

Notes and News

International Institute for Afro-American Studies

WE have been informed by our member, Dr. Jorge A. Vivó, of the foundation of the Instituto Internacional de Estudios Afroamericanos at Moneda 13, Mexico, D.F., under the directorship of Doctor Fernando Ortiz. The object of the Institute is to collect and distribute to Governments of the countries concerned, to unofficial bodies and to individuals, information and the results of scientific research regarding the Negro population in America, the laws and customs concerning them and their relations with the rest of the population; to undertake scientific research, to organize conferences and courses of studies, to publish a periodical journal and other matter, and finally, to act as a centre of information.

Professor Melville J. Herskovits is one of the consulting members of the Institute.

Schweizerisches Tropeninstitut in Basle

WITH financial support from the Swiss Federal and the Basle Cantonal authorities, a Tropical Institute was opened at Basle last Autumn. The Institute is affiliated to the University at Basle. It consists of a school of tropical medicine, with laboratories and hospital accommodation for patients, and a school which provides a general course for people intending to take up life in the tropics. This course includes instruction in general subjects, European languages, Geography, History, as well as Ethnology, African languages, tropical hygiene and tropical agriculture. The medical activities are under the direction of Dr. Lauterburg-Bonjour, who for many years worked under Dr. Schweitzer at Lambarene. African languages will be taught by Inspector Huppenbauer of the Basle Mission who was for many years in West Africa, and the teaching staff also includes Professor F. Speiser who is well known in the anthropological world.

In view of present circumstances and the general international situation, it has been decided to open the Institute on a provisional basis for the first two years.

Industrial Development of the Netherlands Indies

IN a pamphlet¹ which has recently reached us through the courtesy of Dr. Huender, of the Netherlands Government, Mr. Peter Sitsen, Director of the Industrial Division, Department of Economic Affairs at Batavia, gives an account of the industrial development of the Netherlands Indies from 1928 till the Japanese occupation. His account, which is illustrated with numerous statistical tables, is of the greatest interest to all those who are studying or planning the economic and social development of colonial territories.

Mr. Sitsen recalls that as early as 1901 the Netherlands Parliament stressed the importance of developing secondary industries in the Netherlands Indies, and called for reports from technical experts; in 1916 a Commission for Factory Industry was appointed, and a number of mechanized factories, organized on Western lines and managed by Europeans, were started in the Indies, but many of them proved to be unsuccessful. In Mr. Sitsen's view, although 'there existed a strong and sincere desire to industrialise the Netherlands Indies in order to increase the prosperity of the Indonesians, comparatively little was achieved only because all attempts were based on transplanting Western organising methods to an Indonesian society not prepared for them. Too little attention was paid to the basic social

¹ *Industrial Development of the Netherlands Indies*, by Peter H. W. Sitsen. Bulletin 2 of the Netherlands and Netherlands Indies Council of the Institute of Pacific Relations.

structure and the economic conditions in the Netherlands Indies. The setting up of factories such as the commission had in mind, could only mean the establishment and management of production by Westerners. In that manner the native population could not really participate in further development.'

In the rapid and prosperous development of the Netherlands Indies since 1928, the starting point was the improvement effected in agriculture; this, like the industrial developments which followed, was due to the deliberate policy of the Government, and was achieved, partly by encouraging migration from densely populated Java to uncultivated lands available in the Outer Islands, and partly by irrigation, the introduction of improved agricultural methods, the distribution of high-yielding seeds, and the education of the farmers. By 1935 the Indies were practically self-sufficient as regards food, and the increased prosperity of farmers created a demand for industrial products. Mr. Sitsen gives examples of industries in which it was found possible to manufacture goods, chiefly from local raw materials, at a price lower than that of the imported article, and so to provide purchasing power for more manufactured goods; he classifies the secondary industries of the Netherlands Indies as cottage industries, mainly carried out by agricultural workers in their spare time; small-scale factory industries; mechanized industries on a larger scale, frequently set up as a subsidiary, or built on the experience, of similar factories in highly industrialized countries.

