Chapter VI
PROGRESS OF SECONDARY EDUCATION

During the period of our survey, secondary education in Assam was imparted through two types of institutions, i.e., the middle schools and the high schools. The middle schools provided education up to and including Class VI while the high schools had a longer duration, leading up to the Matriculation Examination conducted by the Calcutta University. Entrance of pupils to the secondary stage was determined by success in the primary schools.

In Assam, there were secondary schools with varying types of duration. Some middle schools included the primary stage also, while some high schools included either both the primary and middle school courses or the middle course only. The middle schools were of two types, i.e., the Middle English (M.E.) and Middle Vernacular (M.V.) Schools, providing for almost the same type of curriculum; English was compulsory in the M.E. Schools while it was optional in the M.V. Schools. The identical courses of studies in the two types of middle schools appeared to lead to some confusion and, therefore, a new syllabus was introduced for the M.E. Schools assimilating the standards of M.E. Schools with the lower classes of the High Schools. A different syllabus was also prescribed for the M.V. Schools. Thus was made a demarcation between the M.E. and M.V. Schools.

The Indian Education Commission of 1882 recommended the expansion of secondary education through the agency of private enterprise. The argument was that persons in good circumstances should be made to pay the cost of their children's education and that no obstacles should be raised on the path of progress of the poorer classes. Anyway, it was the argument of the foreign rulers
who seemed to hold that their substantial concern for the progress of primary education obliged them to spend more on primary education. The reality was that the Government did not want to assume direct responsibility for the expansion of secondary education. The Commission suggested that secondary schools should, as far as possible, be provided with funds on the grant-in-aid basis and that the Government should withdraw as early as possible from the direct management of secondary schools. The grant-in-aid system was intended to supplement and partly to supersede the government system of higher education. Under the recommendations of the Commission, grants were also to be made for the provision of furniture and apparatus in the aided schools. The rates of fees in aided schools were to be lower than those in the Government schools, evidently to draw more students to the aided schools. Thus, the Commission wished to make private enterprise the main agency for the expansion of secondary education. But such an approach did not meet with a wholly positive response in Assam. This was because of the fact that at that early period of educational advance in a comparatively backward province, private bodies or individuals did not or could not show sufficient interest in establishing aided high schools. Naturally, the move to transfer Government schools in a gradual way to local bodies willing to undertake the management of the institutions 'under adequate guarantees of permanence and efficiency' did not fully materialise in Assam. Another matter deserves attention. In spite of the promise of financial support by the central government to provinces, no imperial grants were released for the purpose of expansion of secondary education during the period from 1882 till the beginning of the twentieth century. The result was that Government High Schools took the major share of the provincial funds.
were favoured with the major share of the provincial funds allotted to secondary education while the aided High Schools were left to fend for themselves in practically all matters, viz., provision of buildings, furniture, equipments, and staff. This was progress indeed in the reverse gear!

**Impact of the Resolution of 1904**

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Lord Curzon began the drive for qualitative improvement of secondary education by the release of large amounts of imperial grants. The emphasis was on the improvement of the Government High Schools to serve as models for others in the field. This produced a wholesome effect on the development of secondary education.

With a view to improving the conditions in the non-Government schools, the Government Resolution of 1904 laid down the principles of: (a) recognition by the Education Department, and, (b) recognition by the University. It was provided that irrespective of the management of the schools 'by public authority or by private persons and whether they received aid from public funds or not, the Government is bound in the interest of the community to see that the education provided in them is sound'. This served as the basis for the educational policy enunciated in 1913. As a result, the venture schools had to struggle hard to improve their conditions in order to be able to secure grants.

Recognition by the Education Department was necessary in order to entitle a school to the benefits under the grant-in-aid system. Recognition was to be extended to a High School on the following conditions: actual necessity for the school in the area of its location; assured financial stability; existence of a properly constituted managing body for the school; provision for adequate
instruction in subjects up to a proper standard; provision of facilities for care of the health, recreation, and discipline of the students; existence of a qualified staff on an adequate basis; and, a fair fee rate without any implication of unhealthy competition with existing schools. 7

Recognition by the University was extended if the High School concerned fulfilled the conditions for recognition by the Education Department and the Inspector appointed by the University submitted a favourable report on the working of the School. Recognition by the University was most essential because, Schools sent up students for the Matriculation Examination under the University.

