

# NATURE

No. 4089 SATURDAY, MARCH 13, 1948 Vol. 161

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Editorial and Publishing Offices

MACMILLAN & CO., LTD.,

ST. MARTIN'S STREET, LONDON, W.C.2.

Telephone Number: Whitehall 8831

Telegrams: Phusis Lesquare London

Advertisements should be addressed to

T. G. Scott & Son, Ltd., Talbot House, 9 Arundel Street, London, W.C.2

Telephone: Temple Bar 1942

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## COLONIAL DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION

THE increasing tempo of development in Colonial territories, and also the urgent need for integrating their economy with that of Europe as a whole, have given added importance to published studies of Colonial administration. A recent one\*, by Mr. Martin Wight, is the first study made of a Colonial legislative council in action, and has political as well as constitutional significance. Mr. Wight attempts to put the legislative council in its place against the life and society of one of the most progressive British dependencies in Africa. Beginning with a factual study of the history and practice of the legislative council over the twenty years from 1925, it affords a valuable introduction to the appraisal of the new constitution of 1946 in which the legislative council became the legislature for Ashanti as well as for the Gold Coast Colony, and was at the same time transformed into a representative legislature in which the official majority has been replaced by an unofficial, elected, African majority.

Mr. Wight comments on the significance of this first introduction of representative government into Africa outside the colonies of white settlement, in the general context of British Colonial government. His book well indicates how this step is in keeping with the spirit that has inspired British Colonial government since Sir James Stephen's days, and should do something to convince Africans that we share with them both the ultimate vision and something of the ardour and urgency which they are bringing to its realization. In seizing on the legislative council, which has long been the growing point of constitutional development in the Colonies, for the starting point of this series, the Colonial Research Committee appointed by Nuffield College could scarcely have demonstrated better the capacity of such research on contemporary political and economic questions to contribute to an understanding of these problems by both the white and the coloured peoples, and to the effective collaboration which is required for their solution.

A second reason for welcoming this survey of Colonial administration is the value of such a conspectus in relation to the latest approach to international co-operation in this field. The survey has its place in rebutting the uninformed criticism which has sometimes come into discussions related to the trusteeship proposals in the United Nations Organisation; but it is even more pertinent in regard to such developments as those on which the Foreign Secretary just touched in his speech in the House of Commons on January 22. Pointing out that the organisation of Western Europe requires economic support, he emphasized that such support involves the closest possible collaboration between the British Commonwealth and overseas territories, French, Dutch, Belgian and Portuguese as well as British. These

\* The Gold Coast Legislative Council. By Martin Wight. (Studies in Colonial Legislatures, Vol. 2: Published under the auspices of Nuffield College.) Pp. 285. (London: Faber and Faber, Ltd., 1947.) 12s. 6d. net.

overseas territories are large primary producers, with a standard of life which is rising and is capable of great development. They have raw materials, food and resources which can be turned to very great common advantage, and Mr. Bevin suggested that to enable Western Europe to achieve its balance of payments and a world equilibrium, it is essential that those resources should be made available and the exchange between them carried out correctly.

Mr. Bevin did not pursue this idea into any detail. He affirmed that there is no conflict between the social and economic development of these overseas territories to the advantage of their people, and their development as a source of supplies for Western Europe as a contributor to the balance of payments. He merely indicated the Government's intention, if the Marshall Plan for American aid to Europe is accepted, to develop economic co-operation between Western European countries step by step, to develop the resources of the territories with which we are associated, and to build up a system of priorities which will yield the quickest, most effective and most lasting results for the whole world; it is also hoped that other countries with dependent territories will do the same in association with us.

Mr. Bevin's vision of the tremendous resources stretching through Europe, the Middle East and Africa, to the Far East, being brought together with the object of making the whole world richer and safer, involves economic and social planning on a bolder and more imaginative scale than the world has yet seen. None the less, the opportunity may well be there, and although this imaginative passage in his speech has largely escaped notice, there is already evidence that the European Powers concerned in Colonial administration are drawing closer together. The Royal Institute of International Affairs has recently published\* a series of papers on Colonial administration read at King's College, London, in November and December 1946. Contributions from French, Dutch, Belgian and Portuguese administrators, side by side with Lord Hailey's review of British Colonial policy, are brought together, not merely to exchange experience and compare methods, but also to lay down general principles which may assist in the re-orientation of both policy and practice to meet the latest developments and the accelerated urge towards independence in the Colonial territories.

