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EDITORIAL

THE WEST BENGAL HOMŒOPATHIC SYSTEM OF MEDICINE ACT, 1963

We express our heartfelt thanks and congratulations to the Legislature and the Government of West Bengal, particularly to the State Health Minister, Dr. P. K. Guha, for fulfilling the ardent desire of the Homœopathic Profession, vented in our Editorial article of last July Issue. Now the W. B. Homœopathic System of Medicine Bill 1963 is a regular Act, to control and improve the Homœopathic System of Medicine in W. Bengal, the Fosterland of Homœopathy in Asia.

The era of official cognizance of Homœopathy started in many countries of the World fairly long ago, and in many States of India comparatively recently. It is rather paradoxical that our State, the pioneer in every affair of Homœopathy in Asia, the inaugurator of the first Homœopathic State Faculty (in 1943) in India, took so many years to take up the inexorable trend of the age—to render to Homœopathy a legal status. That is particularly why the present Ministry and Legislature deserve special felicitation.

There is no evil on the Earth which has not an inherent good aspect in it. The delay that occurred in our country, particularly in our State, in giving legal status to Homœopathy has opened up a vast opportunity to take lessons from the

experience of the plight of Homœopathy in other countries resulting from official recognition. One and all of us should get thoroughly acquainted with these experiences, and should imbibe objective, deep and detailed lessons from them, on ideological, scientific, professional, social, statutory and financial aspects of Homœopathy. Like every evil having some good in it, we should remember that every good also may have evils in it, and often dangerous at that.

There cannot be any question about the fact that the Homœopathic Act is not only a real good thing, but actually an indispensable thing in the present age. So long Homœopathy has thrived, progressed and spread spontaneously by dint of its own intrinsic virility, only partially nourished by individual or unofficial efforts and support. And, consequently, as is quite natural for any neglected spontaneous growth, the field of Homœopathy has become too full of weeds of various type. On the other hand, due to the mercenary fetish of the present age, the unofficial nourishment so long enjoyed by Homœopathy is gradually drying up. In such a plight struggle for existence of true Homœopathy has become really hazardous. Moreover, in the present age of official control in every sphere of life, it is very difficult for any faculty or profession to survive unprotected.

But, however indispensable be the State support for Homœopathy, we should not be oblivious of the fact that the life and progress of it does not basically depend upon any external factor, but primarily upon its own virility, integrity and alertness. Any external protection always entails some condescension and interference. The less will be the degree of virility, integrity, and alertness on the part of the homœopathic profession, the more is likely to be the tendency to slighting and interference on the part of the State. And, as even the best Government of a State cannot be expected to be thoroughly imbued with Homœopathic spirit, thoroughly aware of the real interest and necessities of Homœopathy, rather, they are by far more likely to be dominated by influences alien to Homœopathy, it is very probable that too much State interference may totally sap away the very life of Homœopathy, as

is tending to happen in many foreign countries, particularly in the U.S.A.—the Fosterland of Homœopathy on World scale. In order to further elucidate this point we propose to reprint an article entitled “*A Note of Caution to Indian Homœopathy*” in our next issue, and also request our readers to pursue our Editorial article of December, 1962 issue viz., “*Indispensable and Urgent Necessity of Common Unofficial Organisation of All Homœopaths in India*”.

Keeping apprehension of these dangerous possibilities in mind, anybody sincerely interested about the life and progress of true Homœopathy should be constantly vigilant and active in the following main lines:—

I. On the Question of Status :

(1) We should constantly strive to elevate and establish our own status by

(a) Organising minimum medical education for the masses of home-read homœopaths directly through the various Homœopathic Associations and Institutions, indirectly through the Health Dept. of Government and Self-Government bodies.

(b) Organising authentic statistical proofs for establishing superior proficiency of Homœopathic Medicine in the matter of prophylaxis and cure of Epidemic diseases.

(c) Rearing up dependable specialists in Surgery, Midwifery etc., from amongst good Homœopathic students, thoroughly imbued with Homœopathic Spirit. And through them to establish the fact that, as adjuncts to these special branches of Medicine, Homœopathy has far superior merit to any other system of Medicine. We should remember that, the Homœopathic School can claim a good number of talents in these various special lines, e.g., in *Obstetrics & Gynaecology*—Guernsey (who was an authority not only in Homœopathy, but also equally in Obstetrics and Gynaecology of his time), Yingling, Conant etc., in *Surgery*—Helmouth, A. M. Linn, Dorothy Shepherd etc. etc. ; in *Ophthalmology*—Norton, etc. ; and so on. We should try our level best to create in India a good number Guernseys, Helmouths, Nortons etc. to show to the public as well as Authorities what Homœopathy can do in these special lines.

(2) We should constantly strive to elevate our ethical standard by—

(a) Discouraging by all means not only the use of unauthorized diplomas and titles, but also the prosecution of unauthorized professional practice. In this connection we should remember that unauthorized amateur practice cannot be stopped by any means in any system of Medicine e.g., rampant use Sedatives, Laxatives or even Antibiotics by lay people ; and no profession can be held responsible for that.

(b) Showing mutual respect among professional Colleagues, and conscientiously eschewing mutual vilification.

(3) We should consciously and straightly face any misrepresentation, insinuation or slander about Homœopathy coming from any quarters or on any occasion, and elegantly refute them forthwith through all platforms.

(4) We must maintain perpetual pressure on the Authorities for recognition of the superior merit of Homœopathy in all the branches of Medicine, and awarding it equal status with the dominant System of Medicine for the interest of the people.

II. On the Question of Mass Registration :

There are certain clauses in the Act which are likely to artificially and deleteriously restrict the number of Registered Practitioners in Homœopathy. But, it is an obvious fact that registration is an essential factor for minimizing the heterogeneity and irregularity in the homœopathic society, and for elevating its standard as a whole. So it is a duty of each and every conscientious individual Homœopath, and particularly any Homœopathic Association to see that no practising Homœopath of their respective locality or jurisdiction may remain unregistered, and to help and encourage the candidates for registration by all means to obviate the official hurdle.

III. On the Question of Support along with Control :

We must always be vigilantly active to see that this Act may not be merely a means of mechanical control and restriction of Homœopathy, but a means of actual official support and protection. For this purpose, we should keep constant pressure on the Authorities for realizing the following necessities of Homœopathy:—

- (1) A thoroughly equipped Homœopathic Research Institute.
- (2) General and Epidemic Disease Homœopathic Hospitals in various towns.
- (3) Homœopathic Charitable Dispensaries in villages.
- (4) Appointment of Homœopaths in the Medical Departments of Government and Self Government Bodies, as well as industries in the State and Public Sector.
- (5) Sufficient State Aid to the various affiliated Homœopathic Teaching Institutions.
- (6) State sponsored arrangements for mass education of Homœopaths (*vide* our Editorial Article—"Homœopathy and National Crisis"—March 1963).
- (7) State Aids to various unofficial Homœopathic Charitable Dispensaries.

IV. In realizing any of these demands we should be always cautious *not to barter with the basic Principles of Homœopathy.*

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