SECTION FIVE

MATTER AND MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION
Chapter XVI

ORIENTAL VERSUS WESTERN EDUCATION

When the East India Company undertook the responsibility of educating Indians, the question arose whether European or 'Oriental' learning was to form "the stuff" of education to be imparted under official auspices. A serious controversy arose at the beginning of the nineteenth century over this question and it ended in 1839 with the Minute of Lord Auckland. Another important controversy that arose was over the medium of instruction. The present section deals with these two important issues.

It was Charles Grant, the Scottish Missionary, who had proposed for the first time the introduction of the Protestant Christianity of England and the arts and sciences of Europe as the remedy for the Hindu 'ignorance'. Under his plan, English was to be the channel for the communication of
the "superior lights." He said:

"It is perfectly in the power of this country (England) by degrees, to impart to the Hindus our language; afterwards through that medium, to make them acquainted with our easy literary compositions, upon a variety of subjects; and, let not the idea hastily excite derision, progressively with the simple elements of our arts, our philosophy and religion. These acquisitions would silently undermine and at length subvert the fabric of error; and all the objections that may be apprehended against such a change, are, it is confidently believed, capable of a solid answer. The first communication, and the instrument of introducing the rest, must be the English language; this is a key which will open to them a world of new ideas, and policy alone might have impelled us, long since, to put it into their hands." (1)

Grant wanted the co-operation of the Government in executing his plan and he saw little difficulty in transplanting the arts and sciences and mechanical inventions of the West into India. Grant was cautious in his plan and he did not anticipate any immediate effects of Western education. He observed that the progress of Western education in course of time would bring "the outward prosperity, and internal peace of society among the Hindus: Men would be resorted to the use of their reason; all the advantages of happy soil, climate, and situation, would be observed and improved; the comforts and conveniences of life would be increased; the cultivation of mind, and rational intercourse, valued; the people would

rise in the scale of human beings; and as they found their character, their state, and their comforts improved, they would prize more highly, the security and the happiness of a well ordered society." (2) Such a change, Sir Charles Grant hoped in 1792, would correct the "sad disorders" of the Hindu society.

The policy of the rulers in India did not, however, favour the proposals of Charles Grant as the basis of an official system of education. Further the trend of events in Europe during the later part of the eighteenth century when Europe was in the grip of an enthusiastic vogue for Oriental languages and classics had its influence on the ruling authorities in India who turned to the revival and encouragement of Oriental literature and learning as the most appropriate mode of fulfilling their duty. Moreover the British rulers in India found it safe in an alien country to draw the sympathies and affections of the people by patronising their Oriental literature rather than introducing the "superior lights" of the West. The policy of encouraging Oriental literature and learning, known as the Orientalist policy in education, was the official policy of the British rulers in India from the beginning of their rule till it was changed in 1835.

2. Ibid. p. 10.
Initiating the orientalist policy Lord Warren Hastings had founded in 1780 the Calcutta Madrasa or Mahommedan College with the object of promoting "the study of the Arabic and Persian languages, and of the Mahomedan law." (3) The Hindu College at Benares was founded during the regime of Earl Cornwallis "for the preservation and cultivation of the Laws, Literature and Religion of that nation, at this centre of their faith, and the common resort of all their tribes." (4) These two institutions were the proto-types of others that were subsequently established. They foreshadowed an educational policy, the object of which was, for the most part, to communicate to the Hindus their own learning through the medium of Sanskrit and to the Mahommedans their own learning through the medium of Arabic and Persian. This policy of the Government was quite in opposition to the proposals of Charles Grant which aimed at a mental and moral reform by the propagation of a foreign religion and foreign knowledge through a foreign medium.

The missionaries in England [154] criticised the policy of the Company's Government in India and argued that the

4. Letter from J. Duncan, Resident, Benares, No. 17, dated 1st January 1792, to the Earl Cornwallis, K.G., Governor-General in Council.
policy of the Government was wrong and un-Christian. The officials of the Company, on the other hand, were agitating for a bolder move in expanding Oriental education and asking for larger funds for the improvement of the classical learning. Lord Minto, an admirer of Oriental literature lamented the sad state of affairs in his Minute. He said that

"It is a common remark that science and literature are in a progressive state of decay among the natives of India. From every enquiry which I have been enabled to make on this interesting subject that remark appears to me but too well founded. The number of the learned is not only diminished but the circle of learning even among those who still devote themselves to it appears to be considerably contracted. The abstract sciences are abandoned, polite literature neglected and no branch of learning cultivated but what is connected with the peculiar religious doctrines of the people. The immediate consequence of this state of things is the desire to lose and even actual loss of many valuable books; and it is to be apprehended that unless Government interpose with a fostering hand the revival of letters may shortly become hopeless from a want of books or of persons capable of explaining them." (5)

Minto felt that the study of Oriental literature would be useful to the Western nations themselves. He lamented that a "nation particularly distinguished for its love and successful cultivation of letters in other parts of the empire should have failed to extend its fostering care to the literature of the Hindoos, and to aid in opening to the learned in Europe the repositories of that literature." (6) Minto associated the moral improvement of the country with the resuscitation

5. Minute, dated 6th March 1811, by Lord Minto, Evidence of 1832, Appendix I, No. 3 (325/486)
6. Ibid.
of Oriental learning to its former flourishing state. Minto's Minute attributed a moral efficacy to Oriental learning and as such it marked the peak of stark, unadulterated Orientalism in the educational policy of the State in the early nineteenth century.

The Charter Act of 1813 required the Company to allot annually a sum of not less than one lakh of rupees out of its surplus revenues for "the revival and improvement of literature, and the encouragement of the learned natives of India, and for the introduction and promotion of a knowledge of the science among the inhabitants of the British territories in India." (7) The interpretation of this clause was the subject matter of a great dispute later. In June 1814 the Court conveyed to the Supreme Government in India their views and sentiments as to the mode in which they wished the enactment to be given effect to. As regards the disputed clause of the Act the Court said that "the clause presents two distinct propositions for consideration: first, the encouragement of the learned natives of India, and the revival and improvement of literature; secondly, the promotion of a knowledge of the sciences amongst the inhabitants of that country." The Court pleaded that due encouragement should be given to

the study of the Sanskrit language and they desired that
"the teachers who may be employed under your authority for
this purpose, may be selected from those amongst the natives
who may have made some proficiency in the sciences in ques-
tion, and that their recompense should be liberal." (8)
The emphasis was on the encouragement of the Oriental learn-
ing though the Court referred to the promotion of European
scientific knowledge at some distant date.

The idea of engraving Western learning with Oriental
learning was introduced by Mr. J. H. Harington, who was subse-
quently appointed a member of the General Committee of Public
Instruction. He wrote a paper in 1814 in which he stated
that "to allure the learned natives of India to the study
of European science and literature, we must, I think, engravin
this study upon their own established methods of scientific
and literary instruction; and particularly in all the public
colleges and schools maintained or encouraged by Government,
good translations of the most useful European compositions
on the subjects taught in them, may, I conceive, be introduced
with the greatest advantage." (9) Harington's idea of engravi-
ing the European knowledge on that of India formed the quin-

8. Public Letter from the Court of Directors to the Governor-
General-in-Council of Bengal, dated 3rd June 1814.

9. Harington, "Observations suggested by the provision in the
late Act of Parliament for the promotion of science and
literature amongst the inhabitants of the British possessions
in India" dated 19th June 1814.
tessence of the Orientalist educational policy in India.

The Orientalist policy was soon translated into action. At the beginning of the nineteenth century Mr. Ellerton established some vernacular schools in Bengal. Mr. May, a Missionary, began his first Vernacular school in the Dutch Fort of Chinsura. Messrs Pearson and Harley, who were Missionaries, in close association with the Government established a number of vernacular schools between Kalna and Chandranagore. Some of the best educational works in the vernacular were composed. The Calcutta School Book Society and the Calcutta School Society started in 1817 and 1818 respectively, aimed at the encouragement of vernacular education.

While the Orientalist formula was being translated into action with the establishment of various types of vernacular institutions there were events in Bengal which were out of harmony with Orientalist ideas and principles. The chief among these was the rise of the famous Hindu College or Vidyasala of Calcutta. There were three factors that contributed to the rise of the Hindu College, designed chiefly for the promotion of knowledge of European literature and science. In the first instance, the contact with an alien civilisation roused a curiosity regarding the source or sources of the European superiority observed by Indians. This idea is well
brought out by Mr. W. W. Bird who said:

"The Natives have an idea that we have gained every-	hing by our superior knowledge; that it is this
superiority which has enabled us to conquer India, and
to keep it; and they want to put themselves as much
as they can upon an equality with us. Therefore they
come to us, and are desirous of obtaining this know-
ledge on any terms; they do not mind the consequences;
they go to the Missionary schools, where they learn
the Bible, and run the risk of being converted for the
sake of obtaining the knowledge which they obtain
there." (10)

A second factor was the reformist movement of the great Raja
Ram Mohan Roy. "I may be fully justified in saying," decla-
red Ram Mohan Roy in 1824, on the occasion of answering
certain queries from a Unitarian Minister of Harvard College
(United States) on the subject of the prospects of Christi-
nity in India, "that two-thirds of the native population of
Bengal would be exceedingly glad to see their children educa-
ted in English learning." (11) The utilitarian motive of
finding jobs in the subordinate ranks of the East India
Company was yet another factor which was responsible for the
demand for Western knowledge. All these factors helped Raja
Ram Mohan Roy, the reformer, David Heron, the philanthropist,
and Sir Edward Hyde East, Chief Judge of the Supreme Court

10. Evidence, 30th June 1853; Second Report from the Select
Committee of the House of Lords on Indian Territories,
Minutes of Evidence, session 1852-53. Q. 7183.

of Calcutta to found the Calcutta Vidyalaya. The primary object of the institution was declared to be "the tuition of the sons of the respectable Hindus, in the English and Indian languages, and in the literature and science of Europe and Asia."

