

Notes and News

L'Homme: Cahiers d'ethnologie, de géographie et de linguistique

A NEW publication under the auspices of the École Pratique des Hautes Études at the Sorbonne (Paris) is announced. The editorial board consists of Professors Émile Benveniste and Pierre Gourou of the Collège de France, and M. Claude Lévi-Strauss, sous-directeur of the Musée de l'Homme. This venture is designed to provide a means of publishing anthropological studies either as symposia of two or three papers on kindred topics, or as separate leaflets. Contributions from anthropologists of all nations are invited. The editors also ask for books and periodicals for review, particularly those published elsewhere than in France, which French libraries cannot easily acquire.

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Prix pour des Travaux en Afrique Noire

LA Commission des Prix de la Société de Géographie, ayant examiné l'ensemble des travaux en Afrique Noire de M. Marcel Griaule et son ouvrage *Arts de l'Afrique Noire*, lui a attribué le Prix des Fondations Africaines Duchesne-Fournet (décembre 1948).

Survey of the Belgian Congo and Ruanda-Urundi by delegates from Belgian Senate

IN the autumn of 1947, for the first time in the history of the Congo, the Belgian Senate sent an official mission of nine senators for a two months' survey of the African dependencies of Belgium: Congo and Ruanda-Urundi. The delegation was led by Professor E. De Bruyne, formerly Minister of Colonies, chairman of the Institut de Recherches Scientifiques en Afrique Centrale (I.R.S.A.C.) and included representatives of all political parties.

It is possible to assess European action in an African territory either in relation to the state of affairs existing before the establishment of white administration, or in relation to what is regarded as the goal to be achieved. The senatorial Mission adopted the courageous attitude of looking at the Congo from the point of view of what it should be rather than in relation to what it was when Belgium took it over forty years ago.

The mission has published a unanimous report¹ which begins with the statement that full participation of the Africans in the public life of the Congo may be foreseen and that, consequently, the present policy must aim at giving the Congolese the maturity required for such a partnership. Good public health is a primary condition of such a development, but unfortunately movements of population have spread some diseases in areas which were formerly free from them. This applies not only to syphilis but also to malaria. Physicians and medical assistants are still too few except in some important industrial or mining enterprises. But even adequate medical care will not solve the health problem until diet, clothing, and housing are considerably improved.

In order to raise the standard of living of the Africans who retain, in the villages, the ancestral patterns of life, the Mission proposes measures for the efficient development of native economies: education in the bush-schools should be more directly relevant to agricultural tasks; schools for the training of instructors in handicraft and farming should be multiplied; co-operatives should be set up and the State should grant more loans for building better habitations.

¹ *Rapport de la mission sénatoriale au Congo et dans les territoires sous tutelle*. Bruxelles: Sénat de Belgique, 1947. Pp. 283.

European enterprises are legally obliged to provide their African workers with lodging, food, and medical care, in addition to wages. But there are many variations in the way these obligations are implemented. For this reason the Mission recommends closer supervision of working conditions and expects that the African labour unions, officially introduced in 1946, will exercise an extremely useful influence if their development is protected against some powerful interests.

In the field of political rights the Delegates desire a much wider representation of Africans by Africans in the different consultative bodies and suggest that the representatives of Europeans in these bodies should be elected rather than appointed.

The general conclusions of the Mission are followed by reports on particular questions written by various Senators each on his own responsibility. These are concerned with problems of administration, education, demography, health, communications, economics, agriculture, &c. Some documents—petitions, minutes of meetings with delegates of colonial associations—are to be found in the appendix. A few naïve utterances recorded there throw a crude light on the mentality of some European settlers and even of some white trade union leaders.

Communicated by J. J. MAQUET

British Colonial Office—Funds for Research

A BILL to increase the annual amounts payable from public funds for carrying out schemes under the Colonial Development and Welfare Acts of 1940 and 1945 has been passed by Parliament. Included in the Bill are provisions for increasing the allocations available for research. The Secretary of State for the Colonies, in introducing the Bill, said that the essential problem facing all Colonial Administrations was how to control environment for good living; there were always effort-destroying factors in the environment and knowledge was still inadequate. If development schemes were to be applied there must be understanding of the structure and customs of the societies affected; the properties of the soil, the existing natural resources, the uses of products, and the methods whereby society and economy could be improved needed to be studied. New centres of research to deal with these problems were being created in the Colonies and research institutions were attached to the new colonial colleges and universities; special missions were undertaking investigations in every field. In these ways the knowledge necessary for tackling problems involved in development work was being acquired and applied.

L'Habitation en Afrique Occidentale

L'OFFICE de la Recherche Scientifique Coloniale (Bureau d'Études Humaines), in collaboration with M. H. Labouret, has published a map of West Africa showing the distribution of different types of native African housing. A key printed at the foot of the map gives drawings of the types of houses and granaries represented. The map, which is based on ethnological and linguistic maps of Meunier, Meek, and Talbot, and on additional unpublished material, is accompanied by explanatory notes describing the materials used for different types of habitation, the methods of building, and the relation of both form and material to physical environment, climatic conditions, and social development. The editors invite comments, corrections, and suggestions, and have distributed with the map a form of questionnaire designed to secure additional information.

The International Colonial Institute

THE International Colonial Institute was founded on 8 January 1894 chiefly in order to facilitate and diffuse the comparative study of colonial administration and legislation.