

Notes and News

III^e Conférence Internationale des Africanistes de l'Ouest

THE Third Session of the C.I.A.O. (International West African Scientific Conference) was held in Nigeria from 12 to 21 December 1949 at the invitation of the Nigerian Government and of the University College of West Africa, Ibadan, which generously provided accommodation and acted as host during the earlier part of the proceedings.

The Conference was opened by His Excellency the Governor, Sir John Macpherson, K.C.M.G., in the Assembly Hall of the University College, when associateships of the newly founded University College were conferred on His Excellency, on Professor Théodore Monod, Director of I.F.A.N., the initiator and Permanent Secretary of the Conference, and on Professor Daryll Forde, a founding member of the Permanent Committee and Director of the International African Institute.

The Conference was attended by about 100 delegates, including, in addition to large representation from the technical and education departments in Nigeria, visitors from the various branches of the Institut Français d'Afrique Noire, from the Institut d'Études Centrafricaines (Brazzaville), the Centro de Estudos da Guiné Portuguesa (Bissau), the Instituto de Estudios Africanos and the Government of Spanish Guinea, the University College of the Gold Coast, the International African Institute, the Institute of Colonial Administration, Oxford, and the Ethnological Department of the British Museum, London.

Three full days were devoted to the presentation and discussion of papers and the demonstration of material, during which the Conference was organized in three sections concerned respectively with (a) geological, geographical and cartographical, (b) biological and (c) social and ethnological fields. An exhibition of Nigerian Bronzes and other art prepared by Mr. K. C. Murray, Surveyor of Antiquities, was opened by H.E. the Governor. A number of famous bronzes were lent by Chiefs who attended the opening ceremony of the Conference and by museums. These included the Tsoede figures from Jebba, lent by the Emir of Bida, the Ife bronzes lent by the Oni of Ife, and the Ejubaj'auilo lent by the Atta of Idah. Demonstrations of the collection were given by Mr. Kenneth Murray during the Conference, and Nigerian art was further discussed in papers presented at the Conference.

Subjects dealt with in the various sections of the Conference included: the use of air surveys (with particular reference to the Nigerian tin-fields); pedological studies in West Africa; principles affecting wild animal preservation in West Africa; practical classifications of West African vegetation, with reference to the projected atlas of West Africa; experimental studies concerning the physiological classification of West African climates; recent work on insect vectors of malaria, yellow fever, and sleeping-sickness; ecological and other investigations related to productivity and diseases of economic plants; social problems of urbanization; the development of new religious cults in connexion with social change in West Africa; the role of secret societies among West African peoples; the techniques and social significance of West African art.

At a plenary session discussion of the need and opportunity for the preparation of a comprehensive atlas of West Africa was continued from the previous session at Bissao in December 1947. Professor Th. Monod presented for discussion a list of proposed sheets, and it was agreed that negotiations should go forward with governments, technical departments, and individual experts in an endeavour to prepare a comprehensive atlas with series of plates on appropriate scales covering all West Africa and including geological, climatological, biological, social, and economic data. Provisional publication of separate sheets of

the proposed atlas as they became available was generally supported. Inquiries and suggestions concerning this project should be addressed to Professor Th. Monod (Directeur, I.F.A.N., Dakar, A.O.F.).

Following the working meetings at Ibadan, the Conference moved to Jos in Northern Nigeria, from which field parties of the several sections were able, thanks to the admirable preparations organized by Mr. Bernard Fagg, Antiquities Officer of the Government of Nigeria, to visit, during three days, a number of sites and installations of special interest. The Human Sciences party, for which a field camp was provided at Nok in South Zaria Province, was able to study the stratigraphy and latest finds of both palaeolithic and pre-historic figurine cultures on the Plateau, to make an ethnographic reconnaissance among the Kaleri and Jaba, and to have demonstrated the existence of figure carving and masked dances of men's associations among these Northern peoples. Opportunity was also provided during the Conference for visits to the Nigerian Agricultural Headquarters, Moor Plantation near Ibadan, to Ife in Northern Oyo Division, the traditional centre of the Yoruba people, and to various places of interest in and around Ibadan.

The success of the Conference, as delegates fully recognized, was largely due to the untiring efforts of Mr. K. C. Murray, Mr. B. Fagg, and other members of the Local Organizing Committee in securing accommodation, transport and other facilities, and in organizing the programme.

Philosophical Society of the Sudan

THE society, which was founded in 1946, to promote discussion and research in moral, political, and natural philosophy, has held twenty-one meetings and four field days during the sessions 1946-7 and 1947-8. Among the papers read was one by Mr. A. J. Arkell on 'Suggestions for lines of research in the Sudan', one by Dr. D. Dunham on 'The history of the Sudan from 800 B.C.-A.D. 350 as disclosed by excavation'; other subjects discussed included forestry research, archaeological excavation at Khartoum, climate and building design, and the development of communications. It is intended that the Proceedings of the Society shall eventually be published in a permanent form; meanwhile abridged proceedings containing abstracts of papers delivered are published annually.

Phelps-Stokes Fund

THE thirty-five year report of the Phelps-Stokes Fund, published in 1948,¹ includes an historical account of the development of the work of the Fund, and sketches of outstanding personalities in the Fund's history, notably the founder, Miss Caroline Phelps-Stokes.

In accordance with the wishes of the founder, the Fund's principal activities have been in the field of education and have been directed both to developing education for negroes in the United States and in Africa and to stimulating the study of the negro and his needs. Ancillary to these main purposes, the Fund has assisted the development of the South African Institute of Race Relations, has worked for the improvement of negro housing conditions in New York, and has organized and stimulated various movements in the interests of negro progress both in Africa and the United States.

One chapter of the report describes the special contributions made by Dr. Jesse Jones to the policy of the Fund, in particular his insistence on the necessity for acquiring a thorough factual basis before attempting the solution of any problem, and his conviction of the importance of inter-racial co-operation and of the special significance of rural life and agriculture.

¹ *Negro Status and Race Relations in the United States*, Phelps-Stokes Fund, N.Y., 1948, pp. 219, index. \$1.50.