

GOVERNMENT HOUSE,  
MADRAS, 11<sup>th</sup> January, 1878.

SIR,—I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of two drafts amounting to Rupees 543.10.4, towards the Famine Relief Fund.

I beg that you will convey to Bishop RAIMONDI and to the Officers and Men of the Portuguese Gun-vessel *Tejo*, my best thanks for the remittance.

I remain, &c.,  
BUCKINGHAM AND CHANDOS.

His Excellency JOHN POPE HENNESSY, Esq.,  
*Governor of Hongkong.*

No. 31.

GOVERNMENT NOTIFICATION.

TEACHING OF ENGLISH IN THE GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS.

The following Letters and Minutes are published for general information.

By Command,

J. GARDINER AUSTIN,  
*Colonial Secretary.*

Colonial Secretary's Office, Hongkong, 15<sup>th</sup> February, 1878.

[No. 15.]

HONGKONG, 28<sup>th</sup> January, 1878.

SIR,—Referring to your Letter No. 132 of the 2<sup>nd</sup> March last, informing me of the Secretary of State's approval of the proposal for introducing a system of payment by results in the Government Schools of the Colony, I have the honour to report as follows:—

The Schools ranked as *very good* are the—

- |                                   |                                   |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Tang-lung Chau (Púnti) School. | 4. Girls' School.                 |
| 2. Wantsai School.                | 5. Tang-lung Chau (Hakka) School. |
| 3. Stanley School.                |                                   |

The Schools ranked as *good* are the—

- |                                  |                            |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Sai Ying-p'ún (Púnti) School. | 5. Ap-li Chau School.      |
| 2. Há Wán School.                | 6. Shek-t'ong Tsúi School. |
| 3. Shéung Wán School.            | 7. Ts'at Tsz-múi School.   |
| 4. Sháu-ki Wán School.           |                            |

According to this classification, 5 Masters receive \$25 each,.....	\$125.00
and 7 " " \$15 " .....	105.00
Total,.....	
<u>\$230.00</u>	

This payment comes under the denomination of Grants-in-Aid. I have already, in my Letter No. 3 of 7<sup>th</sup> instant, (C. S. O. No. 38), reported that the Grants-in-Aid this year are in excess of the sum voted for the purpose. I trust, however, that His Excellency the Governor, on considering the circumstances of the present year, will not object to making provision for this further sum; and I shall be glad if the Warrant for payment is issued in time to enable me to pay the Masters on the 1<sup>st</sup> proximo, before they go home for their New Year holidays.

I have the honour to be,  
Sir,

Your most obedient Servant,  
FREDERICK STEWART,  
*Inspector of Schools.*

The Honourable J. GARDINER AUSTIN, C.M.G.,  
*Colonial Secretary,*  
&c., &c., &c.

*Minute by His Excellency the Governor.*

I have already sanctioned the extra payments in accordance with Mr. STEWART's recommendation, subject to the approval of the Legislative Council.

On visiting some of these Village Schools, I found the Schoolmasters could not speak a word of English, and as far as I could ascertain, none of the pupils had any knowledge of English.

Possibly, in some of the Government Schools I have not yet been able to visit, there may be instruction in English; I should therefore be glad if Mr. STEWART would make out a list of the Schoolmasters of the Village Schools, marking in each case, those who can teach English, and those who cannot.

Also the total number of pupils in each Village School, and the number in each that can speak English.

J. POPE HENNESSY,  
29<sup>th</sup> January, 1878.

*Minute by the Inspector of Schools.*

Before the establishment of the Central School, English was taught in a few of the Schools by visiting Masters, who attended for that purpose a few hours a week. This, the Board of Education found to be highly unsatisfactory. Accordingly, when the Central School was established, the teaching of English was abolished in *all* the other Schools.

The only exception *now* is the Aberdeen \* School, which is, and has been, in such a backward state that I almost despair of the success of the experiment, and often think we should revert, in this School, to the teaching of Chinese pure and simple.

With this one exception, therefore, what are conveniently called the Village Schools are simply Schools where the children receive a *Chinese* education in their own language.

The School Book Committee's Series and Geography have been added to this course of instruction; but these subjects excepted, they are such Schools as might be found anywhere in any part of the Chinese Empire.

Except that there is no religious instruction, the Schools correspond exactly with the Grant-in-Aid Schools in Class I, namely, the Baxter, the London Mission, and the St. Stephen Schools. Neither Masters nor Scholars know anything of English.

FREDERICK STEWART,  
29th January, 1878.

HONGKONG, 10th February, 1878.

MY DEAR MR. STEWART,—Looking to the views entertained by the Governor, and many others as to the expediency of giving greater facility to the boys at the Central School, for the study of the English language, it seems to me very desirable that we should have your views as early as possible as to the arrangements which should be made. Could you not therefore postpone your departure for a fortnight? If prior to sending in a report you would like to discuss the matter with the Governor, myself, and a few others, I am sure His Excellency will afford you every facility.

