardly be acceptable to a Government to which primary education was a task. Besides, the proviso, that such schools should be opened where Backward classes were in large numbers, was sufficient to negative the recommendations simply because in rural parts the Backward classes can seldom be found to be living in one locality in large numbers.

22. It is difficult to understand why the Hunter Commission paid such a scant attention to the educational needs of the Backward classes. If it felt necessary to be generous towards the Mahomedans, it should have at least seen that it was just to the Backward classes who were far behind the Mahomedans in education, wealth and social status. Once the Hunter Commission had thrown the Depressed classes into the background, they remained there and the Government never paid any attention to them. As an example of this neglect, attention may be drawn to the Resolution of the Government of India in the Department of Education dated Delhi the 21st February 1923. It was one of the most important resolutions ever issued by the Government of India in which they decided to assist local Government by means of large grants from imperial revenues as funds became available, to extend comprehensive systems of education in the several provinces. In that resolution, they were particular to point out to the provincial Governments, the educational needs of "Domiciled community" and the Mahomedan community. But they had not a word to say in the whole Resolution about the Backward classes. The Bombay Government readily accepted the suggestion and appointed in 1913 a Mahomedan on Education Committee to make recommendations for the promotion of education among the Mahomedans. One feels righteous indignation against such criminal neglect on the part of the Government, particularly when, it is realized that the large grants given by the Government of India after 1913, were given by way of

fulfilment of the declaration made by His Most Gracious Imperial Majesty, the King Emperor, in replying to the address of the Calcutta University on the 6th January, in which he said :—

“It is my wish that there may be spread over the land a network of Schools and Colleges, from which will go forth loyal and manly and useful citizens, able to hold their own industries and agriculture and all the vocations in life. And it is my wish too, that the homes of my Indian subjects may be brightened and their labour sweetened by the spread of knowledge with all that follows in its train, a higher level of thought, of comfort and health. It is through education that my wish will be fulfilled, and the cause of education in India will ever be very close to my heart.”

IV

What about social Reform under the British Government ?

It was Raja Sir T. Madhavrao, a very prominent and progressive Hindu of the last generation, who said:—

“The longer one lives, observes, and thinks, the more deeply does he feel that there is no community on the face of the earth which suffers less from political evils and more from self-inflicted or self-accepted or self-created, and therefore avoidable evils, than the Hindu Community.”

Leaving aside the question of the comparative cost of the observation, there can be no doubt that Hindu Society suffers from social evils as no other community does.

Mahadeo Govind Ranade, another venerable name among earnest social reformers has made another and equally important observation, emphasizing another aspect of the Hindu Community :—

“Mere considerations of expediency or economical calculations of gains or losses can never move a community to undertake and carry through social reforms, especially with a community like ours, so spellbound by custom and authority. Our people feel, and feel earnestly, that some of our social customs are fraught with evil; but as this evil is of a temporal character, they think that it does not justify a breach of commands divine, for such breach involves a higher penalty. The truth is, the orthodox society has lost its power of life, it can initiate no reform nor sympathise with it.”

In other words all the social evils are based on religion. A Hindu man or woman, whatever he does, he does as a religious observance. A Hindu eats religiously, drinks religiously, bathes religiously, dresses religiously, is born religiously, is married religiously and is burned religiously. His acts are all pious acts. However evil they may be from a secular point of view, to him, they are not sinful because they are sanctioned and enjoined by his religion. If any one accuses a Hindu of Sin, his reply is, 'If I sin, I am sinning religiously.'

Society is always conservative. It does not change unless it is compelled to and that too very slowly. When change begins, there is always a struggle between the old and the new, and the new is always in danger of being eliminated in the struggle for survival unless it is supported. The one sure way of carrying through a reform is to back it up by law. Without the help of legislation, there can never be any reform in any evil. The necessity of legislation is very great when the evil to be reformed is based on religion.

What is the sum total of legislation in favour of social reform under the British Government? The record of the British Government, in the matter of social reform, is to say the least, very halting and very disappointing. In the course of 150 years, there are just six social evils which have been subjected to Legislation.

The first piece of Social Legislation which the British undertook, is contained in **Bengal Regulation XXI of 1795**. It is a regulation for Preventing the Brahmins in the Province of Benares establishing Koorhas, wounding or killing their female relations or children or sitting Dhurna and for preventing the Tribe of Raj Koomars in that Province killing their female children. It enacted as follows :—

Preamble

I. The reverence paid by the Hindoos to Brahmins, and the reputed inviolability of their persons, and the loss of, or prejudice to cast(e), that

ensues from proving the casue of their death, have in some places in the province of Benares, and more especially in the pergunnahs of Kuntit and Budhoe been converted by some of the more unlearned part of them, into the means of setting the laws at defiance, from the dread and apprehensions of the persons of the Hindoo religion, to whose lot it must frequently fall to be employed, in enforcing against such Brahmins any process or demands on the part of Government. The devices occasionally put in practice under such circumstances by these Brahmins, are lacerating their own bodies, either more or less slightly, with knives or razors; threatening to swallow, or, sometimes actually swallowing poison, or some powder which they declare to be such; or, constructing a circular enclosure called a *koorh*, in which they raise a pile of wood or of other combustible and betaking themselves to fasting, real or pretended, place within the area of the koorh, an old woman, with a view to sacrifice her by setting fire to the koorh, on the approach of any person to serve them with any process, or to exerceis coercion over them on the part of Government, or its delegates. These Brahmins likewise, in the event of their not obtaining relief within a given time, for any loss or disappointment that they may have justly or unjustly experienced, also occasionally bring out their women or children, and causing them to sit down in the view of the peon who is coming towards them on the part of Government, or its delegates, they brandish their swords, and threaten to behead, or otherwise slay, these females, or children, on the nearer approach of the peon ; and there are instances, in which, from resentment at being subjected to arrest or coercion, or other molestation, they have actually not only inflicted wounds on their own bodies, but put to death with their swords, the females of their families, or their own female infants, or some aged female, procured for the occasion. Nor are the women always unwilling victims ; on the contrary, from the prejudices in which they are brought up, it is supposed that in general they consider it incumbent on them to acquiesce cheerfully in the species of self-devotement, either from motives of mistaken honor, or of resentment and revenge, believing that after death they shall become the tormentors of those who are the occasion of their being sacrificed. On similar principles, these Brahmins, to realize any claim or expectation, such as the recovery of a debt, or for the purpose of extorting some charitable donation, frequently proceed either with some offensive weapon, or with poison, to the door of another inhabitant of the same town or village, and take post there in the manner called *Dhurna* ; and it is understood, according to the received opinions on this subject, that they are to remain fasting in that place until their object be attained ; and that it is equally incumbent on the party who is the occasion of such Brahmins thus sitting, to abstain from nourishment until the latter be satisfied. Until this is effected, ingress and egress to and from his house are also more or less prevented, as according to the received opinion, neither the one nor the other can be attempted, but at the risk of the Brahmin's wounding himself with the weapon, or swallowing the