

Notes and News

Research into the Teaching of English in the Gold Coast

THE scheme for research into the teaching and learning of English in the Gold Coast, which owes its origin to Mr. T. Barton, formerly Director of Education of the Gold Coast, comes to an end this year. This research scheme was undertaken by the University College of the Gold Coast for the Ministry of Education (it was then the Education Department). It was conducted by Professor P. Gurrey with a staff of three: Mr. H. J. Andrews as Senior Assistant, Mr. R. R. Okyne and Mr. C. O. Botchway as Research Assistants; the statistical work was checked and completed by Professor C. E. Smith of Manitoba University, who devoted his sabbatical half-year to this work in the Gold Coast. Its object was to assess present standards and attainments in English in schools and colleges, and to make recommendations for improving the teaching and the general standard of English in the Gold Coast.

A number of varied investigations were undertaken. A survey of achievement in vocabulary, grammar, and reading was made in the Colony, in Ashanti, and throughout the Northern Territories; the ability of pupils throughout the Colony to deal adequately with the grammar exercises in their English Course was assessed; the average amount of written English produced in a year was estimated from the exercise books of a large number of schools; a count of the frequency of errors in written English was made by classifying all the errors to be found in hundreds of compositions of both Primary and Secondary school pupils; more than 25 tests of attainment in English were constructed; a reliable and valid test of comprehension in silent reading was produced; a number of non-verbal mental ability tests and other well-known ability tests were tried out; but only one—a non-verbal and unpublished test—was found to be valid.

The most important results of three years' work were achieved in (a) a study of the skills used in reading, and the discovery that one of the most important of them would need special attention; (b) an inquiry into the teaching of written English; (c) the compiling of a list of the chief weaknesses in grammar in written English with their comparative frequency, and (d) establishing that a non-verbal test could be used in African primary schools.

It is hoped that an account of the work and of the results obtained will be available in print next year; some of the more important results will not, of course, be exactly applicable elsewhere; but they are likely to be of value to those working on the same problems, and to those who are concerned with standards of achievement in English.

(communicated by Professor Gurrey)

The African Listener

THE Central African Broadcasting Station (Lusaka) now issues a monthly magazine. The first number (January 1952) in addition to an editorial describing the aims and character of the paper, and broadcast programmes for the following month, contains articles on African music, agriculture, education for women, health talks, notice of an essay competition, and various shorter items. It is illustrated with photographs and costs 3d.

La Maison de la France d'Outre-mer

UN foyer d'accueil offert aux étudiants d'outre-mer venus à Paris pour poursuivre des études supérieures, dont la première pierre a été posée en 1949 par M. Paul Coste-Floret, est