



February 18, 1977

VC's Call for Democratisation of Education

MADRAS, Feb. 17.

The centenary of the Institute of Franciscan Missionaries of Mary and the 30th anniversary of the Stella Maris College were celebrated at an impressive function in the college premises to-day. The Institute, founded by Rev. Mother Mary in Ootacamund, has over 10,000 members spread over 70 countries engaged in different activities ranging from running of educational institutions to participation in community development in villages and slums.

Presiding over the celebrations, Dr. Malcolm S. Adiseshiah, Vice-Chancellor, Madras University, paid tributes to the services of the Institute in the cause of education and rural uplift. He stressed the need for admitting in greater numbers to institutions of higher learning the weaker section of society. He said statistics showed that higher education presently remained the domain of the affluent and the privileged minority. Even the educational system seemed to favour the elite and those belonging to the families of "traditional college-goers".

In this connection, he called for democratisation of education at all levels. He regretted that private colleges, known to be centres for "quality education", catered mainly for the well-to-do, while in Government colleges over 80 per cent of the students belonged to Scheduled Castes and Tribes and backward communities.

Referring to the Principal, Sr. Juliet Irene's plea for greater financial aid, he suggested joint efforts by parents, managements and the University be made to convince the State Governor and his Advisers of the need for an enhancement in Government grant to meet the deficit.

Sr. Juliet Irene, Principal, who presented the annual report, supported the semesterisation of courses which was beneficial to both teachers and students.