AN EXPERIMENTAL SCHOOL IN NIGERIA

A. FIELDING CLARKE

IN July, 1938, *Oversea Education* published an article by H. R. Phillips on "A Rural Training Centre in Nigeria." This Elementary Training Centre, Toro, was opened in 1929 for the purpose of training teachers for vernacular elementary schools among non-Moslem, or Pagan, tribes, and selected as its first pupils young men with no previous schooling, for a course lasting four years, including an elementary course in the usual school subjects, a craft and agriculture course, and a final re-orientation from *statu pupillari* to that of teacher.

The writer saw something of Toro in 1935, at a period when it was possible to review about twenty of the first teachers which it trained, and to realise the uphill work it must have been for such men, cut off from the steady, familiar influences and friendships of the past four years, posted in several cases at a distance of three hundred miles from the supervising Superintendent, and with none of the recognised sanctions and ideals before them. Such criticisms as follow applied four years ago, but would certainly not apply now, and are quoted very briefly to show their constructive value.

In visits of two or three days duration one was able to form a fairly just estimate of what the teacher had achieved, while the school register helped one to realise whether the teacher had much influence in the community, as much as whether the community were school-minded or not. A very great deal of the political implications one did not expect to understand at the first visits, though any positive achievements were to a large extent self-evident. Much must have escaped notice, on both sides of the balance sheet. One error is remembered very clearly. The teacher had made considerable progress with arithmetic, and the boys' books were full of money sums. A puzzled half-hour at the end of a tiring day was spent before one learnt from him that he was

convinced that there were seventeen pence in a shilling, and had taught his pupils so. It was not until some weeks later that it was suspected that he had been cornering the local supply of pennies at that rate, and changing them later at a substantial profit to himself.

Four things at least emerged from these inspections. Firstly, the period of re-orientation was insufficient. This was met by a greater attention to professional training in the final year, and by extending the plans for short refresher courses to a full year of post-graduate work for every Toro-trained teacher, after one or two years of experience in the field.[1]

Secondly, the technique of teaching, as demonstrated at Toro, and ultimately imitated in the field, was more suited to older children than to those who actually filled the elementary schools.

Thirdly, the value of the teacher to the community and to the school respectively was not sufficiently well defined. His responsibility began and ended in formal class instruction, and, since the schools were strictly non-vocational, and bound to remain so with the prevailing age-limits, it was legitimate to ask what the schools were for. Their chief value, undoubtedly, was breaking the ground for whatever was to follow, and a further justification for them was that from them further entrants to the training centre could be drawn. One of the reasons for the teacher's apparent detachment from the community, an isolation where there should have been a strong positive influence, was that his wife, although she had accompanied her husband in most cases, and remained at Toro throughout his period of training, had not herself received any direct teaching which would have made her an asset to the community to which she now returned.

Fourthly, such teachers were capable of teaching pupils ranging in age from eight to fifteen years, for at most two

[1] Compare cadet system created by the Commonwealth Government of Australia in the mandated territories, "Administration of Native Races," by J. R. Halligan, in *Oceania*, Vol. LX, No. 3, March 1939 (Australian National Research Council).

years . . . that is, for the first two stages of elementary education (or schooling). After that, the teacher had taught all he knew, and the pupils returned, if they had stayed so long, to their normal avocations. They had a superficial skill in the three R's, for which their life in a primitive rural community had no need, and these tools or equipment were bound to rust from disuse, giving no justification for saying that their two years at school had prepared them for either life or leisure. In the actual everyday life of the people there is no need for reading and writing,[1] and in West Africa, as in other parts of Africa, the spread of literacy has far outrun the supply of books in the vernacular.[2] In this case the few books available were in a lingua franca, and had considerably less interest for the Pagan tribes than for the Hausa, for whom they were written.

The routine work of a Superintendent of Education, and his long rounds of inspection, allow little time for following up the results of such *schooling*—which in any case is essentially a job for the teacher himself. In the United States a teacher of vocational agriculture locates on a wall map the position of the home-farm of every boy in the class, together with similar visual records of prevalent crops, principal individual enterprises, soil types, eroded areas, etc. In addition he keeps a card index record of the background and activities of every student who enrols, which is discontinued only if he leaves the community, or takes up other work than agriculture.

