

Afiliada à



## Gorceix: The man, the master, the work

Current news demonstrates that the development of Brazil will rely on investments in basic education and a tax reform.

However, this news is unresolved old history, since Claude Henri Gorceix, founder of the School of Mines, reported 143 years ago that he was worried about the deplorable situation of the existing graded and high school education in Brazil. He said:

*"Without primary education, there is no secondary education; without secondary education, there is no superior education; and without superior education, there will be no Brazilian engineers or men useful to their country".*

It was with this preoccupation that he wrote to the Governor of the Province of Minas Gerais:

*"I have the honor to inform you that on every Thursday at 10:00 a.m., starting the 15th of this month, I will be at the disposition of the teachers of primary education in the capital.*

*I pretend to give some conferences to expose the method by which I understand should be taught "things" in primary schools and in the secondary schools, the notions of elementary physics and chemistry".*

On the other hand, the founder of the School of Mines understood very well that a scholarship did not necessarily mean free education and as such, wrote to the Minister of the Empire:

*I would feel very happy and proud to be called upon to facilitate the installation of the establishment of which I have had the honor to organize. As such, I ask of you Mr. Minister, to take from my salary, half of the amount necessary to cover the maintenance of three students in the School of Mines of Ouro Preto, and solicit your generosity in the complementation of this aid. Having been educated at the École Normale Supérieure of Paris, under similar conditions, I contracted a debt which, happily, I will liquidate in Brazil, where I have the honor of being in a service for which my Masters taught me to love, independent of the country that I serve.*

Henri Gorceix did not consider himself to be part of a problem, but always proposed a solution for one when it appeared.

In the economic field, a constant task for Gorceix was to examine and give technical advice on the exploration and mining of mineral deposits of the most varied types that were always sent him by the Governor. We reproduce below one of these technical advices: request of a gold exploration Company in São João Nepomuceno, about which Gorceix presented the following considerations: *"In my opinion, and in principal admissible for all, every industrial company of whatsoever nature should encounter in the Government all possible animation and assistance possible. Thus, as the first consequence of this principal, the administration should not hinder in any way a private initiative, either by laws presented to the Parliament or by regulations that should govern the implementation of these laws. Especially, they should neither become very costly for the private companies nor should it become very difficult to obtain the amount needed to execute the projects.*

As can be seen, during the implementation of the School of Mines, Henrique Gorceix worked arduously to achieve recognition for having left teachings for new generations, as well as his own. The current news now demonstrates how much time has been lost by Brazil in this respect; that is, at least 143 years.

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