

not recognise social distinctions but its obvious function is to discover and emphasise intellectual differences, for "democracy more than any other form of society needs an *élite*". The criticism against the lowering of standards really arises from the habit of applying the old yard-stick of efficiency to new and entirely different conditions, there has not yet been sufficient time for the large body of the intellectually backward pupils to acquire from their parents the necessary predisposition for an academic discipline. The setback in standards is a psychological phenomenon, inevitable under the existing circumstances.

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The reform of secondary education in India is attended by difficulties which are absent in other countries. Here a candidate failing in the matriculation examination acquires a social stigma, however capable he may otherwise be and however well-qualified for earning an honourable and independent livelihood. Because the government have placed a premium on university degrees as a qualifying test for admission to administrative posts which are supposed to carry with them social prestige and political power, communities hitherto apathetic to higher education, have discovered, under the stimulus of "Communal representation in the Services", a passion for the rewards which a literary education is expected to confer. This age-long apathy must necessarily impose a handicap on securing immediate academic distinctions on at least a majority of those who but for

communalism, would have been content to carry on and enrich the traditional pursuits of their fathers. We must seek and foster intelligence and scholarship wherever they may be found, but no efforts of education can create them where they do not exist and the money and energy devoted to producing them might more profitably be utilised in training the young men to professions for which they possess specific aptitudes. Perhaps the most serious difficulty confronting any rational reform of education is that within recent years it has come too much within the range of communal suspicions, which can only disappear after government withdraws recognition now accorded to University degrees.

We shall have to wait for administrative reforms to be introduced by the new constitution before we can formulate any schemes for reconstructing the system of secondary education and any proposals for educational reform that may be put forward even when the reconstructed government has been introduced must be of a tentative character, for India is an organism still in the process of becoming. A certain measure of national stability in the wider sphere of its functions is indispensable for the sound evolution of educational reforms the necessity for which will need to be adequately understood by the new legislature. Only a thorough conviction that a sound secondary education with a wide range of selective courses must form the backbone of the national well-being can bring effective means for overhauling the educational machinery slowly, wisely and efficiently.

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## ANNOUNCEMENT

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### ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECTS OF GEOLOGY

A seminar on 'Environmental Aspects of Geology' jointly organised by the Centre for Earth Science Studies, Trivandrum and the Geological Society of India, as part of the Silver Jubilee celebration of the Society, will be held at Trivandrum in November 1984. The Seminar will cover the following aspects: (1) Minerals for the future, enrichment studies and feasibility of recycling; (2) Water pollution and water resource management; (3) Energy resources—Coal, petroleum, atomic minerals and geothermal energy; (4) Environmental geological mapping; (5) Natural geo-

logical hazards—prediction and assessments; (6) Impact of human interference on physical environments; (7) Human and plant diseases *vis-a-vis* minerals and trace elements; and (8) Mapping and environmental problems.

Those desirous of participating in the seminar are requested to get in touch with the convenor, Dr K. K. Ramachandran, Environmental Sciences Group, Centre for Earth Science Studies, P.B. No. 2235, Sasthamangalam, Trivandrum 695 010, Kerala, for further details.

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