

Notes and News

Research into the Teaching of English in the Gold Coast

THE scheme for research into the teaching and learning of English in the Gold Coast, which owes its origin to Mr. T. Barton, formerly Director of Education of the Gold Coast, comes to an end this year. This research scheme was undertaken by the University College of the Gold Coast for the Ministry of Education (it was then the Education Department). It was conducted by Professor P. Gurrey with a staff of three: Mr. H. J. Andrews as Senior Assistant, Mr. R. R. Okyne and Mr. C. O. Botchway as Research Assistants; the statistical work was checked and completed by Professor C. E. Smith of Manitoba University, who devoted his sabbatical half-year to this work in the Gold Coast. Its object was to assess present standards and attainments in English in schools and colleges, and to make recommendations for improving the teaching and the general standard of English in the Gold Coast.

A number of varied investigations were undertaken. A survey of achievement in vocabulary, grammar, and reading was made in the Colony, in Ashanti, and throughout the Northern Territories; the ability of pupils throughout the Colony to deal adequately with the grammar exercises in their English Course was assessed; the average amount of written English produced in a year was estimated from the exercise books of a large number of schools; a count of the frequency of errors in written English was made by classifying all the errors to be found in hundreds of compositions of both Primary and Secondary school pupils; more than 25 tests of attainment in English were constructed; a reliable and valid test of comprehension in silent reading was produced; a number of non-verbal mental ability tests and other well-known ability tests were tried out; but only one—a non-verbal and unpublished test—was found to be valid.

The most important results of three years' work were achieved in (a) a study of the skills used in reading, and the discovery that one of the most important of them would need special attention; (b) an inquiry into the teaching of written English; (c) the compiling of a list of the chief weaknesses in grammar in written English with their comparative frequency, and (d) establishing that a non-verbal test could be used in African primary schools.

It is hoped that an account of the work and of the results obtained will be available in print next year; some of the more important results will not, of course, be exactly applicable elsewhere; but they are likely to be of value to those working on the same problems, and to those who are concerned with standards of achievement in English.

(communicated by Professor Gurrey)

The African Listener

THE Central African Broadcasting Station (Lusaka) now issues a monthly magazine. The first number (January 1952) in addition to an editorial describing the aims and character of the paper, and broadcast programmes for the following month, contains articles on African music, agriculture, education for women, health talks, notice of an essay competition, and various shorter items. It is illustrated with photographs and costs 3d.

La Maison de la France d'Outre-mer

UN foyer d'accueil offert aux étudiants d'outre-mer venus à Paris pour poursuivre des études supérieures, dont la première pierre a été posée en 1949 par M. Paul Coste-Floret, est

maintenant achevé. Il a été placé sous la direction de M. Gaston, Inspecteur Général de l'Enseignement et de la Jeunesse. Edifiée sur un des meilleurs emplacements de la Cité Universitaire, la Maison de la France d'outre-mer comprend des chambres d'étudiants — 161 à un lit, 42 à deux lits et trois studios réservés à ménages d'étudiants mariés; des salles de travail, un cabinet de lecture, une salle de musique et une salle des fêtes équipée d'une scène. Dans le sous-sol fonctionnent des salles de jeu et un cafetaria. L'administration de la Maison de la France d'outre-mer est soumise aux règles générales appliquées à tous les pavillons de la Cité Universitaire. Chaque maison de la Cité est un centre de vie internationale et un lieu de vie collective. Englobé dans la Cité Universitaire, le pavillon de la France d'outre-mer bénéficiera de tous les avantages qu'accorde la fondation à tous ses résidents.

Equatoria Projects Scheme: Opening Ceremony at Nzara

A SHORT six years ago this place was a dense forest with a narrow red road running through it. Today, the forest has been cleared away and in its place has arisen an industrial town. There is a cotton ginnery, vast spinning and weaving sheds fitted with air conditioning, machinery for crushing cotton seed and extracting the oil, machinery for making soap; there is a power-station and a saw-mill; there are storage sheds and well-fitted workshops for repairs of machinery and mechanical transport; there are water tanks drawing their supply from bores and the nearby river.

Around this industrial centre live the staff who work in it. An attractive park has been laid out and in it the senior staff have their homes. The houses of clerical staff, book-keepers, store-keepers, skilled mechanics, and other artisans are reasonably close to the market, which has a number of well-stocked shops. The unskilled and semi-skilled labourers live close by and around each house they have been given an area in which they or their wives can grow vegetables or other food crops.

Immediately adjacent to the factories is an ample recreation ground which is bordered by a school and a dispensary. Nearby is another large park with buildings near the centre of it. This is a grazing ground and home of a milk herd; a beef herd lives close by. Both of these have to be protected from the tsetse fly and are fed on the by-products of the oil-mill. Dotted about amongst the houses and the parks are small plantations of bananas, pine-apples, oranges, tangerines, grapefruits, with mango-trees all over the place.

The Equatoria Projects Board, or E.P.B. as it is more popularly called, was set up in 1946 and was entrusted with the management of production and trading projects in Zandeland and possibly, later, in other parts of the Southern Sudan. The processing of cotton and its by-products was accepted as the economic backbone of the scheme, as cotton has been grown over a period of years in the area around Maridi and it was known that it could be produced over most of Zandeland. As a result, Nzara sprang up containing the factories required to process the cotton and its by-products. As already mentioned, there is a ginnery to separate the lint from the seed. There is a vast factory, first to spin the lint into thread, and then to weave this into cloth. There are going to be dyeing plants to colour the cloth. The oil-mill crushes the oil-seed and produces the oil, some of which goes to yet another factory to help to produce soap while some is refined for sale to local customers; the oil-cake fattens the cattle which help to feed the workers in the factories. There is a power-station, which is the third largest in the country, to create the power with which the factories are run and to provide electric light. It is interesting to note that this power-station runs mainly on charcoal which is produced close to Nzara, the areas which are cut being replanted with quick-growing trees. Cutting and planting will thus follow each other in the same area on a long-term cycle.

In addition to cotton production the Board runs a small plantation at Sakure, about 30 miles from Nzara, for the production of jaggery or brown sugar. This sugar is relished by