M. le Gouverneur H. Laurentie, in his review of recent developments in French Colonial policy, notes that in spite of frequent differences in method, Great Britain and France, inspired by their common belief in the freedom, the dignity and the reason of man, have set themselves the same goal. Dr. A. M. Joekes likewise concludes a very clear and pertinent exposition of developments in the administration of Indonesia with the hope that the assistance given by Britain in clearing up the situation in Indonesia

will be a corner-stone for close and fertile co-operation between Great Britain and the Netherlands in protecting and promoting the well-being of both countries, and Dr. R. Godding's review of principles and methods now being followed in the Belgian Congo is of profound interest for such projects as the East African groundnut scheme. Scientific workers will note with special interest the reference to the National Institute for Agricultural Research in the Belgian Congo, and the emphasis laid on research. The twenty-one research and experimental stations now scattered all over that Colony, covering the various climates, soils and altitudes, have, in fact, something in common with the idea of pilot schemes developed by Dr. E. B. Worthington in his plan for Uganda.

One argument submitted by Dr. Godding in favour of the Belgian method of development is that cultivation of large modern plantations on scientific lines with up-to-date machinery affords much higher yields of produce of better quality, and in consequence a much larger return, to be ploughed back, as it were, in the form of educational, social, medical and material improvements in the native standards of living. Dr. Godding also referred to the formation of an institute of scientific research in the Congo, which would cover such fields as geology, botany, meteorology, sociology and medicine. It was intended to endow this institute with large resources, and it was hoped that it would become a kind of international research station for tropical Africa.

Such developments clearly provide substantial backing for the vigorous defence of Western democratic administration with which Dr. Godding concludes, and he too referred to the inspiration which the Western democracies draw from humanism and Christianity in this task, which, he affirmed, they would perform in a spirit of human solidarity with the coloured races. Dr. José de Almada similarly concluded his survey of Portuguese Colonial administration with the comment that the modern world leaves no room for privilege, economic domination or social injustice, any more than it can tolerate ignorance, disease, malnutrition and extreme poverty.

Lord Hailey's survey was more severely practical, emphasizing first the influences which had gone to form the modern British outlook on the general direction of Colonial policy and the measures taken to give it effect. Here he pointed out that in widening the franchise for the legislatures and extending their legislative powers, we should satisfy ourselves that such institutions are developing so as to secure the interests and confidence of the mass of the people; for this is the real measure of their success. Similarly, in admitting the native peoples to the State services and such administrative institutions as executive councils, there is the difficulty and danger of accepting those of doubtful competence or character. Again, Lord Hailey emphasized that for all the educative influence of the method of indirect rule it has its limitations, and we have not yet succeeded in making it popular with the more educated community or with the middle class or commercial elements.

\* Colonial Administration by European Powers: a Series of Papers read at King's College, London, 14 November to 12 December 1946. By José de Almada, Robert Godding, Lord Hailey, A. M. Joekes and H. Laurentie. Pp. xiii+97. (London and New York: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1947.) 4s. 6d. net.

These are matters to which due attention will doubtless be given at the conference of unofficial members of the African Legislative Councils which is to be held in London later this year. Two things, however, stand out very clearly from this series of papers: first, the general disposition to examine anew the principles which have shaped the Colonial systems of the Western democracies, and to test the adequacy of the existing structure to meet the demands which the future seems likely to make upon it; and, secondly, the large measure of implicit support in the Colonial territories for the ideas of Colonial co-operation which Mr. Bevin ventilated in the most imaginative passage of his recent speech. The chapter on international relations in the Blue Book on "The Colonial Empire, 1939-1947" (Cmd. 7167) indicates how much has already been done to prepare the way, particularly in co-operation with the French and Belgian Governments. In his speech in the House of Commons on July 29, Mr. Creech Jones particularly stressed the three years programme of conferences in technical matters between these three Governments in Africa which had already been agreed, and his words are strikingly similar to those of Mr. Bevin in regard to the larger issue of Colonial development and European needs.