Though the officials in India followed the Orientalist policy in education because of the limited resources at the disposal of the Company's Government, the elite of Bengal demanded English education. The General Committee of Public Instruction for the Bengal Presidency which was constituted by a Government Resolution in 1823, included members like H.T. Prinsep, the supporter of the Orientalist policy, and H.H. Wilson, a great Oriental scholar. In their letter of instruction to the General Committee, dated 31st July 1823, the Government referred "to the better instruction of the people, to the introduction of useful knowledge including the sciences and arts of Europe, and to the improvement of their moral character" as the grand object to the attainment of which the Committee was to direct its endeavours. There was no explicit reference to Oriental learning and this later led to the argument that the Government of the day did not contemplate an Orientalist policy in education and it was the General Committee which was responsible for the
different course actually pursued.

Very soon after its establishment, the Committee found that there was considerable opposition to its Orientalist policy. The first attack came from a few enlightened Indians led by Raja Ram Mohan Roy. Raja Ram Mohan Roy submitted a memorial to the Governor General and urged that the proposals for establishing a Sanskrit College at Calcutta should be abandoned and the Government should "promote a more liberal and enlightened system of instruction; embracing mathematics, natural philosophy, chemistry, anatomy, with other useful sciences; which may be accomplished with the sum proposed by employing a few gentlemen of talents and learning educated in Europe and providing a college furnished with necessary books, instruments, and other apparatus." (12) No heed was paid to this address by the Government and the plan for the establishment of the Sanskrit College at Calcutta was carried out.

The Directors too were disappointed with the results of the Orientalist policy. They propounded their own views on the kind of learning they desired to see imparted. They said that "with respect to the sciences it is worse than a waste of time to employ persons either to teach or to learn.

12. Address, dated 11th December 1823, from Raja Ram Mohan Roy.
them in the state in which they are found in the Oriental books. As far as they any historical documents may be found in the Oriental languages, what is desirable is that they should be translated, and this, it is evident, will best be accomplished by Europeans who have acquired the requisite knowledge. Beyond these branches what remains in Oriental literature is poetry; but it has never been thought necessary to establish colleges for the cultivation of poetry, nor is it certain that this would be the most effectual expedient for the attainment of the end." (13) The Court of Directors, therefore, considered that the plan of the Oriental institution was wrong and said that the great end should not have been to teach Hindu learning, but useful learning. They said:

"We apprehend that the plan of the institutions to the improvement of which our attention is now directed was originally and fundamentally erroneous. The great end should not have been to teach Hindoo learning, but useful learning. No doubt in teaching useful learning to the Hindoons or Mahomedans, Hindoo media or Mahomedan media, so far as they were found the most effectual, would have been proper to be employed and Hindoo and Mahomedan prejudices would have needed to be consulted while everything which was useful in Hindoo or Mahomedan literature it would have been proper to retain; nor would there have been any insuperable difficulty in introducing under these reservations a system of instruction from which great advantage might have been derived. In professing on the other hand to establish seminaries for the purpose of teaching mere Hindoo or mere Mahomedan literature, you bound yourselves to

13. Despatch from the Court of Directors, dated 13th February 1824, to the Governor General in Council, Bengal, paragraph 32.
teach a great deal of what was frivolous, not a little of what was purely mischievous and a small remainder indeed in which utility was in any way concerned." (14)

The strictures of the Court of Directors did not go unanswered. The Directors urged a bold advance and were backed up, not very zealously, by the Governor General. The Committee, in close touch with the majority of public opinion and the view of the pandits, hesitated to embark on so large a measure of innovation. The Committee vindicated the course they had pursued so far. They urged that the Hindus and Muslims still had "vigorous prejudices" against European learning, and pointed out that Oriental literature was not to be summarily condemned so far as it had a utility of its own, and that the use of classical language as a medium of instruction was unavoidable. They added that there were neither books nor teachers available just then to impart instruction in European sciences through such a medium. They were concentrating on the preparation of such books and the training of such teachers, and thus would be able, ere long, to comply with the Directors' instruction fully. The plea was accepted by the Directors and the Committee continued their work of encouraging classical education.

The Committee of Public Instruction carried on undisturbed

14. Ibid., paragraph 83.
their experiment in Oriental education for several years. They printed a number of Oriental works and translated several important scientific works from English into the Oriental classical languages. They also introduced the study of English into the Oriental institutions under their control. In reviewing the operations of the General Committee in the year 1827, the Bengal Government wrote to the Court of Directors with regret that instruction in the English language had not yet become a part of the course of study in the institutions under their control. They said that "considering that the omission should be supplied without further delay, we directed the General Committee to give their best attention to the means of carrying into execution the highly important and desirable object of introducing English tuition into our principal seminary for the education of youth of the Mahomedan persuasion." (15)

The General Committee did not introduce any particular change or innovation in the Benares College when it was placed under their control. Lord Combermere, however, in a Minute of 20th August 1827, reviewing the operations of the General Committee for the past year, referred to the Benares College in the following terms:

15. Letter from the Governor General in Council of Bengal to the Court of Directors, dated 21st August 1829, paragraph 3.
"The Benares College continues to exhibit the same diligence in the cultivation of studies purely national, that it has displayed for some years past. Arrangements have been also made to encourage to a greater extent, the useful and necessary study of the Laws of the Hindus at this institution, as well as to obtain a more general and finished conversancy with the Sanskrit language."

Captain Thoresby, the Secretary of the College, recommended to the General Committee the establishment of a class or classes for instruction in European knowledge through the English language. Captain Thoresby said about his plan thus: "Of the feasibility of the plan I entertain no doubt, for not only does no prejudice exist in the neighbourhood against the English language and literature, but I believe there is a general desire to be acquainted with both." (16) The General Committee agreed with the suggestion of Captain Thoresby but the General Committee preferred the plan of establishing wherever practicable an English seminary on a distinct foundation. The Orientalists were not very reluctant to encourage the diffusion of European learning and the English language among the people they sought to educate.

The General Committee recommended to the Government the formation of a "Literary Establishment" to be designated the Delhi College. They laid down the principles on which the institutions was to be conducted by the Local Agents in Delhi. The Committee directed that the attention of the students

16. Letter from Captain Thoresby to the General Committee, dated 25th March 1829.
should be especially directed, in the first instance, to the command of their own language, and to compositions in a classical and unaffected style of Hindustani. The next step should be a similar command of the Persian language and the course should terminate with an attempt to give the best scholars, at least an equal conversancy with the language of Arabia. The Delhi College founded in 1825 made satisfactory progress within a short period. In 1828 the General Committee recommended the formation of a "separate English class at Delhi" though they were not in favour of a similar class being appended in the existing oriental colleges earlier. The Government approved of the scheme of the Committee and reported to the Court of Directors in 1829 as follows:

"We expressed ourselves decidedly favourable to the policy of disseminating our language, science and literature throughout India, to the utmost extent, which the Funds available for the purpose, and the obligation incumbent on us of cherishing the Native learning of the country, will permit — concurring with the General Committee in their view that the best mode of encouraging and promoting the study would be the formation of separate English colleges rather than the attaching of classes for the cultivation of that language to Institutions already existing. We entirely approved the plan of the new Seminary proposed for Delhi." (17)

In the same manner the Government also agreed with the recommendation of the General Committee with regard to

Another side of the Orientalist activities was the printing of Oriental literature. The Calcutta Education Press under the control of the General Committee confined its activities to the printing of books on Hindu and Muslim law. It published a series of Sanskrit works on Law, Literature, Rhetoric, Logic, Vedanta, Grammar and Mathematics. Besides this purely Orientalist side of its activities the Press undertook some "useful publications" such as Brîgge's work on Algebra translated into Arabic, the first books of Euclid both in Persian and Arabic, a new edition of Wilson's Sanskrit and English Dictionary, a short treatise on Logarithms, another on Surveying, etc. In May 1830 the General Committee submitted for the sanction of the Government an ambitious proposal for the publication of Mahabharata, the great epic. The project could not be undertaken in spite of the Government's sanction on account of their change of educational policy.

Public opinion in India was rapidly growing in favour of English education. This increasing demand could not be long neglected by the General Committee of Public Instruction and steps had to be taken to meet the demand to some extent at least. The Committee tried to incorporate as much of
European scientific knowledge as practicable into the indigenous learning. But this transfusion of Western science and knowledge into the Oriental languages involved a slow and laborious process and the Committee later decided on having separate English classes appended to Oriental institutions. Even this concession did not satisfy the people and the Orientalist policy began to lose favour both with the British officials in India and the general public. There was a split in the Committee itself. Out of the ten members of the General Committee, five supported the policy of giving encouragement to Oriental literature; they came to be known as the Orientalist party. The other five known as Anglicists pointed to the growing Indian feeling in favour of English education and accused the Committee of withholding it from the people.

Thus started the famous controversy between the Orientalists and the Anglicists over the 'stuff' of education. The Orientalists argued that the Charter grant of 1815 was assigned for "the revival and improvement of literature", which could only mean Oriental literature, and the "encouragement of the learned natives of India; by which Oriental scholars alone could have been intended." They held the view that English education meant only a smattering of it, and the question was
between "a profound knowledge of Sanskrit and Arabic literature on the one side, and a superficial knowledge of the rudiments of English on the other. They felt that "the classical languages were "absolutely necessary for the improvement of the Vernacular dialects." The Orientalists contended that "as we have succeeded the native chiefs who were the natural patrons of Indian learning, we are bound to give that aid to Oriental scholars which they would have done had they never been displaced by us."

