

## Notes and News

### *Institute for Scientific Research in Central Africa*

I.R.S.A.C. (Institut pour la Recherche Scientifique en Afrique Centrale), established on 1 July 1947 at Leopoldville, is a semi-official institution, sponsored by the Government but directed by a Board of twenty-five Councillors. At the beginning of 1948, the new Institute was endowed with 200 million Belgian francs to be used for the erection of buildings and another 200 million to be kept in government bonds. This initial endowment will be supplemented by annual subsidies of 25 million francs.

I.R.S.A.C. is concerned with fundamental study of the tropical environment, human, zoological, and botanical, for which the Belgian Congo, with its wide variety of climate and altitudes and its exceptionally well-developed road system, offers unusually favourable conditions. Its aim is to co-ordinate and assist the various scientific institutions and services operating in the Congo, and in furtherance of this aim, it will offer fellowships and grants to scientists established in the Congo. It will also maintain its own scientific and technical staff and will act as an information centre for visiting scientists, for whom it will provide material assistance, research and travel facilities and space for study in its different centres.

Several research centres will be established in the Congo during the next two years. The main one will probably be on the high plateau between Lake Kivu and Lake Tanganyika, south of Costermansville, where a team is now in the field, searching for a suitable site for a high-altitude astronomical Observatory. This main centre will house a laboratory of vulcanology, seismology, and ionospheric measurements, a department of experimental biology, and a library. Early this year a research centre devoted to hydrobiological studies will be opened at Uvira, on the northern shore of Lake Tanganyika. Another centre for researches on physical and social anthropology will be started before the end of the year at Astrida in Ruanda, east of the Congo. A fourth centre will be established in the Province of Equator, in the low central Forest, and will be devoted to studies on climatology, hydrobiology, anthropology, nutrition, botany, &c.

The Board of Councillors, under the chairmanship of Professor E. De Bruyne, of the University of Ghent, formerly Minister of Colonies in the Belgian Government, is composed of representatives of all branches of science. Most of them are distinguished Belgian scientists, but three are foreigners: Dr. E. B. Worthington, Scientific Adviser to the High Commissioner for East Africa in Nairobi and a distinguished hydrobiologist; Dr. Harlow Shapley, Director of the Harvard College Observatory; Mr. A. Chevalier, Professor at the Musée National d'Histoire Naturelle in Paris and a botanist of world-wide reputation.

The Director of I.R.S.A.C., Dr. Louis van den Berghe, M.D., Sc.D., Professor at the Institute of Tropical Medicine in Antwerp and visiting Professor at the Tulane University of Louisiana, is already established at Costermansville, B.P. 217.

Mr. J. P. Harroy, former Secretary of the Institut des Parcs Nationaux du Congo Belge, is Secretary General of the Administrative services in Brussels, 42 rue Montoyer.

No journal will be maintained by I.R.S.A.C., but a report on general subjects, including abstracts of the papers published elsewhere by the members and guests of I.R.S.A.C., will appear annually and will be distributed widely among scientific institutions; a report on the activities of the Institute during the year 1948 will be available by the middle of 1949.