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DUTCH BURGHER UNION OF CEYLON.

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AN APPEAL ON BEHALF OF THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE.

(Communicated).

The list of subscriptions to the Education Fund for the current year which was published in last month's Bulletin is disappointing. A sum of Rs. 618/- only has been collected so far this year. In 1943 the subscriptions and donations amounted to Rs. 1792/- and in 1944 to Rs. 1576/50. What is more disappointing is that only 20 out of 578 members have thought it worth while to support the Fund.

If the grants that are being given this year are to be continued in 1946 a sum of about Rs. 1500/- must be collected before November in which month the Committee will review all current grants and consider fresh applications for assistance. Two such applications have already been received.

A very special appeal is made to the 558 members who have not yet helped the Fund in 1945 to send in their subscriptions without delay.

The opportunity is taken to remind members of the two other Funds which are being administered by the Education Committee. Both funds are deserving of their sympathy and support:—

The Education Endowment Fund.

All monies subscribed to this fund will be invested and the income therefrom used to carry out the aims and objects of the Standing Committee for Education. The Fund now stands at about Rs. 3,000/-. At the last Annual General Meeting of the Union when it was decided to transfer a sum of Rs. 1000/- from the General Funds of the Union to this special fund a target of Rs. 100,000/- was suggested.

According to newspaper reports a similar fund recently launched by another community has already topped that mark. A large number, if not all, of our members have during the past few years been contributing regularly to War Funds either by special donations or by monthly deductions from their salaries or pensions. Is it too much to ask that these contributions be continued for an year or two for the benefit of this Endowment Fund. This will enable us to make it worthy of the Union and of the Community.

Vocation Fund.

This Fund which has so far attracted only eight subscribers four of whom gave contributions of a thousand rupees each is in the nature of a loan fund. Its special object is to grant assistance by way of loans to deserving young members of the Community to complete their professional or vocational training.

• This fund is serving a very useful purpose for the heavy expenditure required for professional or vocational training cannot be met from the meagre resources of the Education Fund nor from the interest of the Endowment Fund until that fund reaches a very much higher figure than that at which it now stands. Further donations to this fund will be welcome.

The question may no doubt be asked as to the necessity for all these funds when free education from the Kindergarten to the University is round the corner. It is true that free tuition of a sort will be available soon, but what with the threat to Denominational Schools and the change in the medium of education the out-look for children of our Community is not bright. If we want them to take their rightful place in the life of this country we must see that they have the best instruction possible. Special arrangements may have to be made to enable them to attend schools at which they will receive instruction in the medium of their home language. Assistance in paying boarding fees has in some cases been found essential in the past, and such cases will arise more frequently in the future. Also it should be remembered that only tuition is to be free and that, especially in the higher stages, tuition fees are almost the smallest item in the total cost of education. The need to support these funds more generously than in the past is essential and urgent.

Letters to the Editor.

Dear Sir,

It is very encouraging to find two letters in the last copy of the Bulletin making reference to the need for our young men to take an interest in the more serious part of life. Meddlesome Mike had the virtue of being practical but his proposals imply that Burgher Youth can be isolated from the rest of Ceylon Youth and will still be able to hold its own. This is highly dangerous doctrine. Mr. Martensz is less practical but has honestly endeavoured to analyse the situation. It is a pity he should have referred rather patronizingly to such forms of entertainment as dancing and bridge. They are just as important as more serious forms of action and have a high stimulating value. This criticism is however a triviality and I am much more vexed with Mr. Martensz for not having pursued his argument further. I cannot help feeling that his sense of kindness restrained him.

My own impression is that if any fault is to be attributed to our youth it must be shared by our elders. It is the fashion in every age to cry out that youth is going to the dogs as though it were not true, more often than not, that young people are what their parents made them. Sometimes indeed I wonder whether we who are seniors are really capable of deciding what is best for our successors. Our vision has to be up to date and it is no use looking at life through ancient spectacles.

An indication of our inability to move with the times is the inadequacy of the objects of the Union. This in itself would not matter, but for the fact that this deficiency is not realised. In consequence one is apt to look back longingly on the good old days instead of gazing earnestly into the future. This contention is no criticism of the founders of the Union. That they possessed the initiative to start a Union to suit their own times is a matter of signal credit to them. That we haven't the wit to improve on what was done before is hardly something to be proud about. And the tragedy of it is that any changes are considered to be disloyal.