The Anglicists replied that the grant of 1813 was not only for "the encouragement of the learned natives of India" but also "for the introduction and promotion of a knowledge of the sciences", by which European sciences alone could have been intended. They said that the example of the Hindu College showed, that Indians could acquire a command of the English language and familiarity with its literature and science "to an extent rarely equalled by any schools in Europe." They said that "the best test of what they can do is what they have done; that all that is required is to impregnate the national mind with knowledge, but by adhering to Oriental education the national mind would for ages be kept "in a state of worse than Egyptian bondage, in order that the Vernacular dialects may be improved from congenial instead of from ungenial sources."
It was quite unnecessary, even if it was practical to have able pundits and Maulvis versed in English to propagate a taste for European knowledge, as such taste had been created already, and the people were greedy for English education; and the Government were not "bound to perpetuate the system patronised by their predecessors, merely because it was patronised by them, however little it may have been calculated to promote the welfare of the people." (18)

The greatest point of controversy between the two parties was in relation to the quality and value of Oriental learning. The Anglicists condemned all Oriental learning as a loose mass of errors and myths, puerilities and absurdities. The search for truth in Oriental learning was compared to the search for a needle in a stack of hay. Trevelyan neatly set forth his arguments in favour of the Anglicists. He said:

"The Hindu system of learning contains so much truth as to have raised the nation to its present point of civilisation, and to have kept it there for ages without retrograding, and so much error as to have prevented it from making any sensible advance during the same long period. Under this system, history is made up of fables, in which the learned in vain endeavour to trace the thread of authentic narrative; its medicine is quackery; its geography and astronomy are monstrous absurdity; its law is composed of loose contradictory maxims, and barbarous and ridiculous penal provisions; its religion is idolatry; its immorality is such as might be expected from the example of the Gods and the precepts of the religion... The peculiar wonder of the Hindu system is,

18. C.E. Trevelyan, On the Education of the people of India. (Calcutta, 1833), pp. 95-142.
not that it contains so much or so little true knowledge, but that it has been so skilfully contrived for arresting the progress of the human mind, as to exhibit it at the end of two thousand years fixed at nearly the precise point at which it was first moulded. The Mahommedan system of learning is many degrees better, and resembles that which existed among the nations of Europe before the invention of printing; so far does even this fall short of the knowledge with which Europe is now blessed; These are the systems under which the influence of which the people of India have become what they are. They have been weighed in the balance, and have been found wanting. To perpetuate them, is to perpetuate the degradation and misery of the people. Our duty is not to teach, but to unteach them — not to rivet the shackles which have for ages bound down the minds of our subjects, but allow them to drop off by the lapse of time and the progress of events.” (19)

Though the Orientalists and Anglicists were equally balanced, the Orientalists in point of distinction were, at first, stronger, including as they did among them such men as Wilson and Shakespeare. But the arrival of Macaulay in 1834, and his able advocacy of the cause of the Anglicists turned the scale in their favour; and the discussion was at last terminated by his famous minute.

Lord Macaulay argued first on the legal aspect of the dispute. He said that "the words on which the supporters of the old system rely do not bear them out, and other words follow which seem to be quite decisive on the other side. This lakh of rupees is set apart not only for 'reviving literature in India', the phrase on which their whole inter-
pretation is founded, but also 'for the introduction and promotion of a knowledge of the sciences among the inhabitants of the British territories' — words which are alone sufficient to authorise all the changes I contend." (20) Macaulay did not, however, directly assail the Orientalist interpretation with fact or argument and went to the extent of saying that if his interpretation were not accepted, he was willing to propose an Act rescinding Section 43 of the Charter Act of 1813.

Macaulay differed from the Orientalists regarding the continuance of the institutions of Oriental learning. "The grants which are made from the public purse for the encouragement of literature differ in no respect from the grants which are made from the same purse for other objects of real or supposed utility." He asked:

"We found a sanatorium on a spot which we suppose to be healthy. Do we thereby pledge ourselves to keep a sanatorium there if the result should not answer our expectations?

We commence the erection of a pier. Is it a violation of the public faith to stop the works if we afterwards see reason to believe that the building will be useless?

In the same way, he said, "to talk of a Government pledging itself to teach certain languages and certain sciences, though those languages may become useless, though those sciences may

20. Minute by the Honourable T.B. Macaulay, dated the 2nd February 1835, paragraph 3.
be exploded, seems to me quite unmeaning. There is not a single word in any public instrument from which it can be inferred that the Indian Government ever intended to give any pledge on this subject, or ever considered the destination of these funds as unalterably fixed."... If I consider this plea merely as a set form of words, regularly used both in England and in India, in defence of every abuse for which no other plea can be set up." (21)

Macaulay then argued on the superiority of Western knowledge over Oriental literature. He admitted his ignorance of the Arabic and Sanskrit literatures but he had never found one among those distinguished by their proficiency in the Eastern tongues who could deny that a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia. He said:

"It will hardly be disputed, I suppose, that the department of literature in which the Eastern writers stand highest is poetry. And I certainly never met with any Orientalist who ventured to maintain that the Arabic and Sanskrit poetry could be compared to that of the great European nations. But when we pass from works of imagination to works in which facts are recorded and general principles investigated the superiority of the Europeans becomes absolutely immeasurable. It is, I believe, no exaggeration to say that all the historical information which has been collected from all the books written in the Sanskrit language is less

27. Ibid, paragraph 5.
valuable than what may be found in the most paltry abridgements used at preparatory schools in England. In every branch of physical and moral philosophy the relative position of the two nations is nearly the same." (22)

Macaulay then quoted examples from history to prove his case. "I speak of Russia," he said. There is now in that country a large educated class abounding with persons fit to serve the state in the highest functions, and in no wise inferior to the most accomplished men who adorn the best circles of Paris and London. There is reason to hope that this vast Empire,"..."may in the time of our grandchildren, be pressing close on France and Britain in the career of improvement."

The reason for the progress of Russia, according to Macaulay, was:

"Not by flattering national prejudices; not by feeding the mind of the young Muscovite with the old women's stories which his rude fathers had believed; not by filling his head with lying legends about St. Nicholas; not by encouraging him to study the great question, whether the world was or not created on the 13th of September; not by calling him "a learned native" when he had mastered all these points of knowledge, but by teaching him those foreign languages in which the greatest mass of information had been laid up, and thus putting all that information within his reach. The languages of Western Europe civilised Russia. I cannot doubt that they will do for the Hindu what they have done for the Tartar." (23)

Macaulay considered that the money spent on the Arabic and Sanskrit Colleges was not merely a dead loss to the

22. Ibid, paragraph 11.

23. Ibid, paragraph 16.
cause of truth but was the bounty-money paid to raise champions of error. "It goes to form a nest not merely of helpless place-hunters, but of bigots promoted alike by passion and by interest to raise a cry against every useful scheme of education." (24) He also considered that the money spent on printing Oriental literature was a waste. He said that about 20,000 rupees a year were spent in adding "fresh masses of waste paper to a hoard which, one should think, was already sufficiently ample." He did not agree with the argument that the study of Sanskrit and Arabic was important because the sacred books were written in that language. He said:

"Assuredly, it is the duty of the British Government in India to be not only tolerant, but neutral on all religious questions. But to encourage the study of a literature, admitted to be of small intrinsic value, only because that literature inculcates the most serious errors on the most important subjects, is a course hardly reconcilable with reason, with morality, or even with that very neutrality which ought, as we all agree, to be sacredly preserved. It is confessed that a language is barren of useful knowledge. We are to teach it because it is fruitful of monstrous superstitions. We are to teach false history, false astronomy, false medicine, because we find them in company with a false religion." (25)

Regarding the argument that Sanskrit and Arabic languages should be studied as the languages of the law Macaulay pointed out that the best course for the Government would be to codify


Hindu and Muslim laws in English, and not to incur heavy expenditure on the maintenance of the Oriental institutions.

Macaulay strongly recommended that the object of educational policy in India should be the spread of Western learning. He wanted the funds used for the encouragement of Oriental learning to be diverted for Western learning. He was even prepared to retire if the opinion of the Governor General in Council was in favour of continuing the existing system of Oriental education. Macaulay was outright in his criticism of the activities of the Board of Public Instruction. He said:

"We are a Board for wasting the public money, for printing books which are of less value than the paper on which they are printed was while it was blank — for giving artificial encouragement to absurd history, absurd metaphysics, absurd physics, absurd theology— for raising up a breed of scholars who find their scholarship an incumbrance and a blemish, who live on the public while they are receiving their education, and whose education is so utterly useless to them that, when they have received it, they must either starve or live on the public all the rest of their lives." (26)

On all the above grounds a complete change in the educational policy of the Government of India was advocated by Lord Macaulay.

Macaulay had his admirers. Some regarded him as a "torch-bearer in the path of progress. His contribution was not in any way original because he did not create the desire for

26. Ibid, paragraph 33.
English education which was already there. Nor was he the
organiser of the Anglicist Party. His contribution lay in
helping to bring a quick decision of a controversy that
would otherwise have dragged on for years but which, neverthe-
less, could never have been decided in favour of classical
languages. Macaulay has been severely criticised for his
ignorant and violent condemnation of Indian languages, culture
and religion. Boman-Behrem says that "We see then on what a
dubious foundation of facts and arguments and imperfect
and incorrect knowledge and information and gross misunder-
standing of the Orientalist point of view Macaulay reared
the edifice of his case for the Anglicists. You have only to
pierce the imposing facade to see the hollowness within." (27)
Insipre of the errors, his Minute "remains a model of just
and comprehensive reasoning." (28)

The Orientalists knew the weakness of their case. They
had to put forth their arguments in an entirely different
angle instead of eulogizing the merits of Oriental learning.
They argued that the national feeling in India was much paaphe-
tic to the cultivation of European learning and it was favour-

27. B.K. Boman-Behrem, Educational Controversies in India,
(Bombay, 1943), p.350.
ably inclined towards that of Oriental learning. They believed that it was a wise policy to give to the people the learning they valued much instead of forcing on them the exotic learning the value of which they had not learnt to recognise. As a matter of justice, too, the Orientalists argued that Indians had a claim for the provision of adequate facilities for obtaining instruction in their own systems, at least so long as they continued to desire it. They said that popular reception or the truths of European or English literature and science would be more honourably secured "by the effect of conviction alone" than by the device of withdrawing all support to the Oriental system of learning.