Recognition by the Education Department and the University entitled a High School to financial grants from the Government, the right to admit pupils securing Government scholarship, and to the enjoyment of the right to transfer pupils to Government schools. Thus, recognition became the very condition of existence of secondary schools. 8

Curzon's policy in the field of education was criticised by many educated Indians because it was feared that the requirement of recognition of secondary schools both by the University and the Department would in effect lead to a restriction of secondary education: the fear was that high schools under private venture could not fulfill all the conditions of recognition and hence, the case of the unaided schools would go by default! Lord Curzon had a flair for satirical remarks against Indian leaders and he made an 'endeavour' to 'correct some of the inherent defects of the Indian intellect'; 9 so, by way of fulfilling the real needs of the community as also to answer the challenge howsoever feebly, private high schools came to be established. Be that as it might be, there
could be no doubt that the release of imperial grants to the provincial governments on a large scale enabled the latter to take an active part in the field of educational reconstruction. This led to the improvement of the High Schools. Thus, it was at the instance of Lord Curzon that the old policy of laissez faire to private enterprise which had been current from 1882 had come to be abandoned in favour of a new policy aimed at qualitative rather than quantitative expansion of existing institutions.

Secondary schools and the Resolution of 1913

The Resolution of 1913 emphasised further the policy of improving secondary education. It suggested that Government schools should serve as model schools to aided and private schools and recommended more grants-in-aid to the latter. It recommended improvements in Government High Schools with the adoption of the following measures: employment of graduate teachers; introduction of graded service for teachers of English; provision of proper hostel accommodation; introduction of a new school course of study which is complete in itself; and, introduction of manual training and improvement in science teaching.

These recommendations encouraged the Education Department of the province of Assam to devote a sizeable portion of the grants released from imperial funds for the improvement of secondary schools. Aided schools were given building grants, and such school buildings came to be constructed at Dhubri, Tezpur, Sibsagar, Nowgong, and Habiganj; a sum of more than Rs 22,000 was spent on the construction of buildings for the Habiganj High School and the Murarichand Collegiate School. The middle schools were also covered in the construction programme: a sum of Rs 30,000 was
spent on the construction and improvement of the middle school buildings in Sylhet and Kamrup. It goes without saying, however, that these grants were not sufficient to cater to the needs of all the existing schools. Further, there was slackness on the part of the aided school authorities and the inspecting staff also in the matter of submitting schemes in good time for the construction or improvement of buildings.¹⁴

In the period after the first World War, naturally there had been some slackening with the pace of expenditure over the building programme. In fact, the process began in the midst of the War; thus, in 1915-16, there was a suspension of the projects for permanent extension of the school buildings at Habiganj, Karimganj and Maulavi Bazar.¹⁵ But in certain cases, obviously of a pressing necessity, grants for building of hostels or school buildings were advanced even during the War - these related to places like Silchar, Sunamganj, Hailakandi, Jorhat, Golaghat, Goalpara.¹⁶

The increase in the government grants undoubtedly led to some improvement in the existing situation with the High Schools. But this was not remarkable. The Government High Schools, at least most of them, failed to serve as model schools. It was officially reported that in the Government Cotton Collegiate School, the school committee was not formed, the teaching staff was weak, accommodation was inadequate, the building was not extended, and that sanitary conditions around the School's Hostel were not satisfactory.¹⁷ If such be the conditions in a School supposed to serve as a model for others after the full enjoyment of facilities extended by the Government, the conditions of aided High Schools could easily be imagined. With insufficient grants, these aided Schools failed to improve the conditions of their buildings, could
not provide for adequate teaching staff, and they had to manage their affairs with poor equipments, inadequate accommodation, and unhygienic surroundings. Such a state of affairs continued well up to the very end of the period of our survey.

Increase in the number of secondary schools

Despite the inhibiting factors mentioned above, the number of schools increased for the period of our survey. In 1883–84, there were 9 Government High Schools with 2,113 pupils; in 1919–20, the number of Schools increased to 18 with 7,716 pupils while by 1936–37, there were 20 Schools with 9,668 pupils. As for the aided High Schools, in 1883–84, there were 2 Schools with 439 pupils; in 1919–20, the number of such schools rose to 12 with 3,505 pupils; by 1936–37, the figures were 36 schools with 11,111 pupils. Thus, by 1936–37, the aided High Schools were more in number and with a larger student enrolment than the Government High Schools. Unaided High Schools also increased, both in point of number and student enrolment; the increase had been from 2 schools with 291 pupils in 1883 to 28 Schools with 6,279 pupils in 1936.

