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A University Training Corps for Mysore.

THE formation of a University Training Corps in the Mysore University has been engaging the attention of the authorities and recently Professor E. G. McAlpine who has had considerable experience of military affairs in the Volunteer Corps, has drawn up a memorandum on the subject. Through his courtesy, we were permitted to peruse this document and we have also received a note on the same subject, written by Sir P. S. Sivaswamy Aiyer, who was one of the members of the Shea Committee, appointed by the Government of India to report on the Non-Regular Military Forces in India. The resolution passed at the meeting of the Senate held in November 1934 runs as follows:—

“ That it be a recommendation to the University Council to arrange for instituting and conducting a University Training Corps with a view to giving the University students military training.”

After an exhaustive study of the budgets of the various institutions in which University Training Corps exists, Mr. M. Ramachandra Rao in moving the resolution pointed out that it was apparently possible to maintain and conduct a University Training Corps in Mysore at a sum of money ranging from a few hundreds to about Rs. 2,500. Professor McAlpine is of the opinion that these figures bore no approximation to the actual cost of a University Training Corps, for, in presenting the Defence Budget of the Government of India, His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief informed the Council of State that Government actually spent Rs. 6 lakhs per year on University Training Corps. Apart from the cost of maintenance, the memorandum proceeded to emphasise the fact that a University Training Corps has nothing to do with a University except that its personnel of officers, non-commissioned

officers and men consists of the teaching staff and students of the institutions concerned. For the University Training Corps are part of the Defence Forces of India and the Defence Department of the Government of India maintains them at a cost of Rs. 6 lakhs per annum and the purpose for which they exist and the conditions under which they train are matters in which the Universities supplying the personnel are not consulted. Col. Loch, Chief Commandant, Mysore State Troops, in a separate note which he wrote on the University Training Corps, has pointed out that the Corps form part of Indian Territorial Force and must therefore come under the Territorial Forces Act of 1920.

The inauguration of a University Training Corps in an Indian State involves problems not merely of finance, but they also bear a political, constitutional and administrative character. Before we deal with these aspects of the subject, it is necessary to deal with the fundamental issue raised by Professor McAlpine in his memorandum. Without referring to the aims and objects of similar organisations in the United Kingdom, so far as India is concerned, they have been clearly defined in the report of the Auxiliary and Territorial Forces Committee published in 1925. We are not aware whether the Government of India have since modified them, and whether there is ground to maintain that the declared purpose of the U.T.C. is to supply suitable officers and possibly also non-commissioned officers for the Indian Territorial Force and that the military training given to students is only an incidental result of this organisation and not its essential purpose. If there is no public document issued by the Government of India subsequent to the publication of the Shea Committee report in modification of the views expressed by that body, then it is obvious that there is confusion of ideas. In paragraphs 8 and 9, the Committee have set forth in unambiguous language the rôle of the University Training Corps and its functions and liabilities:—

“ In order to achieve the greatest measure of success in this form of national education, it is essential that it should commence at as early an age as possible, when the mind is most receptive. When a man is full-grown, it is no easy matter to alter his outlook, and to graft new ideals upon those he has already set up for himself. The