The Orientalist party, led by H.T. Prinsep who was then Secretary to the Government of Bengal in the Education Department, consisted of the older members of the Company's service. The party was keen on preserving the existing institutions of Oriental learning which the English party proposed to abolish. Prinsep in his Note argued that "there cannot be a doubt in the mind of any person that by the clause in the Act of 1813 namely 'the revival and promotion of literature and the encouragement of learned natives' the legislature did not mean to refer to any other literature than native literature nor to any other learned natives than such as were eminent by their proficiency in that literature. These were the persons then intended to be produced and encouraged and it is
surely forcing the words out of their natural construction when it is argued that the revival of native literature can best be effected by absolutely abolishing all institutions for teaching the literature that then existed and that had existed for ages before." (29)

Prinsep considered the analogy of Macaulay who likened the cultivation of English to the study of Latin and Greek in those days not true. He said that to the great body of the people of India English was as strange as Arabic was to the knights of the dark ages. It was not the language of the erudite of the clergy and of men of letters as Latin always was in Europe and as Arabic and Persia were extensively in Asia. He did not agree with Macaulay who said that Arabic and Sanskrit were forced on Indians. He said that "if there were the slightest ground for believing that the great body of the Muslims did not venerate to enthusiasm their Arabic and Persian literature or to believe that the Hindus as a body were not partial to their Sanskrit then of course would the whole case or those who advocate the prosecution of those studies require to be thrown up. This however is a matter of fact and of opinion that cannot be conceded to either party upon mere assertion." (30)

29. Note, dated the 15th February 1835, by H.T. Prinsep (with marginal notes by Macaulay), paragraph 3.

Prinsep agreed that there was a widely spread desire for the attainment of a certain proficiency in English. This he said should be encouraged. But this disposition had not shown itself extensively amongst the Muslims according to him. "It is the Hindoos of Calcutta, the Sirkars and their connexions and the descendants and relations of the Sirkars of former days, those who have risen through their connexion with the English and with public offices, men who hold or who seek employments in which a knowledge of English is a necessary qualification. These are the classes of persons to whom the study of English is as yet confined and certainly we have no reason yet to believe that the Moosulmans in any part of India can be reconciled to the cultivation of it much less give it a preference to the polite literature of their race or to what they look upon as such." (31) The prejudice was so general amongst the Muslims that there was "no hope of our being able by the mere offer of instruction in English and English science to secure that it shall be received for its own sake." (32)

Prinsep pleaded that at least the Calcutta Madrassa should not be closed as it was the only link through which the Government had any connection whatsoever with the instruction

31. Ibid, paragraph 21.
32. Ibid, paragraph 23.
of the Muslim youth of Bengal. The other arguments advanced by the Orientalists did not amount to much. It was argued, for instance, that Indians could never master the English language, and that its imposition upon the people would provoke their resentment. These arguments did not carry any weight particularly against the arguments of Macaulay.

This fundamental difference of policy between the Orientalists and the Anglicists long obstructed the business of the General Committee. Almost everything which came before them was more or less involved in it. The two parties were so equally balanced as to be unable to make a forward movement in any direction. A particular point might occasionally be decided by accidental majority of one or two, but as the decision was likely to be reversed the next time the subject came on for discussion, this only added inconsistency to inefficiency. This state of things lasted for about three years, until both parties became convinced that the usefulness and responsibility of their body would be utterly uncompromised by its longer continuance. The Committee had come to dead stop and the Government alone could set it in motion again by giving preponderance to one of the other of the two opposite sections. The members, therefore, took the only course which remained open to them, and laid before the Government a statement of their existing position, of the grounds of the conflicting opinions held by
them. The arena of controversy was now shifted from the General Committee to the Governor General's Council.

Lord William Bentinck and Macaulay may be said to have mainly settled the question between themselves. Out of the remaining members of the Council one deferred to the views of Macaulay (33), and the opposition of the member as well as the protests of Prinsep (who was not a member but Secretary in the Political Department) went unheeded or were easily borne down. Lord William Bentinck gave his entire concurrence to the sentiments expressed in Macaulay's Minute. The Government Resolution stated that "the great object of the British Government ought to be the promotion of European Literature and science among the natives of India; and that the funds appropriated for the purpose of education would be best employed on English education alone." (34) It was not the intention of the Government to abolish any College or School of oriental learning, and they directed that all the existing professors and students at all the institutions under the superintendence of the Committee should continue to receive their stipends.

The controversy was not dead. Nor was Lord Bentinck's Resolution to stand unchallenged. In his protest note Prinsep

33. Minute, dated 10th February 1835, by A. Ross; Pub. Cons. 7th March 1835, No. 16 (G.I.R.)
34. Lord Bentinck's Resolution of the 7th March 1835, para 2.
gave an interesting account of how Bentinck disposed of the question. The minute of Macaulay, he said, "was evidently a partisan paper advocating in a controversial and not very moderate tone the cause of one section of the Committee. It proceeded further than the warmest advocates of that side had yet ventured. Its assertions and arguments therefore demanded some investigation before they should be adopted as the basis of any grave proceeding of the Government. Without instituting however any such enquiry and as far as is known to me, without consulting any one of those in whom he was in the habit of placing confidence, the late Governor-General immediately upon the perusal of the minute in question, before any of the papers had been laid before the Council or discussed, added to it the declaration of his entire concurrence and so forwarded it to the Secretary of the Department (i.e. Prinsep himself) for circulation."(35)

As a result of the Resolution of Bentinck the General Committee was reorganised and it included for the first time Indian members. Two prominent members who were the supporters of the Orientalist point of view seceded from the Committee. The Committee at the outset repudiated any narrow interpretation of the Resolution of 1835. It affirmed its faith in

the ultimate importance and destiny of the vernacular tongues. It was interpreted that the phrases "European literature and science", "English education alone", and "imparting to the native population a knowledge of English literature and science, through the medium of the English language" were intended merely to secure the preference to European learning over Oriental learning.

The General Committee proposed to suspend the further progress of Oriental works under impression and recommended "that it be authorised to make over the unfinished copies to any societies or persons willing and competent to finish them." (36) The Committee recommended the abolition of the Book Depository the necessity of which was superseded by the proposition to suspend the progress of the Oriental works under impression, and the decision to abstain from printing others. The Committee was of opinion that a considerable saving might be effected by providing for the performance of the duties executed by the late Secretaries of the Benares and Calcutta Sanskrit Colleges on a moderate scale and suggested, therefore, that no appointment for those vacant offices be at present made. The General Committee also proposed the

36. Letter No. 2174, dated the 20th April 1835 from the General Committee of Public Instruction to the Government of India, paragraph 2.
establishment of schools for the teaching of English litera-
ture and science through the medium of the English language
in the principal towns under the Presidencies of Fort William
and Agra.

Government approved the propositions of the General
Committee.

Though the issue was settled in favour of Western educa-
tion by the Government Resolution of 1835, the situation was
reviewed once again in 1839. It was in that year that Lord
Auckland observed that the insufficiency of funds assigned
by the State for the purpose of public instruction had been
the main cause of the violent disputes. A tone of compromise
can be noted in the policy of Lord Auckland. He pointed out
that "a principle of wise liberality, not stinting any object
which can reasonably be recommended, but granting a measured
and discriminating encouragement to all, is likely to command
general acquiescence, and to obliterate, it may be hoped, the
recollection of the acrimony which has been so prejudicial to
the public weal in the course of past proceedings." (37) Lord
Auckland proposed that the funds assigned to Oriental semi-
naries should in the first instance be employed for perfect
efficiency in Oriental instruction and the surplus amount

37. Minute, by the Right Hon'ble Lord Auckland, the Governor-
General, dated 24th November 1839, paragraph 4.
should be spent on the creation of English classes. He guaranteed the continuance of the existing institutions of Oriental learning and payment of adequate grants and scholarships to them. He encouraged the publication of useful books in Oriental languages provided the expenditure was kept within the limits of allotment for Oriental education.

Lord Auckland was able to satisfy the Anglicists as well. He allotted more than a lakh of rupees for the spread of English education and directed that the principal aim of educational policy should be "to communicate through the means of the English language, a complete education in European Literature, Philosophy and Science to the greatest number of students who may be found ready to accept it at our hands, and for whose instructions our funds will admit of our providing."

(38) Lord Auckland said that "I would look with assured confidence to the recognition by the community of the advantages of an advanced English education, comprising those branches of study, a conservancy with which would place an instructed Native Gentleman on a level with our best European Officers."

(39)

Lord Auckland's minute decided the question at issue between the advocates of Oriental learning on the one hand and of English on the other. The controversy, however, was kept alive.


39. Ibid, paragraph 16.
In Bengal the controversy was kept alive by Anglicists holding extreme views of whom the Rev. A. Duff of the Church of Scotland mission was most conspicuous for the acrimonious tone in which he expressed his objections to the study of Oriental languages. This he did in three open letters addressed to Lord Auckland in 1844.

The echoes of the controversy grew fainter after the receipt of the Despatch from the Court of Directors. They intimated their long-awaited opinions and orders on the subject to the Government of India. They endorsed the views of Lord Auckland and laid down certain propositions for guidance, but studiedly abstained from entering into the controversy. They said that "the funds assigned to each Native College or Oriental Seminary, should be employed exclusively on instruction in, or in connexion with, that College or Seminary, giving a decided preference within those institutions to the promotion, in the first instance, of perfect efficiency in Oriental instruction. They authorised liberal encouragement to be given to the printing and translation of Oriental works or to works in the Vernacular languages, or generally to any works "designed for educational purposes." They willingly acquiesced in the increase of expense which the various measures of encouragement to Oriental learning involved. But they did not hesitate to declare that "We cordially subscribe
to one of the principal declarations of the Resolution of 7th March 1835, that 'it should be the great object of the British Government to promote European Science and Literature amongst the Natives of India, ' and have no hesitation in sanctioning it, as a general principle for the conduct of our Indian Governments." Regarding the system of education they said

"Experience indeed does not yet warrant the adoption of any exclusive system. We wish a fair trial to be given to the experiment of engrafting European knowledge on the studies of the existing learned classes, encouraged as it will be by giving to the Seminaries in which these studies are prosecuted, the aid of able and efficient European superintendence. At the same time we authorise you to give all suitable encouragement to translation of European works into the Vernacular languages, and also to provide for the compilation of a proper series of Vernacular class-books according to the plan which Lord Auckland has proposed." (40)

This Despatch of the Court of Directors came to be regarded as an authoritative pronouncement of the educational policy of the Government with regard to Vernacular education.

The policy was now that of encouraging Western education. For various reasons the Government did not discourage the development of Oriental learning and at any rate they did not abolish any of the existing Oriental institutions. Nor did they abolish the grants or scholarships awarded to Oriental learning. But they categorically declared now and

then that the official policy was the propagation of European knowledge. The Orientalists were saved from complete annihilation and that was what they wanted after a prolonged fight with the Anglicists.