I mentioned before that the objects were inadequate. You will search in vain for any reference to our most precious heritage, the Christian religion. I do not suggest that the Union should concern itself with the practice of religion but it is surely significant that it has been entirely indifferent to the attempts made recently to destroy Christian education. It is too easily forgotten that our most prized characteristics, our honesty and sense of justice, are all in the Christian tradition.

Nor will you find anywhere any suggestion that sports be encouraged to increase physical fitness. This is the best avenue along which to direct youthful enthusiasm. Fortunately some of the younger members found this out for themselves and there now exist affiliated clubs. But the lack of vision, of the Union, qua Union, is evident.

Again you would notice the absence of any reference to the encouragement of good relations with other communities. We have never

been antagonistic but we have shown little signs of friendliness. Mr. Martensz has brought this point out well, one which is of vital importance for our preservation. This high degree of parochialism is probably responsible for the fact that a large number of successful members of the community whose capabilities and sincerity are above question have preferred to join clubs of a more catholic kind where a man is taken for what he is and not for his family. There is every reason why the Union should promote closer association with those who share some of our common interests.

My own opinion inclines to the view that any plan for youth presupposes a plan for the seniors. Or to put it more bluntly why should young men take interest in meetings of the literary and ethical group which most of their elders avoid like the plague? If the subjects in question were really discussed, as they should be, intelligently in the home we should find families instead of individuals coming to these meetings. All this is due to the fact that we take the Union for granted instead of thinking of it as our own creation which by our own contributions can be shaped to serve our particular purposes.

To change the spirit is difficult and I for one have little idea how it can be done at present. That a number of earnest members of the type of Mr. Martensz working together can do something for the purpose I have no doubt. Perhaps he will make a lead in the matter. But so much is certain. Our elder members will of course discuss any plan but it is much more important that they participate in it.

Yours faithfully,

W. J. A. VAN LANGENBERG

**PROCEEDINGS OF A CONFERENCE SUMMONED
BY THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE
of the Dutch Burgher Union of Ceylon and held in
the D.B.U. Hall on Friday the 24th August
1945 at 6-30 p.m.**

PRESENT:—Dr. Andreas Nell (in the Chair); Mr. L. A. H. Arndt, Mr. Patrick Arndt, Mr. C. L. Beling, Mr. Ernest de La Harpe, Dr. H. A. Dirckze, Mr. A. L. B. Ferdinand, Mr. C. E. Foenander, Mr. George Gratiaen, Mr. Hilarion Jansz, Mr. R. A. Kriekenbeek, Mr. W. J. F. La-Brooy, Mr. J. A. Maartensz, Miss Paulusz, Miss Agnes Spittel, Dr. R. L. Spittel, Mr. G. F. Vander Hoven, and Mr. C. A. Speldewinde (Secretary).

It was explained that the purpose of the Conference was to discuss the likely effects of the proposals for reform and the impending changes in our educational system as far as Burgher children were concerned, and to consider what steps should be taken to safeguard the position of the community in the future life of the country. In particular, it was intended to consider the question of the medium of instruction, regarding which new regulations had been placed before the State Council.

The consensus of opinion among those present was that while Burghers should welcome the principle of imparting instruction through the

medium of the mother tongue they should take steps to make sure that this advantage should not be denied to Burgher children and others whose mother tongue is English, on the score of cost, or administration inexpediency or inconvenience. It was agreed at the same time that, as future-citizens in Ceylon, they should be well instructed in either Sinhalese or Tamil as a second language, and that any tendency among Burgher parents to minimize the importance of these studies was to be deprecated. It was in fact felt that much of the diffidence that sometimes existed was simply due to the fact that these very important subjects were too often taught very badly in schools. But while the importance of these languages was recognised, and the advantages of bilingualism were admitted, it was agreed that arrangements (or the absence of facilities) which had the effect of compelling Burgher children to receive their instruction in a language which was not their own language would be to impose an iniquitous and disastrous handicap upon them, and would imply an attempt to deprive the community of its European cultural heritage, of which it is justly proud and of which the use of the English language was an essential ingredient.