seed must be sown before his mind is formed, and for this reason it appears to us that the schools, colleges and Universities offer the most suitable medium through which the first phase of this education can be carried out. We recognise that at the present time, there may be serious difficulties in the way of establishing cadet corps in all schools in India, but a beginning can be made even in schools with the teaching of elementary principles of civic duty and with physical training and elementary military drill. In the Universities, the great opportunity lies, and here it is possible to communicate more advanced ideas on the subjects of patriotism and self-defence to a large and increasingly influential section of the population. We are of opinion that in the present state of India's evolution, and for many years to come, the University Training Corps should be regarded as the most important section of the Territorial Force. By means of the University Training Corps, if properly organised and developed, it is possible to educate and influence over a number of years that large body of young men who should become the leaders of thought and the teachers of the next generation. Their training in the principles and the practice of military service will not be limited to themselves, for, when they go out into the world, they will, if their military training has been adequate, take with them the spirit of patriotism, the sense of discipline and the improved physique which will be their legacy from the University Training Corps, and their example should serve to inspire a widening circle of the people of India with a sense of the benefits which fitness for military service confers both upon the individual and the community as a whole. We therefore recommend that the University Training Corps be viewed as the foundation stone of the national army and that no artificial limit be set to the expansion of these Corps, every encouragement being given to the formation and development on sound lines of fresh contingents in all Universities and Colleges where they do not already exist. In conformity with the general principle, which we have previously enunciated, we are of opinion that no form of state compulsion should be adopted to secure the enlistment of students in the U.T.C.—but we should, at the same time, be content to leave it, to the authorities of each individual University to decide whether as a matter of University discipline and regulation, it should be made obligatory for their undergraduates to join the U.T.C.

Since we contemplate that the object of the U.T.C. shall be primarily educational, and because

of the youthfulness of their members we suggest that these Corps should not have any liability for military service. Our own judgment and the evidence we have received lead us to believe that the imposition of such liability would be most unpopular with parents, and would frustrate the purposes which, in our opinion, the U.T.C. should serve. Moreover, it is clear that in actual practice the military authorities would never reckon upon the U.T.C. as an effective military weapon,—and there is no advantage to be gained by prescribing an obligation which it is never intended to exact. The members of the U.T.C. should, however, be encouraged by every other means to realise that they are being trained to qualify for service in the other sections of the Indian Territorial Force, where they can have a practical opportunity of undertaking to defend their country, which is alike the duty and privilege of every citizen. We envisage the U.T.C. of the future not only as a school for training the young idea in elementary military matters, but as the recognised recruiting ground for the officers, non-commissioned officers and men of the Indian Territorial Force, and later also as a potential source of supply of candidates for commissions in the Regular Indian Army.

The success of the U.T.C. in the rôle which we recommend should be allotted to it depends not solely upon the military but also upon the University authorities. Any efforts which the former may make to promote keenness and efficiency may easily be rendered nugatory by a lack of co-operation on the part of the latter, and in like manner, when encouragement is shown by the University authorities to the members of the U.T.C., the task of their military instructors will be facilitated. We feel confident, however, that the University authorities may be relied upon to reinforce, in a practical manner, any efforts which the Government may make to stimulate the successful evolution of the U.T.C.”

In their recommendations, the Committee have formulated the proximate and distant ideals of the University Training Corps. The former emphasise that the elementary principles of military training should form an integral part of any scheme of national education and the purpose ought to be to inculcate in the youthful minds a strong sense of discipline and patriotism with the power of self-defence, while the latter point to a period that when the U.T.C. has become thoroughly popular and its benefits are widely utilised, it ought to become the source

for the supply of officers, non-commissioned officers and men of the Indian Territorial Force. If this experiment is to succeed, then the Committee contemplate that the U.T.C. should serve as the foundation upon which the regular army should be built up. In any case the intention of the Committee seems that the U.T.C. should, in the first instance, form part of the extra-mural activities of the educational institutions, and that the results achieved would furnish the basis for the formulation of a scheme for integrating the U.T.C. into the Indian Territorial Force and the Regular Army. There are distinct and separate phases in the evolution and future development of the U.T.C. organisation. The declared purpose is educational and popularisation of the principles of military training among the younger generation and we do not believe that the Committee at any time thought that the immediate object of the U.T.C. was to supply officers and non-commissioned officers for the I.T.F. Further, we are not convinced that the military training of the U.T.C. is only an incidental process of recruiting officers for another branch of service. It is an educational end in itself in the initial stages. We are apt to confuse the stages and the purposes of each stage of the development of the U.T.C., and it is this tendency to mix up the objects of the successive phases of the organisation that has led to radical differences of opinion regarding the desirability and necessity of establishing U.T.C. in the educational institutions.

