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OBITUARY

EDWIN WILLIAMS SMITH

MEMBERS of the Institute, and especially those who were associated with it in its early days, will learn with deep regret of the death of the Rev. Edwin Smith in December 1957 at the age of 81.

Edwin Williams Smith was born in South Africa in 1876 and returned there in 1898 to follow in his father's footsteps during seventeen years of active work as a missionary of the Protestant Methodist Church, first in Basutoland and later at the Kasenga mission in Northern Rhodesia which he established. There, too, in collaboration with A. M. Dale of the British South Africa Company, he carried out the pioneer anthropological studies later published in their *Ila-speaking Peoples of Northern Rhodesia* (1920), a work which laid the foundation for future studies of the social organization of the Central Bantu, and his linguistic studies published in his *Handbook of the Ila Language*.

The range of Edwin Smith's interest in the welfare and development of African peoples was further extended after he joined the British and Foreign Bible Society as one of its secretaries in 1916. His concern for the problems of Christian education, social development, and enlightened administrative policy in a rapidly changing Africa led to the writing of his best-known study *The Golden Stool* (1926) and his account of *Aggrey of Africa* (1929). These books showed a deep insight into both the traditional values and the nascent aspirations of Africans as well as a keen sense of the need for constructive policies in administration and education in Africa. As many of our members well know, he played a leading part with Sir Hanns Vischer in the founding of this Institute, an account of which he wrote in *The Story of the Institute: A Survey of the First Seven Years*, published in *Africa*, vol. vii, 1934.

In the late twenties and thirties, when he was also closely associated with the Phelps-Stokes Foundation, Edwin Smith became a leading figure in the promotion of research, publication, and teaching in African social and linguistic studies, and was President of the Royal Anthropological Institute from 1933 to 1935. During the Second World War he spent some years in North America as a visiting Professor at the Hartford Seminary and later at Fisk University, and he was made an honorary D.D. of Wesley College, Winnipeg. On his return he resumed his close interest in this Institute, editing *Africa*, after it had resumed full-scale publication, from 1945 to 1947 and becoming Chairman of the Linguistic Advisory Committee in succession

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to the late Professor Ward. It was at Edwin Smith's suggestion that the Institute organized and obtained international support for the Northern Bantu borderland linguistic field survey, the findings of which are in course of publication.

In his later years, after editing a series of studies on African religion in *African Ideas of God* (1950), his interest was concentrated again on southern Africa and the epic period of missionary endeavour on which he had built as a young man. He wrote *The Blessed Missionaries* (1950), *The Life and Times of Daniel Lindley* (1950), and *Great Lion of Bechuanaland: The Life and Times of Roger Price* (1957).

The Institute owes a great debt to the forcefulness and simplicity with which, in its early years, Edwin Smith presented, as he put it, 'the need for an application of scientific method to a solution of the questions arising generally from the contact of Western civilization with African culture and particularly from the attempt to educate Africans on modern lines'. One of the last things he wrote was a characteristically appreciative and constructive review for *Africa* of Lord Hailey's revised *Survey of Africa*, which we print in this number.

DARYLL FORDE

RETIREMENT OF THE INSTITUTE'S SECRETARY MRS. B. E. WYATT

MRS. WYATT will retire from the secretaryship of the Institute at the end of March 1958. After assisting Sir Hanns Vischer during the later years of the war to keep the Institute in being, she became its Secretary in April 1945, and has since then been intimately associated with its many activities over a period of considerable development since the war. An expanding and increasingly diversified programme of research and publication has continuously increased the amount and complexity of the secretarial activity to which Mrs. Wyatt has, over the years, applied herself with great energy and adaptability and an enthusiasm with which she has always succeeded in inspiring our small staff. As assistant editor of *Africa* and in her editorial work on the books published by the Institute, she has done far more than 'see the work through the press'. Many whose studies we have published have gladly acknowledged that Mrs. Wyatt has not only relieved them of much of the burden and uncertainty of proof correction, but has kept an eagle eye on grammatical lapses and prolixity, and offered constructive suggestions for improving the presentation. Her practical assistance and sympathetic encouragement will also be gratefully remembered by many holders of Institute fellowships. Her husband, Professor S. H. Hooke, has been invited to join the Department of Divinity in the University College of Ghana for the spring term of 1958, and the officers have, with the approval of the Council, offered her salaried leave from January to enable her to see for herself something of the life of the continent with which she has been so closely connected on the Institute's behalf. Her many personal friends among the members of the Institute, while greatly regretting that she is no longer immediately available to deal with their requests for information and advice, will, in gratitude for all that she has done for them, wish her a most rewarding visit to West Africa and new satisfactions in what will undoubtedly be an active retirement.

DARYLL FORDE