

Notes and News

Anthropological Studies by Belgians during the war

It has not yet been possible to hold a meeting of the Institute's Executive Council but the Bureau had on 11 April the great satisfaction of welcoming one of the members of the Council, Professor E. de Jonghe; and the welcome was the more cordial in view of the terrible experiences he had suffered at the hands of the Germans. He was able to give the Bureau an account of what Belgians did for and in Africa during the war: and he addressed the Royal Anthropological Institute at greater length on the same subject.

In spite of all the repressive efforts of the Germans the universities (except that of Brussels which had to close its doors in 1941) and learned societies pursued their activities though on a reduced scale. Some societies had, it is true, to suspend publication of their journals, but others were able to issue them intermittently. Scholars, though hampered by the destruction of libraries, continued their studies. The great Tervueren Museum escaped destruction though some of its treasures were damaged by flying bombs. The Belgian Congo was the scene of considerable scientific research. Father Schebesta, as the result of two expeditions among the Pygmies, was able to get two large volumes published in Belgium; Father Schumacher did work among the Pygmies of Kivu, but the results have not yet been printed for want of paper. Linguistic resources have been enriched by Father Vanneste's dictionary of Alur, one of the so-called Nilotic languages spoken by 140,000 people in the Congo; and by grammatical and tonological studies in Luba by MM. Stapfer Willems and Burssens. Discussion has gone on about Professor De Jonghe's proposal to make Luba the one national language of the territory. In 1943 Professor De Cleene published an Introduction to the Ethnography of Belgian Congo; and in 1944 the first volume appeared of Professor Van der Kerken's *L'Ethnie Mongo*—a veritable encyclopedia of 1,141 pages. Much important work was done in the study of customary law, notably by M. Possoz who published *Éléments de Droit Coutumier Nègre*, and by M. Sohier whose *Le Mariage en droit coutumier* is described by M. de Jonghe as 'a remarkable synthesis'. Finally, the Professor spoke of Father Tempels's *La Philosophie bantoue*, expressing some doubt as to the method adopted by the author but saying that he was convinced that this ingenious study will open up new pathways for ethnological research.

Two distinguished visitors, Professor Olbrecht of Ghent and Professor Lindblom of Stockholm, attended the meeting of the Bureau and took part in the discussions.

Four New Journals

IN this number of *Africa* references will be noticed to three new journals. Of these, *Lovania* is the quarterly organ of Old Students of the Roman Catholic university of Louvain and is published by the Katanga group at Élisabethville. The various groups of members, at Léopoldville, Katanga, and in the Eastern Province, hold meetings at which they discuss questions relating to the Colony. The latest issue of *Lovania* to reach us, no. 7 (2nd and 3rd quarters 1945), contains, besides a long article on the work of the Jesuits in Belgian Congo, a contribution on Polygamy by A. Rubbens, and several informative articles on land, stock, nutrition, and fish. Under the rubric 'Chronique' an account is given of the university teaching that was offered at Élisabethville for the first time in 1944-5 when 27 students were enrolled. For the courses which commenced in November 1945 twelve students entered: the list of professors includes 28 names. M. E. Possoz writes to urge a more intensive study of the native languages: he has overlooked Dr. C. M. Doke's Zulu grammar

in writing: 'Mais alors que nous possédons au Congo belge diverses études déjà très poussées sur les tons des mots, si essentiels pour la signification dans les langues bantoues, on ne trouve encore en Afrique du Sud aucune langue pour laquelle les tons sont publiés.' He asks for the proscription of Swahili and 'the soi-disant lingala' in Belgian Congo, in the interest of civilization.

The *Bulletin de l'Institut d'Études Centrafricaines* is published at Brazzaville under the patronage of the Government-General of French Equatorial Africa. Its aim is well expressed in an introductory note. In these days when economics is so dominant there is a great temptation to regard everything as rather negligible that does not bear upon production and the standard of living. 'Ce serait une erreur. La connaissance approfondie et rationnelle d'un pays est l'un des instruments indispensables de l'action. Et par connaissance rationnelle il faut entendre une connaissance qui va à la source et au détail.' The Bulletin therefore will seek to obtain and spread abroad precise detailed information about the peoples, the geography, the material resources of A.É.F. The first number, of 112 closely printed pages, contains several articles of anthropological interest, from one of which we give an abstract on pages 188-9.

Afroamerica is the organ of the International Institute of Afroamerican studies which was set up in October 1943 after the first Congress of Interamerican Demography held in Mexico. The aim of the Institute is to study the Negro populations of America in their biological and cultural aspects. Its journal is to be published twice a year; it is printed in Mexico.

A fourth new journal has the distinction of being (apart from quotations of French writers) entirely written and edited by Africans. It is entitled *Genèse* and is the bulletin of an Association whose active members are all old students of the École William Ponty on the island of Goree. It is published at Rufisque in Senegal. Its aim is to help in carrying out the objects of the Association, viz. to link the Old Boys in friendly union, to conserve and perfect their general and professional attainments and (this is significant) 'to make Franco-African culture an ever richer reality'. This first number affords pleasing evidence of interest in things African. One section is devoted to members' contributions under the rubric 'La Voix de l'Afrique'—tales, songs, essays; and an appeal is made for the collection of stories 'from the aged lips which soon will not open again'. The French text is printed of a short play performed at the Dakar meeting of the International Congress of Africanists; this is a rendering of a Susu fabliau, 'Eh bien! mais oui'. There are poems in French from one of which (by Ouezzin Coulibaly) we quote these lines. They are written in praise of the School:

A moi qui n'avais rien, Ponty a tout donné,
Travail et joie et ce bonheur d'être l'ainé
De mille adolescents d'âme fière et ardente,

Sportifs et travailleurs, et toujours prêts au don
De soi pour tous; de mes jeunes frères que hante
Le courageux souci de jamais dire 'non'.

Applied Anthropology

After reading Dr. Evans-Pritchard's article in the April number of *Africa*, Dr. Margaret Read wrote to us as follows:

'Dr. Evans-Pritchard has thrown down the glove on the issue of colonial governments and the use they make, or could make, of anthropologists. He has at the same time stated with emphasis that the two primary tasks before anthropologists to-day are research and teaching. With this latter statement no anthropologist would quarrel. Whether he is teaching or doing research work, he is always coming up against the limitations of the existing field of knowledge, both extensively in the study of societies of similar and con-