

CURRENT SCIENCE

Vol. XIII]

JUNE 1944

[No. 6

	PAGE		PAGE
<i>The Teacher and Reconstruction</i>	.. 141	<i>An Early Reference to Night-Blindness in India, and Its Relation to Diet Deficiency.</i> BY W. R. AYKROYD	.. 149
<i>Ideals for Teachers</i>	.. 142	<i>Coconut Shells as an Industrial Raw Material—III. Estimated World Production.</i> BY DR REGINALD CHILD	.. 150
<i>The Maharajah of Travancore Lectureship in Applied Chemistry</i>	.. 142	<i>Similarities between the Excitation Phenomena in Unstriated Muscle and Those in the Retina.</i> BY IDERJIT SINGH	.. 152
<i>Sir Ardeshir Dalal</i>	.. 143	<i>Letters to the Editor</i>	.. 154
<i>New Developments in Plastics</i>	.. 143	<i>Cyclewelding—A New Bonding Process</i>	.. 163
<i>Obituary—</i>		<i>Reviews</i>	.. 164
<i>Acharya Sir Prafulla Chandra Ray</i>	.. 144	<i>Central Sugarcane Committee</i>	.. 166
<i>Intellectual Workers' Union</i>	.. 144	<i>Science Notes and News</i>	.. 167
<i>The Four Forms of Diamond.</i> BY SIR C. V. RAMAN	.. 145		
<i>A New Punjab Oil-Field</i>	.. 148		

THE TEACHER AND RECONSTRUCTION

AMIDST the world-wide struggle which has continued to rage with all the ferocity of a modern war, plans for post-war reconstruction are being forged by all nations. Rehabilitation, currency, form of government, industrialisation, transport, markets, food production, health, employment and social security, have, each of them, been receiving their share of attention at the hands of the several expert committees set up for investigation and report. The problems of education, in its various aspects, the type of education to be imparted to the rising generation, education for enlightened world-citizenship, education for research and industry, education for character and culture, and education for peace, are being widely discussed by the public and the press. Leading educationists are examining the problem of education in the light of the new world order which prominent thinkers and statesmen are visualizing.

It is generally recognised that the present system has many inherent defects. To prevent a recurrence of the war and secure an ordered progress of the world, the system of education needs to be modified. Education of the youth is the vital foundation on which the progressive, peaceful and humane reconstruction should be organised; it is only through a well-conceived system of liberal and humanising education that the long-cherished hope of maintaining ever-lasting peace and of securing universal prosperity can be fulfilled.

In India the problem of educating the 400 millions and raising their economic standard, has received the earnest attention not only

from the Government but also from our national leaders. The Wardha Scheme, inspired by Mahatma Gandhi, is intended to unfold the full personality of the individual and qualify him for a creative and corporate life in a democratic community. The Sargent Scheme lays down a plan through which the nation is prepared to shoulder the responsibilities of a modern democratic administration. The Sargent Plan which incorporates a good many important points outlined in the Wardha Scheme, has earned for itself the reputation of constituting one of the most practical and comprehensive schemes ever evolved for educating the people of this land. In addition we have the post-war reconstruction schemes pertaining to every department of nation-building, post-war agriculture, post-war industrialisation, and post-war plans for scientific and industrial research. Leading industrialists of this country have put forward the fifteen-year, 10,000 crore scheme, generally known as the "Bombay Plan", for the industrial regeneration of this country.

