

Notes and News

Meeting of Linguistic Specialists, November 1956

AN international meeting of linguists, sponsored by CCTA/CSA, was held in London in November 1956 under the chairmanship of Professor Guthrie of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. Linguists from Belgium, France, the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, Portugal, the Union of South Africa, and the United Kingdom attended, as well as observers from UNESCO and from the East African Institute of Social Research. The main task to which the meeting addressed itself was the implementation of recommendations made by the first Conference of the Inter-African Committee for Social Sciences held at Bukavu in August 1955 (see *Africa*, xxvi. 1, January 1956, pp. 75-76). The meeting accordingly discussed the formation, within the framework of the Inter-African Committee for Social Sciences, of an Inter-African Committee for Linguistics; a draft constitution was prepared and recommended for the approval of CCTA/CSA, in which the functions and membership of the proposed committee were defined; it was recommended that the Committee should meet once a year but that members should keep in close touch with each other in the intervals between meetings. It was further recommended that national and international organizations interested in linguistic research in Africa should be invited to participate in the work of the Committee as observers.

The meeting also recommended the appointment of a Committee for Traditional African Literature and nominated its members—Professor Burssens of Ghent to act as chairman. The aim of this Committee, which is to conduct its activities by correspondence, is to arrange for the publication of a collection of different types of traditional African literature in a French or English translation (in some cases with the original texts), with an introduction and notes where necessary. The recording of oral literature was also considered, and the Committee invited the co-operation of specialists and of those engaged in field work in Africa in assembling information and material.

Other recommendations made by the meeting concerned the reprinting or reproduction of works on African languages (see below, p. 189), the review of existing documentation for African languages (in which reference was made to the comprehensive bibliographical card catalogue in the possession of the International African Institute), and the review of the present state of research in the various fields of African linguistics.

A Pilot Scheme for Nomadic Betterment in the Somaliland Protectorate

UNTIL 1943 there was strong resistance on the part of the Somali to the idea of Government secular education. Now, although in urban and settled communities the demand for secular education is persistent, among the nomads who form the greater part of the population of the Protectorate resistance to secular education is still strong and is sometimes fostered by the local religious leaders (the *Wadads*). A pilot scheme has now been initiated by the Government with a view to providing some basic education for the nomadic peoples and, in particular, giving them some knowledge of the recent history of the Protectorate and of the improvements which the Government is trying to effect. In order to overcome mistrust of the Government's intentions, a small number of *Wadads*, who were already engaged in teaching in Koranic schools, were selected as instructors and given a three months' course of training. The programme consisted of the following: observation of methods of teaching the Koran used in Government schools; attending and devising simple talks on Islam as given to children in Government elementary schools; the teaching of simple arithmetic in