The Government's firm determination to carry out a system of English education proved unfavourable to the Muslims and a great boon to the Hindus. The latter, who had been for ages under the Muslim rule, had no dislike to learn the language of their new rulers. As they had learnt Persian and Urdu under the Muslims, so they were willing to learn English under the British. But this was not so with the Muslims who objected to the study of English because they said that they feared English education would undermine their religion. This objection did not, however, contain the whole truth. In reality, it was based on a far more serious consideration. According to the Muslim law, as expounded by Sunnis of the old school, it was not lawful to learn English or the language of any other non-Muslim people except for the purpose of answering letters, or of combating the religious arguments of those people. Learning a foreign language for any other purpose was not allowed. (41)

The abolition of the Muslim law offices on the introduction of the Penal Code deprived the Muslims of almost all the

40. Y.B. Mathur, Muslim Education in India, (Studies in Islam vol.IV, No.3 July 1967).
respectable appointments and greatly checked Vernacular edu-
cation. While this radical change was introduced in the
administrative policy of the country by making it necessary
on all aspirants for offices under Government to know the
language of the rulers, no order was passed to make English
education compulsory. On the contrary, till 1864 the Muslims
were fed with the hope that their own classics were the
sine quo non for Government employment, or for entering the
legal profession. The order of the Government permitting
candidates for the offices of munsif and pleader to take their
examinations either in English or Urdu remained in force till
1864. A year or two later, however, a sudden change was intro-
duced. It changed the previous orders and declared that in
future examinations for higher grade posts of pleaders and
munsifs would be conducted only in English. This measure
placed the Muslims under a complete disadvantage. For them
the British system of education was a failure. (42)

It may be pointed out here that though Government had
taken the decision to introduce Western education, it was not
their intention to scrap away any existing pattern of educa-
tion. English education was meant only for the few, and
Government hoped to educate the many in the Vernacular system.
But English teaching institutions of the private enterprise
had outstripped their aim; and there had not been commensurate

42. Note by His Excellency the Viceroy dated June 26, 1871.
Education A Proceedings, Nos.2-3A dated August 19,1871.
improvement or output in the Vernaculars. The decision to introduce Western education was never revoked later in favour of Oriental learning though occasionally Government provided opportunities in special institutions for the study of the Vernaculars. Any acquaintance with the works contained in the Vernaculars was considered valuable for historical and antiquarian purposes only. The need for English education in a country like India was found to be essential by the rulers. R.B. Chapman explained the position thus: "Had the country been under a Native Government, a Vernacular education graduated from an elementary to a high University standard according to the different classes of the people, would be the best, but its political condition being different, it is necessary that our system of education should likewise be different; at any rate it is absolutely necessary that the language of the rulers should be extensively studied by the subject races." On it mainly depended the well-being of the State, for without it no sympathy could exist between the Governors and the governed; and "the best intention of the former are apt to be misunderstood by the latter, and the administration of Government and of justice cannot be very effective." Chapman said that "no fellow-feeling can be created between the two classes, except through the agency of a community of languages,
and for the importation of the modern sciences of Europe, a thorough knowledge of the English language is a sine quo non. In short, the intellectual, moral, material, and religious amelioration of the people depends on the progress of English education in the country, and to check it would be to check all improvement; to stop it, to bring on an intellectual blight most baneful in its consequences." (43)

No attempt was made after this to revoke the earlier decisions. The idea of blending Western learning with the Eastern culture, however, was thought of by Lord Ripon in 1882. In his convocation address at the Calcutta University on 11th March 1882 Lord Ripon said:

"We are in the midst of ancient peoples, possessed of civilization, of literature, and of art of their own; and our business is not to try and force them to reject their past, to forget all that is characteristic in their history and their traditions, and to convert themselves into bad imitation of modern Englishmen; but to place without stint, at their disposal, all the riches of Western science and Western culture, that they may blend them in one harmonious union with the treasures of their own Oriental learning!" (44)

The policy of Government continued to be that of encouraging Western education. This decision was taken after much controversy and the present educational policy and system owe a historical debt to these controversies of the nineteenth century over the system of education to be introduced.

43. From R.B. Chapman, Officiating Commissioner of the Presidency Division, to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal (No. 128, dated Calcutta, the 3rd June 1863.)

Chapter XVII

MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION

Another important policy decision was taken during the nineteenth century similar to the one to introduce Western education. This was the decision to introduce English as the medium of instruction. In fact both these decisions were inter-related and it is because of the importance of the subjects that they are dealt with separately. The decision to introduce Western education was taken in 1835 and was never revoked. The decision to have English as the medium of instruction was also taken during the same period, but the issue remains a live one even today.

The first suggestion that English should be the medium of instruction in India appears to have been contained in the treatise of Mr. Charles Grant submitted to the Court of Directors in 1797. Charles Grant, the Missionary, observed that English would be the most effective medium for the enlightenment of India. Having argued in favour of Western knowledge as the "matter of instruction" Grant recognised that there
might be differences of opinion with regard to the 'mode' of communicating it. He anticipated a great controversy over the question of medium of instruction at a later stage.

In a conquered country, Grant thought, that the Britishers had the liberty to choose the language of communication. He was simple and frank in his argument over this question. Grant said:

"There are two ways of making this communication: the one is, by the medium of the languages of those countries; the other is, by the medium of our own. In general, when foreign teachers have proposed to instruct the inhabitants of any country, they have used the Vernacular tongue of that people, for a natural and necessary reason, that they could not hope to make any other means of communication intelligible to them. This is not our case in respect of our Eastern dependencies. They are our own, we have possessed them long; many Englishmen reside among the Natives, our language is not unknown there, and it is practicable to diffuse it more widely. The choice, therefore, of either mode, lies open to us; and we are at liberty to consider which is entitled to preference." (1)

With this liberty for the conquered race Grant suggested English as the medium of instruction in schools. He considered the Indian languages least eligible for serving the medium of instruction and preferred English to them. Grant considered that the acquisition of a foreign language was a matter of no great difficulty to men of cultivated minds. English teachers would be sooner qualified to offer

1. Extract from Charles Grant's Observations on the State of Society among the Asiatic subjects of Great Britain particularly with respect to morals; and on the means of improving it. Written chiefly in the year 1792.
instruction in the Indian languages but Grant did not consider this method of instruction of Western knowledge through Eastern tongue as sound. He said that it would be far more confined and less effectual.

Charles Grant's plan for the introduction of English medium was many sided. He wanted the Government to establish at a moderate expense, places of gratuitous instruction in reading and writing English. The employment of English in public business, for which Grant said that "every political reason remains in full force", would make English very popular throughout the country. He did not anticipate any difficulty in the change over to English in the administration of the revenue, judicial and other business of Government, wherein Persian was till then used. The establishment of free schools, for instruction in English, would insure its diffusion over the country. He said:

"Neither would much confusion arise, even at first, upon such a change; for there are now a great number of Portuguese and Bengalese clerks in the provinces, who understand both the Hindustany and English languages. To employ them in drawing up petitions to Government, or its officers, would be no additional hardship upon the poorer people, who are now assisted in that way by Persian clerks; and the opportunity afforded to others who have sufficient leisure, of learning the language of the Government gratuitously, would be an advantage never enjoyed under Mahomedan Rulers." (2)
The treatise of Charles Grant was seen by few till it was issued in a Blue Book in 1832. The Company took no action in regard to it. The official policy during those early years of the Company rule was the encouragement to the classical languages, Sanskrit and Arabic. Though Grant did not succeed in his efforts he laid the seed. He was prophetic in his statements and foresaw the future developments of English as the language of the Government and as the medium of instruction. He also correctly diagnosed the eagerness of the Indian people to learn the English language and rightly foretold that multitudes of the young would flock to the English schools and that Indians themselves would, in course of time, be teachers of English. He was, however, wrong in his estimate that the spread of English education would slowly but necessarily make the Indian people accept Christianity.

The issue was taken up in 1814 by Mr. J. H. Harington who examined whether the English language should be employed as the medium of communicating knowledge to the Indian people, or whether the Vernacular and learned languages of the country were the more appropriate instruments. He observed that both of the plans "noticed have their advantages and disadvantages; that neither the one nor the other should be exclusively adopted, but that both should be promoted so far
as circumstances may admit." (3)

A taste for English had been widely disseminated by now and many independent schools used English as the medium of instruction. In the Jaynarsiin Charity School founded in 1818 in Beneres the English language was taught along with Hindustani, Persian and Bengali. (4) The Hindu College opened at the same period on account of the efforts of Ram Mohan Roy and David Hare was the first college at which English was first systematically taught. The number of Mission Schools offered instruction through the medium of English. The superiority of the alien ruling race in many fields gave an impetus to the study of the language of that race. But the movement for an English education was purely non-official, and the official policy during those early years of the Company rule was that of encouraging Vernacular education.

The demand for instruction in English language was pressed with increased earnestness on the attention of the Board of Education. The Board itself was divided into two hostile parties as described in the previous chapter. The Orientalists argued that Indians could never master the English language, an argument which proved to be wrong later, and that

3. Herington, (n.9, p.325)

an imposition of the English language upon the people would provoke their resentment. The Court of Directors also declared in favour of affording a greater measure of encouragement to the acquisition of a knowledge of English by Indians. They fully concurred with the General Committee and said that it was "highly advisable to enable and encourage a large number of the Natives to acquire a thorough knowledge of English; being convinced that the higher tone and better spirit of European literature can produce their full effect only on those who become familiar with them in the original languages." (5)

The Court of Directors, though they wanted an extensive cultivation of English, did not overlook the importance of the Vernaculars as vehicle for wide diffusion of useful knowledge to the masses. They wrote to the Bengal Government that "while we thus approve and sanction the measures which you propose for diffusing a knowledge of the English language, and the study of European science through its medium, we must at the same time put you on your guard against a disposition of which we perceive some traces in the General Committee, and still more in the Local Committee of Delhi, to underrate the importance of what may be done to spread useful know-

5. Public Letter from the Court of Directors, dated 29th September 1830, to the Government of Bengal, paragraph 13.
ledge among the Natives through the medium of books and oral instruction in their own languages." (6) Thus the policy of the authorities was one of using the Vernacular for mass media of imparting knowledge and having English for the education of a very small proportion of the Natives of India.

