APPENDIX
APPENDIX- I


"YOUR HONOUR,

"The Resolution which I beg to move proposes nothing new. It simply recommends the use of that old universal thing, the first condition of life - I mean the pure air, the virtue of which is little recognized, perhaps owing to its abundance in nature. It only emphasizes what medical men are always preaching as the primary requisite for a healthy existence.

"Nor do I ask for a novel experiment; for your Honour knows that an open-air School is not a mere idea with me. It is not a picture drawn by imagination from the accounts ashramas and institutions of ancient India. To me it is fact, an actual thing which I have made, tried, and found sufficiently to stand the test. I would not have ventured to press the Government for its adoption as a system, were I not myself convinced of its usefulness and suitability to the purpose for which it is intended.

"The subject of my resolution is in the first place educational and as such it may fairly admit of an academic treatment for which, I am afraid, the present is not an appropriate occasion. But at any rate I wish to make it clear at the outset that I claim no originality in the experiment of the open-air system in the education of our youths. The Indian educational system of bygone days offers a precedent for this and the open-air method has long survived the many changes that have come over the country and has still been lingering in our village Patshalas and Tols though it has now been almost supplanted by closed costly buildings. I remember how in my childhood I received my lessons in the village patshala under
the spreading Banyan tree which could give accommodation to children of all castes, high and low, each occupying his seat separately. In the sacred shed of that historic tree the distinction of caste among the children did almost vanish, a fact which contributed in no small measure to the greater degree of literacy in Orissa."

"I believe, Sir, most of the members of this Council are aware that the Victoria Satyabadi School, with which I am associated from its inception, is run on open-air lines. It has passed the stage of experiment and during the last ten years of its existence its open air character has not only given satisfaction to the students and teachers but has also impressed those who have favoured the institution with their kind visits. From the result obtained at Satyabadi I feel myself justified in commending the open-air living and teaching for general acceptance."

"I think, Sir, I have not brought this resolution before the Council too early. The time has come when Open-air methods should be introduced in our Schools where and when it can be conveniently and advantageously followed. Influenza, tuberculosis and many other infections and epidemics are causing terrible havoc in the country and medical opinion is unanimous that the use of the open air is a chief remedy for these diseases. Our boys should learn to value the fresh pure air properly, and when its importance is brought home to them, they will be our chief agents in making the people appreciate its efficacy."

"There is also another consideration which is not less important - I mean the cost of education. In the meeting of the Select Committee on the compulsory Primary Education Bill there
arose the question of expenditure on education which necessarily involved the subject of School buildings. It cannot be denied that the importance attached to School-houses in our present system entails an expenditure which is by no means insignificant. If the country is to be studded with Primary Schools, as it must be before primary education is made effectively free and compulsory, enormous expenditure has to be incurred on account of buildings, unless there is a change in the existing method and ideas. Everybody who has experience in organising a School, knows very well that the initial chief difficulty is the building. Complaint is often heard that inspecting officers look more to the building and furniture than to the actual teaching, as if bricks and wood possess all the virtues necessary to make education efficient and effective, who does not know that for some defects in the School-houses grants are often suspended, and sometimes Schools are reduced in status and occasionally threatened with abolition."

"That more money is spent on buildings than is necessary has often been a matter of public complaint. In a country with the traditions of forest universities such a complaint cannot be said to have no meaning. The large, rather the lavish, expenditure on School buildings has produced an undesirable impression on the minds of the people, which is responsible for the suggestion often made in several quarters that much of the increased educational allotments is deliberately wasted on houses and furniture in the name of efficiency with the result that the expansion of education has been extremely slow and does not satisfy the growing demand of the country for a wider diffusion of knowledge. In these circumstances, I respectfully submit that it would be not a day too soon to take steps to
minimize the cost of buildings."

"From the reply given by Government to a question of mine on the subject, it appears that a type plan for middle schools costs Rs. 6,500 and the cost of construction of buildings for the Government High Schools varies from Rs. 1,06,000 to Rs. 1,42,000. These are astounding figures, of course, for a country whose poverty and ignorance make it imperative that its education should be as cheap as possible. It may be said that for private schools such heavy sums may not be necessary, but Government Schools are the models and departmental authorities will generally demand that private institutions should follow this model. It was to meet this demand that we had to spend a large sum of money on the buildings of the Satyabadi School unnecessarily and quite against our will. Though we followed the open-air system from the very beginning, we could not advocate its cause successfully without having a building, for we would then be misunderstood as trying to make a virtue of a necessity. Many distinguished officers of the department visited the School and seemed to have been favourably impressed with its open air conditions, but none of them suggested any change in the School buildings which would reduce the cost of construction until Dr. A. Lankester, M. D. (London), on special duty for tuberculosis inquiry, Indian Research Fund Association, expressed his regret at our buildings being so out of harmony with the general open-air life. He writes:

"In connection with my work, I am naturally interested to a special degree in all attempts to familiarize the people with the work under open-air conditions and it was delightful to see how thoroughly the School was being run on simple open-air lines without any sacrifice of real efficiency."
"It was difficult to avoid some feeling of regret that the new buildings necessitated by the recent affiliation of the School to the University should be of a character so different to the remainder of the School. One would have thought that these buildings also might have been of a simpler character affording necessary protection under more completely open-air conditions."

