

Notes and News

Sir Hanns Vischer's visit to Paris

FOLLOWING an invitation received through the French office in London, the Secretary General had the honour of calling on Mr. Giacobbi, the French Minister for the Colonies in Paris, to discuss, on behalf of the Chairman and the members of the Executive Council in London, the work of the Institute and its plans for the immediate future. In the course of the interview the Minister expressed his keen interest in our work, and promised to give us his support. The Secretary General also saw Professor Rivet, Monsieur Delavignette, the Head of the École Coloniale, and a number of permanent officials in the Ministry of the Colonies, with whom the future co-operation of French scholars and officials in promoting the Institute's activities was discussed in greater detail and with most promising results. The Secretary General also met Monsieur Labouret who handed to him his resignation as Director of the Institute. He further received letters from General Dérendinger and the Rev. Père Dubois who expressed the greatest pleasure at the prospect of further work as members of the Executive Council.

DONNANT suite à une invitation reçue par l'intermédiaire du Service des Colonies du Bureau Français à Londres, le Secrétaire Général s'est rendu à Paris où il fut reçu par le Ministre des Colonies M. Giacobbi, auquel il a pu exposer au nom de Lord Lugard et des membres du Conseil Exécutif à Londres les activités de l'Institut et ses projets de travail pour l'avenir. Au cours de cette entrevue le Ministre manifesta le plus grand intérêt et a bien voulu nous promettre son secours. Le Secrétaire Général a eu l'occasion de rencontrer le Professeur Rivet, Monsieur Delavignette, directeur de l'École Coloniale, et plusieurs membres du Ministère avec lesquels il lui a été possible de discuter en détail les moyens pour établir une coopération étroite entre l'Institut et les savants de France afin qu'ils puissent dès à présent apporter leur aide et leur appui aux travaux de l'Institut et maintenir l'intérêt dans nos activités en France et dans les colonies françaises d'Afrique. Le Secrétaire Général a aussi eu l'occasion de rencontrer Monsieur Labouret qui lui a communiqué sa décision de démissionner de son poste de directeur de l'Institut. Des lettres du Révérend Père Dubois et du Général Dérendinger reçues récemment expriment la satisfaction qu'éprouvent ces deux membres de notre Conseil Exécutif à l'idée de reprendre leur travail pour notre Institut.

Social Development in Africa and the work of the International African Institute

LORD HAILEY took the Chair at a joint meeting of the Dominions and Colonies section of the Royal Society of Arts and the Royal African Society on 21 November 1944, when Professor Daryll Forde, Director of the International African Institute, read a paper on Social Development in Africa and the work of the International African Institute.

In introducing the speaker the Chairman said that he himself had always emphasized the importance of investigation into the social conditions of Africa, and pointed out that modern sociological study was very much more vital and of much greater practical value than might be thought by those acquainted only with the older tradition of those studies. With regard to the International African Institute, Lord Hailey said that the best tribute he could pay to it was to mention the fact that for many years it had enjoyed the guidance of Lord Lugard—the most revered name in the history of African administration.

Professor Forde began his paper by indicating the change which had taken place in recent years, especially since the outbreak of war, in the attitude of colonial powers towards

dependent peoples. The assumption which now underlay all proposals relating to colonial administration was that the colonial peoples should themselves take over responsibility for their economic and political destiny, and clear evidence of this point of view had come from French and Belgian as well as from British sources. Such a policy, however, implied the social development of the African peoples on a scale hitherto scarcely realized, in order to enable them to assume control of their legal, financial, and economic affairs. Professor Forde went on to describe some of the effects of modern economic and industrial developments on the traditional structure of African societies, and showed how these changes involved a transition from the traditional habits of life and ways of thinking to an entirely new social pattern. This transition was likely to be accomplished in an inefficient and wasteful manner, and to be accompanied by strife and faction, unless policies were adopted which could promote understanding of the changes and forces at work and behaviour adjusted to the new conditions. European administration in Africa, however beneficent, had tended to stunt the spontaneous adaptation of African societies to new conditions. As the range of government activities was extended, they became more remote and impersonal, and more incomprehensible to the African; moreover, the administrative machine was not able to provide the governing race with the detailed knowledge of African life, or with the multiplicity of personal contacts, from which alone real understanding could grow. There was great need for reliable and detailed knowledge of the conditions of life of African communities of all types, and also for trained Europeans prepared to participate in the education of African communities, not only through the channels of scholastic or technical instruction. It was not possible to adopt a policy of non-interference, leaving the Africans to meet new needs and develop new political institutions in their own way. The European had to take responsibility and, because of the methods of inquiry open to him, was in a better position than the African to know the real needs of the latter.

It was the realization of these essential features of the African position which led to the foundation of the International African Institute, as an instrument whereby scientific knowledge of African life might be increased and might be more widely disseminated and applied to practical problems of education, administration, and economic development. Professor Forde then gave a brief account of the founding and development of the Institute and of its activities in the fields of sociological and linguistic research; he emphasized its independent and international status and outlined proposals for the expansion of its work in the near future. The war, while it had enforced a curtailment of the Institute's activities in some directions, had also intensified the need, and stimulated a demand, for research into and information about African problems. The British Government had recognized the contribution which the Institute could make, and had allocated grants for several important research projects. The French and Belgian Governments had expressed their readiness to support and participate in the proposed undertakings, and opportunities for co-operation with centres of teaching and research in different parts of Africa would enable the Institute to extend its functions as a clearing-house of information and research. In conclusion, Professor Forde pointed out that though there was an increasing number of institutions and trained workers able to study and advise on social development in Africa, and though colonial governments were increasingly making use of them, there would be need for more and more workers and for substantial financial support; the task was a great one and would indeed never be completed—it could only be progressively handed over to the Africans themselves.

The Royal African Society's Silver Medal

At an informal meeting on 7 December 1944, the Royal African Society's Silver Medal was presented to the Rev. Edwin Smith in recognition of his services to Africa.