The question of the official language also cropped up along with that of the language for the medium of instruction. In fact the decision to have English as the official language was an additional indication of the growing importance of the language as medium of instruction. The Court of Directors issued the following instruction to the Government in India on the question of the adoption of English as the language of administration. They said that "with a view to give the natives an additional motive to the acquisition of the English language, you have it in contemplation gradually to introduce English as the language of public business in all its departments; and you have determined to begin at once by adopting the practice of corresponding in English with all Native princes or persons of rank who are known to understand that language, or to have persons about them who under-

6. Ibid, paragraph 16.
stand it." (7)

The taste for English became more and more widely disseminated and "a loud call arose for the means of instruction in it." The subject was pressed on the Public Instruction Committee from various quarters. Meanwhile the English classes tacked to the Sanskrit College and other Oriental colleges failed in their purpose. The Oriental course was too severe to allow of secondary studies; and a fundamental difference of opinion arose in the Committee as to the mode of spending money allotted for education.

In regard to the Vernaculars all parties agreed that they contained neither the literary nor scientific information necessary for a liberal education. No one but underestimated the value of the Vernacular which should become the medium of instruction in course of time. Even the staunch Anglicist Sir G. Trevelyan, a member of the General-Public Instruction Committee, admitted that the instruction of the mass of the people through the medium of their own language was the ultimate object to be kept in view. But this problem of medium of instruction had to be solved immediately. The choice was only between English and the Oriental classical languages because the Vernaculars were condemned as unfit

7. Ibid., paragraph 27.
to be the medium of instruction. Macaulay, for instance, said that the Indian dialects were so poor and rude that, until they were enriched from some other quarters, it would not be easy to translate any valuable work into them. He said that the intellectual improvement of those classes of the people who had the means of pursuing higher studies could be effected only by means of some language not Vernacular amongst them.

The outright condemnation of the Vernacular languages left the choice of a medium of instruction between Sanskrit and Arabic on the one hand and English on the other. Macaulay again argued, though he was ignorant of Sanskrit and Arabic, that these languages were unfit to be the medium of instruction and put the question "How then stands the case?" He argued that "we have to educate a people who cannot at present be educated by means of their mother tongue. We must teach them some foreign language." He then began to eulogize in eloquent terms the importance and utility of the English language. He said:

"The claims of our own language it is hardly necessary to recapitulate. It stands prominent even among the languages of the West. It abounds with works of imagination not inferior to the noblest which Greece has bequeathed to us; with models of every species of eloquence; with historical compositions which considered merely as narratives have seldom been surpassed, and which considered as vehicles of ethical and political instruction have never been equalled... Whoever knows
that language has ready access to all the vast intellectual wealth which all the wisest nations of the earth have created and hoarded in the course of ninety generations. It may safely be said that the literature now extant in that language is of far greater value than all the languages of the world together. Nor is this all. In India, English is the language spoken by the ruling class. It is spoken by the higher class of natives at the seats of Government. It is likely to become the language of commerce throughout the seas of the East."

For all these reasons Macaulay considered that English alone was suitable as the medium of communication and instruction in India.

The Government Resolution of 1835 directed that all funds at the disposal of the General Committee be "employed in imparting to the native population a knowledge of English literature and science through the medium of the English language."

The medium of instruction in institutions of higher learning was to be English, rather than the ancient learned tongues, Sanskrit and Arabic. No mention was made of the Vernaculars but Government did not in any way wish to discourage the development of the Vernaculars. The only change was that the Western education had to be imparted through the medium of English. It was feared by many that the place of Vernaculars as a medium of instruction was overlooked in the Government Resolution.

The first opposition to this policy of the Government

came from Mr. W.H. Macnaghten, a member of the General Commit-
ttee, who carried with him two others, Messrs. Henry Shakes-
peare and James Prinsep. Mr. Macnaghten, in common with the
rest of the Orientalists, felt convinced of the ultimate
failure of the new policy of attempting wide-spread enlight-
enment through the medium of English. He considered that the
exclusive use of English as the medium of instruction was im-
practicable and disadvantageous. He believed that the acqui-
sition of the higher knowledge, or the arts and sciences, of
Europe through the medium of English could be undertaken only
by a few. The pursuit of knowledge for its own sake was diffi-
cult even through a national medium and the introduction and
employment of a foreign medium, Mr. Macnaghten regarded, as
enhancing the difficulty to untold proportions. He said:

"The people are almost universally poor as regards both
their mental and their physical necessaries. In such
a state of things, though it would be humane to add
to their stock of moral and useful knowledge, it would
be cruel to consume their valuable time in the ac-
quision of that which is not in itself knowledge, but
only the means of gaining knowledge and which could
prove to but few of them the means of gaining a sub-
sistence." (9)

Macnaghten insisted upon the languages of the country
as the proper media for the general diffusion of knowledge.
He argued that "I would cultivate Sanskrit and Arabic langua-
ges as being the sources whence the vernacular languages will

acquire the means of communicating the literary treasures of the English world and I would hold out high prizes for the best translation into those or into the Vernacular languages of the most popular scientific treatises on all subjects of our own. Why such a course of proceeding should not be ultimately successful I cannot foresee though I doubt not that it may be thought by some to be too circui-
tous. The grand object in my opinion to be kept in view in giving instruction in the English language is not so much that the few who make themselves masters of its in-
valuable treasures should be enlightened but that through their means the light should be diffused over the whole surface of society." (10)

The Minute of Mr. Macnaghten was forwarded to the Government by the General Committee. The Government replied briefly that the questions discussed in the Minute had al-
ready been decided by the Resolution of 7th March and that it was not considered by the Government "necessary or pro-
per to revive them." (11)

During the period of Lord Auckland the question again

10. Ibid., pp. 424-5.

11. Letter, dated 22nd April 1835, from Government to General Committee of Public Instruction, Pub.Cons., No.11 (G.I.R).
arose but this time the controversy was no longer between the Orientalists and Anglicists only. A third party emerged under the championship of Brian Houghton Hodgeon of the Bengal Civil Service, who was the British Resident at the Court of Nepal. Hodgeon championed the cause of the Vernacularists and he differed from the other parties in the matter of medium to which predominance was to be assigned in a national system of education. He denied the necessity of importing the alien language as the medium of instruction. He was also opposed to the resuscitation of the dead languages which were the theme of admiration of the Orientalists. Hodgeon argued that the Vernaculars were not so rude or barren as assumed often. He considered the English medium as one creating monopoly of knowledge and it would make the affairs and conduct of the administration a mystery liable to be turned into a weapon of oppression of the many by the few. "The mystification of knowledge and of administration separately evil, are dreadful when combined, and were we to anglicise our courts and our schools, we could scarcely fail, under the circumstances of the case, to fix on India the curse of this double inequity." (12) He regarded the Vernacular medium a safe one as capable of bringing knowledge within the reach of the many.

Lord Auckland, the Governor General, favoured the Anglicists who stood for the English medium. He declared that "the principal aim of educational policy should be to communicate, through the English language." Rejecting the principles of the Orientalists and the Vernacularists as plans impracticable of adoption Lord Auckland agreed with the view once taken by the Court of Directors that "the higher tone and better spirit of European Literature can produce their full effect only on those who become familiar with them in the original languages." (13) While rejecting the Vernaculars as media of general instruction, Lord Auckland introduced them to a large extent as the media of public administration, especially of the judicial branch of it. But in schools Lord Auckland favoured English as the medium. He said in his Minute that "Native youths will not come to our schools to be instructed in vernacular composition. The qualification is more quickly and easily to be attained from other sources. The desire for the new ideas and information which will be imparted to them must therefore be among the great inducements to attendance, and those who are candidates for such instruction will not, I think, in any important degree be deterred by having to undergo also the labour of learning the English character

and language... For mere instruction of a general nature (such as our masters now give) through the vernacular medium, it may, it seems to me, well be doubted whether even the number of pupils would seek our schools, who now resort to them." (14) Lord Auckland carried with him the Court of Directors in his plan for the expansion and better organisation of the prevalent system of English education.

While Bengal neglected the Vernaculars in favour of English the policy in Bombay was different. The Bombay experiment on Vernacular education was based on the educational policy formed by Mountstuart Elphinstone soon after he became Governor of Bombay in 1819. The policy of the Bombay Government was only the official statement of the already existing practice in Bombay of Vernacular medium of instruction. The Annual Report of the Bombay Gov Education Society summarised the policy of the Bombay Government thus: "In imparting to the Natives useful knowledge to any extent, and with the hope of any good and permanent effect, it is evident the language of the country must be the chief and proper vehicle... It is impossible to look, with any hopes of success, to imparting knowledge generally and usefully in a language (i.e. English) which must remain to the greater portion a foreign one." (15)

14. Minute, dated 24th November 1839, paragraph 27.
The Native School Book and School Society in Bombay considered the study of English "of secondary importance in effecting the mental and moral improvement" of the Indian people. It was of the opinion that Western knowledge could never be spread to the people through the medium of the English language alone. In its report for the year 1825-26, it stated its policy on the medium of instruction:

"These ideas (i.e., the new ideas in Western literature and science) will be most easily rendered comprehensive to them by means of the mother-tongue of each scholar. It will, therefore, no doubt be admitted that the time and labour both of the master and the scholar would be materially saved, were these indispensable explanations previously embodied in works written in the native languages; and thus it again appears that English can never become the most facile and successful medium of communicating to the natives, as a body, the literature science and morality of Europe." (16)

The Society suggested measures for the promotion of education mainly through the medium of the Vernacular and only secondarily through English. The Society was also anxious to ensure against the neglect of the Vernaculars on account of a popular preference for English.