Scarcely less significant, however, is the emphasis placed by Mr. Creech Jones in this speech, in the Blue Book, and also in the papers just noted, on the importance of the contribution which the scientific worker himself must make in such developments. References to research in the Blue Book and also in Mr. Creech Jones' speech show how ready should be the response of the British Government to the lead which, as Dr. Godding showed, the Belgian Government has given in certain fields. Problems of Colonial welfare and development, in their scientific aspect, were considered by several sections of the British Association at its meeting in Dundee last year, while elsewhere current discussions on game slaughter in Africa in connexion with the control of tsetse fly and trypanosomiasis have emphasized the need for proper research, to which adequate finance is the key, in yet another field, and in particular the linking of research with authoritative administrative co-operation.

There are, indeed, many reasons why scientific men should take an increasing interest in Colonial affairs generally. For the solution of a wide range of Colonial problems their co-operation is essential, and frequently those same problems are linked to scientific problems of fundamental importance. Further, as citizens, they cannot be indifferent to the wider implications, in the material and economic field, and in the greater task of building those Colonial and international institutions which may best serve the highest cultural and moral needs of men. In seeking thus to provide the means of safeguarding both human welfare in its physical and material sense, and the great heritage of freedom and creative achievement which Western civilization has given to the world, we shall simultaneously further the nurture and advance of science itself.

## EARLY ENGLISH NATURALISTS

### English Naturalists from Neckam to Ray

A Study of the Making of the Modern World. By the Rev. Charles E. Raven. Pp. x+379. (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1947.) 30s. net.

DR. C. E. RAVEN has followed up his remarkable work on John Ray by another, equally learned, on the early English naturalists. His purpose in the latter "began as a series of biographies. But very soon it became clear that the succession of 'lives' not only formed a very definite pattern, but that this illustrated and illuminated the progressive change in Western civilization from the medieval to the modern world." Again, "in Man's attitude to living nature the process of a gradual overcoming of superstition and fabulous tradition, and the development of the modern scientific spirit as a result, is significant and may be followed from man to man. . . . Little by little nonsense was recognized, fables were exploded, superstitions were unmasked; and the world outlook built up out of these elements fell to pieces." The thesis is not a new one, nor is it one that admits of serious dispute, but Dr. Raven has brought to bear upon it a wealth of new matter, the result of prolonged and detailed critical research. These notable additions to our knowledge have been exhumed often from little-known and unpromising sources, and they enrich and distinguish the author's bio-biographies of such naturalists as William Turner, John Caius, Thomas Penny, Thomas Mouffet, John Gerard, Edward Topsell, John Parkinson and Thomas Johnson. Dr. Raven's method, however, has one drawback. It complicates what is known as documentation, and a text frequently halted by the intercalation of bibliographical detail is apt to be tedious to follow. It is better to preserve the flow of the narrative even if it involves some sacrifice of meticulousness. In a future edition we hope to see the author's sources collected and printed in alphabetical order at the end of the text. But however this may be, historians of biology must welcome so scholarly an addition to their studies and literature.

The history and emergence of the modern outlook on science has been to many workers an attractive and fruitful field of research. The preceding or medieval period, based as it was on scholasticism, symbolism and the ingenuous acceptance of attractive but flagrant fables, was not only incapable of producing an integrated body of science, but would have been even hostile to it. As Dr. Raven remarks, the contest between an untenable tradition and the induction of the men who loved and lived by the world of plants and animals unhappily resulted in giving "for a time to the ancient writings an authority, indeed an infallibility, very damaging to progress. So long as Aristotle and Galen, or for that matter Genesis and the Apocalypse, were accepted and imposed as inerrant, it was difficult to encourage the investigation of the facts with which any real advance must begin. This delayed, though it could not prevent, the coming of the new outlook." Such is Dr. Raven's theme, and his scrutiny of the works of the early naturalists provides us with a convincing and orderly exposition of it. His most successful biography is that of William Turner, but much new light is thrown upon the works of Penny, Mouffet, Parkinson and Merrett. The book learning of Wotton, the author of a beautifully printed zoological treatise dated 1552, is rescued from undeserved obscurity, but Gerard's "Herbal" is severely, if justly, handled. Dr.