

1. Some place-names may have as many as two or three prefixes: e.g. Nya-mi-gudu, Ki-nya-ki-ti, Nya-lu-baha.

2. There are two suffixes: RO and SI. The meaning of RO is very uncertain: SENERO, TENGERO, CHOHERO. The meaning of SI (TSI) may be an abbreviation of MAZI—water, because we find it always in names of rivers.

3. It must be understood that there are many place-names without any prefix or suffix.

Communicated by C. VERMUNT

Spelling of African Place-names on Maps

THE Linguistic Advisory Committee of the Institute, in consultation with the Place-names Committee of the Royal Geographical Society, has given much consideration to the difficult problem of the spelling of African place-names on maps. The matter was also discussed at the Deuxième Congrès de Toponymie et d'Anthroponymie in Paris last year, and a recommendation on the subject was recorded at the Conférence Internationale des Africanistes de l'Ouest at Bissau in December last. The complete lack of uniformity, or even of recognized principles of orthography, is a source of confusion and difficulty for students no less than for travellers. In a recent number of the *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* (vol. xii. 3 and 4, 1948), Dr. A. N. Tucker states the existing problem, reviews the various attempts which have been made periodically since 1745 to standardize the representation of geographical names, and describes the emergence of a new factor in the problem as it concerns Africa, in the wide adoption of a standardized orthography (the Institute's *Africa* orthography) for vernacular languages. Dr. Tucker considers that the attempt to introduce phonetic characters on maps would be premature, and recommends that where the standard alphabet of a language contains phonetic characters or letters with diacritics, a form of romanization should be worked out for use on maps; he suggests that, in general, the spelling recognized by local authorities should be followed for place-names on maps, and refers to a recommendation of the Congrès de Toponymie that the names adopted for places in West and Equatorial Africa should be those used by the natives of those places.

Land Conservation and Utilization

GOVERNMENTS in all parts of the world are becoming increasingly aware of the urgency of the problems connected with land conservation and use, particularly in tropical and sub-tropical areas. The numerous conferences of experts, the carrying out of soil surveys, and the establishment of research organizations and agricultural bureaux are indications that the fundamental importance of these problems is not ignored. In June of this year a conference on tropical and sub-tropical soils was held at the Rothamsted Experimental Station, England, when the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies welcomed guests from the United States, France, Belgium, and Holland. The committee for Colonial Agricultural, Animal Health, and Forestry Research organized conferences at Nairobi in 1946 and 1947, at which improved arrangements for agricultural and veterinary research in East Africa were initiated and the need for a comprehensive soil survey was stressed. During 1947 a soils sub-committee was appointed to specialize in soil science research. In West Africa much attention has been paid in recent years to problems of agricultural production. Research into improved methods of rice production is being carried out in the Gambia, and the most extensive soil survey yet undertaken in the Colonies is shortly to be started in the Gold Coast. The survey will cover an area of 51,000 square miles, largely tropical forest and savannah. Six Europeans and 120 trained Africans, as well as African labourers, will be employed, since the intention is that the survey shall be carried out by the inhabitants of the Gold Coast, and the first year's work will consist largely of training African staff.

The object of the survey is to map the boundaries of the distinctive soil patterns, which are known to exist over large areas, and which are determined by the underlying rocks, by climate, relief, and drainage. Within each soil pattern a small area will be surveyed in detail.

Petition of the Bakweri Land Committee, Cameroons under British Mandate

A PETITION dated 24 August 1946 was forwarded to the Governor of Nigeria with a request that it be presented to the Trusteeship Council of the United Nations. The petition formulated a demand on the part of the Bakweri Land Committee, which claims to represent 'the entire populace of the Bakweri people i.e. including the sub-tribes of Bota and Bimbia of the Victoria Division in the Cameroons under British Mandate', for the return of 580 square miles of land which were alienated by the German Government during their administration of the area, and sold or leased as plantations, or to missions, or retained as Crown lands. The Bakweri Land Committee states that there was no legal sale of the land to the German administration or any agreement concluded with the Bakweri people; they state also that the areas remaining to them are 'rocky barren upland slopes', or swamps and bogs, unfit for cultivation; that they have attempted cultivation on the mountain slopes without success, except in the case of the coco-yam, which has proved unsuitable for food, and that they therefore suffer from malnutrition; further, the cultivation of these mountain areas imposes too heavy a strain on the women, who 'by custom are the planters of our locally consumed food stuffs', and causes early breakdowns in health, infant mortality, and deterioration of the people.

The Bakweri Land Committee therefore asks that all land shall be returned to the Bakweri people, that its cultivation shall be regulated by the Native Authority who, in consultation with the Committee, shall apply any profits accruing for the benefit of the people. They also ask, as compensation for the exploitation of their land, for costs equal to the proceeds which have accrued from the plantations during the last five years.

The petition was duly forwarded to the Secretary-General of the United Nations. On 9 June 1948 certain observations by the United Kingdom Government on the petition were forwarded to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, in which it was pointed out that all lands had been declared native lands and had been placed under the control of the Governor of Nigeria to be administered for the use and common benefit of the natives; that the Nigerian Government had repurchased 14,851 acres of plantation land for the benefit of the natives, and that the Cameroons Development Corporation had been set up to administer and develop the plantations until such time as the Bakweri people were competent to manage them without assistance; moreover, a senior Administrative Officer had been appointed to make a survey of land in the Victoria Division in order to ensure that the inhabitants had fully adequate land for subsistence farming.

Current Research Projects of the Institute

Cameroons Research: Dr. Phyllis Kaberry, who, on behalf of the Institute and at the request of the Nigerian Government, has been making a study of the position of women among the peoples of the Cameroons under British Mandate, has completed her field researches and returned to England in April. She will present a short report of the main results of her investigations and will follow it by a major study of the Nsau and other peoples of Bamenda. *Ethnographic Survey of Africa:* Preliminary surveys have been carried out for the Ibo, Ibibio, Yoruba, and other peoples in the Southern Provinces of Nigeria as well as for some of the pagan peoples of the Northern Provinces; summarized reports have been circulated or are in preparation. Data are being assembled for the Gold Coast, and a survey of the Akan