

Notes and News

Report of the Second Conference on History and Archaeology in Africa

THE second conference on history and archaeology in Africa to be held at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, took place from 16 to 18 July. Over a hundred members attended and a truly international atmosphere was created by the presence of representatives from metropolitan France, Belgium, Portugal, and America, as well as of scholars working in almost every territory in tropical Africa. Teachers from the African University Colleges had provided the backbone of the first conference, four years ago. These colleges were again well represented, together with the new University of Élisabethville. The membership included social anthropologists and linguists—and even one serologist—besides historians and archaeologists.

The organization of the conference, the result of a full year of preparation and correspondence, was somewhat unusual. Reports on work in progress since the last conference were submitted by most members, and these papers, which were circulated in advance and taken as read, provided the basis for the spontaneous discussion to which the greater part of every session was devoted.

Every discussion, whether on the problems of archaeology and proto-history, or on the materials for the nineteenth-century history of Africa, or on the teaching of African history in African university institutions, was held in a plenary session of the conference. In Africa, there is no wall dividing the orthodox historian from the archaeologist, the social anthropologist, or the student of oral tradition. It was generally recognized that close co-operation between scholars in all these several disciplines was a prerequisite for that rapid progress of scholarly research on the African past, which is vital if scientific history is not to be swamped by nationalist myths and the unfounded vapourings of ill-informed amateurs. University teachers in Africa must be enabled to offer their students history which is truly African, looked at so to say from inside Africa, and not merely the history of European expansion in that continent.

The resolutions of the conference were concerned mainly with the institution and organization of antiquities services in tropical Africa. They draw attention to the fact that there is as yet no archaeological officer in Somaliland, Nyasaland, Zanzibar, Sierra Leone or Gambia, and point out that the individual archaeological officers in Uganda and Tanganyika are not yet provided with adequate staffs and facilities. Further resolutions regret that H.M. Government has not yet been able to implement the decision to establish a British School of History and Archaeology in East Africa, and stress the urgent need for training historians for field work in concert with archaeologists and anthropologists.

The trend of discussion had drawn attention to the importance of the Nile–Chad region as an area of cultural diffusion into tropical Africa, and the conference welcomed the suggestion that an international archaeological expedition to this region might be sponsored by the C.T.C.A./S.C.A.

It was agreed that the time has already come when co-operative volumes should be undertaken to present existing knowledge of the pre-colonial period. The first volume of a co-operative history of East Africa, which is being undertaken under the auspices of the British Colonial Social Science Research Council and which will incorporate the work of archaeologists, historians and other specialists, might provide a model for similar schemes

in other parts of Africa. The conference also set up a panel to explore the practicability of publishing an international journal of African history.

It is intended that a full report of the proceedings of the conference shall be published as soon as possible.

[Communicated by D. H. Jones]

A Native Farming Settlement at Gandajika, Belgian Congo

EXPERIMENTS have been made in recent years to establish native farmers' settlements in the Belgian Congo, with a view to controlling the exodus of younger members of the population towards the towns, and increasing agricultural production by modern methods. The administration has allocated land on chosen sites, after investigating the customary rights to the soil, and farmers receiving land in this way have followed a predetermined programme of cultivation based on crop rotation.

Such a settlement has been in existence at Gandajika since 1947, and some 8,000 farmers are now cultivating allotments of 15 to 18 acres each. There is a rotation of food as well as of cash crops, which allows each field to remain fallow for six years. Administrative officers and the specialist staff of the local INEAC (National Institute for Agricultural Research) study together the problems of sharing out seed to the farmers and of finding the best and most economic fertilizers to suit local needs. The farmer pays a small rent for the use of tractors and other machines. Game is scarce in this region, and efforts have been made to augment the amount of protein in the diet by increasing the number of fish ponds; the district now has some 4,000 ponds, each yielding annually about 12 cwt. of fish per acre. Cattle farming, poultry, goat and sheep breeding, have also been started at Gandajika and there are two buying and selling co-operative societies whose thousands of members act as intermediaries for the farmers.

Stabilization of the population of the district of Gandajika has been achieved by this development. New methods have also improved the quality of the produce and thereby increased the farmers' income. The settlement of the population has brought about an increase in social benefits and the Native Welfare Fund has been able to build a modern hospital and dispensary, maternity homes, more durable houses, and a vocational establishment for the training of masons and carpenters. There is a branch of the National Savings Bank and social centres where assistants are being trained to look after women and children.

International Institute of Differing Civilisations

THE thirtieth study session of INCIDI was held in Lisbon from 15 to 18 April 1957, under the chairmanship of H.E. Commodore Sarmiento Rodrigues, President of INCIDI, Member of the Portuguese National Assembly and formerly Minister for Overseas Affairs of Portugal. The subject of the session was 'Ethnic and cultural pluralism in interropical societies', and twenty-nine working reports from many parts of Africa, South America, Indonesia, the British Caribbean, and Hong Kong were presented to the participants as a basis for discussion. The task of drawing up the conclusions of the discussions was entrusted to an Editorial Board, consisting of the four general rapporteurs, i.e. Professor Adriano Moreira (Portugal), Dr. P. J. Idenburg (Netherlands), Professor Gaston Leduc (France), and Professor Gilberto Freyre (Brazil).

As on former occasions, the working papers and the complete text of the discussions and conclusions will be published in book form. Meanwhile Vol. VII, No. 2 of the Institute's quarterly, *Civilisations*, contains a full report of conclusions reached by the conference with respect to the legal and political, social, and economic aspects of the factual situation, and the policies to be pursued in plural societies.