

Abstracts of Some Recent Papers

ANTHROPOLOGY

R. P. JACQUES DELAERE, 'A propos des cousins croisés', *Bulletin des Juridictions Indigènes et du Droit Coutumier Congolais*, Elisabethville; 14th year, No. 11, Sept.–Oct. 1946. A DISCUSSION of the institution of cross-cousin marriage with particular reference to the Bapende of the district of the Kwango in the Belgian Congo. The author criticizes the 'Anglo-Saxon' usage by which the term 'cross-cousin' is applied to both male and female children of the mother's brother or the father's sister and would seem to wish it to be confined to the relation between persons of different sex. The Bapende have a term *gisoni* which is used in this way, and in English usage would be translated as 'cross cousin of opposite sex'. The Bapende are organized on a matrilineal basis. What Father Delaere calls a clan may perhaps be a lineage in modern terminology. A man belongs to his mother's clan (or lineage) and to her 'village'. The men of this group of his mother's generation are his *malemba* (mother's brothers). A common form of marriage is with the daughter of the mother's brother, preferably the man's own mother's brother but alternatively some other *lemba* or man of his mother's lineage. The native explanation of the custom is that a man's *lemba* (mother's brother) is the person concerned with aiding his sister's son to obtain a wife and this he can most easily do by arranging that his nephew shall marry his daughter. As in some other African tribes marriage is regarded as permissible between a grandfather and his granddaughter (father's father and son's daughter). Father Delaere also refers to a customary form of marriage of the Bambundu (a neighbouring tribe to the Bapende) in which a man marries the granddaughter of his maternal uncle. The author's interpretation is that the uncle transfers to his sister's son his right to marry his granddaughter. The paper contains an interesting discussion of cross-cousin marriage and gives a list (not professing to be complete) of peoples in different parts of the world amongst whom such marriages are customary.

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ECONOMICS

J. W. D. GOODBAN, 'Land Settlement—The Requirements and Lay-out of a Scheme', *Farm and Forest*, vol. vii, Jan.–June 1946, No. 1. The author gives an account of the progress of the Daudawa settlement scheme in the Northern Provinces of Nigeria, from its inception in 1924, when it was started by the Empire Cotton Growing Corporation with the primary object of becoming a seed farm for improved strains of cotton. In 1941 the farm was handed over to the Agricultural Department and since that time the number of farmers has expanded, the holding acreage as well as the number of cattle kept has increased and, in addition to farm buildings and houses, amenities such as a school, a dispensary, a produce marketing office, a social centre, &c., have been established or are being planned. Although Daudawa is still an experiment, some information may be gained from it which will be of value to others starting similar schemes. The following points are important:

1. The locality must be carefully chosen with regard to its suitability for agriculture, whether water, grazing land, &c., are available, and whether it can support a farming community.
2. The size of individual farms cannot be arbitrarily fixed, but will depend on special local conditions.
3. The area selected must be surveyed and mapped, and the need for anti-erosion measures

decided. If undertaken, such measures should be carried out before the site of any one holding is decided.

4. The shape of the individual holdings must be determined with reference to the existing terrain; roads, cattle tracks, grazing areas should be fitted into the general plan before the holdings are laid out; roads should follow contours, cattle tracks should be left between farms and be wide enough to avoid too great concentration of traffic. Grazing and fuel reserves should not be too far from any one farm.

5. Care should be used in determining how much land should be opened up the first year; a farmer unused to cattle cultivation should not attempt to open up a fifteen-acre farm in his first year.

6. The size of a settlement is liable to be limited by essential factors and therefore expansion will not be possible beyond a certain maximum.

For the success of any such scheme, certain settlement rules, to which settlers must adhere, are necessary, e.g. the fragmentation of farms by inheritance or extension due to the opening up of wives' farms, or to squatters, should be disallowed. The size and grouping of settlers' holdings has been the subject of much discussion, and the possibility of using or modifying existing villages instead of resettling farmers has been mooted. There are, however, good arguments for grouping farms in such a way that the farmer lives on his farm, that unit groups may be of a convenient size, that the distances from grazing grounds and fuel areas can be decreased and the danger of erosion on tracks and roads avoided.

The size of any settlement will vary according to the locality; and the possibility of the settlement benefiting adjacent villages and hamlets and providing facilities for co-operative marketing, social activities, &c., should be borne in mind.

The question of buildings is one the solution of which will depend on local conditions; at Daudawa it was found that initial expenditure on buildings of a permanent type was justified in the saving of time spent on repairs.

