

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.

Thousands of people have been driven by necessity into the mountainous area where the soil of basaltic origin is shallow though rich, and where up-and-down ploughing on the slopes has been ruinous. (This practice is now forbidden by law.) The population is now on the decline, partly because a falling birth-rate is not balanced by a diminished infantile mortality: there are no vital statistics but knowledgeable observers put it as high as 300 per mille. There was a time when Basutoland exported immense quantities of grain—was, indeed, a granary for central South Africa; now foodstuffs must be imported; and one of the principal (if not the principal) exports is labour; more than 50 per cent. of the able-bodied males are normally absent from home, working in the Union. Not all this labour is migratory; many thousands of Basuto are permanently domiciled outside their homeland owing to the impossibility of subsisting on the land.

Since Sir Alan Pim's report in 1935 much has been done to check erosion and to introduce improved methods of field and animal husbandry. A loan obtained from the Colonial Development Fund to finance an anti-erosion campaign was refunded at the outbreak of war and provision was made to carry on this vital work from revenue through the years of war. In the lowlands 154,000 acres, and in the highlands 77,000 acres, have been protected, but immense areas remain to be dealt with. The present writer had an opportunity in 1947 to observe something of what had then been accomplished. Taking as their motto 'No social security without soil security' the officers responsible have thrown themselves into this enterprise with laudable skill and resolution. Contour furrows 9,710 miles in length had been constructed on the slopes; 182 major dams, holding 304 million gallons, had been built; some millions of trees had been planted; buffer strips of grass had been laid down on many mountain-sides. There remains the knotty problem of grazing control; and also that of inducing chiefs and people to adopt modern methods of agriculture, with manuring and composting, and to reduce the numbers of their stock.

To attain these objects the close co-operation of the chiefs and people with the Agricultural Department is imperative. The Resident Commissioner and the Paramount Chief, after consultation with a standing committee of the Basutoland Council, put forward certain proposals for the consideration of the District Councils and the National Council. The Paramount Chief, it was proposed, should be empowered to declare Agricultural Improvement Areas any areas where special measures are urgently needed to restore the soil. There the Ward Chief in consultation with the local Agricultural Officer would draw up a scheme, laying down the maximum acreage to be cultivated (not less than six acres of arable land per family); the methods, such as contour-ploughing, manuring, rotation of crops, to be adopted by heads of families; assessing the carrying capacity of each communal grazing-area, and estimating the number of stock that might be grazed and the system of rotational grazing to be followed on each such grazing-area. It was proposed also that in these areas trees should be planted by communal labour (*matsema*) at the rate of 100 trees per annum to each family; that dams and silt traps in dongas be built by *matsema*; and that isolated small settlements be grouped into villages. The responsibility for carrying out such a scheme was to be on the local chief. In the last resort, persistent disobedience to his orders would be punished by forfeiture of his lands by a delinquent.

These proposals aroused considerable opposition—especially the proposal to reduce stock to six head per family where the carrying capacity of the veld would not allow of more. The National Council was not favourable to this reduction. Nevertheless, some of the chiefs have awakened to the necessities and are willing and anxious to have land in their wards set aside as Agricultural Improvement Areas. The planting of trees by *matsema* has not proved successful, and the Council voted in favour of the labour being paid out of Treasury funds.

Every man in Basutoland has the right to a parcel of land for cultivating. By the Laws of

Lerotholi the allocation of lands is in the hands of chiefs, sub-chiefs, and headmen, and these have the power to take away lands from holders who do not cultivate them properly. People complain that they have no security, that their holding is dependent upon the favour of their chief; and in the National Council voices have been raised in favour of transferring to land-boards the power of allocation and also asking for permanent individual tenure. The feeling of insecurity is possibly a hindrance to land improvement.

The Basutoland National Treasury

WRITING in this *Journal* (October 1947) Dr. E. H. Ashton has referred to the two proclamations of 1938 as bringing the Native Authority of Basutoland 'unequivocally into the framework of government'. A further advance was made in 1946 by the establishment of a National Treasury. Its revenue, derived from a proportion of the taxation, from court fees, and fines, amounts to about £120,000. The plan was hammered out by a committee of the National Council. Since its constitution provided for the payment of salaries to chiefs and members of the courts, it was necessary to regulate their numbers. The Committee found that the existing 1,340 courts were greatly in excess of the need and proposed to reduce them to 117. It was also ordained that fines should no longer go to the chiefs but be paid into the National Treasury. The effect of this enactment was considerably to reduce both the power and the income of many of the chiefs. The opening of the Treasury on 1 April 1946 was probably the most important event in the recent history of the country.

During 1946 and 1947 Basutoland was shaken by a succession of trials for 'ritual murder'. *The Times* correspondent reported from Maseru on 24 October 1947 that seventeen Africans had that day been sentenced to death. Many others had preceded these. In all the cases it was shown that people had been killed for the purpose of getting their blood, or some other part of their body, for the making of 'medicine'. The Paramount Chief asked the National Council in October 1946 for advice how to put a stop to these murders. Some councillors put the blame upon 'witch-doctors' (as the English report of the debate calls them) and the Council passed a resolution that 'witch-doctors' should be made to stay in their villages and not move about. But other councillors were of the opinion that not the 'witch-doctors' but the chiefs were responsible. 'Councillor Lefela'—so runs the record—'strongly opposed the proposal to do away with witch-doctors, as he said that it was not proved that they were the cause of the murders, it being doubtful whether they persuaded the chiefs or whether the chiefs went to them first. He considered that restoring the position of the 1,300 chiefs, sub-chiefs and headmen, plus those others who had been omitted when these were gazetted, would stop the murders.' It is not at all impossible that there was a direct connexion between the establishment of the Treasury and the 'ritual murders'—that the chiefs whose power had been curtailed had recourse to 'medicine' to re-establish their power, 'medicine' of the requisite virtue only to be obtained from human bodies.

African Place-names

THE latest number of that excellent periodical *The Uganda Journal* (vol. x, No. 2) is a reprint of articles which appeared in the five *Bulletins* issued during the war years 1943-5, when it was impossible to produce the *Journal*. Mr. R. A. Snoxall's paper on 'Some Buganda place-names' is of particular interest and raises questions which hitherto have been all too rarely studied. The names in Buganda have as prefixes KA-, WA-, NA-, and BU-. Of these BU- is widely used as indicating 'country' as in 'Buganda' itself; the name of Busiro county means 'the country of tombs'. Thus, outside Uganda, we have Bwila, 'the country of the Ila people'. NA- is taken by Mr. Snoxall to be 'the feminine form corresponding to the