It was agreed that at the same time it would be regrettable if, in order to preserve the right to receive instruction in English, Burghers were forced to have recourse to special schools, whether private, state aided or Governmental; this would involve the unwilling segregation in their most impressionable years of the younger members of a community which is notable for the active share it has always taken in every sphere and aspect of the country's life. The correct solution therefore was that Burgher children should receive instruction in their mother tongue, English, in the schools run by Government or by denominational bodies within the framework of the national system of education. It was disquieting therefore that when steps were being taken to introduce reforms so little had yet been said to assure minorities that they were not to suffer for the reason that parallel classes might be uneconomical for a small number of pupils and might therefore be scamped or denied; and it was resolved that steps should be taken to allay their just fears in this direction by asking government to adopt certain defined safeguards for minority rights. With this end in view the meeting decided that the following resolution be placed before a public meeting of all sections of the community:—

"That the Burgher community calls upon the Government to give a pledge that the recommendations contained in paragraph 895 of the Report of the Special Committee on Education (SESSIONAL PAPER XXIV-1943) will be implemented by the provision of instruction through the medium of English in all schools where at least 20% of the pupils on the roll have that language as their mother tongue as defined in paragraph 90 of the same Report."

The meeting also agreed that as it was a matter, notably, though indirectly, affecting the community a resolution should also be passed condemning, on the ground of its grossly discriminatory effect against Christian schools the following resolution adopted by the State Council on June 5, 1945:—

"Denominational schools shall be subject to the following among other conditions: (a) to be recognized, the school shall have at least 30 pupils of school-going age of the same denomination as the controlling body who reside with their parents within a radius from the school of two miles for boys and one mile for girls and children under eight years of age; (b) to be registered for grant the school shall have at least 30 pupils of school-going age of the same denomination as the controlling body who reside with their parents within a radius from the school of two miles for boys and one mile for girls and children under eight years of age; (c) to continue to receive assistance from public funds the school shall have at least 30 pupils of school-going age of the same denomination as the controlling body, who reside with their parents within a radius from the school of two miles for boys and one mile for girls and children under eight years of age."

At this stage Mr. Speldewinde explained that the conference had been summoned in consequence of a letter from Reverend Brian de Kretser, President of the Galle Burgher Association, suggesting that the Dutch Burgher Union should take the initiative in calling a meeting of all the Burgher Associations to consider and take action regarding impending Educational changes. It was agreed that this should be done and the Secretary was instructed to take action, in consultation with the President of the Dutch Burgher Union, to call such a meeting not later than the middle of September, inviting to it such Associations and bodies as the Burgher Political Association the Burgher Recreation Club, the governing body of the Burgher Education Fund, the Burgher Association and the Galle Burgher Association from whose President the suggestion first emanated, and also inviting generally all members of the community through the medium of the Press. The Agenda of the meeting, it was agreed, should include the two resolutions referred to above, and any other resolution or business of which a week's notice was given on behalf of any of the Associations mentioned above. It was also decided that the Secretary should communicate to Mr. G. A. Wille, M.S.C., the substance of what had transpired at the Conference, with a special request that he should take action on any directions issued by the Director of Education under the Schools Grants (Revised Conditions) Regulations, 1945, if and when those Regulations are passed.

Finally the Secretary was requested to obtain, if possible, reliable statistics as to the present cost of running one of the bigger schools in the island, with primary, post-primary and secondary divisions.

Educational Reforms.

A meeting, sponsored by the Education Committee of the Union, will be held in the Union Hall on **Saturday the 15th of September at 6-30 p.m.** to consider certain aspects of impending changes in the edu-

ational system of the country as they affect the Burgher Community. The meeting is open to all members of the community and the various Burgher Associations have been invited to give their support. It is hoped that as many members of the D.B.U. as possible will be present and that they will make the meeting known to other members of the community who are likely to be interested.

Meetings for September, 1945.

Monday	Sept. 10th	6-30 p.m.	Genealogy	
"	"	"	7-15 p.m.	Finance
Tuesday	"	11th	6-30 p.m.	Education
Monday	"	17th	6-30 p.m.	Social Service
"	"	"	7-15 p.m.	Entertainment
Tuesday	"	18th	6-30 p.m.	General Committee

Events in September.