"The opinion of so eminent an authority gave us no small support and now we found ourselves in a position to continue our open-air work with some security and confidence. I may, however, be permitted here to take this opportunity to thank the Hon'ble Mr. J. G. Jennings, C.I.E., who visited the Satyabadi School in his capacity as Director of Public Instruction, for his sincere and sympathetic appreciation of our work on open-air conditions, and it is no small satisfaction to me that since his visit to the Satyabadi School, he has got a plan prepared for primary Schools on open-air lines and forwarded copies thereof by his circular letter of the 27th May, 1918 to all Chairmen of District Boards of the Province. But it is a pity that the matter did not proceed further and it did not receive the consideration of the local authorities to which it was undoubtedly entitled. It need hardly be said that the step taken by the Director of Public Instruction amounts to a practical acceptance of the system I propose. As a matter of fact, the Hon'ble Mr. J. G. Jennings called his plan 'the plan of the open-air primary schools'. My resolution asks for a wider application of this plan and proposes to make the secondary Schools run on open-air lines. In this I am supported by another educational officer of thought and independence of Judgement. Mr. R. McCombe, M.A., Inspector of Schools, Orissa
Division in his inspection note on the Satyabadi School observes:

"However, a valuable lesson has been learnt from the experiment here made. It is clear that, a high School in India can be sufficiently conducted through the greater part of the year in the open-air, provided it possesses a piece of land shaded by plenty of trees. And it appears that for use in the rains a building of the simplest description, consisting mainly of roof and partition wall is all that is required."

"From the experience I have been able to gather by practical working and the suggestions received from the action and opinion of high educational and medical authorities, I think, I am now in a position to lay out a scheme for the formation of open-air classes. Places of natural advantage should always be sought for the work. Almost very village in this country can afford one such spot. The shady mango topes in our rural areas would be exceedingly suited to characteristic open air classes where natural shade is wanting, trees may be grown."

"Buildings cannot, however, be dispensed with altogether. They would be necessary for wet weather. But they should be of the simplest description. The wall should be only four feet high but the rooms should be separated by partition walls raised high up to the roof. The roof should be so sloped as to cover a spacious verandah outside the class. The roof may be of any material, straw or tile, that may be cheap and available in the locality. A building of this description does not materially differ from the Hon'ble Mr. Jennings' plan of open-air primary schools, which also answers to the character and description of buildings indicated by Mr. McCombe. Some of the classes of the Satyabadi School are held in buildings of this type and they are
found to work comfortably."

"In a conference of the Deputy Inspectors of Schools of the Orissa Division, I was given the pleasure and privilege to propose planting of trees in School compounds. It was accepted, and at the instance of the then Inspector of Schools, Orissa Division, Mr. W. V. Duke, President of the Conference, the department has given effect to the proposal, for which I am sincerely thankful."

"Thus the steps hitherto taken by the department meet my resolution half way. Its acceptance by Government would only encourage the department to follow up these steps further and would give educational officers the authority, and the public the sanction, to workout the open-air idea with great completeness and courage."

"Not only in Schools but also in hostels open-air lines should be followed. Hostels attached to Government high schools are costly buildings. Consequently the boarders have to pay a high rate of seat rents. The wisdom of the system is very doubtful. Most of our students come from villages where they live in thatched houses and huts. When they come to the School hostel, they find themselves under changed conditions. The change may and does, no doubt bring them greater comfort, which to most of them is a luxury. In a few years the boarder becomes so accustomed to living in such costly surroundings that he probably begins to look down upon his own village and its people. Moreover, except a very few of the students, others in their after-life are unable to afford to live in such costly quarters, and discontent throughout their lives is an inevitable result. It is certainly not a divine discontent. I admit, education should raise the standard of living. But plain living and high thinking should be a better and more desirable standard
to be placed before our students."

"I believe I have sufficiently explained the importance of an open-air School from economic considerations. If the Government think that costly buildings will in the long run secure greater economy, they may raise such buildings. But the less the cost, the better, and the savings thus made can be utilised in other directions, say on a library and on tuition, to effect real improvement in the efficiency of the School. I urge specially on behalf of private Schools. I do not doubt that their management under completely open-air conditions will remove in a considerable degree the financial difficulties which they have to face in the beginning of their life and which in many cases render their development almost impossible."

"The importance of the sanitary consideration already indicated should not be overlooked. On this point I have to refer again to the Satyabadi School, and I may be pardoned for such frequent references which in the circumstances of the case become unavoidable. Most of our boys are poor. They have to live on simple poor diet, but they are not poor in physique for all that. I respectfully invite your Honour to bear testimony to their physical strength and agility. They were free from influenza which was prevalent on all sides at their very door. If there be one thing more than another to which the healthy cheerful life of the Satyabadi students is due, I would unhesitatingly point to the fresh open-air in which they live, move and have their being. Allow me, Sir, to say that we have so long been courting insanitation, ill-health, dyspepsia, loss of eye-sight and all such complaints at a very heavy price. Let us now pull down the walls of our Schools so that our children may live a healthy and simple life in a freer atmosphere, as the
children of nature. Let not the place of instruction give a sense of confinement to the child. Let it be at once his School, his playground, and his place of recreation."

"As a place of instruction an open-air School is best suited for teaching almost all subjects that do not require experiment in a Laboratory. Nature study which forms so important a part in a child's education, can be done successfully only outside the School room. An open-air school affords greater scope to the teacher to carry on the direct method of teaching. Lessons on poetry, drawing, botany, hygiene can be imparted in gardens and groves in the open air with better effect. Let the student see living nature herself with his own eyes and enjoy the sweet sounds and screen beauties around him. Such a direct contact with nature would lend his lessons a life and a force which would be utterly lacking in a closed classroom. It would certainly expand his mind and bring it into communion with the 'spirit which is in the wood'. Is this not a higher standard of living, worthy of being sought at the sacrifice of the luxury of living in a place?"

"Considered from any standpoint, an open-air school proves itself to be a distinct advantage. 'It is strange', says Mr. McCombe, 'that it has taken so many generations to make this discovery'. The discovery has, however, been made and a truth found out. It is now for the members of this council and for your Honour's Government either to receive or reject this truth."