The writer's conception was an Experimental School, to be financed by the Native Administration of a small tribe, the Birom, in an endeavour to put some further meaning into school work. This article proposes to describe the aim in view, and such details as can be remembered of the first year's work (while the writer was still in Nigerian Service), and it is hoped that there will be a further article on what is actually being done now at Riyom—how far those aims have been achieved (especially with regard to the part Riyom plays

[1] *The Education of a South African Tribe*, Dr. P. A. W. Cook (Juta & Co., Cape Town, 1934).
[2] R. M. East in *Nigeria*, Vol. 1, No. 4, 1935.

in the Tribal Community) and what modifications and improvements have been made.

The aim was to limit the experiment to one tribe, the Birom, of whom some 40,000 live in the tin-mining area opened up shortly before 1904, in which year the Alexander-Gosling Expedition passed through what is now the Plateau Province on its way to Chad and the Nile. These people have been considerably circumscribed by a civilisation from which they have acquired neither culture, custom, nor skill. At one time they smelted their iron for weapons and tools, and there is little doubt that their land had fine tracts of forest, especially such trees as Atili, the wild plum, which grows to an enormous size, and a large mahogany. They are still primarily farmers, and in addition work intermittently in the nearest tin mines, or work an area themselves as "tributers." They keep small ponies and untethered goats, and live in small villages, usually approached through a maze of tall cactus hedges, meeting overhead, and presumably planted to discourage surprise attacks.[1]

This part of the Plateau resembles Salisbury Plain, and is over 4,000 feet above sea-level. The principal crop is a dwarf millet. The land is subjected to heavy erosion, which is in part hastened by the continual roaming of large herds of Fulani cattle, for which in the dry season the alien herdsmen fire the grass, to obtain the harsh new growth which appears among the ashes. In many parts the subsoil has been brought to the surface by mining operations, and at the time of which this is written, afforestation was limited to very few areas, and was not in the programme of Community Development, as it is to-day. Drought or locusts periodically cause an acute shortage of food. The villages are far apart, and cultivable land is so scattered, and produces such a poor return, that cultivation involves a trek of several miles daily from home to farm.

The villages of the Birom are extremely dirty; their

[1] See C. G. Ames, *Gazetteer of the Plateau Province* (S.I.M. Press, Jos, Nigeria).

sanitary habits are direct, and pursued in full view of passers by. To them a public convenience is primarily public. Goats and chickens share their sleeping huts, and jiggers are so bad that the writer and his servants invariably suffered from them after every visit.

Before the new schools opened, each with the teacher from Toro, there already existed Mission Stations of the Sudan United Mission, at one of which, Vwang, there is a large Mission Hospital and a Leper Camp, and not far away is the headquarters of the Veterinary Department, at Kaduna Vom.

The three Native Administration Schools were at Hei Pwang, Rim and Gyel. Gyel had two teachers, and had made better progress than the other two. Rim slowly dwindled until there were only five pupils, and Hei Pwang was, in almost every particular, an example of what a school should not be. The superintendent had at that time a ramifying beat, extending over two provinces, on which there were two diagonal runs of four hundred miles, and besides some forty schools in his direct charge, there were seven hundred English-speaking pupils in one town alone, three training centres, about ninety Mission schools, a Middle school for Moslems and a Government school.

The chances of following up the pupils were very remote: mostly they left school after two years or less, to be seen no more.[1] But meanwhile the Birom were about to undergo an administrative re-organisation, and progress was in the air. Literates were badly needed, to fill minor parts of all kinds in the Native Administration. The three schools needed drastic overhauling, and they needed an aim.

A plan was made[2] and adhered to for the first two years, to

[1] Elementary non-vocational training without "follow-up" has been likened to the Indian rope trick; the boy climbs up to the top and disappears.

[2] A short account of the school at Riyom was published in *Nigeria*, No. 7, July 1937. It contains illustrations of the school, and concludes with this passage: "Without such links with lower elementary schooling it is difficult to see how (without continuous supervision at headquarters) suitable pupils can be selected for training as teachers, or other service to the community, short of establishing a number of full-time elementary schools, giving an erroneous bias towards bookwork. Locally this school has already proved its worth, and it remains to be seen whether similar link schools can be established in other parts of a province of unusual interest and great potentialities."

