The story of the Sudan Interior Mission's activities in the Sudan during the two latter decades of Condominium rule shows that some of the problems besetting missionary pioneers at the beginning of the century were still to tax the patience and endurance of missionaries in the final two decades. The Sudan Interior missionaries were to find the Sudan a particularly difficult country for missionary enterprise. So had the Church Missionary Society and the Roman Catholic Verona Fathers from the early years of Condominium rule. At first the Sudan Interior missionaries were allowed to remain in Khartoum before going to the South. They were not given freedom to go wherever they chose in the Sudan. The Church Missionary Society had been in the same position in the early years. The C. M. S. had procrastinated for some time under the mistaken view that the Government would finally give in and allow missionaries to proselytize among Muslims in the North. Even in the late thirties and forties the Sudan Interior Mission still hoped that government restrictions would be lifted. The C. M. S. had sought permission to spread its resources over a wider area. But the Government forced the Mission to concentrate its efforts on a limited number of stations. Similarly requests were made by the Sudan Interior Mission; they were met with similar refusals. The C. M. S. had envisaged 'chains of stations' linking its work in Egypt across the Sudan to stations in Uganda. Similarly the S. I. M. hoped to establish a 'chain of missions' linking its work in Ethiopia across the Sudan with its work in Nigeria. The Government's system of granting missions 'spheres of influence' was to restrict S. I. M. activities as it had those of the Catholic mission since the beginning of the century. And yet one important change had taken place. The Government in the latter decades was prepared to pay for primary education: it was therefore more dynamically interested in the content and organisation of missionary education.
During the early decades, despite considerable difficulties, the two leading missionary societies, the Catholic Verona Fathers and the British Church Missionary Society had found a modus vivendi with the Government. The S. I. M. faced a similar problem; but in spite of severe difficulties, it reached a rather uneasy compromise solution with surprising rapidity. These difficulties were of two main kinds. The first was external and environmental. By the 1930s improved communications and more effective administration had enabled the older societies to establish themselves effectively in the Bahr El Ghazal and Equatoria Provinces, through Upper Nile province was still a backward and difficult area; and it was to one of the most backward regions of Upper Nile province that the S. I. M. was directed. They were asked to work among small aboriginal tribes, hitherto scarcely administered, in inaccessible country along the Ethiopian border south of the Blue Nile.

The second difficulty stemmed from the Mission's conception of itself and its task, and of its relations with the secular power. These relationships were aggravated by the Mission's complete unfamiliarity with the very tight administrative control of missions which prevailed in the Sudan. Being above all a 'faith' Mission the first priority of Sudan Interior missionaries was to 'seek first the kingdom of God', to evangelise, to establish churches, and then in the fullness of time to let schools develop after the establishment of the Church, and under the auspices of the newly established native church. But to the Government the early establishment of elementary education was a sine qua non for permission to work in the Sudan at all. Individual Sudan Interior missionaries accepted this condition; but in the thinking of some missionaries, responsibility for education really lay with the Government.

A third difficulty arose after the effective take-over of educational administration by the Northern Sudanese, a process which began in December 1948 with the appointment of the first Sudanese Minister of Education. Because the S. I. M.'s 'sphere' was only just beyond the 'frontier of Islam' in the Sudan, it was difficult to resist Sudanese pressure to treat this area as 'Northern' rather than as 'Southern'. It was therefore much to the Mission's credit that especially in the late forties and the early fifties the Sudan Interior Mission was doing valuable educational work even according to the stringent demands of the Sudan Government.

The Sudan Interior Mission was an international mission with its