

Notes and News

Association of Social Anthropologists

THE Association was founded on 23 July 1946, in response to the general opinion among social anthropologists in Great Britain that the subject has reached a stage of development warranting the establishment of a professional organization. Its aims are: (1) to promote the study and teaching of social anthropology as a specialized branch of anthropology; (2) to represent the interests and maintain the professional standards of the subject; (3) to arrange periodic conferences of the members of the Association; and (4) to secure publication of researches under its auspices.

It is intended that a journal, *Annals of Social Anthropology*, be published as soon as arrangements can be made.

Membership of the Association is limited to persons holding, or having held, a teaching or research appointment in Social Anthropology, and is strictly by invitation of the Officers and Committee of the Association.

President: Prof. A. R. Radcliffe-Brown. *Chairman and Hon. Secretary*: Prof. E. E. Evans-Pritchard. *Committee*: Prof. Raymond Firth, Prof. C. Daryll Forde, Dr. Meyer Fortes.

Christian Marriage of Africans

In the January number of *Africa* Mr. Martin Parr has clearly shown the complicated situation which exists in African territories with regard to legislation concerning the Christian marriage of Africans: the complexities are all the greater because the 'practically standardized ordinances' differ so materially in the different territories.

In his opening paragraph Mr. Parr states that in Britain no legal consequences follow from marriage in a church 'other than those which follow from marriage in a Registrar's office'. But the converse of this *does* follow, viz. that a marriage celebrated in a church *has* legal standing. This is what the Native Church in Nyasaland has sought to obtain, and not the complicated 'practically standardized ordinances'. One would like to know Mr. Parr's authority for stating that the request for legal standing for Christian marriages was 'strenuously opposed by the African Christians': it was the unanimous desire of the Synod of the (Native) Church of Central Africa (Presbyterian) that legislation be enacted to give legal standing to Christian marriages.

Early in the history of the missions in Nyasaland the necessity of raising the status of womanhood was recognized, and the desirability of Christian marriage was pressed upon those who had joined the Church and set foot on the Christian way of life; later it became possible to insist on Christian marriage for Christians—indeed, in the Church of Scotland Mission to the south of the protectorate the rule was adopted that Christian marriage must be only between Christians; but in the northern part of the protectorate the social situation did not admit of this rule being imposed, and Christian marriage continued to be celebrated even where only one party was Christian. Books of printed marriage certificates were prepared, with counterfoils, which were kept as records. These certificates were much prized—especially by the women, many of whom stood out for Christian marriage against the wishes of their relatives and their prospective husbands, often with much ultimate spiritual benefit to themselves, their husbands, and their homes.

In 1902 a Marriage Ordinance was enacted by the Nyasaland Government. This was definitely promoted for the legalizing of marriages contracted by Europeans within the Protectorate, and had European conditions in view; but it was legal for natives to be married