The Governor of Bombay, Mountstuart Elphinstone, placed before his colleagues in Council a plan of education in his lengthy Minute. The measures suggested by him were similar to those suggested by the Native School Book and School Society. His Minute kept in view, while presenting a system of educa-

[16. Minute, dated 13th December 1823, by Honble Mountstuart Elphinstone, Governor of Bombay, paragraph General Department, vol. 48, 1821-23, pp. 69-70, (Bombay Records)]
tion, the Vernacular medium as the most suitable channel for the diffusion of knowledge. Elphinstone did not expect a rapid spread of English language in India and hence assigned but a secondary place to the English language. His view on the subject of medium of instruction was:

"If English could be at all diffused among persons who have the least time for reflections, the progress of knowledge by means of it would be accelerated in a ten-fold ratio, since every man who made himself acquainted with a science through the English would be able to communicate it in his own language to his countrymen. At present, however, there is but little desire to learn English with any such view." (17)

Mr. Francis Warden, a staunch Anglicist of the Bombay Government, differed from Elphinstone and held the view that "the progress of knowledge can be most effectually and economically promoted by a study of the English language, wherein, in every branch of science, we have, ready compiled, the most useful works, which cannot be compressed in tracts, and translated in the native languages without great expense and the labour of years." He said that "greater benefit will be bestowed on the country, and at less labour and expense, by circumscribing our efforts and funds, to the diffusion of the English language, and the circulation of English books, than in instructing natives in their own languages, printing and

17. Minute, dated 13th December 1823, by Hon'ble Mountstuart Elphinstone, Governor of Bombay paragraph 27.
circulating their own works, translations of English tracts, and of English works on arts and sciences in all the languages of India." (18)

This continued to be the policy of the Government of Bombay. The Governor of Bombay in 1828 felt that no knowledge of the English language was necessary to men who were employed in Government. In the field of education, he said, the acquisition of English language would occupy a period required for other studies and pursuits. The Governor, Sir J. Malcolm, however said, that it "is quite essential to aspiring natives that they should have the advantage of translation from our language of the works which are best calculated to improve their minds, and increase their knowledge not only of general science, but to enable them to understand the grounds which led us to introduce into the system of administration we have adopted for India the more liberal views and sounder maxims of our policy and legislation in England." (19) Thus the Bombay policy was that of diffusing Western knowledge through the Vernacular.

An elaborate report on this subject was prepared at the


desire of the Governor General by Captain Candy, superintendent of the Poona Sanskrit College, in 1840. Captain Candy expressed his opinion as to the respective claims of English and of Vernacular in the system of Indian Education. Candy wrote:

"It seems to me that too much encouragement cannot be given to the study of English, nor too much value put upon it, in its proper place and connection, in a plan for the intellectual and moral improvement of India. This place I conceive to be that of supplying ideas and the matter of instruction, not that of being the medium of instruction."

The medium through which the mass of the population must be instructed, Candy conceived, must be their Vernacular tongues, and neither English nor Sanskrit. Sanskrit, "I conceive, to be the store-house from which strength and beauty may be drawn for the Vernacular languages, and it is, therefore, highly deserving of cultivation, but it cannot furnish from its stores the matter of instruction, nor can it ever be the medium of instruction to more than a few. In a word, knowledge must be drawn from the stores of the English language, the Vernaculars must be employed as the media of communicating it, and Sanskrit must be largely used to improve the Vernaculars and make them suitable for the purpose." (20) It may be noted here that the controversy over the medium of instruction in Bombay was between English and the Vernaculars whereas in Bengal it

was between English and the classical languages.

Captain Candy's report was duly submitted to the Governor General. There was no opposition from the Imperial Government to what Candy wrote. The issue was still kept an open one. Even the Court of Directors forbore "from expressing an opinion regarding the most efficient mode of communicating and disseminating European knowledge. Experience does not yet warrant the adoption of any exclusive system." (21)

In 1843, Sir Erskine Perry, a Judge of the High Court, became the President of the Board of Education, Bombay. In his nine years' regime he did for Bombay what Macaulay had done for Bengal. Being a staunch supporter of the use of English as a medium of instruction he did not at all approve of the early policy of the Bombay Native Education Society to give as much of higher education as possible through the modern Indian languages. His proposals to have English as the medium of instruction as in Bengal met with stiff opposition. In the Report of the Board of Education, Perry drew up a summary of Bombay Education from the days of Elphinstone down to his own time. He discovered that the Bombay policy was not in conformity with the policy of the Government of India. After comparing the Educational statistics of Bengal

21. Despatch from the Honourable Court of Directors, dated the 20th January 1841, on the subject of Native Education, paragraph 9.
and Bombay he pointed out that "while the resources available for Education in this Presidency (Bombay) have principally been directed to numbers and to vernacular instruction, the Bengal authorities have chiefly adapted their institutions to the reception of the smaller numbers who desired to acquire the English tongue." (22)

In 1844 an Engineering College was opened in connection with the Elphinstone Institution under a Professor specially sent by the Court of Directors. The new Professor, being unacquainted with the Vernaculars of the pupils, was asked to impart the instruction in English and the class was formed from some of the advanced students of the English Department of the Elphinstone Institution. Colonel Jervis, a member of the Board and the most prominent advocate of the Vernaculars, gave expression to his opinion that the Engineering class should be conducted in the Vernacular and not in English. This gave the Vernacularists a useful opportunity of starting a fresh discussion over the decision of the Board on the question of the medium of instruction.

The controversy was opened by Colonel Jervis who in an able Minute advocated the use of Vernacular as the medium of instruction. He objected to the "influence of certain men in authority, of undoubtedly talent, but of strong and peculiar pre-

judges, introduced the idea of giving the preponderating consideration to the study of English." Col. Jervis considered that general instruction could not be afforded, except through the medium of a language with which the mind is familiar. According to him making English the essential medium for the intellectual improvement of Indians was to withhold all education from Indians until the English language was so familiar to them, "that each individual can think and reason in that tongue, to the supersession necessarily of his own dialect."

He said that "in proportion as we confine Education to the channel of the English language, so will the fruits be restricted to a number of scribes and inferior Agents for Public and Private Offices, and a few enlightened individuals, - isolated by their very superiority from their fellow countrymen!? He had in mind the benefit of three hundred years' experience in Europe when Latin was the sole language of Literature; and when, in consequence, knowledge, both spiritual and temporal, was confined to a few Monks, - a few Divines - a few Men of Letters. "Should we then, here, at this day, so far forget this lesson, and insist so much on imposing the burden of the foreign language of a handful of Rulers on the Millions of our Native population?", Colonel Jervis asked. (23)

23. Minute, by Colonel Jervis, dated the 24th February, 1847.
Colonel Jervis thought that too much attention was paid to English and he wanted that the object of Government exertions should be to produce Vernacular literature. He favoured the translation of standard European works into Vernacular. Sir. E. Perry, another member of the Board, however, considered the proposals of Jervis as wholly impracticable. In the first place it would be a very costly affair. Secondly the required scholars to translate the English works into Vernacular would not be available. Thirdly the time involved would be much to translate the works. But Jagannath Shankarset, in concurrence with two other Indian members of the Board of Education, F ranjee Cowasjee and Mahommad Ibrahim Mackba, gave retort to those who argued that English was the only suitable medium of instruction. He said that if the object of education was to diffuse knowledge and improve the minds of the natives of India as a people, "it is my opinion that it must be done by imparting that knowledge to them in their own language? He firmly believed that education through English was unsuitable for the masses of people. (24)

The Bombay Government in their letter to the Board of Education declared the official policy with regard to the medium of instruction. They referred to the Minutes of the President and the members of the Board of Education and said that "hitherto,

the greatest attention appears to have been devoted to the study of English, and the communication of knowledge in the Vernacular seems to have been treated as of secondary moment; but before any lasting or effectual impression can be made by our teaching upon the native mind in general, or any advance towards producing better, more learned, or more moral men, the Governor General in Council feels convinced that the process must be reversed, and that the Vernacular must become the medium for the diffusion of sound knowledge among the masses."(25)

The Government wanted particular efforts to be directed towards increasing the efficiency of the District and village schools in which the vernacular medium was employed. They directed that "good elementary works in the Vernacular, on science, literature, and morals ought to be provided; while the efforts in English should be confined to a school in each Province, and the College at the Presidency, where moreover the higher branches of learning should be taught also in the Vernacular tongue, as the progress of translations may enable this to be effected. This letter from the Government of Bombay is an important document as it contained the first intimation on the part of the Government of their policy as to the medium of instruction to be adopted in Government education.

The Vernacularists in Bombay were victorious and Sir E. Perry, the Anglicists' champion, was about to resign. He was persuaded by his followers to continue in the Board. At last Perry resorted to his trump card. He insisted that the Bombay Government should refer the whole matter to the Government of India. He perhaps thought that he could find his champions in Calcutta as his influence in higher quarters was great. What Mr. Perry expected happened as when the Bombay Government referred the matter to the Government of India. The Government of India expressed their strong disapproval of the Bombay policy. The legal Member of the Governor General's Council, Mr. Bethune did not agree with the Bombay Government that too much attention was paid to English instruction but was inclined "to suspect that much more attention ought to be paid to it, in order that there may be any reasonable expectation of deriving from it any practical advantage, and I deplore the intimation conveyed in the Government letter to the Board (5th April 1849), that, for the future, they must not devote even so much attention to the study of English as they have done, but must treat it as of secondary moment to the communication of knowledge in the Vernacular." (26) The Government of India felt that "they should intimate to the Honourable

26. Minute, dated 23rd January 1851, by the Hon'ble Mr. Bethune, Legal Member of the Governor General's Council, paragraph 4.
Court of Directors that they have drawn its attention, and expressed its own opinion, on a question, the right solution of which is fraught with consequences of such immeasurable importance to the welfare of the whole Indian Empire." (27)

The effect of the admonition from the Government of India was that the Bombay Government remained tamed and subdued in the matter of deciding on the medium of instruction but in spite of the disapproval of the Government of India the Bombay Government remained faithfully to the numerous Vernacular Schools which unlike the Bengal Government they had spread over the Presidency. But one thing they gave it up and gave up for good. The Government of Bombay no longer troubled themselves with their oft-repeated desire of creating a Vernacular literature of a superior type for the diffusion of higher knowledge. "The controversy centred round one central problem—what should be the medium of instruction for imparting the higher branches of European knowledge? And so far as that problem was concerned the fate of the Vernaculars was sealed for ever." (28)

The Court of Directors made their policy with regard to the medium of instruction very clear in their Despatch of 1854.

27. Ibid.
They stated clearly that it was not their aim or desire to substitute the English language for the Vernacular dialects of India. They stressed the importance of the use of the languages which alone were understood by the great mass of the population. These languages, and not English, replaced Persian in the administration of justice, and in the intercourse between the officers of Government and people. They also said that "it is indispensable, therefore, that in any general system of education the study of them should be assiduously attended to. And any acquaintance with the improved European knowledge which is to be communicated to the great mass of the people—whose circumstances prevent them from acquiring a high order of education, and who cannot be expected to overcome the difficulties of a foreign language—can only be conveyed to them through one or other of these Vernacular languages." (29) The Despatch favoured English medium for those persons who had acquired a sufficient knowledge of it to receive general instruction through it, and the Vernacular as the medium for teaching the far larger classes who were ignorant of, or imperfectly acquainted with, English.

