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SIR HANNS VISCHER

MEMBERS of the Institute will have been grieved to hear of the sudden death of Sir Hanns Vischer—to very many both in Europe and overseas it will have meant the loss of a personal friend. To the Institute his loss cannot be measured in mere words, for he was the embodiment of its spirit and purpose: to promote world-wide co-operation for the welfare and progress of the peoples of Africa.

It was his special role as Secretary-General to maintain liaison with the Continental Powers, the Protestant and Roman Catholic Missions, and other bodies interested in Africa. To their representatives on the Executive Council he translated from or into English the discussions with the Members of the London Committee and the two foreign Directors. By his tact and sincerity and his unbiased and sympathetic appreciation of the national and individual points of view and reactions he gained the confidence and friendship of every Member and established the complete harmony and understanding which always characterized the Council's proceedings.

When war broke out in 1939 and it was no longer possible for the Council to meet, the Institute was compelled temporarily to suspend its activities, but fearing lest it should be submerged he arranged to keep the office open by sharing the accommodation with the confidential war-work on which he was fully engaged. With the assistance of an 'Interim Committee' a quarterly bulletin was published. He was however eager that the Institute should resume its full activities on 1 January 1943, to which, with some reluctance lest it should overtax his strength, I agreed.

As members have already learned from an announcement in an earlier issue of *Africa*, the London office was re-organized, and the work of the Institute developed rapidly under his inspiration and guidance.

Meanwhile, at the suggestion of Professor Rivet (French member of the Executive Council) who has returned to France to resume his position at the Musée de l'Homme, he received and accepted an invitation from M. Giacobbi, Minister for the Colonies, to visit Paris, and was assured by him of his desire for close co-operation. In consultation with Professor Rivet he was able not only to re-establish, but to draw closer our relations with the French Colonies. I am glad to think that he had the satisfaction of having accomplished this last service for the Institute to which he was so intensely devoted.

'Africa', the Journal of the International Institute of African Languages and Cultures, is published by the Institute, but except where otherwise stated the writers of the articles are alone responsible for the opinions expressed.

It is given to few men to achieve so much. His career stands as an example and incentive to every cadet who joins the Civil Service in Nigeria. A colleague in the Colonial Office writes: 'His great work in fostering better relations and understanding between the British and the Africans will be a monument to his memory There is no doubt that what he did has been of great value to the Colonial war effort.' The Belgian Ministry in London add that his death 'is a great loss not only for the International African Institute, but also for the cause of international and inter-colonial co-operation', and many who have been privileged to work closely with him write in terms of personal affection, for, as Sir Reginald Coupland writes, 'He was unusually selfless and understanding and considerate and therefore lovable'.

R. I. P.

26 February 1945

LUGARD, *Chairman*

OBITUARY

C'est avec une vive douleur que nous annonçons aux membres de l'Institut la mort, dans le courant de janvier, du Gouverneur Général Olivier, qui, depuis 1933, rendit de grands services à l'Institut comme membre du Conseil Exécutif. Nous venions de recevoir de lui une lettre dans laquelle il exprimait son très vif plaisir à l'idée de reprendre son travail pour l'Institut.

Avec le décès du Gouverneur Georges Louis Ponton, survenu à la Martinique le 31 décembre 1944, le Gouvernement Français a perdu un administrateur de grande valeur et de promesse et notre Institut un bon ami. Avant d'occuper son poste comme Gouverneur à la Martinique, Monsieur Ponton fut attaché pendant une courte période à l'entourage du Général de Gaulle à Londres. Il venait alors de l'Afrique où il avait rendu de grands services dans l'Afrique Équatoriale Française et à Accra où il avait été Officier de Liaison auprès de Lord Swinton. Pendant son séjour à Londres il assistait souvent à nos réunions et fit preuve du plus grand intérêt pour le travail de notre Institut.

The Journal was in type when we received the news of the death of Lord Lugard on 11 April. He presided at a meeting of the Bureau on 26 March and was taken fatally ill a few days later. We shall write more fully in the July number of the service which he rendered to the Institute.