Yours, &c.,

J. GARDINER AUSTIN.

FREDERICK STEWART, Esq.

*Inspector of Schools to The Honourable J. Gardiner Austin, C.M.G., Colonial Secretary.*

[No. 23.]

HONGKONG, 11th February, 1878.

SIR,—In answer to your note enquiring if I could not postpone my departure for a fortnight, in order to give the Government my views on the expediency of affording greater facility to the boys at the Central School for the study of the English language, I have the honour to inform you that it would be exceedingly inconvenient for me to postpone it, for several reasons: this one among others, that I had to telegraph to Shanghai to secure a passage for the 21st instant, and that I have no chance of being able to get one by the following steamer. I should, of course, at once sacrifice my own private interests for the sake of the public service; did I think it necessary; but I expect to be able to send you to-morrow, or the day after, a communication which, I believe, will set at rest this question of English at the Central School.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient Servant,

FREDERICK STEWART,  
*Inspector of Schools.*

*Minute by His Excellency the Governor.*

Let this await the further communication Mr. STEWART tells us he is preparing. I should be very sorry to stop him, for no Officer has earned his leave of absence better, but I fear he is somewhat over-sanguine in thinking that the communication he contemplates will set this question at rest; and it is to be regretted that he does not think it necessary for the public service to act on the suggestion conveyed in Mr. AUSTIN's letter, and thus be able to discuss with the Colonial Secretary, myself and others (such as the Members of Legislative Council who represent commercial interests) the problem of again teaching English in all the Government Schools, and of making the nominal programme of four hours a day of English for every boy at the Central School a reality, so that all the pupils in that school should be able to speak English—perfectly or imperfectly—instead of only 60 out of 610.

J. POPE HENNESSY.  
11th February, 1878.

* No. of Day Scholars in 1877, .....	30
No. of Evening Scholars in 1877, .....	21
Total, .....	<u>51</u>

All these *learn* English; none of them *speak* it. The Master, Wong Káp, *speaks* English fairly.

*Inspector of Schools to The Honourable J. Gardiner Austin, C.M.G., Colonial Secretary.*

HONGKONG, 12th February, 1878.

SIR,—I have the honour to bring to your notice that there is a serious misapprehension abroad as to the working of the Central School.

2. This misapprehension has arisen from a question put to me by His Excellency the Governor, on the 25th ultimo, at the Distribution of the Prizes at the Central School.

3. I was then asked, "How many of the boys *now* in the school *speak* English?" I answered, "From fifty to sixty; and that imperfectly."

4. His Excellency, in his speech as published in the Government Gazette of the 26th of January, said, "In this English Colony we must not be satisfied with 60 out of 600 being able to *speak* English in our principal Government School, and that imperfectly."

5. On the following day, these words appeared in the "Catholic Register," "He" (His Excellency) "remarked on the small proportion, only 50 or 60 out of that number (610), who *knew anything* of English and of their very imperfect knowledge of the language."

6. At an interview to which the Governor invited me in the forenoon of the 9th instant, on reference being again made to the *speaking* of English in the school, I called His Excellency's special attention to the distinction between *speaking* a language and *learning*, that is *studying* it; as the impression was then gaining upon me that there was a misapprehension on the subject.

7. In the afternoon of the same day, on the occasion of the Distribution of Prizes by His Excellency the Governor at St. Joseph's College, Mr. FRANCIS is reported in the "China Mail" of that date to have said, "He was astonished to find at the recent examination of the Central School that only forty or fifty of the Chinese youths receiving instruction there were being *taught* English, or able to *speak* the language to any extent. He was under the impression previously that *every* Chinese boy who went there was *taught* English, and he was much surprised to find that that was not the case."

8. In the report of the same proceedings contained in the "Daily Press" of the 11th instant, Mr. FRANCIS is similarly reported to have said, "I was astonished to find at the recent examination of the Central School only forty or fifty of the boys were able to *speak* English. I had always been under the impression that the one thing that school existed for was to *teach* English, that *every* boy was *taught* English, and I was very much astonished to find that was not the case."

9. On the same occasion, His Excellency is reported in the "China Mail" to have stated, "You have heard it said that only about forty or fifty, I think the actual number given to me by Mr. STEWART was fifty or sixty of the Chinese boys being educated in the Central School last year *spoke* English and that imperfectly."

10. Further on, His Excellency is reported to have said, "It was only this very morning in an interview I had with Mr. STEWART, who is at the head of our Government educational system, I told him, what I was bound to repeat to him, namely, the views of leading merchants, un-official members of my Council, and others in this Colony, which are that they desire the Government Schools in Hongkong to *teach more English*, and that no boy should, in time to come, *leave* the Government Schools, without being able to *speak* English."

11. The report of His Excellency's words in the "Daily Press" is in precisely the same terms, and need not therefore be repeated.

12. Now I very respectfully beg to point out that in all this there is a fallacy lurking, and I have italicised the words on which I think that fallacy turns.

