

Les Instruments de Musique de Madagascar

Par Prof. Curt Sachs. (Université de Paris : Travaux et Mémoires de l'Institut d'Ethnologie, 28.) Pp. ix+96+15 plates. (Paris : Institut d'Ethnologie, 1938.) 37.50 francs.

THIS study of the musical instruments of Madagascar by Prof. Sachs, the well-known authority, fills a gap in the study of primitive music, which in itself is not a little remarkable. As the author points out, ethnographical museums and collections of musical instruments are singularly ill-supplied with specimens from this source. The Musée du Trocadero, however, or the Musée de l'Homme, as it is now called, possesses a collection of nearly two hundred examples. Prof. Sachs, accordingly, has prepared a *catalogue raisonné* of the collection, and in order to make his study as complete as possible, has supplemented it with a description of types to be found in other collections, or if not otherwise available, recorded in the literature.

In view of the ethnic composition of the people of Madagascar, in part African, in part of Malayan origin, and keeping in mind its geographical position, which has made it from early times accessible to all the seafaring peoples who traversed the Indian Ocean, it is not surprising to find that the musical instruments are of a varied character and mixed origin—African, Malayan, Indonesian, Arab and European. Nor is it safe to infer that when an instrument has been traced to its place of origin, it has reached Madagascar direct. It may have come, for example, by way of India. Hence it will be seen that the task which Prof. Sachs has set himself of constructing a chronology is by no means simple. One very interesting point which emerges is connexion with the instruments from Malaya. The absence of the Javanese gong and other bell-like Indonesian types leads to the conclusion that the Malayan instruments cannot have been introduced in the island later than the beginning of the Christian era.

Elementary Mathematics for Electrical Engineers

By Sir Ambrose Fleming. Pp. 110. (London : George Newnes, Ltd., 1938.) 5s. net.

THIS handbook of mathematics is designed to provide the engineering student with just those practical parts of the subject which are of the greatest importance to him. The subject-matter, arranged in ten sections, ranges from simple to differential equations ; from the elements of trigonometry to hyperbolic functions and from plane co-ordinate geometry to vector algebra and harmonic analysis. There is a commendable continuity in the treatment of such a variety of topics, the connecting link being naturally the calculus, which is the foundation of engineering calculations.

The section on quadratic equations may prove somewhat confusing as an x is missing in several places on p. 16, and in the following paragraph, the condition for *one* real root is explained after the existence of *two* roots has been well illustrated.

There are few exercises for the student, but many of the basic principles are well applied to some

interesting and really practical problems. Some useful tables are given at the end by the use of which numerical calculations may be facilitated. The engineering student should find this a very useful book, in spite of its brevity, and, if he makes himself thoroughly acquainted with its contents, he will be able, as the author hopes, to continue his mathematical studies from more advanced works on mathematics.

The League from Year to Year (1937)

Pp. 246. (Geneva : Information Section, League of Nations ; London : George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1938.) 1s.

UNDER the title "The League from Year to Year (1937)" the Information Section of the League of Nations Secretariat has issued its annual survey of the League's activities in 1937. This volume of 246 pages gives a clear and concise review of all the main activities of the year in sufficient detail to emphasize the value and significance of the technical co-operation which is being maintained in spite of the deterioration in the international political situation.

Scientific workers should find in the volume much material to facilitate the study of technical questions in which they are specially interested. The chapter on communications and transit, for example, refers to action taken in relation to oil pollution at sea and in regard to road transport. A separate chapter is devoted to nutrition, while the chapters on the Health Organization and on intellectual co-operation indicate very clearly the significant contribution to human welfare that is being made in those fields.

Other chapters deal with mandates, the Permanent Court of International Justice, economic and financial work, the protection of minorities, opium, social questions, etc. ; a detailed chronological table of the chief events of the year so far as the League is concerned is also included.

Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics, Canberra

Official Year Book of the Commonwealth of Australia. No. 30, 1937. Prepared by Dr. Roland Wilson. Pp. xxxii+1021. (Canberra : Government Printer, 1938.) 5s.

THE Commonwealth Year Book is always most informative. It contrives, mainly through the medium of statistics, to give a view of Australian life as a whole. It would be difficult to find any important aspect of Australian activity that is omitted from its pages, and where considerations of space demand curtailment of treatment, full reference is given to relevant publications. In many aspects also the statistics are all the more useful since comparable statistics are given for other States.

The book contains a number of maps, including an average annual rainfall map, an air route map, a railway map and a map of artesian basins. The number of artesian and subartesian bores increases only slowly, but on the other hand the area irrigated by surface water has grown in several States. As usual, a long list of books on Australia appears.