

Lerotholi the allocation of lands is in the hands of chiefs, sub-chiefs, and headmen, and these have the power to take away lands from holders who do not cultivate them properly. People complain that they have no security, that their holding is dependent upon the favour of their chief; and in the National Council voices have been raised in favour of transferring to land-boards the power of allocation and also asking for permanent individual tenure. The feeling of insecurity is possibly a hindrance to land improvement.

The Basutoland National Treasury

WRITING in this *Journal* (October 1947) Dr. E. H. Ashton has referred to the two proclamations of 1938 as bringing the Native Authority of Basutoland 'unequivocally into the framework of government'. A further advance was made in 1946 by the establishment of a National Treasury. Its revenue, derived from a proportion of the taxation, from court fees, and fines, amounts to about £120,000. The plan was hammered out by a committee of the National Council. Since its constitution provided for the payment of salaries to chiefs and members of the courts, it was necessary to regulate their numbers. The Committee found that the existing 1,340 courts were greatly in excess of the need and proposed to reduce them to 117. It was also ordained that fines should no longer go to the chiefs but be paid into the National Treasury. The effect of this enactment was considerably to reduce both the power and the income of many of the chiefs. The opening of the Treasury on 1 April 1946 was probably the most important event in the recent history of the country.

During 1946 and 1947 Basutoland was shaken by a succession of trials for 'ritual murder'. *The Times* correspondent reported from Maseru on 24 October 1947 that seventeen Africans had that day been sentenced to death. Many others had preceded these. In all the cases it was shown that people had been killed for the purpose of getting their blood, or some other part of their body, for the making of 'medicine'. The Paramount Chief asked the National Council in October 1946 for advice how to put a stop to these murders. Some councillors put the blame upon 'witch-doctors' (as the English report of the debate calls them) and the Council passed a resolution that 'witch-doctors' should be made to stay in their villages and not move about. But other councillors were of the opinion that not the 'witch-doctors' but the chiefs were responsible. 'Councillor Lefela'—so runs the record—'strongly opposed the proposal to do away with witch-doctors, as he said that it was not proved that they were the cause of the murders, it being doubtful whether they persuaded the chiefs or whether the chiefs went to them first. He considered that restoring the position of the 1,300 chiefs, sub-chiefs and headmen, plus those others who had been omitted when these were gazetted, would stop the murders.' It is not at all impossible that there was a direct connexion between the establishment of the Treasury and the 'ritual murders'—that the chiefs whose power had been curtailed had recourse to 'medicine' to re-establish their power, 'medicine' of the requisite virtue only to be obtained from human bodies.

African Place-names

THE latest number of that excellent periodical *The Uganda Journal* (vol. x, No. 2) is a reprint of articles which appeared in the five *Bulletins* issued during the war years 1943-5, when it was impossible to produce the *Journal*. Mr. R. A. Snoxall's paper on 'Some Buganda place-names' is of particular interest and raises questions which hitherto have been all too rarely studied. The names in Buganda have as prefixes KA-, WA-, NA-, and BU-. Of these BU- is widely used as indicating 'country' as in 'Buganda' itself; the name of Busiro county means 'the country of tombs'. Thus, outside Uganda, we have Bwila, 'the country of the Ila people'. NA- is taken by Mr. Snoxall to be 'the feminine form corresponding to the