commence " post elementary " *schooling* for the pupils leaving these schools, so that they should continue to practice reading, writing, and arithmetic, and in addition learn some of the crafts in which the Birom were so deficient. Above all, it was hoped to introduce mixed farming, which was practised at the parent Toro, but had not been considered suitable for introduction into an elementary school curriculum, nor brought into the community by the teachers. There are still many schools in that part of Nigeria, and in many other parts too, which aim no further than these schools did, and in which many pupils spend as much as seven years of intermittent attendance, while barely reaching the standard of an Elementary Form 2. It was decided to break away from the traditional time-table and curriculum,[1] and under the guise of vocational training, teach certain skills in the way that other skills can be taught, seasonally. Elsewhere such sports as cricket and fishing are kept alive and improved by intermittent seasonal practice, and the training of the Territorial Army gives a high pitch of technical efficiency by intermittent training, in periods of short duration. There seemed no reason why, in its later stages, school work should not be run successfully on similar lines, leaving plenty of time for the boys to grow up in the natural environment of the home and the community. While at home, such boys might help by establishing reading circles in each of the various villages from which they came. The lingua franca difficulty comes in here, but Hausa is understood by nearly everyone, and where health propaganda is concerned, it would be better to use such a language, which is also spoken by all European technical and administrative officers (A. T. and G. M. Culwick, *Oversea Education*, April 1938). There was no need, as there is in England, to think of keeping the pupil off the streets, by lengthening the term's work. The

[1] " In the early stages of the educational movement . . . it would be essential to have a few very well trained teachers to whom great liberty would be given in the matter of curriculum, for their function would be to demonstrate as clearly and as spectacularly as possible the utility of the school and to engender in the people a belief in education." Dr. P. A. W. Cook, *op. cit.*

longer he could be spared from school the better for his future, especially if he turned out to be " unemployable."

The pupils would be offered the chance of attending a central boarding school, to be set up within 25 miles of the Superintendent's headquarters, at the spiritual centre of the tribe. This centre was intended to develop into a Community Centre, and to be essentially devoted to service for the tribe. Formal school work was to be limited to 1½ hours a day in each of three terms a year, of one month's duration each. A shortening of school hours would not find favour, or be practicable, under different conditions, or where educational traditions were strongly established. It would probably be an unpopular innovation in the British West Indies, especially when combined with a bias towards crafts, and in Malaya there is a tendency to increase school hours.[1] The rest of the day was to be spent in a variety of crafts, in farming, preparing food, and in gardening. A pupil would be encouraged to continue attending for some years, during which a dossier would be made of his progress, and a suitable career as Scribe, Forest Guard, Teacher or Farm Demonstrator chosen for him. " It is not generally realised how careful are the records now kept in most schools of the mental calibre and scholastic attainment of our boys and girls. They are often supplemented by records of character and of medical history. In most districts a sufficiently wide scope is given to the records to enable a rough assessment of personality which is often more important to the employer than academic success."[2] Each pupil would " ripen " at his own speed, and even if he proved unsuitable for such posts, he would have done nothing but gain from the experience of the mixed programme arranged for him. The terms would be so arranged as to allow pupils to spend nine months in the year at home, to attend all the regular feasts, and to be at home during the important periods of the farmer's year . . . namely, harvest, sowing, and weeding.

[1] A Report on Vocational Education in Malaya (Straits Settlements, No. 64, 1938).

[2] *The Child in the Educational System*, by E. S. Woodhead, Director of Education for the City of Norwich.

Most of the pupils would be drawn from a radius of twenty-five miles, and it was hoped to restrict entrance to members of the Birom tribe.

The farm would only be required to provide food for the boarders, for the three months (or slightly more) of their attendance. Thus the actual area under food cultivation would not be very great, and so the schooling and other crafts would not be subordinated to farm labour. With the introduction of oxen for ploughing, and the conservation of manure by keeping them in a covered stall, coupled with the introduction of a more greedy crop, giving a bigger yield per acre, it was expected that a surplus would be grown, and the disposal of this surplus corn would be decided upon by the tribe itself.

If, later, the Agricultural Department wished to start mixed farming in the tribal area, Riyom would be able to supply several recruits, who could be given further training. At the same time it was hoped that, at least for some years, Riyom would confine itself to service to the Birom Tribe, rather than dissipate its potentialities by admitting pupils from other tribes. It would in fact be part of a Tribal Community Centre. Claud F. Strickland, reviewing F. L. Brayne's "Better Villages" (O.U.P. Madras) in *The Bulletin*, says: "It is evident . . . that agriculture and co-operation, health, and education, are in a peasant community so intertwined and mutually dependent that the whole process of "rural reconstruction" is one of adult education: . . . in a wider sense of general enlightment and encouragement by every available means. . . ."