It is pointed out that the formation of a U.T.C. in an Indian State involves problems from which British India is exempt. If the Government have laid down the maxim in modification of the recommendations of the Shea Committee that the U.T.C. is the direct source of recruitment of officers for the I.T.F., and that therefore it forms a Unit of the general defence scheme, then it must be admitted that the resolution of the Senate of the Mysore University assumes a political complexion. But if the U.T.C. still retains its educational character, there can be no reason to suppose that the Government of India would oppose its introduction into the Indian States, the question of officering and financing the State U.T.C. being left to the Government concerned for final solution. The relation of State U.T.C. with similar organisations in British India,

and the question of their being linked up with the general army defence scheme and of the contribution of finances by the Central Government will naturally be considered in the States entering the proposed Federation. In the near future, the whole problem of the relation of the armed forces of Indian States to the general defence of India must come up for review, but even then, the primary educational purpose and the broad moral and civil outlook of the U.T.C. scheme will not be subordinated to military ideals. Whether the financial responsibility for organising and maintaining a U.T.C. should or should not belong to the Universities, will, in a large measure, depend upon the view taken of the U.T.C. itself. If it is distinctly a military body forming part of the general defence budget, then the finances must be derived from the military budget; but, if the U.T.C. is part of the national educational scheme, its cost must be defrayed partly from the University finance. If at the present moment the cost is debited to the army budget, the explanation must be found in the fact that though the U.T.C. has no real military value as an effective weapon, the ideal is that the Corps will foster the growth and diffusion of military spirit and a desire on the part of the educated people to participate in the benefits of the training either in the defence of the country or in the recruitment to the effective fighting forces. Besides such training could only be given by the Military Department. It is in this sense that the U.T.C. is part of the defence forces of India.

The generous enthusiasm which the U.T.C. evoked among the undergraduates in the earlier days was not, as is suggested, due to motives of preferment in public services, but was inspired by the genuine desire to profit by military training for which the authorities had made adequate financial provision. But the low estimate of the military value of the U.T.C. was soon reflected in the grudging spirit in which provision was made in the budget for the expansion of the U.T.C. and in the step-motherly treatment accorded to it by the authorities. It is obvious that the military authorities at the headquarters are always deeply anxious to guard against

any possible retrenchment in the expenditure which they consider necessary for the maintenance of the highest efficiency and standard of the regular forces, and they should naturally become afraid that the existence of the U.T.C. and the non-regular forces like I.T.F. and Auxiliary Forces might be used as an argument for cutting down military expenditure. This apprehension resulted in the policy of a progressive reduction of finances for the maintenance of the U.T.C. with the unfortunate consequence that those who were attracted by the benefits of the training were ultimately repelled by the parsimonious allowances permitted to them. The cost of maintaining the 5th (Madras) Battalion which comprises four companies, each with a personnel of 165, amounts to about Rs. 85,000 per annum, of which more than 41,000 is spent upon the pay of Adjutant, British staff and clerical and menial establishments, while the remainder is devoted to the maintenance of the U.T.C. personnel and the annual cost of upkeep, stores, arms, equipment, clothing and other expenditure.

If the Government of Mysore proposes to establish a U.T.C. at their own expense, the Government of India are not likely to take any serious objection to it and might be willing to lend the services of selected officers for the purpose of military training. On this basis the University of Calcutta has formulated their scheme of military training as part of its educational course. The U.T.C. can never be regarded as a material addition to the armed forces of the State or as a source of potential danger to the stability of the Empire. The lines along which Calcutta has framed the scheme are wise and have earned the approbation of the Provincial and Central Governments and we fail to see any reason why the Indian States should not formulate similar schemes for the benefit of their subjects. It is the ambition of the people of India, which is both natural and legitimate, that they should share in the responsibility of governing their country and of defending it, and should not opportunities be given to them to qualify for such national duties?