

Notes and News

Africa—Lowdermilk Project

IN view of the very serious situation resulting from the deterioration and destruction of land in Africa, largely owing to unskilful use of natural resources by native cultivators, the Agricultural Missions, Inc., of New York, in co-operation with the Secretary of State for Colonies in H.M. Government, and with British and American Missionary Societies in Africa, has arranged to make available for study and consultation the services of Dr. Walter C. Lowdermilk. Dr. Lowdermilk possesses exceptional qualifications in the fields of forestry and land use and conservation and has had wide experience in the U.S. Soil Conservation Service (of which he was Assistant Chief from 1933-47) and in the U.S. Department of Agriculture. He has also acted as consultant for the French Government in North Africa and as adviser on soil conservation to the Chinese Government.

Dr. Lowdermilk is now in Africa and is proposing to visit Sierra Leone, Gold Coast, Nigeria, Northern Rhodesia, Southern Rhodesia, and Nyasaland. He will consult with all those concerned, both official and unofficial bodies, as to methods of promoting, on the part of the African, an increased sense of responsibility for the wise use of his land; he will also be available, as may be requested, to Government agencies in a technical capacity, to carry out field studies, conferences, meetings for Africans, and such other activities as may be required in the different areas concerned.

Gift for Natal University

AN anonymous European donor has offered £100,000 to endow a chair of African (Bantu) studies at the University of Natal, to establish a library and museum, and provide for their maintenance. The offer, which is subject to certain conditions regarding a grant of land by the Durban municipality, will enable the University to plan the establishment of a major school or institute of African studies.

East Africa Inter-territorial Languages (Swahili) Committee

THE Committee's report on its activities for 1948 describes the reorganization consequent on its transfer to the authority of the East Africa High Commission. The Committee has been reduced from twenty-two to nine members, and will in future consist of persons expert in Swahili and kindred Bantu languages; it will act as the sole authority for Swahili for the purposes of literary publication. The staff of full-time readers at head-office has been increased and an additional reader has been appointed in England, to facilitate speedy production. Work has continued on the revision of the new standard Swahili-English and English-Swahili dictionaries, and on the production of an abridged edition. The organization of the Swahili Essay Competition and the Authorship Competition has been handed over to the East African Literature Bureau, but the adjudication of awards is still vested in the Committee. Satisfaction is recorded at the improvement in the general standard reached in the Essay competition. Contacts have been made with those interested in the co-ordination of Swahili outside the East African dependencies, for example in the Belgian Congo.

Sound Recording of African Languages

A LINGUISTIC project on a large scale is in preparation under the direction of IFAN Cameroun, with the assistance of the Office de la Recherche Scientifique Outre-mer and