The cottage industries are almost entirely in the hands of the Indonesian farmers; the goods are produced for the greatest part within the family circle and traded locally; there are, however, many instances of cottage industries combining with small-scale or factory industry; for example, in cases where there is a markedly seasonal demand for goods of a perishable nature, such as a certain sort of cigarette, factories frequently give temporary employment to cottage workers, the more readily as the time of increased demand is usually after harvest when agricultural work is slack. A striking example of such a combination is described by the author as follows: 'In the little villages grouped round Soekaboemi, a small town in West Java, situated in a prosperous agricultural district, a fairly important cottage industry existed, making agricultural implements for local use. From this, a small-scale industry developed which extended its programme by making all kinds of cutlery. Here the hammering out of blades, &c. was done in small-scale industrial shops with from four to ten workmen, while the handles, made from horn, bone, wood, or tortoise-shell, were made in the sphere of cottage industry. The knives were subsequently assembled in the shops and were sold locally. . . . Then through instruction and education consumers desired better workmanship. Growing incomes stimulated this demand and this encouraged the workers in small-scale industry to greater efforts. A number of small-scale shops negotiated for closer co-operation and within a couple of years they organized some 1,200 workers into a so-called industrial "central" or co-operative. The central built a finishing plant, for the joint account of its members, in which the most skilled workers from various small-scale workshops were brought together and where polishing machines, boring machines, tempering furnaces, equipment for nickel and chromium plating, &c. were set up. The workshops which were co-operating with the industrial central pledged themselves to bring in every week a specified amount of work, such as blades with the handles made in cottage industry. These semi-finished products were made from materials and models furnished by the central; they were delivered to the central for a reasonable price, jointly decided upon by the members. . . . It was an accepted principle that profits should be shared by the workshops according to the quantity of goods they had delivered, while the elected management of the central exercised a certain authority in deciding the uses to which the money should be put. In principle, it was agreed that part of the profits was to be spent on better tools for improving the affiliated small-scale shops.' Mr. Sitsen admits that earnings

both in cottage and small-scale industry are low, but hours of work are short; the earnings of workers employed by a 'central' are equivalent to agricultural earnings.

There are many centrals of the sort described, often combining cottage, small-scale, and factory industry in one organization; Mr. Sitsen attributes the success of this form of organization in part to the sense of obligation to the community, which is very marked in Indonesian society. This sense of obligation to give mutual assistance, which formerly operated only within the village community, has been successfully widened, so that the cottage and small-scale workers feel an obligation towards the central and look upon it as part of their community; they therefore feel obliged to do good work and to deliver their quota of goods at the right time.

Small-scale industry employs by far the greater number of Indonesian industrial workers, and is mainly controlled and managed by Indonesians. Factory industry has also expanded greatly during recent years; the mechanization of farming necessitated repair and tool shops; export of agricultural products led to the development of shipyards and dry-docks; with the increasing demand for consumer goods, it became profitable to develop local mechanized production. The management of large-scale factories is still largely in the hands of Europeans, owing to the fact that there are not yet enough Indonesians with the necessary training and experience.

In guiding and controlling the industrial development of the Netherlands Indies, the first step taken by the Government was to assist the farmers, not only by educating them in the use of improved methods and by increasing the area under cultivation, but also by reducing land taxes and extending credit facilities; thus not only was the total income from agriculture increased, but the income was distributed so that the purchasing power of individual farmers was raised. The Government has also engaged in educational and propaganda campaigns in order to extend the demand for new commodities. A special department of Government, the Industrial Division of the Department of Economic Affairs, was formed which concerned itself with the regulation of production, with scientific and technical research, and with education and propaganda. By means of a system of quotas, the market was kept open for domestic textiles, while a licensing system regulated production so as to 'guard against exhausting price wars, against a cartelization of the large factories to the detriment of the smaller ones, against a socially unwarrantable division of incomes, &c.'