An outlined rationale of the plan was submitted to the Resident and District Officer, and the approval of the Director of Education for this departure from normal routine was sought and obtained. It was discussed with the Teacher-designate and with the elders of the tribe, and the provision for the carrying it out was included, by special permission, in the already compiled Native Administration estimates. The actual sum involved was extremely small (about £20) since much of the equipment was from Rim School (already

closed) and the food, in early stages, cost £5 per mensem for twenty-two boys. The teacher's salary was already included in estimates.

The best of the four Birom teachers, all Toro trained, was a man called Rwang Pam, who bore the nickname " Sanda," or " Stick." This name probably was complimentary; it could only have meant " something to lean on," for irritability would have earned the name " whip." Sanda was chosen for the post of Headmaster, and most ably and loyally did he interpret the basic idea. At first he was also scribe to the monthly tribal gathering of seventy Birom chiefs. In the writer's time his salary was at first 25/- per mensem and this was later raised to 30/- per mensem.

Twenty-two ex-pupils presented themselves, were billetted out in the village,[1] and started building the school, teacher's huts, store rooms, etc., and renewing acquaintance with their lesson books in the lingua franca, Hausa. The most advanced were able to help the younger boys, who worked more slowly.

The first term was held in the dry season, when building was possible, and to give time to make plans before the important claims of farming became insistent. On the second day the whole school turned out to build a temporary dam across the stream bed which lay in a gorge, widening out as it left the village. The miserable trickle of water soon formed a long, curving bathing pool, about four feet deep—to the delighted astonishment of the village and the pupils. Where the dam joined the bank below the school, a little flood gate was improvised out of materials found on the spot, and a rapidly flowing leat of water was drawn off to irrigate first a series of gardens on the alluvial soil of the wet-season bed, and thence round the shoulder of a hill to a cassava farm, then an experimental rice farm, and so back to the main stream. Along its course were planted 120 Canary banana suckers, warranted to thrive at such an altitude, and hastily seized

[1] In the second term they constructed dormitory huts, and buildings of some kind were under construction throughout the first two years.

from private gardens in Jos, where the Sanitary Authorities had condemned them.

While the acquisitive mood lasted, it was decided to buy a fairly sound 30 cwt. lorry, the engine of which had long been coveted for the Government School. It cost two pounds, and after selling the body and part of the chassis for 15/- one was left with five wheels, with tyres in very good condition, and all the necessary axle parts to build an ox-cart. There was a limit to the number of journeys and the time which could be devoted to the fifty mile journey, or far more bananas could have been taken, but a similar number of sisal plants were salvaged from the same source, and experiments were started to find out how to make rope from them, since sisal rope was unknown in that part of Africa.[1]

A motor track was made, leading from the nearest road; two forges were constructed by one of the few remaining native blacksmiths and a weaver was brought out to set up four looms (costing 1/3 each) and to teach weaving. Spinning was considered too lengthy an operation for the short time to be spared, so white and scarlet machine-made cotton thread was bought for the warp, and white handspun native cotton for the woof. Within twenty-four hours four boys were learning to weave, and two others were making the parts for another loom, native gadgets for winding the shuttle-spools, and so forth. The weaver was a cheery and industrious rogue, born in the Southern Provinces; he was a master weaver in Jos, and so was expensive to employ. He had to be decoyed out and "jollied" into remaining, and after he left several things were missing. However, he was the best weaver for several hundred miles, and with a white man in the offing he taught very well.

[1] Margaret Trowell published an article, "Suggestions for the Treatment of Handwork in the Training of African Teachers for work in Africa" in *Oversea Education*, Vol. 7, January 1936. Her book, *African Arts and Crafts* (Longmans, 1937), is most stimulating, but was not then available. In a school of this kind, there was always something urgently needed which had to be made on the spot. The writer's difficulty was rather a shortage of specific materials, or immediately available substitutes, rather than a dearth of ideas.

From this cloth a number of "jumpers," loin-cloths and bandages were made. The clothing had a ready sale, and was considered to be worth more than the garments made up of cheap foreign cloth and sold in the nearest markets.

