

1925



E. AFRICA
SOMALILAND

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DATE

KITTERMASTER. 155

5th November 1925.

REGULATION

USE OF VERNACULAR IN NATIVE EDUCATION.

U.S. of S.

Submit obcons on S. of S's despatch regarding -

U.S. of S.

U.S. of S.

Secretary of State.

Previous Paper

MINUTES

B.O. 35571

Mr. Jagger

Await other replies.

~~Major Vickers to see~~

En 25/11/25

Sim. / Hambrick
10.12.25

17/11
25/11

Went

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Subsequent Paper

Sp. 10/14/26
26/11/25

PROOF.

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336 A

No.

SOMALILAND.

THE ACTING GOVERNOR TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE.

(Received 23rd November, 1925.)

[Answered by No.]

(No. 155.)

Governor's Camp, Sheikh, 5th November, 1925

SIR. With reference to your despatch No. 126 of 3rd October* on the subject of the use of the vernacular in native education, I have the honour to reply that the matter is one which at the moment is not of direct interest to this Protectorate owing to the lack of educational facilities. The only school in the Protectorate apart from the Koranic schools in the villages is a small primary school in Berbera where little is taught but reading and writing in Arabic and elementary mensuration.

2. There is no written Somali language: the spoken language is akin to Arabic, and the Arabic language can express adequately Somali conceptions, but Arabic characters cannot be employed to represent Somali sounds. Books in Somali would be confined to school books specially written for the purpose and would not perhaps open up avenues to wider thought. The use of Arabic instead of Somali in primary education, on the other hand, would give the key to the whole range of Arabic literature. The Somalis claim kinship with the Arabs and are proud of it and seem to learn the language easily. It would therefore appear to be a question whether Arabic should not be used in primary education rather than the vernacular.

3. I entirely agree that elementary education should be carried out through the medium of the vernacular or some language akin to it. I do not feel competent to express an opinion as to the psychological value of the vernacular. I do feel, however, that there is a definite danger in the use of English as a medium of instruction in elementary education. There is room in Government offices and commercial houses for a certain number of natives with an elementary knowledge of English reading and writing but the use of English in primary education tends to make the supply much in excess of the demand. Yet the distinction of clerical work as opposed to technical or manual work appears to have invaded Africa and the aim of most natives on getting even elementary education seems to be a clerical post. The elimination of English from primary education would obviate this danger and would give a better opportunity for the development of a native in some other line of life of greater utility than mere clerical work. It must, however, be admitted that the elimination of English from a school curriculum would also greatly reduce the desire for education with the Somalis, as it is only regarded as a means of earning money and a knowledge of English appears to be the shortest road to this end.

4. I agree most particularly in recommendation No. V that where English is taught it should be taught well and that only in Secondary schools.

5. I do not find myself in such agreement with recommendation VI. When a boy has embarked on his education for some three or four years. By this time his mind should be sufficiently trained to allow him to benefit by instruction in all literary subjects in some other language than the vernacular. In technical and scientific subjects I presume the vernacular is out of the question as being inadequate. I make a proviso that for the best results the teacher must have a perfect command of the vernacular himself to enable him to give vivid explanations of the mother tongue of passages or phrases which might otherwise not be understood.

6. As there are no Missions established in this Protectorate I am unable to quote expert opinions in this despatch. I have discussed the matter in its local aspects with officers of the Protectorate. In its more general aspect I have perhaps been influenced by the recollection of my own personal experience twenty years ago of education in South Africa where the problem presented certain points of similarity.

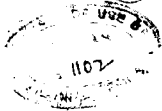
Yours, &c.

H. B. KUTTERMASTER.

Acting Governor.

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RFA
ISLAND PROTECTORATE.

NO.155.



52471 337
GOVERNOR'S CAMP.

SHEIKH,

5th November, 1925.
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3.
His Honourable

MAJOR-GENERAL L.C.M.S. AMERY, P.O., M.P.,

etc. etc. etc.,

Secretary of State for the Colonies.

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I have, the honour to be,
Sir,
Your most obedient,
humble servant,

L. B. Kittermester
ACTING GOVERNOR.