The Government did not appear to take much interest in the establishment of middle schools. Thus, Government M.E. Schools increased from 3 with 195 pupils in 1882 to 4 only with 169 pupils in 1919–20 and to 5 only with 950 pupils in 1936–37. By 1936–37, the number of Government M.V. Schools decreased from 17 to 15, but student enrolment increased from 1,468 to 2,774. The number of aided M.E. and M.V. schools also increased.

It will appear from the above figures that the number of Government High Schools was initially greater than that of aided schools because, despite policy declarations, the Government hesitated to implement the policy of State withdrawal and thus
leave the field comparatively free to private enterprise. Later, however, a different picture emerged, with an increase in the number of aided and unaided institutions. The reasons for such increases could be attributed to a number of factors. First, the people evinced a keen interest in the expansion of secondary education. Knowledge of English entitled people to subordinate jobs in the Government service and, besides love for education, this was an additional attraction. It was this that led people to establish middle and then high schools. Secondly, it was also true that 'the pressure of increasing population on the soil compelled the cultivating classes to seek other means of livelihood'. The rising middle class families began sending their children to secondary schools. Thirdly, conservatism against girls' education decreased and early marriage of girls was not gone through strictly. The result was that the number of girls' institutions and enrolment therein increased considerably. Fourthly, certain schools came to be established in the wake of popular reaction against the 'Cunningham Circular', so called after J.R. Cunningham, the Director of Public Instruction (D.P.I.) of that period. The Cunningham Circular was directed against student participation in the national movement for freedom which then proceeded in the form of the Civil Disobedience movement. The circular required guardians of the student participants in the movement to withdraw their sons and wards from schools, giving them the option of readmission on furnishing an undertaking to the effect that they would not participate in political demonstrations and activities. Many guardians refused to give the undertaking. It has been officially recorded that 'as a consequence of the movement, there were cases of expulsion and rustication, a few boys who had drunk
too deeply of the political waters were convicted and sentenced to various terms of imprisonment. Thus, the need arose to accommodate these students in new schools, and these were established at public initiative. These schools earned the name of 'anti-circular high schools' in official reports. These national high schools also prepared students for the Matriculation Examination under Calcutta University. In a rare exercise of powers under accepted norms of University autonomy, the Calcutta University admitted the student victims of the Cunningham Circular and the products of the 'anti-circular high schools' to the Matriculation Examination. The official Report on Public Instruction in Assam for the Year 1930-31 recorded with some pique: 'The authorities of Calcutta University, instead of supporting Government in the endeavours to keep our boys out of the political arena, definitely took the side of the politicians'. Be that as it might be, the steps mentioned above led to an increase in the number of non-Government schools of the high school stage.

Medium of Instruction

As far back as 11 March 1904, the resolution of the Government of India on educational policy stated: 'If the educated classes neglect the cultivation of their own languages, these will assuredly sink to the level of mere colloquial dialects possessing no literature worthy of the name, and no progress will be possible in giving effect to the principle, affirmed in the Despatch of 1854, that European knowledge should gradually be brought, by means of the Indian vernaculars, within the reach of all classes of the people'. But gradualism had the practical effect of hindering the development of modern Indian languages due to the insistence on English as the medium of instruction. Curzon had of course directed
that the modern Indian languages should be used as media in the lower secondary standards. By 1921-22, by and large, the modern Indian languages came to be used as the media of instruction at the middle school stage. But English still continued as the medium of instruction at the high school stage.

During the period of dyarchy, the Calcutta University decided that modern Indian languages should be used as the media of instruction in all non-language subjects beginning with the year 1930. The Report on education in Assam for the year 1935-36 says: 'The medium of instruction for Government high schools in the Assam Valley engaged consideration with the result that Assamese will be the accepted medium in the Government schools of the Valley except in Dhubri Government high school'.\textsuperscript{29} In this connection, a very important question arose as to what should be the medium of instruction in high schools having a high proportion of Bengali-speaking students. A meeting was held in the Gauhati Circuit House around May 1935. This was a representative meeting of the educated sections of the Assamese and Bengali communities, and it was decided therein that 'the best course would be to help the Bengali residents of Gauhati to organise a school of their own and to leave the Government schools free for Assamese'. Accordingly, a Bengali school was established at Gauhati with financial aid from the Government; incidentally, it was opened by the Governor of Assam.\textsuperscript{30}

The DPI of Assam was in favour of extending the facilities of a separate school for Bengali children to areas like Tezpur and Dibrugarh where also there were sizeable sections of Bengali-speaking people. Anyway, the facility given to Bengali children gave rise to an agitation in the Assam Valley; its purport
was that no Government aid must be given to any educational institution in the Assam Valley which did not give instruction through the medium of Assamese. It goes without saying that in the Surma Valley, Bengali continued to occupy its rightful place as the medium of instruction in high schools.