Perhaps a better way of experimenting with crafts and mixed farming than the "one step ahead" method, with trial and error, would have been a project method. This raises a number of points. To begin with, the success of Riyom, which is still carrying on, in spite of five changes of Superintendent since its inception, is because there is no resident European. All the responsibility for organisation falls on the native teacher, who happens to be more than adequate to bear it. His own education is still continuing, and he is continually going forward under his own steam, laying most of the track, and bridging or circumventing the difficulties which continually arise. [The Malangali experiment,[1] on the other hand, was, from the start, based on the fundamental idea of Tribal Control, was far wider in scope, but appears to have been dependent on continuity of resident European supervision. Thus, although in plan the school developed naturally, and according to the wishes of the tribe, the force of a strong European personality was behind it all the time, keeping it wound up.] The growing of cotton, and the final making up into cloth, would provide a project covering several, if not all, school subjects and several crafts. In a large school with traditional terms of longer duration, the project method by being systematic is more easily organised than any other (assuming a real desire to relate all activities to each other and to life). In a small school such as Riyom, all the activities, in the case of cotton, were actually taking place, the plots measured, and the cotton weighed with home-made scales and weights. But the activities were loosely and intermittently related; the boys who sowed the cotton might never handle it again, and no special effort was made to ensure that the use of cotton in other countries, its

[1] "Malangali School," by W. Bryant Mumford, *Africa*, Vol. III, No. 3, July 1939.

export to England, the innumerable by-products from cotton-seed, etc., were brought into the picture.

One of the reasons that would have prevented a successful project at Riyom, namely, the shortness of the term, presented a difficulty which struck at the roots of the whole plan. How was the farm to be kept going, and the oxen, which were acquired while the farm was still being worked by hand, properly looked after, if the pupils were to be away for a total of eight or nine months of the year? This was solved by calling upon the community to provide a cattle-herd and a party of boys. The herdsman was given a brief training at Vom, managing the actual pair of oxen which the school was to purchase. The boys were formed into an elementary class, and during the first year did an incredible amount of work, insisting on overlapping with the boarders of the main school. These boys, fourteen in number, and aged from eight to thirteen, made 2,000 bricks[1] for the cattle stalls (used in rotation by the oxen, which were partly stall-fed), weeded the farm, learned to read, write, and count, and grew a number of experimental crops, such as tomatoes, pumpkins, flax, upland wheat, English cereals, and ginger.

The Forestry Officer issued seedlings to the schools of this tribe, and each boy was put in charge of one seedling. During the dry season this entailed a great deal of work, and their protection from goats was no light matter. He was so pleased with the results that he asked for two of the Riyom boys, and their selection was left to the teacher. The boys so chosen accepted and they worked under the Forestry Officer's direction,[2] in the Forestry Reservation, for about a month, and then returned, as Forest Guards, to establish and care for a Nursery at Riyom. From this Nursery a steady supply

[1] A reserve stock of sun-dried bricks can be used for outdoor building at any time except during the wettest month of the wet season. It is essential to remember to store them under cover some time before the first rains are expected.

[2] All Africans are now going to "school," in the sense that they are being subjected to a never-ending education process in their contacts with missionaries, officials, traders, etc. See Dr. T. Walter Wallbank, "Britain's Colonial Policy and Native Education in Kenya," *Journal of Negro Education*, October 1938 (condensed in *The Colonial Review*, No. 1, February 1939).

of young trees, some of known viability and some for trial, were to be issued to villages throughout the area. The boys have kept up their reading sufficiently to be able to act on written instructions, and were able to write short reports.

The strikingly clean appearance of all boys connected with the school, though largely due to the influence of the teacher, is partly because the school was sited close to a good water supply.

Great faith was pinned in the influence of a boarding school, with a well-kept compound, and here the short terms, which are the one original feature of this experiment in post-elementary education and schooling, obviated the main drawback to the boarding system, namely the cutting-off of the boarders from their home environment. It is interesting to compare short-term schooling, costing so little that it can be spread over several years, with the plan followed at Kizigo near Tabora, in Tanganyika Territory, where the pupils spent nine months continuously at the school, and three months at home,[1] and with Tabora and Malangali described by Dr. Mumford in the same article.

"At Kizigo a nucleus school of the traditional European type has been placed in the hands of a native board of governors, and they are to be left to weave in their own modifications and culture, and try to make the school a part of their tribal life. . . ."

