

*Bantu Authorship.*

IN recent years considerable development has taken place in South Africa in regard to Bantu authorship. For long the majority of the vernacular books produced were the work of European missionaries, and most of them had a specific missionary purpose in view. It has been more and more realized, however, that in a truly indigenous literature the African must play the largest, if not an exclusive, part. Happily there are signs that the Bantu themselves are stirring with a view to meeting the needs of their people in this field. In many parts of the country educated Africans are attempting authorship and submitting their work for publication. Mission presses are still the principal channel of such publication, but these are assisting the movement through the recognition that literature, though it may not deal specifically with religious and biblical matters, is in the best sense Christian if permeated by the Christian spirit. Thus in addition to religious publications, books on history, poetry, ethnology, drama, music, and fiction are coming from African pens. One mission press during the past ten years has published at its own risk and expense the work of nineteen Bantu authors and composers. It is symptomatic of the growing demand for literature that these works have been published without appreciable loss. The whole movement has been considerably forwarded by the holding of two Bantu authors' conferences. These were held in Johannesburg in 1936 and 1937 and were attended by authors, all of whom had had work published. Difficulties were frankly faced. One of the chief of these is the financial difficulty, and it is hoped to relieve this by raising a fund of £5,000 for the financing of African authors' works. A recent decision to bring into being a Central Literature Board with representatives from the Inter-University Committee on African Studies, the Christian Council, the Education Departments, and the Bantu Press, is a further step towards the encouragement of the African people. (*Communicated by the Rev. R. H. W. SHEPHERD, Director of Publications of the Lovedale Press, South Africa.*)

*Labour Problems in Tanganyika.*

A REPORT by a local committee, issued early in 1938, on the supply and welfare of labour in Tanganyika, emphasizes the African dilemma of the dependence of all large-scale production on the employment of labourers at long distances from their homes. In the 'labour reservoirs' the obvious effects of the migration lead to efforts to check it, by control of movement or by the development of local resources. In the centres of employment, where the inconveniences of a labour shortage are more keenly felt, misgivings are discounted and measures which tend to decrease the supply are resented. In Tanganyika independent native production has been encouraged wherever possible, on the principle that no native should be forced to seek

employment through the absence of any other source of revenue, and this production was stimulated by an active campaign during the depression years when plantation products could not be sold at a profit. Hence, since the turn of the tide in 1935, employers have found increasing difficulty in obtaining labour.

The report urges the importance of providing satisfactory means of transport and living conditions, and stresses the principle of freedom of choice for the labourer. Some of its conclusions, however, both as regards present conditions and future possibilities, appear to call for a further investigation of the facts. The committee endorses 'without reserve' the statement of the East African Commission of 1924 that the native should not be 'allowed to stagnate in a reserve leaving all the work to the women'. But since 1924 a certain amount of closer observation of native economic systems than a travelling parliamentary commission was able to make has cast some discredit on the popular assumption underlying the phrase. Again it is asserted that native producers of cash crops are 'working at low pressure', and that where surplus food crops are grown for sale this is entirely the work of women. It seems clear that any reliable calculation of the amount of labour available must depend upon really adequate information, not only as to the number of days' work which the various occupations in the village involve, but as to their distribution throughout the year, the actual division of labour in the community and the extent to which this can be shifted. Again, the proposal for a redistribution of population in order to establish native settlements near centres of employment raises most complex problems of the tribal composition of such settlements and the position of native authorities. The regular daily appearance of the employee at work is regarded as the ideal; among other reasons because to allow a labourer to extend the completion of his contract over an indefinite period is depriving another potential employer of his services. The possibility that the establishment of tribal life a stone's throw from the plantation may conflict with this ideal is not examined; it is simply assumed that the integration of village with plantation life will take place along the lines which are convenient to the employer. Other parts of the continent, notably the Union, have found that this is unfortunately not a safe assumption. (*Communicated by Dr. L. P. MAIR.*)

#### *Nouveau périodique au Congo belge.*

LES missionnaires du Sacré-Cœur du Vicariat de Coquilhatville ont lancé une publication: *Equatoria*, pour essayer de mettre en commun les connaissances et les expériences de divers coloniaux dans les questions de l'enseignement, de la linguistique, et de l'ethnologie.

Par la publication de deux numéros: sur l'orthographe du lonkundomongo, et sur l'étude comparée des dialectes (avec questionnaire pratique), et par la communication — comme troisième numéro — d'un tiré-à-part sur les