Thursday	13th,	9 to 11 p.m.	Whist Drive. Re. 1/- per head: guests welcome: names as usual to Mr. F. W. de Vos.
Saturday	15th,	6-30 p.m.	Educational Reforms Meeting. See special announcement.
Thursday	20th,	7 to 10 p.m.	Members' Day.
Saturday	29th,	5-30 p.m.	Children's Day. Details will be announced later.

Notes.

The Entertainment Committee plans to have an evening for children on Saturday, September 29th. Will all members willing to assist in its organisation please contact Mr. F. W. de Vos immediately.

There is no truth in the story that Mr. and Mrs. Bert van Langenberg's second daughter, who was born the day the Japs decided to quit, is to be named Victoreen. We congratulate them.

Mr. F. W. de Vos wishes to bring the Union's stock of gramophone records up to date. Your suggestions, supported, if possible, by details of makes and numbers, will be welcome.

The Schneider Scholarships.

According to information received from the Warden St. Thomas' College the following scholarships will be available for children of members of the Union on the results of the Entrance Examination to be held on the **27th October 1945.**

One Boarding House Scholarship of the value of Rs. 495/- per annum.
One Boarding House Scholarship of the value of Rs. 330/- per annum.
Six Scholarships of the value of Rs. 189/50 each per annum.

N.B. Boys now at St. Thomas', even though they will not take this examination will on the results of their term tests be considered for these Scholarships.

For any further information please apply to the Secretary, Education Committee or to The Warden, St. Thomas' College at Gurutalawe Farm, Welimada.

Minutes of a Meeting of the General Committee held on Tuesday, August 21st, 1945, at 6-30 p m.

Business arising out of the Minutes :

(1) On the suggestion of Mr. C. A. Speldewinde, Secretary of the Education Committee, it was decided that the Education Committee be entrusted with the task of preparing a census of the families of the members of the Union, and the Special Committee appointed for this purpose be dissolved.

Entertainment. The General Committee sanctioned the expenditure of Rs. 320/- for renewing the rubber cushions and replacing the balls on one of the Billiard tables.

Queen Wilhelmina's Birthday. Mr. Beling reported that arrangements had been made to celebrate this event on the 1st of September, by a Dutch Tea, a concert, and the unveiling of the Coat of Arms of the Netherlands Kingdom which had been presented to the Union by the R.N.N. Forces in Ceylon.

Other Business :

(1) The Committee accepted the resignation, of membership of the following:—Messrs. A. W. Beyen, Carl Kelaart, K S. van Rooyen, Lt. Cdr. J. Nieuwenhuyzen and Mr. H. V. vander Straaten.

(2) The receipt of a sum of Rs. 300/- for addition to the Beling Memorial Fund from the Administrator of the will of the late Mr. H. P. Beling was reported: the Committee resolved to place on record its appreciation of the bequest.

(3) The President reported that Dr. E. W. Arndt had given instructions for the transfer to the Union of two of his shares in the Building Company, and said that he had written thanking him for the gift.

Election of Members :

Mr. J. M. H. Toussaint was elected a member after the usual ballot; Mr. K. G. Joachim was re-elected to membership.

Contributions to Social Service Fund from 26-7-45 to 24-8-45.

Sale of refreshments at concert on 21/7/45, Rs. 165.65. *Per Mrs H L. Austin*:—Mrs. E. P. Swan Rs. 30, H. K. de Kretser Rs. 10, C. A. Speldewinde Rs. 10, Miss L. Deutrom Rs. 5, Mrs. H. Wambeek Rs. 2, Dr. E. R. Loos Rs. 1 50, Mrs. B. C. Kelaart Re. 1, Dr. H. A. Dirckze Rs. 2.—Total Rs. 227'15.

Information Wanted.

The Social Service Committee will shortly be applying to the Charity Commissioner for grants at the standard rates for distribution to needy widows and their children. Members are requested to inform Mrs. A. L. B. Ferdinand, Hon. Secretary of the Social Service Committee of any deserving persons for whose benefit application might be made.