

The unfortunate experience in connection with the closing of the orphanage at Nowgong has been emphasized considerably by other writers. The Deputation sent out by the Board in America to consult with the missionaries urged the closing, or rather a change of program for the orphanage. It was but natural that the missionaries should resent any action, on the part of the Executive Committee, which would close an institution that was of province-wide importance. To the missionaries it was like throwing away the labors of many years and shutting a door of usefulness. They pointed out that to close the institution would mean a humiliation which would be difficult to overcome. Sudden abandonment or subversion would appear to the natives like religious bankruptcy.

The missionaries argued that the schools enabled the people to read the printed word and religious tracts. They helped to impart correct moral and religious ideals; and to facilitate the right apprehension of religious terms used by the preachers. This was particularly important as Hindu terminology often misrepresented great Christian doctrines, and needed special explanations. Education further exposed false usages, inwrought with idolatry. The schools gave opportunity for the first inculcation of the gospel, or in other words, for preaching to the pupils and others associated with them.

The missionaries maintained that they needed at least one high school for the whole mission; that a primary or village school be established in every place where the missionary was able to establish a permanent preaching post; that Scriptures and religious books be the principal studies; and that the schools be in charge of Christian teachers.

The tone of the deputation from home tended to discourage the educational efforts and to emphasize direct preaching. Dr. Solomon Peck, the chief member of the deputation, felt that secular education should be cared for by the government; and in his closing remarks in his report on the educational policy of the mission, said, "With respect to Assam, the demand for common schools will be met at no distant day, there is reason to hope, by the civil government, to whom it appertains. And there is also encouragement to hope that the language in these government schools will be the vernacular, so soon as suitable text books can be obtained; a result to which it is believed the influence of the mission has not a little contributed."<sup>1</sup>

The missionaries, after a long conference, reluctantly acquiesced to the following compromise for reorganization submitted by Dr. Peck. It was suggested: first, that the Nowgong orphans institution be changed with a view to its becoming as soon as practicable, a central normal school for the preparatory training of native teachers and preachers; second, that the institution be divided into two departments: primary and normal, and that the period of study in either department should not exceed three years; third, that the number of pupils be limited to forty; that none be admitted under ten years of age; that preference be given to Christians and to those regarded as inquirers; and that the normal department be reserved entirely for church members in good standing; fourth, that all instruction be given in the vernacular and that no English be allowed after the following October first; fifth, that the superintendent travel and preach in the cold season when practicable; and sixth, that the girls' de-