Riyom was, at the start, more frankly utilitarian than Kizigo, Tabora, and Malangali. It must be understood that before Toro Training Centre was founded there were, practically speaking, no literates in the whole tribe. The first Birom scribes were the teachers and one or two "failed teachers." Any attempt to rule the tribe through its own chiefs was bound sooner or later to involve pen and ink. This would have meant using Hausa scribes.[2] Forest Guards and similar subordinate posts in the development of this community would

[1] "Education and Social Adjustment of the Primitive Peoples of Africa," W. Bryant Mumford, *Africa*, Vol. II, No. 2.
[2] *Native Administration in Nigeria*, Margery Perham, p. 151.

also have been foreigners, or under Hausa headmen. So that if the tribe as a whole was to take a pride and a part in its own administration or development, literate young men with a good record and a varied experience of skills leading to social progress and welfare were its first need.[1] The traditional school system would cost more, would uproot and detribalise men destined to fill key positions, and, if previous experience was any guide, would produce a large proportion of discontented, unemployable failures. Thus Riyom hoped to anticipate the need for such remedial measures as the Land Settlements for Unemployed from the Distressed Areas in England. " These men and women have become part of the English countryside. They know that their future is now on the land and their talk is no longer of the present and all its disadvantages, but of the future." [Third Annual Report of the Land Settlement Association, 1937.] It was hoped that Riyom boys who shewed no marked aptitude for salaried appointments in the community would *remain* part of the Nigerian countryside. Indeed it would be a good thing if the majority " shewed an aptitude " for returning to the land.

Another reason why it was imperative, for anyone who had the educational future of the tribe at heart, to evolve some form of central or continuational school, was that the existing system of lower elementary schools were following a truncated curriculum with absolutely no survival value.[2] The very minimum to aim at, in any form of literary education, is that firstly, the pupils will still be able to read and write, with purpose and opportunity, for the rest of their lives, and secondly that the period of schooling (and one hopes, of education) will be continued as far as possible into the period

[1] It must be admitted that the English name " Riyom Vocational School " is unsatisfactory. The writer was equally free to call it a Central, Evocational, Tribal, or Continuation School. Prof. F. Clarke, in " The Conflict of Philosophies," *Year Book of Education*, refers to the misuse of the term " vocational." In U.S.A. " Orientation courses " are given. The writer is not qualified to proceed more deeply into the question of terminology, and still thinks of Riyom as an experiment in post-elementary education, the chief feature of which is the one-month term.

[2] P. A. W. Cook, *op. cit.*

of adolescence and into life itself. Given, too, the necessary character training as much at home as at school, such products of an educational system are less likely to exploit their more ignorant fellows than men who have received an incomplete secondary education.[1]

It must not be thought that Riyom was considered as a complete solution to the problem of Community Development. To take but one aspect, no plan could be made for the education of women, which would probably be best tackled through training the teacher's wife. It was an isolated experiment, which could have been repeated if a similar personality were found as teacher in another tribal area. Toro intended to have on the staff a European lady, trained in welfare work, who would run classes for the wives of teachers attending Toro. As yet this appointment has not been made. But a gradually increasing number of candidates are sent by Missions to Toro, for training, and it would appear possible to reciprocate and send such a man's wife, or such a wife as this man's, to a Mission training centre for special training, since husband and wife are both Christians.

A difficulty which merits special thought and a plan of action in schools in such areas, is caused by the disruptive effect of the introduction of a money-currency. It demands a definite teaching in economics for a young man to appreciate the competing values of wages and home-grown food. Where taxation is low, but paid in coin, there is a maximum period during which paid labour on the mines is worth while, from the tribesman's point of view. Each day's work beyond this means less attention to his farm, rising costs in food for his family at home and for himself and the danger of falling into debt in his labour-camp. A labourer who gets into debt learns to gamble, loses, and dare not return empty handed to his home. A better understanding of the cash value of paid labour, and the far greater food value of labour on his own farm should be explained to him in any institution which claims to educate him to manage his own affairs and adapt

[1] Loram, *The Education of the South African Native*, p. 31.

himself to change. The other side to the question of currency impact is seen in a speech by Lord Lugard, at a meeting of The Royal Empire Society (as reported in *The Crown Colonist*, January 1937), in which he said: "The idea of earning money for his own use, instead of for the community in general, introduces the radical change to individualism and personal initiative and responsibility, the keynote of liberty and progress." At the same time the lesson will gain in effect if his system of farming can be made more secure by teaching him to use oxen, giving him a knowledge of new crops of proved viability and inspiring in him "a regard for living as contrasted with an exclusive devotion to making a living."[1]

No reference has been made to the place of religion in the school because Riyom was experimental, and this adjective cannot be applied by a layman to religious influences. The teacher was a Christian, and at Toro, where he was trained, the only stipulation made was that Moslems were not accepted, and any teacher embracing Islam, during or after the course, would have to leave. On the other hand, the students-in-training were at liberty to follow any of the Christian denominations, or to attend any services held by them from time to time at Toro. These stipulations were approved of by the Pagan Chiefs.

