

E. Leynaud: Organisation politique des Azandé.

A. Venciana: Notes sur les Bwiti.

G. Tardits: Les mythes, les institutions et les coutumes des Dogon.

Bibliographie des problèmes politiques actuels.

Communication de G. Balandier

The Advancement of African Women in the Belgian Congo¹

THE advancement of women in the Belgian Congo and Ruanda-Urundi was the subject discussed at the 12th session of the Congrès Colonial National held in Brussels 23 and 24 November 1956. The Congress received reports from four Commissions each of which was concerned with one of the following aspects of the problem: The legal status of African women; social welfare and assistance; education; the role of European women in the Congo. M. Paul Coppens, Secretary-General of the permanent committee of the Congrès Colonial National, summarized the reports and resolutions presented by the Commissions. Before the session, questionnaires had been circulated in the Colony, and the 62 answers received from a wide variety of sources, African as well as European, had provided material on which the reports of the Commissions were based.

A review of the status of women in the traditional African society led to the conclusion that indigenous law and custom in fact protected women, especially as wives and mothers, although denying them full legal status in theory. Rapidly changing economic and social conditions today were, however, undermining the traditional structure with consequent repercussions on the status of women. These were, of course, most acutely felt in urban centres and here the disparity between the stages of development reached by men and by women was most clearly evident. The problem was whether the traditional structure could be adapted to the needs of the future and to the women of the future. Welfare and educational facilities needed to be developed and multiplied and the active co-operation of educated Africans must be secured. There was need for many more schools for girls, primary and post-primary as well as vocational and professional, together with facilities for further training in Belgium.

It was suggested that European women living in the Congo, whether exercising a profession or accompanying their husbands, should receive some training and preparation for life in the Colony, should study one or other of the African languages and be encouraged to play their part in working for the common welfare.

Missionary Conference on Literature in the Congo

THIS conference, the last of six sponsored by the Conseil Protestant du Congo and the Evangelical Literature Organization and organized by Mr. Paul Stough of the Africa Inland Mission, met in Léopoldville in October 1956. Mr. Stough was assisted by the executive secretary of ELO, the Rev. Harold Street, and the International Committee for Christian Literature in Africa was represented by its London secretary, the Rev. Claude de Mestral. Language-area conferences were held as follows: Kikongo (Kikwit), Lingala (Bolenge), Congo-Swahili (Ruanguba), Bangala (Gombari), Kinyaruanda (Usumbura).

In proposing the resolution for the formation of a colony-wide committee, Mr. R. B. Anderson of the Methodist Evangelical Union suggested that it should be formed from the literature committees of local missions and from the area fellowships which had grown out of these. The function of such a committee would be to further the interchange of manuscripts between areas, to supervise the French literature programme, and to dispense neces-

¹ A lengthy report of the Congress, with numerous illustrations, was published in *Belgique d'Outremer*, Janvier 1957.