The author believes in a great future for land settlement but emphasizes two points: 'no settlement can be successful if it is laid out from a blue-print directly on to the map—it must be adapted and fitted into existing topography; secondly, any scheme is an experiment in the beginning'.

SOCIOLOGY

ANTOINE RUBBENS, 'La Protection du mariage indigène', *Lovania*, no. 9, Deuxième Trimestre, 1946. In the past this problem was regarded primarily from the angle of the fight against polygamy. To-day, as the result of our more intimate knowledge of African peoples and because of the impact on them of western institutions, the question is seen to be more complex. There is no historical evidence for the belief that in so-called primitive Bantu societies sexual life was entirely unregulated; on the contrary it was subject to definite rules and prohibitions. The attempt to describe native marriage customs in terms of European usage and conventions is misleading, since our vocabulary is not adequate. It is clear that the married state among the Bantu is a social fact, legally sanctioned and founded on a coherent philosophy of life. Some ethnologists have come to the conclusion that marriage, properly speaking, does not exist among natives; Culwick, for example, points out that in African societies blood ties are far more important than those which unite a man and his wife and that marriages are dissolved with an ease and an absence of emotion disconcerting to European ideas; and that marriage is a contract entered into by a man and a woman and their respective clans to satisfy sexual and economic needs and to ensure the perpetuation of the clan. Although some observed facts seem to corroborate this theory it is not the whole truth. Side by side with the interest of the clan there does exist a desire that the natural union of a man and a woman should be expressed in an adequate social institution, and one does find unions motivated by feelings of personal affection.

M. Sohier, Procurator-General of the Belgian Congo, published during the war a summary of information concerning native marriage-custom; he distinguishes between two aspects of native marriage: the conjugal union of two persons and the inter-clan alliance. He further points out that Bantu polygamy is not the union of one man with a group of women, but a series of unions in which the same man participates. He takes the over-optimistic view, however, that polygamy is the product of economic factors which are disappearing. But all who have had any contact with natives in recent years will agree that small-scale polygamy is increasing and that economic developments are the chief cause.

Missionaries have stressed the difference of status between the first, or main marriage and subsequent or secondary unions, and they maintain that even by native law, secondary unions are not regarded as true marriages. This may be an exaggeration, but a difference of status does undoubtedly exist.

For the past fifty years Belgians have occupied themselves with this problem, but so far without achieving any result. The problem is now becoming more acute in view of the decrease of population resulting from the spread of venereal disease and the monopoly of young girls by polygamous chiefs. The Ordinance of July 1945 (now annulled) had the grave defect of legislating only for a minority, whereas the real need is to protect the marriage custom of the masses. The following suggestions are offered for consideration.

A first step towards the protection of native marriage would be the restoration in law of the ancient customary distinction between the true marriage and secondary unions. This distinction would be emphasized if native marriages were registered, and it would be within the province of the officials who carried out the registration to inquire how far the influence of the clan interests constituted an obstacle to marriage based on the free choice of the parties.

It is doubtful whether the regulation by law of bride-price values, which has been proposed, is advisable. The commercialization of bride-price, as a result of the western economic régime, has gravely impaired its character as an 'instrument or certificate of marriage' (M. E. Possoz) or as 'a guarantee of inter-clan alliance' (M. Sohier). Ancient custom fixed the bride-price in terms of cattle; now money payments are frequent, and even where payment is still made in cattle, the development of stock-breeding for profit has put the institution in danger. It is necessary that adultery should be restrained and that while the husband should be able to take action against an unfaithful wife, the wife also should have the right to protect her home and to be released from customs which extend marital rights to the males of her husband's clan. Practical considerations support the continuance of the custom whereby the widow remains with her husband's clan and finds another husband there; her return to her own clan raises problems of the repayment of bride-price and the care of her children. If, however, the custom encourages polygamy on the part of the heir or infringes the liberty of the individual widow, it should be combated.

The sense of responsibility of parents for their children is not strong among natives, since the care and education of children is the responsibility of the clan. Nevertheless the shifting of population and the disintegration of tribal life make it necessary to reconsider the problem. If the responsibility of the father for his children were enforced by law, the father would not so lightly abandon his family.

It is clear that on some points legislative action is necessary, but the administrative and judicial authorities must also do their part. There are, too, moral influences—missions in particular—which can modify the habits of the people. In order to assure to marriage a status of dignity and stability, not legislation merely, but a policy is necessary. The old policy of assimilation is discredited and the pendulum has swung to the other extreme with the notion that the natives should develop in accordance with their own indigenous culture. A new synthesis is needed which will integrate the two policies.