The change-over to Assamese involved the important question of preparing a good number of text-books in Assamese. No help was forthcoming from the Syndicate of the Calcutta University for production of text-books in Assamese. For its part, the Government of Assam provided for a meagre sum of Rs 3,000 in the budget for 1937-38, to be utilised by the central text-book committee for the production of the new text-books. Further, as a consequence of the proposed change-over also to Assamese, the DPI floated suggestions again for the establishment of a Board of Secondary Education and the introduction of a school leaving certificate examination in place of the Matriculation Examination conducted by the Calcutta University. These suggestions did not materialise in practice during the period of our survey. But Assamese as the medium of instruction came to be introduced in all high schools excepting for the Bengali schools. By 1937, the general practice was that instruction was given in a mixture of English and the mother tongue of the pupils.

Curriculum

Till 1910 when new regulations were enforced for the Matriculation Examination of the Calcutta University, the subjects for study in the high school classes were determined by the needs of the Entrance Examination. The subjects for this examination were four in number, viz., English, Mathematics, a second language (which might be either classical or vernacular), and History and
The Indian Education Commission suggested the bifurcation of the curriculum: one course of study should lead to the Entrance Examination, while another course of study should be of a practical character, intended to fit youths for commercial or other non-literary pursuits. This suggestion, however, was not accepted by the Calcutta University. An experiment was made in some schools in Assam: under this, one batch of students was given instruction leading to the Entrance Examination while another batch was given training necessary to secure jobs in tea plantations or tourist companies. The experiment proved a failure, because students generally wished to take the Entrance Examination.

The Calcutta University framed new regulations in 1910. In 1911, a new curriculum was introduced. Students had to study six subjects - four compulsory and two optional. The compulsory subjects were English, Mathematics, a classical language, and a vernacular language; the optional subjects could be chosen from a wide range of subjects - History, Geography, Mechanics, classics of an advanced standard, and Mathematics of an advanced standard.

But a revised curriculum by itself could not lead to qualitative changes in the situation. Besides the need to conform to a standard in the matter of teaching compulsory subjects, there was need for specially trained teachers, for reasons of introduction of a number of optional subjects of an advanced standard. Yet no training centre for secondary school teachers was opened in Assam till 1936. In a situation of lack of trained teachers, teaching continued in the narrow grooves of old-style teaching which gave undue importance on memorisation of the subject matter. A further difficulty arose from the poor state of
finances of the secondary schools with the result that even the existing set of teachers could not be provided with teaching aids. Be that as it might be, the system was dominated with the need to train students for the Matriculation Examination. As usual, an examination-oriented education could not be regarded as the kind of education that ought to be. The unitary type of the academic curriculum did not provide for a diversified course of studies including in it subjects of practical importance. Thus, such a course of studies failed to cater to the needs of students of all types of intelligence. Inevitably, therefore, there had been much avoidable wastage of different kinds of talents.

The bookish nature of the curriculum came to be criticised, and the Hartog Committee recommended the following by way of retrieving the situation: (a) the retention in the M.V. schools of boys intended for rural pursuits, accompanied by the introduction of a more diversified curriculum in those schools; (b) the diversion of more boys to industrial and commercial careers at the end of the middle stage, and for this provision should be made for alternative courses at that stage preparatory to special instruction in technical and industrial schools.38

The Hartog Committee laid emphasis on the remodelling of the M.V. course and adapting it to rural requirements. The Committee stated that such a course should be able to prepare a good number of M.V.-passed men who were urgently required to be trained as the primary school teachers of the future. Men suited to the needs of their several callings were required to promote the cause of education. The Committee further stated that India should look to the day when her soldiers, policemen, postmen, builders, farmers, etc., would be literate and would receive the
required type of education in the rural middle schools.

