

The New Nation

WEDNESDAY JUNE 25, 1986

ON EDUCATION AND EXAMINATION

The report submitted by the 25-member committee named Examination Improvement Committee headed by Prof. Md. Shamsul Haq appearing in part in a national daily has made the disquieting disclosure that on an average 6,000 candidates of S.S.C. and H.S.C. examinations are expelled each year, while a far bigger number resorting to various unfair means cannot be so expelled due to various types of pressures and adverse circumstances. The report says that copy-supplying cannot be stopped even by the imposition of Section 144 around the examination centres. Copying has become a chronic disease which looks almost incurable at present. The report even speaks of involvement of guardians and administrative officials in unfair means in examinations.

The Committee has listed six main problems in conducting examinations arising mainly out of administrative complications: the numerousness of examination centres which now stands as high as 6,000; pressure of influential people which interferes with maintenance of discipline in centres; variations in the number of candidates in different centres; differences in the standard of discipline in

different centres; non-co-operative attitude of examinees, guardians and teachers in different centres and finally the widespread proclivity of copying.

The Examination Improvement Committee report makes a very dismal reading indeed. The committee has mainly blamed the old colonial system of education and examinations and various types of administrative complications for this state of affairs. It has also quoted Lord Macaulay, the chief architect of the colonial system of education in the sub-continent as saying, "It is not possible for us to educate all natives. We should, therefore, aim at creating a class of people who will be Indian in blood and complexion but English in taste, morals and intellect, who would work as intermediaries among us and the millions of natives". On an earlier occasion we commented in these columns that the purpose of the colonial system was the creation of a cadre of clerks and quill-drivers who would play an instrumental part in perpetuating the colonial rule in the sub-continent. It is gratifying to note that the report of the Examination Improvement Committee also dwells on this theme. Such being the case, it was only natural that philosophy of education itself under the colonial rule was shot through with the same spirit of colonialism and mercantilism. Any improvement in the system of education and also of examination should, therefore, grapple with the philosophy of education first, which in the changed context must needs be tied to the age-old values like modesty, honesty and

true wisdom. Only a sound value-system can breed a sound system of education and a clean system of examination.

Of course, we cannot afford to forget that the erosion in our value-system is directly related to our socio-economic and political situation and resultant restlessness and the prevailing spite for norms and rules from bus-stands and shopping centres to examination and polling centres. The problem of restoring health and discipline in the system of education and examination must, therefore, be viewed in the overall perspective of restoring the health of the social ethos.