

Notes and News

Professor Enno Littmann

WITH the death, earlier this year at the age of 82, of Professor Enno Littmann, Emeritus Professor of Oriental Languages in the University of Tübingen, the last great representative of that school of Semitic studies which was still able to embrace the entire field of Semitic scholarship has disappeared. In recent years the vast accumulation of new material together with the general movement towards specialization have brought about the fragmentation into areas and languages, on one hand, and subject (linguistics, literary studies, archaeology, anthropology, &c.), on the other. Though Littmann had actively contributed to many diverse spheres of Oriental scholarship (attested by his election to membership of several internationally renowned academies) and his versatility had ranged from Ethiopian inscriptions to a translation of the *Arabian Nights* or from Turkish loanwords in Egyptian Arabic to the metrical origin of the Lord's Prayer, his significance *sub specie aeternitatis* will have to be sought principally in the field of Ethiopian studies. This estimate would have been approved by Littmann himself: from his doctoral dissertation (on the verb in Tigre) to the great Tigre dictionary (now being prepared by his pupil, Professor M. Hoefner; two fascicles have already been published) some of his most important work had been concerned with Ethiopian languages.

He was responsible for editions of Ethiopic texts and poetry; he worked on the traditional pronunciation of classical Ethiopic (Gə'əz); he wrote a history of Ethiopic literature and made contributions to the study of several modern Abyssinian languages. Here it was Tigre (the language of the Northern, Eastern, and Western lowlands of Eritrea) that engaged his attention first and foremost. He was in Eritrea and Northern Ethiopia in 1905-6 as leader of the German Aksum Expedition whose four heavy tomes remain the basis of Ethiopian archaeology and epigraphy. The tales, customs, names, and dirges of the Tigre tribes (Publications of the Princeton Expedition to Abyssinia) represent a truly monumental collection of linguistic and ethnological material. In the preparation and interpretation of this work Littmann had the assistance of a Tigre-speaking informant who stayed in Littmann's house at Strasbourg from 1907 to 1909 and thus contributed to Littmann's great proficiency in handling Tigre—the last fruits of which may now be studied in the, alas partly posthumous, Tigre dictionary.

Littmann's published work exceeds 500 items, but he was not given to writing for the sake of swelling his bibliography. Among the greatest *ethiopicists* of the present century, Guidi, Praetorius, Conti Rossini, Marcel Cohen, and Cerulli, Enno Littmann's name occupies a most honoured place.

[Communicated by EDWARD ULLENDORFF]

The Seventh C.I.A.O. Conference

THE Government of Ghana has invited C.I.A.O. to hold its seventh conference in Accra early in 1959.

The sectional themes of the Conference are as follows:

Section I. Human migrations, ancient and modern, in West Africa.

Section II. Water in relation to population.