Following the Hartog Committee's report, the Government of Assam submitted a scheme in 1935 on the subject of educational reconstruction to the Government of India. It suggested the separation of the middle schools course from the high school course by making the Middle School Leaving Certificate examination compulsory for all pupils who wished to go further. It suggested the opening of classes for artisans at the conclusion of the middle school stage, instruction in manual work, and imparting teaching in science and commercial subjects. It was recommended that training classes should be opened by the departments concerned for the purpose of training people to serve as mandals, forest guards, agricultural demonstrators, postal peons, police personnel, etc. The scheme was concerned with the diversion of pupils of average merit to institutions specialising in practical and special type of education of a normally useful character. The scheme was a useful addendum to the existing curriculum. Unfortunately, nothing concrete was done to implement the scheme.

Expenditure

Expenditure on secondary schools came from funds provided by the provincial government, Local Boards, Municipalities, fees, and other sources. The amounts spent on different types of schools from different sources are set forth in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Type of school</th>
<th>1889-90</th>
<th>1919-20</th>
<th>1937</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provin-</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>25,424</td>
<td>190,818</td>
<td>581,352</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cial</td>
<td>M.E. School</td>
<td>1,718</td>
<td>30,465</td>
<td>83,971</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fund</td>
<td>M.V. School</td>
<td>8,538</td>
<td>59,676</td>
<td>100,826</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

contd.
Provincial expenditure on high schools continued to increase when the Government abandoned the policy of State-withdrawal and accepted the policy of building up and maintaining high schools as model schools. The policy matters in this regard have already been explained elsewhere. With the increase in grants-in-aid, expenditure on M.E. and M.V. schools also increased. The local bodies received the grants to maintain the middle schools.

The Local Boards spent a sizeable portion of their meagre resources on the maintenance of the M.E. and M.V. schools. They also spent some money on aiding high schools, as they did in 1889-90 with a sum of Rs 4,076. But expenditure under this had been discontinued since 1904 when other agencies took up the responsibility for the high schools. Further, of the sums spent on the middle schools, the M.V. schools took the lion's share because a big majority of the M.V. schools were under the control of the local boards. In 1937, as many as 172 M.V. schools out of 215 were under the local boards.

The municipalities did not spend much on education. Whatever they had spent on different types of schools, most of it was devoted to the middle schools.
Fees as a private source of income contributed a major share of the expenditure on high schools. As shown in the table in the preceding page, the amount of fees collected marked a big rise. This was due to enhancement of the fee rate and increase in the enrollment of the students.

'Other sources' denoted endowments, subscriptions, donations and gifts. It was natural that individuals who constituted the source of these 'other sources' could only be marginally involved in the vast task of educating thousands of students. Anyway, funds contributed from this source undoubtedly proved helpful. Another point deserves attention. The amounts contributed for high schools and M.E. schools were greater by far than those spent on M.V. schools.

The following table indicates the percentage of expenditure on boys' high schools and middle schools from different sources in 1936-37:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Incurred on</th>
<th>Percentage of expenditure from</th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Govt. funds</td>
<td>Local Funds</td>
<td>Fees</td>
<td>Other sources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Schools</td>
<td>53.34</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>42.52</td>
<td>4.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle schools</td>
<td>27.27</td>
<td>29.89</td>
<td>31.69</td>
<td>11.15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Allied to the question of percentages is the one of cost per pupil. The telling difference in this respect obtaining in three different types of high schools, viz., Government, Aided and Unaided high schools, speaks for itself. With greater resources, the Government schools were better equipped and better staffed than the aided and, of course, the unaided schools. In 1936-37, the average annual cost on a pupil in Government high schools
was Rs 67-0-9; it was Rs 26-11-2 on a pupil in aided schools while
the figure for a pupil reading in unaided schools was Rs 23-4-5. \(^43\)
It was in the nature of the circumstances that more funds would be
spent on Government schools. But aided schools deserved somewhat better consideration and the unaided institutions should
not have been deprived of the facilities for long. In point of per
capita expenditure, the aided schools came out as a poor second
while the unaided schools turned out as a poorer third.

**Defects of the system and concluding remarks**

In the foregoing pages we have shown the progress attained
in the field of secondary education. In 1937, there were 84 high
schools for boys and 16 high schools for girls; further, boys' middle schools numbered 466, while girls' middle schools stood at 54. But secondary education suffered from a number of drawbacks
and the prevalent system was criticised from a number of quarters.