The policy of the authorities was clear now. It was their aim not to substitute English for the Vernacular in schools, but, first, to cultivate a bilingual system for those

pupils for whom English was regarded as necessary, and secondly, if possible, to develop in time the Vernacular schools up to the level of those in which the medium was English. Meanwhile they wished there to be a passage for the cleverest boys, not only from the Anglo-Vernacular but also from the Vernacular schools, to those more advanced schools in which English was used as the medium of instruction.

Even in the higher branches of education, the Government of India held the view that the Vernaculars would be the medium in course of time. The Calcutta University withdrew the permission to answer in Vernacular, and in 1861–62 ruled that "all answers in each branch shall be given in English." The University thus stipulated education in the English medium at the expense of the Vernacular. But when the Punjab Government referred to the Government of India about the medium of instruction in higher education the latter said that "the Government ought to aim at giving to the people of India in science and in all branches of true knowledge through the medium of their own vernacular languages, and as the best means of improving these languages, and for other weighty reasons, the Government ought to afford every practicable encouragement to the study of the classical languages of the east. Indeed, it seems to His Excellency in Council impossible to suppose that the people of this country can ever be educated, except through the medium of their own
own languages," (30) Even the decision of the Calcutta University that true knowledge, in its higher branches, could be imparted to the people of India through the English language, was questioned by the Government of India. They said that "the present difficulty of conveying scientific truth through the Vernacular languages of India is indispensable, but there is no reason to doubt that this difficulty may be gradually overcome." (31) The Government of India pointed out that in Bengal this difficulty had been overcome to a great extent already. The language had undergone such a process of improvement and expansion that it could be used without difficulty as the instrument of conveying knowledge and the vehicle of accurate thought and abstract ideas.

Though this was the official policy of the Government of India there was no danger anywhere in India of English being neglected. It was recognized generally as the key which opened the door to all the higher kinds of employment under the British Government. Further because of the absence of sufficient number of text-books in the Vernaculars, it was impossible to obtain in many subjects, and especially in science, any competent instruction without English. In fact in many cases where English and Vernacular education co-existed, the tendency


31. Ibid.
was for the former to oust the latter. The schools teaching through English medium continued attract students.

The policy of the Government of India after 1854 was that of encouraging Vernaculars as the medium of instruction at the various stages. For various reasons the English medium institutions sprang up in large number and became prominent. The Indian Universities Commission of 1902 condemned the use of English as the medium of instruction and pointed out that one reason for the low standard of education was the foreign medium. The Commission said that "boys begin to learn English as a language, and also to learn other subjects through the medium of English, long before they are capable of understanding it." (32) The Commission suggested various measures for the development of the Vernaculars both at the school stage as well as the college stage.

The Government Resolutions on education during the early years of the twentieth century only reiterated their earlier policy of the Government. The Resolution of 1904 pointed out that it had never been the policy of Government to substitute the English language for the Vernacular dialects of the country. But circumstances forced the institutions in India to adopt English as the medium of instruction. In the interest

of sound education the Government wanted this tendency to be corrected. The Resolution said that as a general rule a child should not be allowed to learn English as a language until he had made some progress in the primary stage of instruction and had received a thorough grounding in his mother tongue.

"It is equally important that when the teaching of English has begun, it should not be prematurely employed as the medium of instruction in other subjects." (33) The Resolution pointed out that much of the evils, prevalent in Indian schools, such as committing to memory ill-understood phrases and extracts from text-books or notes, were due to the scholars having received instruction through the medium of English before their knowledge of the language was sufficient to enable them to understand what they were taught. Government suggested that:

"The line of division between the use of the vernacular and of English as a medium of instruction should, broadly speaking, be drawn at a minimum age of 13. No scholar in a secondary school should, even then, be allowed to abandon the study of his Vernacular, which should be kept up until the end of the school course." (34)

The question of the medium of instruction in Secondary Schools was further raised by the following motion in the Imperial Legislative Council on March 17, 1915 by Mr. Rama Rayeninger:


34. Ibid.
"That this Council recommends to the Governor General in Council to have, in consultation with the Provincial Governments and Administrations, steps taken for making the Indian Vernaculars media of instruction and the study of English as second language compulsory for Indian people pupils in all Secondary Schools." (35)

This led to a debate which showed a very sharp division of opinion among the Indian members of the Imperial Legislative Council. Sir Harcourt Butler, then Member for Education, in summing up the debate reminded that Council that it was the accepted policy of Government that the Vernacular should be the medium of instruction for boys up to 13 years of age, that it should be a compulsory subject throughout the whole course and that the only question at issue was whether English should continue to be used as the medium in the three or four high classes. The alternative proposed was to reduce English education, but to teach English by the direct method, as a language, "and at the same time to lighten the strain on the mind by introducing the Vernacular as the medium of instruction; so that the question was not one of 'educational policy,' but of 'educational economy,' which it would require many minds to solve." (36) Mr Harcourt Butler thought that the matter should be referred by the Government as an open question to

36. Ibid., p. 240
the Local Governments after the First World War; and Mr. Rama Rayamangal withdrew his motion.

The subject remained a live issue even after the War. The Government of India attached the same importance to the subject and in January 1917 Lord Chelmsford, the Viceroy in his speeches at the general Conference of Directors of Public Instruction at Delhi made reference to the medium of instruction and suggested measures for setting things right. He did not favour the Vernaculars as the medium but wanted to make the study of English more effective. Addressing at the Conference of representatives of Local Governments held at Simla in August 1917 he put forward as the two desiderata to be kept in view: "first, the students may be enabled to obtain a better grasp of the subjects which they are taught, and secondly that they may complete their Secondary course with a more adequate knowledge of the English language than at present" (37)

When the Calcutta University Commission took evidence from witnesses the opinion expressed on the subject by some of the witnesses was in favour of Vernacular medium for schools. Mr. W.C. Wordsworth, officiating Director of Public Instruction of Bengal, for instance, said that students should be permitted to use their own Vernaculars in all University examinations. He considered that "the teaching of English would be improved if

schools were permitted to make it a second language, and not the medium of instruction in the higher classes." (38) Mr. J. A. Richey, the Director of Public Instruction of the Punjab, in an admirable memorandum, expressed his views that English should be the medium, not in the secondary stage but only in the higher stages. He said:

"The aim of the Secondary school (regarded as a preparatory for a University) should be to educate its pupils intelligently up to the standard required for University study, and to give them such a thorough knowledge of the English tongue as will enable them to undertake that study through the medium of English. By attempting prematurely to make its pupils study in English it fails to educate them intelligently." (39)

On the 4th and 5th March, 1921, the Senate of the University of Madras, in considering the recommendations of a large Committee appointed on the 25th October, 1919, arrived at the following conclusions with regard to the medium of instruction.

(1) "That at the S.S.L.C. examination (corresponding to the old Matriculation) candidates be permitted to answer either in the Vernacular or in English except in the subject of English in which English should be compulsory and in Vernacular in which the respective Vernaculars should be compulsory."

(2) That the medium of instruction and examination in the Intermediate instructions should be English (except in dealing with the Vernacular and the classical language)." (40)

The Madras Government Committee on this subject presided over by Sir Venkataratnam Naidu took an even more favourable attitude towards the substitution of the Vernacular for English as the medium of instruction in the upper secondary classes. But the majority of the members, while willing to admit that substantial progress had been made in adopting the Vernacular as medium in lower secondary classes, felt that the time had not yet come to adopt such a sweeping innovation. The relegation of English to the position of a compulsory secondary language in the schools was felt to be unsuitable, as English was the language of instruction in the College. The Committee resolved that:

"While instruction and examination through the medium of Vernacular in Forms IV to VI should be the ultimate ideal, liberty be given to the managers of schools to choose either English or the Vernacular as the medium of instruction and examination, subject to the recommendation that approximately one-half the time devoted to instruction should be given to teaching through English and the other half through the Vernacular, and that the examination papers of the secondary school public examination other than language subjects be set in English and certain specified Vernacular languages."(41)

The Punjab University Enquiry Committee recommended in 1933 that the Vernacular medium should be used throughout the secondary course and that the medium of examination should be the Vernacular.(42) But only in 1939 at the Fourth Confe-

41. Ibid., pp.313–4.

42. Report of the Punjab University Enquiry Committee (1932–33), (Lahore, 1933), p. 302.
rence of Indian Universities at Bombay it was expressed in clear terms that "the medium of instruction at different stages of education upto and including the degree course should, as far as circumstances permit, be the mother tongue of the students." (43) The Conference passed the following Resolutions in this matter:

"That modern Indian and Eastern classical languages should be recognised as optional subjects for study in the High School and Intermediate and B.A. courses, and they should, as far as possible, be taught through the medium of the mother tongue or of any modern Indian language of an allied nature.

"That modern Indian languages may be recognised gradually and as far as possible alternatively with English as media of instruction for the Intermediate and Degree Courses excepting for English, and if necessary, for science subjects." (44)

The Conference wanted English to be the medium for instruction only in the research institutions.

As the great movement for freedom was gaining strength there was a strong plea for the Vernacular medium of instruction. It was considered that the English education through the medium of English, made Indians mere imitators and that the foreign medium put a severe strain upon the Indian students' nervous energy. Mahatma Gandhi was one of the champions of the Vernacular medium of instruction. He said that "the process

43. Fourth Conference of Indian Universities, (Bombay, 1939), pp. 48-49.
44. Ibid.
of displacing the Vernacular has been one of the saddest chapters in the British connection. Rammohan Rai would have been a greater reformer, and Lokamanya Tilak would have been a greater scholar, if they had not to start with the handicap of having to think in English and transmit their thoughts chiefly in English. Their effect on their own people, marvellous as it was, would have been greater if they had been brought up under a less unnatural system. No doubt they both gained from their knowledge of the rich treasures of English literature. But these should have been accessible to them through their own Vernaculars. No country can become a nation by producing a race of imitators." (45) Gandhiji said that if he had the powers of a despot, he would stop immediately the tuition of the boys and girls through a foreign medium, and require all the teachers and professions on pain of dismissal to introduce the change forthwith. He said that "I would not wait for the preparation of text-books. They will follow the change. It is an evil that needs a summary remedy." (46) The evil continues till today though attempts at several stages were made for the changing the medium during British rule in India.