

interbreeding and the influence of changed conditions of life, owing to the introduction of new styles of dress or in buildings, call for investigation. For the anthropological economist, problems are raised by changes in the methods of production, and by such measures as the wholesale suppression of slavery, which latter on the Assam-Burmese frontier has thrown land out of cultivation. The introduction of mill-spun yarn or machine woven cloth may completely supersede indigenous manufacture, to the great detriment of certain sections of the community. Again, in Assam, the anthropologist will discover that the administration of previously independent tribes has had a deleterious effect. The old conditions of intermittent warfare, raids, and head-hunting involved competition and a hard life, the need for vigilance, resource and quick reactions. Personal efficiency was the primary standard, and wealth secondary. With the prevention of warfare and raiding, wealth comes to stand first and the whole tribe suffers by the change.

The imposition of taxation is another important factor in change, necessitating the use of money,

leading to detribalization and the acceptance of European values. Another difficulty is the belief in witchcraft, which cannot be ignored as a vain superstition, when the people themselves believe in it.

The obstacle in the way of anthropology's contribution to the solution of these and other problems has been in the past largely due to the absence of recognition of the practical value of this science. The end of the Great War, as Rivers prophesied, has brought the duty of meeting old responsibilities in new ways. The feeling is growing in Great Britain that dependencies inhabited by people of primitive culture are held in trust primarily for their inhabitants, and secondarily for the world in general. Those responsible for the administration of such areas have been slow to recognize the value of anthropology in meeting such responsibilities. The Colonial Office, it is true, has now recognized the value of a knowledge of anthropology, and probationers going out do not now go out without at least some knowledge of that science; but politicians and men of affairs are apt to regard learning and theoretical knowledge with consistent distrust.

Forest Products Research

THE report of the Forest Products Research Board for the year 1936 with the report of the Director of Forest Products Research for the same year (H.M. Stationery Office, Dec. 1937) give evidence of the increasing interest being taken in timber research by industry.

The Board states that the period covered by the report has been of special importance to the Board as it includes a survey of the work and policy of the Forest Products Research Laboratory carried out on behalf of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research by a Committee appointed for the purpose. It is of public interest to know that inspections of this nature are held periodically by the Department on the various activities under its control and the Board welcomed the opportunity thereby afforded to review the present position and to adjust future policy. Throughout the year, the Board was in close touch with the Reviewing Committee set up by the Department and the suggestions of the Committee were submitted to the Board for opinion at a meeting held at the Forest Products Laboratory at Princes Risborough in October. The Board's comments were afterwards laid before the Advisory Council for Scientific and Industrial Research.

During the year, more than 2,200 inquiries were dealt with at the Forest Products Research Laboratory—or twice the number dealt with five years ago, a fourth of these being from trade sources, asking for advice and assistance in practical problems connected with the seasoning and bending of wood.

As evidence of the varied nature of the work undertaken at the Laboratory, tests were carried out for British firms in the country on a number of species of foreign timbers, on the strength of a new fire-resisting wall board, on timbers for aircraft, for furniture and on a method of packing crushed bamboo and on the adhesion of plywood and glued

joints generally. Another fourth of the inquiries, the majority from private individuals, related to the attacks on timber by beetles.

An interesting and perhaps unsuspected outcome, as the result of a large number of mechanical tests on selected hardwoods similar in weight, is the determined factor that tropical timbers are generally inferior in resistance to shock (toughness) to those grown in temperate regions. On the other hand, the tropical timbers are appreciably stronger in resistance to compression parallel to the grain. Both these strength properties are fairly closely related to specific gravity or weight per cubic foot and, therefore, indirectly to one another; but statistical analysis shows that toughness and strength in compression parallel to the grain are inversely related. Search has been made, among the newer Empire timbers from tropical Africa and Asia recently appearing on the markets, for substitutes for ash and hickory but none of outstanding toughness have yet been discovered to replace these two well-known timbers.

The report deals with the investigation work carried out on shrinkage problems, box testing, insect and fungus researches, plywood products and test work in connexion with Empire timbers. Several species of the latter are mentioned. It would appear that in some of these cases the work of the Research Laboratory is in advance of the Colonies and their Forest Departments from which the timbers originate. It is of little practical utility to the trade to know that a timber is of value for a particular purpose when the commercially accessible amounts available in the forest are to a great extent unknown; whilst working plans safeguarding the correct exploitation of the forests, as understood in India, have yet to be drawn up for the greater part of the areas under the Colonial Forest Services.