The purpose of secondary education initiated at the early
stage of British rule was to produce a set of men suited to running
the administration at different levels. This aim continued
without any major change throughout the period of our study. An academic type of education which laid more stress on learning the English language and learning of subjects with Western content
undoubtedly served to produce a rising intelligentsia, but it did not help produce practical-minded educated men who could utilise
their knowledge and skill in different professions. The Hunter Commission appreciated the danger arising from a unitary type of
curriculum and hence, it suggested changes in the curriculum: a course of study should continue to provide literary type of education, while another course should be directed toward producing youths suited for commercial or non-literary pursuits. This problem
was officially discussed a number of times from 1904 onwards, but diversification of courses of study was not introduced. The academic type of education came under fire because it laid more emphasis on memorisation rather than the development of original thinking and the faculty of reasoning. The type of teaching imparted was of such a nature that it failed to foster proper skills, right attitudes, and better understanding of the subjects. It also failed to reflect the cultural heritage of the country. Neither could it satisfy the needs of a changing society. Students were made to learn the subjects not according to the requirements of the situation but in response to the needs of the Matriculation Examination.

Individual differences, a recognised fact in modern psychology, were completely neglected in the Indian secondary school system. The increased number of adolescents did not get adequate materials to develop their talents according to their capacity. Most of the schools in Assam did not provide for the teaching of optional or additional subjects other than those prescribed for the Matriculation Examination. Even pupils with a practical bent of mind had no other alternative but to take the Matriculation Examination: success in the examination provided a passport to employment in Government offices. It was a pity that vocational education was not provided for. This had a far-reaching effect, apart from the immediate one of not producing talents with a practical bias. Absence of courses with a practical bias led to the development of an attitude which looked down upon manual labour and practical work. It was as if education should turn out men to work in the offices only! Such a type of education also failed to develop in the products of the system that sense of initiative which led men to start any business or life's activities independently.
The educational system as such was manifestly designed to meet the requirements of the rulers and not of the ruled. Naturally, therefore, the contents of the system failed to be in tune with the needs of the people. A bookish and theoretical type of education, and the system did not make it a terminal stage of useful education for those who wanted to enter the professions at that stage — could only end by turning out office assistants; small mercy it was that some unemployed products of the system liked to cling to the easiest of professions, i.e., becoming school masters. Further, the system was productive of a gulf gulf between the educated and the uneducated sections of the community. The educated section appeared to form a class by themselves and did not like to identify themselves with the masses.

Another defect of the system was that it was dominated by examinations. Success in the Matriculation Examination appeared to be the summum bonum of life: it was to be the yardstick to judge the total achievement of pupils in secondary schools. No wonder then that pupils became examination-minded: so were the teachers who directed all teaching with the Matriculation Examination in view. The result was that pupils of comparatively low intelligence or of below average or even average merit could not often enough do well in the examination. This caused a large number of failures. In 1957, about 40% of the candidates failed in the Matriculation Examination: 2,308 candidates took the examination; only of them, 1,395 candidates only came out successful. There had been much wastage of talents.

The University of Calcutta had a vast jurisdiction, it covered Orissa, Bengal, and Assam. It was not possible for the University to exercise effective supervision over the secondary schools in
Assam. Neither was there any representative from Assam in the Syndicate (Executive Council) of the University. Absence of any representative from the province in the University's governing body meant that the needs and problems of Assam's secondary schools were not adequately brought to the notice of the authorities of the University. If Assam had her own University, the situation possibly would have improved. But, not to speak of a University of her own, the province did not have even a Secondary School Board. Both official and non-official thinking agreed on the establishment of such a Board to exercise proper supervision over the secondary schools.

A thorough reorganisation of the system was necessary. The needs of the twentieth century, as far as they could be spelt out in the 1930's, demanded diversified courses of studies to produce useful men and women beyond the range of subordinate officials. It is possible to think that even within the existing limitations, the rulers could have shown imagination by introducing terminal courses at the end of the middle school stage; this would have diverted a good section of the pupils to vocational and practical training courses if these were provided for. A better course in the field of secondary education could also have been taken: this was to make it a terminal stage of education with all its implications for those who could not go further for various reasons. If this were done, a very large part of the criticism would not have been there that the existing system was designed to produce 'black-coated clerks' only. Anyway, the system left much to be desired in many matters of importance viz., determination of a broader concept of secondary education, introduction of diversified courses of studies, improvement of the physical conditions of the schools,
provision of adequate funds for the proper maintenance of all types of high schools and middle schools, and last but not the least, establishment of a training centre or college to produce trained and better teachers.