An institution for Scientific Industrial Research, founded by Government, studied the technical and economic aspects of the various industries, and carried out chemical, technical, and analytical research, the testing and inspecting of materials, and experiments in the processing of raw materials; a special office was set up in 1940 to investigate the possibilities of new branches of industry and the advisability of establishing specific industries, having regard to the economic and structural expansion of industry as a whole.

In order to make these services generally available to all industries, an extensive education service was established by Government, including industrial laboratories and institutes in different places, consultative offices, technical instructors, and a staff of travelling vocational teachers. Of these, Mr. Sitsen writes: 'This institution differs from the others mentioned in that it is probably peculiar to the Indies. The travelling vocational teachers are chosen from the best Indonesian craftsmen and are given special training. . . . They travel with one or two assistants and good, simple tools, calling on thousands of workshops and teaching the use of good equipment, of moulds, &c., to everyone from the apprentice to the boss. They explain the proper use of the proper materials; keep the craftsmen informed of price fluctuations and explain how to figure cost prices, how to judge the quality of raw materials, &c. These teachers are not white-collar men who stand up before the class, but workmen. They travel around in their overalls and demonstrate the better techniques themselves.'

In conclusion the author gives a comprehensive analysis of the raw materials, and sources of power available, or likely to be developed, in the Netherlands Indies, and relates the industrial expansion of the Indies to conditions of world trade in the future. He points out that, while the development of local industries has benefited the Indonesian population by freeing it from the effects of price fluctuations operating in the highly industrialized countries of the rest of the world, the Netherlands Indies will continue to need imports of machinery, metals, dairy produce, &c., and to export raw materials. If the lands producing raw materials are to prosper, it will be necessary for favourable rates of exchange to prevail, otherwise they may be forced into adopting a policy aiming at self-sufficiency in capital goods and commodities, which will greatly retard their progress.

The key to a satisfactory development is the prosperity of the farmer; further, for many years small-scale industry will continue to be a cheaper producer than the western organized mechanized factory. Mr. Sitsen outlines the principles on which the Government's policy during the last ten years has been based, 'that activity on the part of the population itself, even if on a small scale at first, should be considered as more important than the establishment locally of foreign enterprises. That the carrying through of general measures [to achieve this end] would develop the possibility of important migrations of workers from primary to small-scale secondary industry. This would bring possibilities for Indonesian leadership; this, in turn, would encourage the spontaneous establishment of larger enterprises which, not being artificially created, would grow in a sound and strong manner, while balanced relations would be maintained between local production and local consumption, between export production and imports from other countries. . . . The results obtained demonstrate that the policy followed in these ten years has been efficacious.'

Société d'Études Camerounaises

WE have received a letter from the President of the Société d'Études Camerounaises, at Douala, informing us that the Société has been reconstituted and has resumed publication of its Bulletin, the first numbers of which appeared shortly before the war. We have received two issues of the Bulletin, dated July and November 1943; the July number contains an ethnological sketch of the principal tribes of the French Cameroons, giving particulars of their origins and geographical distribution, short descriptions of their physical characteristics, and brief notes on their history. The survey is necessarily somewhat cursory, but it is designed as a guide to further study. The November number contains an article on 'Pratiques de Divination Massa et Toupouri', a study of 'Des Négrilles de la Région de Haut-hyoung', and a questionnaire intended as a guide in making a survey of oral literature.

Applications for membership of the Society should be addressed to the President, and correspondence relating to the Bulletin, to the Secretary, Madame Dugast, Douala, Cameroun Français.

Africans studying in the United States

THE Phelps-Stokes Fund have recently issued a short memorandum on 'Information for Africans planning to study in the United States of America'. It has been drawn up in consultation with government officials in Washington, representative African students in the United States, and the officers of various Boards and Institutions who have had experience with foreign students, especially those from Africa. Copies can be obtained from The Phelps-Stokes Fund, 101 Park Avenue, New York 17, N.Y., U.S.A.