

CHAPTER XIII.

DISCIPLINE.

1. When Government and Authority were vested in an alien power and the people were considered as separate from these, there was a tendency to consider the interests of the people as different from the requirements of authority. This psychology often found transference to the world of students and schools, with the result that the laws of the school were not always identified with the interests of the students. The term "discipline" had not, therefore, the same significance as it should carry in its ordinary connotation. But things are different now as the people and the Government are one. Discipline assumes a new significance and a new importance in independent India.

2. The Nation's leaders, like Pandit Nehru, have been repeatedly emphasising the importance and necessity to discipline ourselves if we are to preserve our new-found freedom. To abide by the laws of the authority constituted by common consent, to respect the Constitution and to have faith in its ideals, to realize that success lies in the way of hard work,—these are the directions in which we must discipline ourselves. Though discipline in schools depends to a large extent on the environment in which the student moves outside the school, yet the school has a special responsibility. An atmosphere of discipline must be fostered in our schools and this is an educational responsibility of the utmost importance imposed upon us by our independence.

3. The best discipline is what the student acquires in a natural manner in the atmosphere which the school develops for itself. Every action of the teacher and everything done by the school as a corporate body contributes to the building up of that necessary atmosphere and tradition. The teachers and educational

authorities have therefore a special responsibility in this matter.

4. We believe that the proper teaching of the Social Studies both through formal lessons and what is more important, through appropriate activities will greatly aid the building up of discipline. We have indicated the methods of approach to these subjects in the previous chapters, which we consider, will produce the right attitude towards social relations and enable the pupil to realize that there is a right way as well as a wrong way of behaviour and action. We recommend that steps should be taken to ensure that the Social Studies are not allowed to degenerate into a state of bookishness, but that they function in a really live manner in our education.

5. We have recommended the introduction of Social Service and Manual Labour as part of school work and as an integral part of it. These activities are potent influences in building up disciplined personalities. These are mostly group activities, and working in a group is a healthy pursuit which cannot but improve discipline. We have, in the relevant places, indicated how these activities should be conducted. We fear, however, that it is too easy to let these activities become more nominal than real. Every endeavour should be made to prevent them from becoming so.

6. Our recommendation the whole of the second or afternoon session of the school may be devoted to extra-curricular or rather co-curricular activities will, we trust, conduce to better discipline, as it will provide the pupils with healthy activities in which they could learn the right use of their leisure. Here again, everything depends upon the way in which these activities are conducted.

7. Personal contacts between the pupil and the teacher will produce harmonious relationships between them and will be a powerful influence conducing to good discipline. These extra-curricular activities provide numerous opportunities for such contacts and both the educational authorities and the teachers should see that such activities are developed.

8. In this connection, it may be urged that Scouting and Girl Guiding should be a necessary part of school

discipline. In the Scout movement, the mind is integrated with physical activity. The activity is not one imposed from outside but is really a voluntary and natural activity of the pupil, with constructive hunger, creative aptitudes, nascent loyalties, and love of adventure. It is in the Scout and Girl Guide movements that one finds that sporting spirit, that recognition of the dignity of labour, that readiness to turn one's hand to whatever job which needs be done, that willingness to bow to authority, and that frame of mind to explore the possibilities of solving difficulties by understanding the other man's point of view. We are emphatically of the opinion that healthy Youth Movements like the Bharat Seva Dal and Bharat Scouts and Guides should be well-organised as the only effective checks against any restlessness among students.

9. The schoolmaster's work in future would be judged by the extent to which he contributes to the education of the citizens of a progressive State. It is the schoolmaster's business to place constantly before the students the idea of national unity and national prestige. We are inclined to believe that the moral influence of the Headmaster and the members of the teaching staff of each institution is a sovereign remedy to indiscipline among students. There is new life in the country. The destiny of a nation depends, as Goethe said, on the thoughts of its youth. We firmly believe that education at all stages should build up character and expand the mind and heart of students, so as to bring about a growing realisation of the essential need for developing a sense of respect for duly constituted authority and of the profound value of constitutional methods in getting their grievances redressed. The old distant attitude of awe on the part of the student towards the teacher is a thing of the past. The teachers must be so near to their students that they should enable the students instinctively to share their thoughts with them as they would with their classmates or brothers. We are fully aware of the growing energy of student life, the impulse for self-expression and the urge for individual freedom. But we view with no small concern recent evidences of indiscipline though it be only in a small section of the student community in the State.

10. Frequent transfers of teachers should not be effected in the interests of discipline. In order that a teacher may identify himself with his school and thereby exercise a wholesome influence over his pupils, he must be allowed to stay there sufficiently long. If quarters are built for the teachers either by private agencies on a guarantee of payment of rent—a system which was tried to be introduced by the Department some years ago—or by Government or managements, it will provide a valuable amenity long overdue to teachers and may reduce the clamour for transfers.

11. Opinion was also expressed in the Committee and the Committee agreed with this opinion—that discipline is a bigger problem in cities than in smaller places, and that the unwieldy size of schools in cities is a contributory factor to indiscipline. We recommend that in the interests of better management and discipline no school should be allowed to have in a class more than two sections or more than 45 pupils in a section.

12. We have observed that, latterly there has been a tendency for external influences to interfere with the teachers' authority in enforcing discipline among students, with disastrous consequences. We are of the opinion that all cases of indiscipline must be decided by the Headmaster and the Teachers' Council subject to the final approval of the Director of Public Instruction in respect of educational institutions in his charge and by the Principal and College Council subject to the approval of the University in all other cases. This policy of vesting ultimate responsibility for discipline in the teachers who are in *loco-parentis* will, we consider, greatly help to solve the problem of discipline.

13. We cannot conclude this section of our report without emphasising the importance of the responsibility of parents in the matter of enforcing discipline among students. In a spirit of genuine co-operation, we look to the parents to foster and develop in the minds of their children a healthy spirit of willing obedience to the laws of the school and the college, and thereby help to build up sound traditions of teacher-pupil relationship. If the teacher is of the right type, we expect all marks of true discipline to appear in our educational institutions, a

discipline worthy of ranking with that which Lord Montgomery has described as the "superb discipline of the Army"—a discipline that "does not consist of a slavish obedience to orders but is a looser, more rational framework of control in which the soldier's independence can flourish unhindered." This will depend as much on the character of the teachers as upon parental co-operation in full measure.
