

The effect on family life is most serious. The absent father soon ceases to send money home, and his wife has to fall back on her own resources—beer-brewing and prostitution—to obtain necessities such as medicine for her children, while it becomes a point of honour to pay her hut tax and so show that she is not deserted. The break-down of native rules of sexual morality, the increase of divorce, the practice of deserting a wife but returning when her adultery gives a claim for damages, are developments with which the student of African sociology is familiar. It is interesting that the experiences of the emigrants in labour centres are not found to have led to an increase of crime on their return.

The Commission proposes the introduction of a recruiting system under strict supervision, coupled with a rigid quota system based on the percentages recommended by the Congo Labour Commission but covering both conventioned and uncontracted labour, and the institution of a Labour Department responsible for its enforcement; a change from the present hut and poll tax to a graduated tax on males only; the encouragement of cotton cultivation, of European tobacco plantations, and of prospecting. It is proposed that revenues received from other territories as the result of Labour Agreements to be concluded should be paid into a Native Trust Fund for agricultural and medical services and for the repatriation of unemployed natives or others who have difficulty in returning home.

Meanwhile the native labourer in the Union is becoming as protectionist as the European. In an article in the *South African Journal of Economics* Miss Sheila van der Horst shows that the cumulative restrictions on all other forms of employment for natives have created a glut of labour in mining and agriculture, the only occupations left open to them. Yet the mines continue to recruit labour from farther and farther north. The result is described by a Departmental Committee on labour in the Native Territories as 'an outcry . . . to the effect that the mines were neglecting the Union labour supply'. One remedy proposed is that the mines should recruit 'semi-fit' labour from the Union for work 'where conditions are favourable' rather than healthy foreign labour; another that preference should be given to mine rejects in employment on public works in the Native Territories. (*Communicated by* DR. L. P. MAIR.)

### *Orthography of Dagomba (Dagbane).*

Some little time ago a meeting took place to discuss the question of a practical orthography for the Dagomba language. Professor Westermann, Mr. H. A. Blair, and Dr. E. L. Rapp (Basel Mission) were present, and complete agreement was reached as to the way in which the language should be written.

Previous studies on Dagomba have been published by Dr. R. Fisch of the Basel Mission and by I. A. S. Okraku, an African. They have each written

a grammatical outline of the language and Dr. Fisch has also edited valuable texts. The latest contribution is a part-translation of *Peep of Day*, by Rev. Shirer of Yendi. This is of particular value because of its admirable phonetic accuracy, which will be appreciated by students of the language. Some of the phonetic distinctions observed can, however, be dispensed with in a practical script.

In the discussion the following principles were adopted: (a) to follow the suggestions laid down in the Institute Memorandum on Orthography, (b) to adapt the script closely to that of Fante and Twi, and (c) to make it simple.

Five 'new letters' are required, viz. *f*, *y*, *g*, *ε*, and *o*. Possibly *y* may be replaced by *g* since it occurs only in certain positions; experience will show whether this is feasible. It was agreed that *o* should not be used, although the sound expressed by this letter does occur, but that *e* should take its place. The language has, like Fante and Twi, two *i* and *u* sounds, both close and open. The open form of *i* and *u* will be written *e* and *o*, as is done in Fante and Twi. Following the method recently introduced in Twi it was suggested that nasal marks should not be used. Nasalized vowels are not frequent, and their distinction is of much less importance than in Twi or Fante.

It is hoped that the agreement reached will be a useful starting-point for a vernacular literature in this leading language of the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast. The vocabulary and grammatical outline which Mr. Blair proposes to publish will provide an illustration of the new script. The orthography as outlined above has also been adopted for Nzima, which means that all the written languages of the Gold Coast now use the same script. (*Communicated by* DR. E. L. RAPP.)

*Problems of Orthography in the Congo Belge—'De "Africa"-Spelling ende Kongoleesche Talen.'*

This article (28 pp.) by A. Burssens and G. van Bulck, S.J., which appeared in *Kongo Overzee* II, 2, December 1935, is actually a short phonetic manual applying the principles set out in the Institute's Memorandum on Orthography to the main Congo languages and follows on a previous article published in June of last year.

The writers review the conditions under which Congo languages have been written, when almost every mission and individual writer devised their own particular spelling for service and school books. In this way, for closely related languages, different letters have been used for the same sound, and one letter for different sounds, with the result that whoever has to deal with more than one language, whether he be native or European, is constantly in uncertainty as to the sound values of the letters. In those books where there is a clear indication of the values of the letters used, the difficulty is