As for the school, the writer's opinion was that all possible co-operation with Missions should be encouraged, but that, in this respect alone, the school should stand by its curriculum, and not allow right of entry, or extension of this curriculum to the religious sphere. In effect the school was prepared to take part in "cross-fertilisation" in social, cultural and technical matters. The only local Mission had been working in the area for some twenty-five years, and co-operated very understandingly on this point, from their side agreeing to differentiate more between the training of catechists and the training of teachers, so that a note of increasing technical efficiency and closer supervision (which all along had been

[1] "Little Red Schoolhouse Southern Style," by Edwin R. Embree. Reprinted from *Atlantic Monthly*, by Julius Rosenwald Fund, 1938.

a marked feature of the Central Schools) was apparent in their bush schools. These previously had been the activity *least* related to the social needs of the Tribe, but now drew up level with the extremely efficient medical and welfare work, and these little schools from being a rather unimportant appanage to Religious Instruction, became instead an active expression of it.

Dr. Cook's important study of the Bomvana Tribe (which was reviewed in *Oversea Education*, Vol. VII, No. 1, 1935) gives in Part IV ("A Proposed Educational Scheme") a very thoroughly worked out plan for the organisation of a school system with which Riyom has certain features in common and, although the latter could only claim a fraction of the European supervision which the proper working out of Dr. Cook's scheme would entail, the common aim and different paths form an interesting comparison.

His Primary Schools were to offer a two-year course, non-literary and complete in itself. He was prepared as a short-range policy to omit the 3 R's from this stage. "The balance of the arguments," he says, "seem to be against the inclusion of literacy in the primary school," but the decision whether to include or omit literacy is to be left to "the feeling of the parents and adults of the community, for the school is theirs—and this they must clearly understand. Progress within the community depends upon the active participation of the people in their own educational enterprises . . . ."[1]

Whether the 3 R's are included or not, the Primary School was to cover a certain curriculum of Health, Culture, Technical Skill and Recreation; and the syllabus or content of these is remarkably wide, and makes one realise how much more ground could be covered in Hygiene, Tribal History, Cultural History, Civic Understanding, Crafts, Drawing, Drama, Mental Arithmetic, etc., if learning to read and write did not

[1] But "education will fail to make an important contribution to the reconstruction of our culture if it seeks to move no more rapidly than approval of the whole community will permit." Prof. J. L. Childs: "Ten Theses on Education and American Culture," quoted in "A Review of Educational Thought," reprinted from *Year Book of Education*.

monopolise the first two years of schooling. In fact, as Dr. Cook says, "it is therefore more fitting for the school to concentrate its efforts upon *the promoting of such conditions as will make the use of reading and writing functional.*" "... an active mind, seeking knowledge for some clearly understood and accepted purpose, is in every way more effective than a mind occupied in passively learning in rote fashion material the use of which is unknown."[1]

The chief difference in plan between these two is that Dr. Cook's was a complete system (experimental and progressive), whereas the writer's was, also experimentally, designed to round off (and justify) the existing system with the definite aim of producing a literate personnel, of the foreman type, and around this functional activity a complete Tribal Institute was to take shape.

The strength of our English Educational System, and of the educational policy in the dependencies of the British Empire, lies in its freedom and lack of stereotyped or dogmatic control.

In Africa, apart from the danger of blind imitation, the greatest weakness of this freedom to experiment is the impermanence of its guiding spirits. Where the community can be given responsibility this impermanence is combated, and the time will soon come, not only in the educational sphere, but in all aspects of Indirect Rule, when the people will show the initiative, and the European remain as counsellor and friend. The writer believes Riyom is on the verge of attaining this happy ideal.

[1] Prof. F. A. Cavenagh, *The Development of Educational Thought in the United Kingdom*, 1920-35.