

Notes and News

Chairmanship of the Institute

MEMBERS of the Institute will learn with regret of the retirement of Gouverneur Moeller de Laddersous from the chairmanship of the Institute. A short note on Gouverneur Moeller's services to the Institute will be found in the account of the recent meeting of the Executive Council published in this issue. Mr. Arthur H. Smith, Chairman of the United Africa Company, has accepted an invitation to serve as Chairman of the International African Institute.

Honour for Mr. William Fagg

MEMBERS of the Institute will be glad to learn that the honour of Commander of the Order of St. Michael and St. George has been conferred on Mr. William Fagg, Deputy Keeper of Ethnography at the British Museum. Mr. Fagg is widely known to an international public for his many contributions to the study of African art. More recently he was Chairman of the United Kingdom Committee which advised on and facilitated the exhibition of a wide range of examples of African art from former British territories at the First World Festival of Negro Arts at Dakar in April 1966. He also took a leading part in the colloquium on African art held in connexion with this festival.

East Africa and the Orient: Historical Problems of the Pre-Colonial Era

THE conference on this subject announced in the January issue of *Africa* (p. 95) was held from 5 to 9 April at the British Institute of History and Archaeology in East Africa. It was convened by H. Neville Chittick and Robert I. Rotberg and attended by some forty-five scholars from all over the world.

There was a general consensus of opinion that the evidence for Indonesian contacts with East Africa was insufficient to enable any firm conclusions to be drawn regarding the chronology (within comparatively wide limits) of such contacts, or the routes taken by the Indonesians. The Benadir coast, and in particular Shungwaya (Port Durnford), may well have been the most important primary region from which Arabs and 'Shirazis' dispersed to the remainder of the East African littoral. Although there is substantial evidence of commercial contact between the trans-Limpopo and trans-Zambezi areas of the interior and the coast, there is very little material evidence of such contacts between the inter-lacustrine region and other sections of the East African interior and the coast before the eighteenth century.

It was agreed to recommend that: archaeological surveys and excavations in southern Somalia (particularly at the site of Shungwaya), in Moçambique, along the coast of South Arabia, and in south-western Ethiopia should have the highest priority; the influence of the Maldives and Socotra on the history of the Indian Ocean basin deserved investigation; a further study of the genetics and diffusion of food crops—particularly bananas, cotton, and sugar—and domesticated animals would contribute greatly to the understanding of early contacts between East Africa and the remainder of the Indian Ocean basin; since the relevant Arabic and Chinese texts now for the most part exist only in unreliable editions,