

Notes and News

The Third Pan-African Congress on Prehistory (see *Africa*, xxiv. 4, p. 383)

THE third Congress on African prehistory, held at Livingstone in July 1955, at the time of the centenary of the discovery of the Victoria Falls by Dr. Livingstone, was attended by delegates from all parts of Africa and from Europe, the United States of America, and India. The Congress was in session for a week following its official opening by the Governor-General of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. Dr. L. S. B. Leakey was elected President for 1955-9, with Professors C. Van Riet Lowe and C. Arambourg as Vice-Presidents and Dr. J. Desmond Clark as General Secretary. The chairmen of the separate sections were: Professor G. Mortelmans, Quaternary Geology; Professor G. H. R. Von Koenigswald, Human Palaeontology; Professor L. Pericot-Garcia, Prehistoric Archaeology. Sub-committees were appointed to cover subjects embodied within these three sections and some seventy-five papers were read and discussed by delegates. The occasion was taken to open a small field museum at the Eastern Cataract of the Victoria Falls, with a unique main display of a specially excavated section over seven feet deep, showing the late succession of deposits and cultures in the Zambezi Valley.

Arrangements were made for delegates to visit some of the most important and accessible sites in the west of Southern Rhodesia, and also in Northern Rhodesia, including the Zambezi Valley. A small party of delegates visited sites in the Katanga Province of the Belgian Congo.

Among the many well-known personalities at the Congress was Miss G. Caton-Thompson, who had last visited Rhodesia in 1929 when she carried out her important investigation of Zimbabwe. It was, therefore, particularly interesting for delegates to visit the site in her company. The Zimbabwe ruins, which extend over some one hundred acres, comprise three categories of buildings, namely, the Elliptical Building (or 'Temple'), the Acropolis on Zimbabwe Hill, and the Valley of Ruins, in which last the more important inhabitants probably lived. The available building material was granite but some rubble was used in the walls of the Elliptical Building. There are obvious parallels between Zimbabwe and the large earthworks of Bigo on the south bank of the Katonga River in Buganda, notably the presence of elliptical enclosures and absence of rectangular structures. The scarcity of building material, noted at Bigo, prevails everywhere in Uganda where there are earthworks of this type. The 'Acropolis' at Zimbabwe consists of numerous structures linked by passages and alley-ways and was apparently used as a stronghold and place of retreat.

The ruins have yielded many important objects from which attempts have been made to determine the dates when the site was developed and occupied. The discovery at Zimbabwe in 1950 of two wooden lintels inset in a wall has confirmed that the site must have been occupied as long ago as *c.* A.D. 700 and possibly much earlier. A comparison of glass beads found at Zimbabwe and also at Bigo may be of importance in helping to date the latter.

Other ruins visited were those at Khami, near Bulawayo, which, though evidently not as old as Zimbabwe, appear to be closely related, and may have had some religious significance.

In a paper read at the Congress Mr. J. Walton spoke on the dating of certain objects found in Southern Rhodesian ruins, such as the soapstone carvings, ingots, double gongs, and the monoliths and conical towers. While all these ruins are now regarded as being essentially Bantu it is evident that some of these objects are not Bantu and that external influences must have been responsible for them. It is considered, in fact, that they belong to two widespread non-Bantu cultures. The first, showing affinities with the Hima, came to

Zimbabwe from the north, reaching Southern Rhodesia in about A.D. 1400. The second came from the direction of the Congo Basin, whence it spread to Southern Rhodesia in the early part of the sixteenth century.

A number of papers were read on rock paintings in various parts of Africa, and opportunities were provided for visiting rock shelters in both Rhodesias. This art is highly developed in Southern Rhodesia and covers a long stretch of history possibly from the Middle Stone Age to recent times, several styles of painting being represented. In the north, the naturalistic and schematic styles may be distinguished, both probably dating from the Later Stone Age. The Nachikufu Cave south of Mpika is of particular importance since it gives the complete Late Stone Age sequence of that part of the country. There are interesting geometric designs in Nsalu Cave in the Nachikufu ridge, which are considered to be Bantu and exhibit obvious similarities to the Teso rock paintings in Uganda. There may also be paintings on Buvuma Island in Lake Victoria.

Two sets of rock engravings were inspected in Rhodesia. Very few have been found in Tanganyika, but they are more common in Kenya, where the designs are rich and include animals and people.

At the closing plenary session resolutions were passed regarding the terminology to be used in African prehistory.

The Belgian Government's invitation that the next Congress, to be held in 1959, should take place in the Belgian Congo was unanimously accepted.

Centre d'études africanistes à l'École Pratique des Hautes Études (Paris)

DEPUIS novembre 1956, un Centre d'études africanistes existe au sein de l'École Pratique des Hautes Études, VI^e section (sociologie). Ce centre dispense l'enseignement suivant:

- G. Balandier, directeur d'études, professeur à l'Institut d'Études politiques:
 1. Structures sociales et structures économiques; aspects traditionnels et aspects modernes; 2. Travaux pratiques, exposés d'ouvrages, résultats d'enquêtes.
- D. Paulme, directeur d'études: Quelques types de structures sociales traditionnelles en Afrique Noire.
- P. Mercier, chargé de conférences: Fonctions économiques de groupes sociaux en milieu africain.
- G. Sautter, chargé de conférences: Les économies africaines et la colonisation.

En outre, des séances de travail collectif réunissent professeurs et étudiants, parmi lesquels on compte de nombreux Africains. Ces séances sont consacrées à des exposés sur les techniques de l'enquête (Sautter, l'enquête cartographique; Paulme, l'enquête en milieu rural; Mercier, l'enquête en milieu urbain; Balandier, l'enquête en milieu industrialisé). D'autres séances sont réservées à l'étude d'une question particulière: exposés d'ouvrages, résultats d'enquêtes.

Dans le cadre de cet enseignement, M. Hampate Ba a donné, en décembre 1956, deux leçons sur l'éducation traditionnelle dans la société peule. Ces leçons ont marqué l'accueil officiel fait par l'Université à un enseignement de sociologie africaine émanant d'un Africain.

Un Centre de documentation africaniste, comprenant une assistante (Mme A. Chiva-Deluz), une documentaliste et une secrétaire, a été constitué. Il comporte, dès à présent, une bibliographie ethnographique et des bibliographies spécialisées sur les structures et évolutions politiques; les problèmes de sociologie économique. Une bibliographie historique est en cours d'élaboration. Ce centre est installé à Paris, 54 rue de Varenne.

Le programme de publication pour 1957 prévoit les ouvrages suivants:

Ouvrage collectif: Systèmes africains en mouvement.

G. Althabe: Pygmées du Cameroun: changements économiques et sociaux.