13. The belief now abroad in the Colony is that no attempt is made at the Central School to teach more than fifty or sixty of the boys English; and that the study of that language is subordinated to the study of Chinese, which both the English and the Chinese masters devote their time and their energies to teach. Indeed, it is difficult to see how people could believe otherwise, considering that Mr. FRANCIS, as appears above, stated at St. Joseph's College on the 9th instant, that he was astonished to find that only forty or fifty of the boys at the Central School were being *taught* English, and that His Excellency practically endorsed the statement by allowing it to pass unchallenged although touching upon it.

14. The simple fact however is quite otherwise. *Every* boy in the Central School is *taught* English during *four hours* every day, a period which I think it impossible to extend with any good result. In addition to this teaching of English, *but in subordination to it*, the boys are also taught their own language by non-English-speaking masters; for I hold that no boy can master a foreign language without a competent knowledge of his own, unless he resides in the country in which the foreign language is spoken.

15. When I said to His Excellency that only 50 or 60 of the boys *spoke* English, I referred to those who had been some years in the school, and who were about to leave it on obtaining employment. When I used the word "imperfectly," I did so in contradistinction to the facility with which one *speaks* a foreign language from actual experience in life, as apart from the slow and imperfect speaking of it which one acquires by learning it only from the lips of a master: and I did not for a moment intend to suggest that none of the others *knew anything* of English.

16. In the "China Mail's" account of the proceedings already referred to, His Excellency is reported to have said, "I asked His Lordship when I came in this morning what was the number of Portuguese in the school, and what number *left* the school, able to *speak* English. He answered, first, that there

cannot be far short of 200 Portuguese trained in the school, and that all these, *practically speaking*, leave the school able to *speak* English *more or less*."

17. If His Excellency will take the same reply from me now, I can give it, without hesitation or reservation, as regards the boys at the Central School.

18. That more can be done at the Central School *as it is*, than is being done, to *teach* English, I believe to be impossible: that more could be done at the school *as I should like to see it*, than is done now, it would be impossible to deny: but, to reach that stage, the new school must be built, more accommodation provided, smaller classes formed, a stronger staff of teachers obtained, and a play ground supplied as the most practical of all forms of teaching the boys to *speak* English.

19. I have repeatedly referred to all these matters in my Annual Reports, but it is now necessary to repeat and emphasize them; and, as much evil must result to the school from the currency given to the impression that is now prevailing, I venture to request that His Excellency will permit the publication of this letter in next Saturday's *Gazette*, in order that this serious public misapprehension may be authoritatively removed on the earliest possible occasion.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient Servant,

FREDERICK STEWART,  
*Inspector of Schools.*

*The Governor to the Colonial Secretary.*

As the Colonial Secretary was with me when I put the questions to Mr. STEWART about the amount of English spoken in the double class-room where there were one hundred and fifty boys being taught by three Chinese teachers, and about the amount of English spoken by the six hundred and ten pupils in the whole school for 1877, I should be glad if he would record his recollection of Mr. STEWART'S answer.

J. POPE HENNESSY.

12th February, 1878.

*Minute by the Colonial Secretary.*

The information given to Your Excellency by Mr. STEWART conveyed an impression to my mind that only 50 or 60 of the boys knew anything of English. Indeed when these figures were given in Your Excellency's speech I understood Mr. STEWART to say, when turning round to me, that he feared they were in excess.

I must confess that in consequence I left the school with an unfavourable impression as to the extent to which instruction was being given in English, as I hold that political and commercial interests render the study of English of primary importance in all Government schools.

I quite agree, however, with Mr. STEWART that we should obtain better results with more accommodation, smaller classes and a stronger staff of teachers.

J. GARDINER AUSTIN,  
*Colonial Secretary.*

13th February, 1878.

*Minute by His Excellency the Governor.*

Send copies of these Minutes to Mr. STEWART, and say I should be glad if he would prepare an approximate estimate of the total cost of the whole scheme of Government Education, assuming that the Legislative Council will concur with Mr. AUSTIN in thinking that political and commercial interests render the study of English of primary importance in all Government Schools: and that as regards the principal Government School (the Central School) smaller classes be formed, and a stronger staff of teachers be obtained.

As regards providing increased accommodation, I signed warrants last year for over ten thousand dollars for this object, in addition to more than forty thousand spent by my predecessor; and in this year's Estimates, I have taken a further vote on account of the new Central School of \$25,000.

J. POPE HENNESSY.

14th February, 1878.

No. 32.

GOVERNMENT NOTIFICATION.

Applications will be received at this Office for the appointment of Fourth Master at the Central School during the absence on leave of the Head Master, Mr. STEWART.

Salary \$120 per month and an Allowance of \$30 per month for House Rent.

Applications to be addressed to the Office of the undersigned.

For further particulars, apply to F. STEWART, Esquire, Head Master, Central School.

By Command,

J. GARDINER AUSTIN,  
*Colonial Secretary.*

Colonial Secretary's Office, Hongkong, 15th February, 1878.