

Notes and News

Industrialization Study in Sierra Leone

THE Edinburgh University research team engaged in studying urbanization and the effects of industrialization upon a tribal population in Sierra Leone (see *Africa*, vol. xxix, No. 2, 1959, p. 196) has completed the first phase of its fieldwork. The workers concerned are Dr. James Littlejohn, Dr. David Gamble, and Mr. David Butcher, anthropologists, and Dr. A. R. Mills, a medical scientist. Members of the Departments of History, Geography, and Economics at Fourah Bay College, University College of Sierra Leone, are also contributing to the study.

Lunsar, an up-country town of some 13,000 inhabitants, was chosen for investigation mainly because it has grown up entirely in response to iron-ore mining operations in the vicinity by the Sierra Leone Development Company. This has enabled comparisons to be made with the situation obtaining in nearby villages. For example, Dr. Mills conducted a health survey of Lunsar based upon a sample census; while subjects of anthropological and sociological interest have included the belief systems of the local people and their assimilation of industrial ideas and techniques; the size, form, and composition of kinship and residential units; new forms of leadership and of social stratification, &c. Special attention has also been given to the origin of the various immigrant groups and the part played by a particular group, the Fula, in the urban economy of Lunsar.

This collection of information about demography, household size and composition, social organization, &c., has been so designed as to permit the construction of various 'indexes of urbanization'. It should therefore be possible by using these Lunsar indexes to make comparisons with other urban and industrial areas in Sierra Leone and so to devise a systematic method of analysing urban growth. This could then be applied under suitable conditions to the study of urbanism elsewhere in Africa and might, in addition, provide an answer to the question whether the presence or absence of industry makes any qualitative difference to the growth of urban centres—a problem which can only be satisfactorily explored after empirical data have been obtained on a wide enough basis.

The further fieldwork necessary for these inquiries will be undertaken during the coming year and a more extended examination will also be made of leadership in the urban environment. Since one of the findings of the research so far is that new leaders tend to be either European-educated with a modern 'progressive' outlook, or Arabic-educated with a more traditional attitude, it seems necessary to compare Lunsar in this respect with areas where Moslems are less influential.

As part of the present research psychological tests were administered to samples of literate and illiterate individuals. This was done rather to check the validity of these tests than with the intention of measuring intelligence or ability. While the number tested is not significant statistically, the difference between the two groups was so great that the possibility of using such tests as an index of cultural assimilation can be seriously considered. A further subject for specific investigation, therefore, will be the reaction of children brought up in a traditional environment to Western ideas and concepts in school. This aspect of the research will be carried out by an educational psychologist working in conjunction with the anthropologists.

Finally, it is intended to make more extensive comparisons of the village populations with the town of Lunsar in respect of health. The medical study so far made into such

matters as nutritional deficiency, survival rates of children, &c., has shown that Africans working for a wage packet are better off in certain respects than Africans in rural occupations. If, therefore, a real difference in health status were found to exist between the urban and the rural populations, industrialization as a factor in health could be measured.

These further investigations, like the initial inquiry, are being financed mainly by a grant from the Nuffield Foundation. The Edinburgh University team will also continue to co-operate with Fourah Bay and to provide the College with lectures and tutorials in a Social Sciences Seminar.

[Communicated by Dr. Kenneth Little]

Un Colloque sur la Rédaction des Droits Coutumiers à Bruxelles

LES 16 et 17 mai 1960, le Centre d'histoire et d'ethnologie juridiques de l'Institut de Sociologie Solvay, attaché à l'Université libre de Bruxelles, organisait à Bruxelles son premier colloque; celui-ci était consacré à l'étude comparative de la rédaction des droits coutumiers dans le passé et le présent.

Le droit coutumier de l'Afrique actuelle a été étudié dans trois communications: 'The recording of customary law in British Africa', par M. A. N. Allott, lecturer in African Law, de la School of Oriental and African Studies de l'Université de Londres; 'Les réalisations françaises dans le domaine de la rédaction des coutumes africaines', par M. J. Poirier, Faculté des Lettres de Lyon; et 'Vers un "programme" belge en matière de rédaction des droits coutumiers africains', par M. J. Vanderlinden, Aspirant au Fonds national de la Recherche scientifique. M. A. Abel, professeur à l'Université libre de Bruxelles, a fait un exposé sur la 'transmission du texte juridique dans l'Islam'.

[Communication du Dr. R. Sweetlove]

International Congress of Orientalists in Moscow

THE 25th International Congress of Orientalists was held in Moscow from 9 to 16 August.

The African Studies Section, which met in the Sternberg Astronomical Institute, under the direction of Professor I. Potekhin and Professor D. A. Olderogge, was attended by about 110 members, including a considerable number of Russian students and five Africans. Among the more general Africanists attending were: Professor K. R. Ruzicka (Czechoslovakia); Professors Ursula Hintze, E. Dammann, and K. Büttner (East Germany); Professor Tubiana (France); Professor I. Graham (Ghana); Professor A. N. Tucker, Dr. A. N. Allott, Dr. R. Oliver, Dr. J. D. Fage, Mr. F. R. Palmer, Mr. G. W. B. Huntingford, Mrs. Mary Holdsworth (Great Britain); Professor L. Ricci (Italy); Professor S. Streleyn (Poland); Professors M. Herskovits and W. Leslau (U.S.A.). It was divided into two sub-sections: History and Philology. The former attracted the larger share of the audience.

The work of the African History sub-section ranged widely over various topics, such as law, race relations, African art and literature. Most papers were on fairly strict historical lines, dealing with such subjects as the old kingdoms of West Africa, the evolution of African history and law, and the discussion remained, on the whole, on an academic level.

Papers in the Philology sub-section were rarely on philology itself, but dealt with more specific linguistic topics.

In between the reading of papers, members were able to make a good many contacts, including talks with advanced Russian students, and Professor Potekhin held a reception for members of the African section. It is hoped that a further exchange of ideas will follow. Members of the Congress were given a state reception in the Kremlin, and were able to take part in many excursions. A two-to-three-day visit to Leningrad was also organized.