These gigantic schemes need the services of an army of trained personnel, teachers, technologists, administrators, and scientific men. To reap the full benefits of a democratic way of life, and of the four freedoms which are enunciated as the birthright of every nation on this globe, the people must be educated and illiteracy which, in this country, exists to the extent of 85 per cent. removed. In the abolition of illiteracy and in the training of personnel to man the schemes of reconstruction, it is the humble teacher that has to play the fundamental role. The teachers lay the foundation

of the edifice of national regeneration and national prosperity. They constitute the master instruments through which reconstruction plans have to be put through. These facts are not generally recognised to the extent they should be and strangely enough, the profession of teaching, in spite of the vital and strategic position which it occupies in the body politic, still remains one of the most unremunerative of the learned professions. It is argued that there are no financial prizes, such as men strive for in business. The teacher must find his reward not in the form of high salaries or accumulated fortunes but in the intellectual life of the scholar, "in the fellowship of cultivated colleagues in the companionship of young minds and young hearts" and in the gratitude and friendship of his students. These are worthy ideals which most teachers appreciate and practise when they are provided with adequate means for leading a life of dignity and modest satisfaction. But when the teacher is faced with the spectre of domestic penury, as he is to-day in India, and when he has to run the risk of an uncertain future for himself and his dependants, he naturally feels neglected and discouraged.

It is flattering neither to a progressive state marching towards democracy, nor to an enlightened public aspiring for freedom, that the teacher who constitutes the central figure destined to ultimately influence every sphere of nation-building, should find himself neglected, unrecognised and in a condition of abject poverty. Elsewhere in this issue (p. 162) Sir S. S. Bhatnagar has drawn pointed attention to the lamentable conditions, which characterise the economic status of the teacher in this country. Relevant portions of a letter to him from a science teacher are also reproduced in this issue (p. 163). A grave situation has arisen; immediate relief should be provided.

Progressive nations have realised that teachers constitute by far the most powerful instruments through which a people may control its future destiny. The teacher is the animating force which kindles in the young the passion for knowledge, freedom, truth and justice. The teacher in Japan enjoys the privilege of being the first to be interviewed by the Emperor when he visits a village. The economic condition of teachers in other countries are far more satisfactory than what their Indian compeers enjoy in this country. Americans, in particular, have recognised the value of teachers in a most effective and practical manner. There is the Carnegie Foundation for the advancement of teaching, which takes upon itself the task of protecting and promoting the interests of the community's most precious asset—the teacher.

Andrew Carnegie, the illustrious American benefactor, wrote to his trustees on April 16, 1905, "I have reached the conclusion that the least rewarded of all professions is that of the teacher in our higher educational institutions. I have therefore transferred to you and your successors, as trustees, ten millions of dollars, of five per cent. Mortgage bonds of the United States Steel Corporation, to provide retiring pensions, for the teachers of universities, colleges and technical schools in our country, Canada and Newfoundland, under such conditions as you may adopt from time to time". Later, the gift was increased to fifteen millions of dollars. Is it too much to expect that some of our enlightened industrial magnates will likewise come forward to retrieve a situation which is growing worse day by day? The Central Government and the informed public should take up this matter and reorganise the teaching profession in a manner which will restore it to its rightful place in society.

IDEALS FOR TEACHERS

ADDRESSING the Secondary School Teachers' Association, Sir S. Radhakrishnan, Vice-Chancellor of the Benares Hindu University, said: "I believe the teaching profession, whatever may have been its past, has a very great future before it. Education is the main thing by which we can develop radically new types of men, if we so desire. We have our own system of education and our ideals. People might come forward and ask us: Is it any good pursuing your own ideal at the present moment? I must say that the political and economic condition of India need not be regarded as invalidating the spirit of Indian culture any more than the present war may be

said to invalidate the spirit and the value of science. We do not say because the world is at war and science is being abused, therefore science is invalidated. We cannot say that because we are in the present unfortunate condition politically and economically, the ancient Indian wisdom is futile. We require the wisdom—enlightenment as well as knowledge—that is power. If we have failed, it is because our philosophy or our wisdom did not have enough practical application. If science has failed, it is because science has not looked to philosophy for guidance. A combination of these two will help our own country."

THE MAHARAJAH OF TRAVANCORE LECTURERSHIP IN APPLIED CHEMISTRY

A GRANT of Rs. 3,000 per annum has been sanctioned by the Government of Travancore to the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, for three years from 1120 (1944-45) for

a Lecturership in the Department of Applied Chemistry, to be called "The Maharajah of Travancore Lecturership in Applied Chemistry."