

Factors and Social Services, and Community Organization, and each commission formulated a number of recommendations. A plenary session approved motions proposed by the head of the French delegation relating to the continuation of international co-operation in the matter of rural welfare and the holding of other similar conferences.

World Health Organization: Regional Office for Africa

THE report of the Director, published in August 1953, gives a brief account of the organization of the office for Africa in Geneva and its transfer to Brazzaville in October 1952, and describes the work of the year 1952/3. Many initial difficulties had to be overcome—in particular, shortage of housing, high costs of living, and ill health among members of the staff. In addition, though communication with Europe was good, trans-African postal services and other means of communication were slow and unreliable. Recruiting of professional and office staff has also been difficult. The report emphasizes the need for the appointment of an Information Officer, whose duties would be to familiarize himself with what has been done in the field of public health in different territories, to keep the Regional Office informed on events in the field of public health administration, and to be responsible for external information, making known to the African world the policy, aims, and methods of the World Health Organization.

The report makes special mention of the appointment of a cultural anthropologist, M. Jean-Paul Lebeuf (see *Africa*, xxiii. 2, p. 158), and of the importance of the study of the habits and reactions of human beings by a specially trained social scientist. During the year under review M. Lebeuf attended a meeting of the Scientific Council for Africa South of the Sahara (C.S.A.) at Kampala, and also travelled in the Cameroons and attended the UNESCO International Seminar on Public Libraries in Africa, held at Ibadan, July 1953.

Dr. Carothers, attached to the Regional Office for the purpose of studying psychiatric and psychological problems, visited Belgium, England, France, and the United States and several areas in Africa; he also attended the meeting of the Centre International de l'Enfance in Brazzaville in December 1952.

Dr. J. Karefa-Smart, Public Health Medical Officer, delivered an address on 'The West African Village and its Problems' at the West African Area Conference of the Y.M.C.A. held at Accra in March and April 1953.

The report concludes with a warning against attempting to introduce into Africa 'western' systems of public health administration and social programmes without considering whether such systems and programmes are suitable for application in the African environment, and against starting expensive and elaborate schemes which cannot be maintained or cannot at a later date be taken over by the population itself.

UNESCO Seminar on the Development of Public Libraries in Africa

UNESCO has held four seminars on Public Libraries development of which the last took place at Ibadan, Nigeria, from 27 July to 21 August 1953 (see *Africa*, xxiii. 2, p. 159). The purpose of the seminar was to study the principal public library problems in Africa and to draft proposals for the development of public library services, particularly in connexion with mass education. Twenty-nine librarians and educationists took part, from a great number of African territories as well as Egypt, France, and the United Kingdom. Eight members of the seminar were Africans, the rest being Europeans working in Africa. The Librarian and Acting Principal of the University College of Nigeria was host to the seminar, and the Director was Mlle Yvonne Oddon, Librarian of the Musée de l'Homme, Paris. The main work of the seminar was carried out in three working groups concerned with: (i) organizing public library services on a regional or national scale; (ii) provision and use

of publications and audio-visual materials in African public libraries; (iii) professional training for public library service. The group discussions were based on fifteen working papers prepared by librarians and educators working in Africa, and provisional study outlines drafted by the group leaders; these papers were circulated in advance of the meeting. In addition, each participant was asked to bring some statement on the public library service of his country and these were supplemented by reports on public library developments in seventeen African territories submitted by governments. A large collection of photographs of library services and mass education activities was placed on exhibition at Ibadan, and this to some extent compensated for the lack of a first-class modern public library in the locality. In addition, films on libraries, mass education, and other topics were shown, and arrangements were made for participants to visit the Gold Coast and see the public library service in that territory, which is centred in Accra with branches in several other towns, as well as mobile library services.

At the conclusion of the seminar a number of recommendations were drafted concerning the development of public library services in Africa, the organization and financing of such services, co-ordination between the various agencies producing publications for Africans so as to avoid duplication, training of library staff, formation of library associations, &c. As one of the results of the seminar a West African Library Association was formed, with John Harris, Librarian of University College, Ibadan, as President, and representatives from Nigeria, Gold Coast, Sierra Leone, and Liberia on the Executive Committee.

Protectorate Literature Bureau (Sierra Leone)

THE Annual Report for 1953 records a widening of interest in efforts to achieve literacy, and an increasing demand for books in vernacular languages and in English. More and more Paramount Chiefs are co-operating in literacy campaigns which are now being carried out in twenty-six chiefdoms under the auspices of the Literature Bureau, and by welfare and community development workers in several districts. The total number of adults who have become literate in their own languages is now about 30,000. A number of books were published by the Bureau during the year, including school primers, children's books, portions of the Bible, proverbs and stories in Mende, Temne, Kono, and Kuranko. The number of books sold during the year was 39,117, an increase of 5,291 on the previous record.