

Notes and News

A Lugard Memorial

FROM the Chief Commissioner of the Northern Provinces of Nigeria, Sir John R. Patterson, we have received a brochure containing an account of the foundation-stone laying of the Council Chamber at Kaduna on 27 June 1947. The building, which will be the scene of the labours of the Northern Regional Council under the new constitution, is to be known as the Lugard Memorial Council Chamber. It stands on the site which Lord Lugard selected for the erection of Government House had Kaduna become, as at one time he proposed, the capital of Nigeria. The ceremony fitly symbolized the co-operation of two parties in the colony's development, for the first stone was laid by the Governor, Lord Richards (now Lord Milverton), and the second by Abubakar, the Sultan of Sokoto. It was inevitable that the name of the first Governor-General should figure largely in the speeches. The Governor quoted from a speech made by Lord Lugard when laying a foundation-stone in Kaduna; he then likened himself and his colleagues to masons, each trying 'to lay our line of bricks straight and true in the building up of the edifice of good government in this country'. The Sultan (who received the insignia of the K.B.E.), referring to the amalgamation of Northern and Southern Nigeria in 1914, said: 'We shall never forget Lord Lugard who carried through the amalgamation; nor can we forget what he did for us while he still held the reins of office in Nigeria. May God reward him for what he did!'

Development Plans for Basutoland

THE memorandum of development plans issued by the Government of Basutoland is, unlike other similar documents which we have seen, printed in both English and the vernacular. It sets out a realistic scheme for the balanced development of the territory over a period of ten years, a scheme which, over and above local resources, would call for assistance under the Colonial Development and Welfare Act to the extent of about £2½ million. Unfortunately the actual amount allocated to Basutoland was only £830,000 and the plans have had to be considerably modified. The £1,130,000 which it was proposed to spend on social services had to be cut to £214,375. Priority is inescapably assigned to economic development for upon this depends future improvement of social services. The first and all-important call is for continued anti-erosion measures, and upon these it is proposed to spend £282,000 during the next ten years. Roads, water-supplies, and public buildings will absorb £333,625 and the balance of the grant, £214,375, will remain for medical, health, and education services.

No one familiar with conditions in Basutoland will cavil at the priority given to rehabilitation of the soil. During the fifty years since the present writer first saw the country there has been a progressive deterioration. The deep soil of the lowlands, cropped, and some of it doubly cropped, for eighty years without any (or with very little) enrichment by animal manure, has so largely lost its fertility that much of it produces no more than half a bag of maize to the acre. Since the land is destitute of trees the manure must be used for fuel. The large numbers of cattle, horses, sheep, and goats (public enemy number one), and latterly of donkeys, have extensively denuded the soil of its grass cover. 'If you see a patch of grass 100 yards square you wonder', said one official to the writer. Gully erosion has assumed alarming proportions; whole tracts that formerly were fertile fields are now ripped by deep branching dongas—up to fifty feet deep, many of them. In these fifty years the population has more than doubled. At the present level of soil fertility the land is insufficient to maintain it.