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CORRECTION

In Dr. Abbey's article in our last issue (L.O. V/4), for "NC50,000" on p.6, left column, please read "NC50,000,000".

EDITORIAL

THE GREAT PURGE

568

FIVE HUNDRED and sixty eight public servants, of varying status positions, have had their appointments revoked by the government. Actually, this dramatic exercise is in line with a provision in the country's Constitution which deals with the appointment and dismissal of public servants.

Although there is no official list yet, people affected are believed to range over a wide spectrum—from heads of departments and of corporations, to (it is said) messengers!

Any narrow interpretation of the motives of the government would be really a blunder. Apparently one cannot state positively that the officers have been retrenched because of party affiliation—some of the officers affected by the order are alleged to be card-carrying members of the ruling Progress Party. It is reassuring to note that the days of crude political victimization of public servants are about over.

The efficiency of a public servant, like his productivity, is, however, not very easy to measure. There are many complicating imperatives in bureaucratic structures which are not easily appreciated by outsiders; thus, civil servants tend often to suffer through public ignorance of the difficult conditions in which they work. But certainly there has been an urgent need to restructure the public services, in order to make fuller use of the resources of the rising generation. One understands the type of status anxiety which this need has generated, especially among the older segments of the public service personnel.

However, in line with the need for new ideas, it is incumbent on the part of the government to create the atmosphere whereby no group or groups of people would regard themselves as indispensable, especially if there is evidence of deliberate non-co-operation or obstructionist tactics in the operation of governmental machinery.

Honesty is another vexed dimension, especially in a community where people would want to have supporting evidence to back any such charges of dishonesty. If any of the public servants had been found to be dishonest, one hopes that such members had been informed to this effect, with specifications which are more detailed than a mere statement informing them that their services are no longer required.

Efficiency, honesty, hard work, loyalty—these are very lofty ideals upon which to build a healthy, responsible public service; and the nation has a right to expect these of its servants—irrespective of the sectors of public

activity in which they are engaged.

But the purging weapon can also be used disastrously. If it leads to panic and anarchy, with individuals becoming spies over their personal enemies in the search for vendetta, or in the desire to "catch the eye of the authorities," then one would wonder whether the nation will ultimately become the beneficiary of such exercise. Of course a government has freedom to employ or deploy its servants; the disagreement hinges, however, on the *means* for attaining the ends of making the public services more healthy.

L.S.N.A. Communication

THE CASE OF THE DISMISSALS

THE EXERCISE by which 568 civil and public servants have been relieved of their posts has touched profound depths in many Ghanaians during the last few days. The shock and distress are not necessarily caused by the principle, or principles, behind the action taken but by some of its features and the number of important issues it raises, as well as by its total effect. But let us get things into proper perspective and focus before tackling effects and totalities.

First, the N.L.C. had been obliged to take several kinds of fundamental action in order to keep the country going during their tenure of office. They passed laws by decree, borrowed money for us, signed contracts and made appointments. Legally as well as morally, many of these contractual obligations, thus incurred in the name and interest of the country, would be binding on the successors of the N.L.C., so as to keep business, government, life itself stable and continuous. But not all contracts need bind successor parties, otherwise other kinds of dysfunction afflict society. Provision is often made, therefore, in the form of what are sometimes called "escape clauses", for a successor party to be able to opt out of his part, on choice or discretion, or by force of circumstances. This in effect, is what Article 9 of the transitional provisions of the Ghana constitution did, with respect to civil and public servants appointed and in service before the present government assumed power.

That Article, by its paragraph (1), gave a six-month period of grace (starting from 22nd August 1969, when the constitution came into force) to "every person who immediately before the coming into force of this Constitution held or was acting in any office ESTABLISHED

(a) by or in pursuance of the Proclamation for the constitution of a National Liberation Council for the administration of Ghana and for other matters connected therewith, dated the twenty-sixth day of February, 1966, or

(b) in pursuance of a Decree of the National Liberation Council, or

(c) by or under the authority of that Council.

A person in any of the three categories stated above was to be deemed to have been appointed to hold office until the end of the period of grace only, unless he had meanwhile been appointed by the new administration to hold or act in any office. It followed that those who fell into the three categories, and who were not re-appointed by the Busia administration during the six-month period of grace, were to lose their offices. To avoid all doubt, individual letters were sent to all such persons, and these letters served as notice of termination of appointment.

Secondly, we must remind ourselves that the

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N.L.C. had confirmed what we had all known to be a fact for a long time, namely that an incredibly large number of Ghanaian civil and public servants had been and still were corrupt; that many of them had looted their country and their people, and were even now sitting on the loot, getting fat on it and looking ugly; while others had compromised the country in different ways and almost beyond hope of redemption. Some of these disastrous characters just had to go; justice, rationality, efficiency and common decency were calling for the removal of such persons from our public services, and many of us had publicly demanded action on these lines. The question was: How, when and by whom?

Classes Not Named Before

That is the background. Now the Busia government has answered the question. They have said: "By us; now; through the removal from office of certain individual officers!" So, it had to be done and has been done. The point is, the blow has fallen more heavily than any of us outsiders might have anticipated. And that trend of thought leads us to the important constitutional question of the legal coverage of the transitional provisions. What criteria have determined the application of the provisions not merely to such a large number but, beyond that, to what would appear to us to be classes of public servants not designated by the provisions, as shown by the citation above? Is it being contended that the Proclamation mentioned above *established* all offices in the Civil Service? No doubt the lawyers and the judges will have to answer this and other relevant questions. It will be both too early and too late for this issue of the *Observer* to chronicle the debate coming up in parliament on this very vital point, by motion of the opposition; we regret this ill luck, for we believe that the outcome of that debate is going to be most important.

Beside the major question of how restrictively or widely the provisions could be applied, there are other issues raised by the exercise. Can the Prime Minister, for instance, be sure that, even so, the criteria laid down have been applied both justly and fairly, without political victimisation and the scoring off of vendettas and private reprisals? How, for another instance, could he be sure of foolproof, when the letter of dismissal is known to be a mass-produced, cyclostyled affair, saying the same thing to everybody except for the difference in name and address? Could there be private "executions" with a state sword, cases of mistaken identity; of false witness about records and activities of some individuals affected? Is the Busia Government certain that those retained are all more efficient, more honest and more forward-looking than those laid off?

The most serious aspect of this episode, however, is its effect on morale. The government statement emphasised that 568 is only a "few cases" of non-reappointment, since this number is, after all, only a small fraction of the 200,000 persons in the public service. Even so, there is the equally prominent fact that in the context of Africa, with its extended family system, 568 workers, most of them occupying high positions in the state machinery, constitute a veritable host of people, including perhaps thousands of dependants. This is the first great fact about the morale aspect of the matter. A second concerns the question of skilled manpower. With Africa's woeful condition of shortage in this area, 568 mostly trained and experienced officers is a frightening number of skilled manpower to turn adrift.

Consistence Required

In conclusion, we should like to re-emphasise some of the points we have made, and to raise one or two new ones. *First*: Should the interpretation of the transitional provisions have been as wide as to embrace all sectors and members of the public services? If so, why then the specific categorisation of those within the ambit of Art. 9 by Art. 9 (1)? *Second*: It should be observed that the terms of Art. 9 (1) required implementation to be not inconsistent with the constitution. *Third*: The power of removal granted under Art. 9 (1) is not absolute, for it can only be exercised "as far as is consistent with the provisions of this Constitution." One such qualifying provision is Article 138: "No member of the public services shall be (a) victimised or discriminated against for having discharged his duties faithfully in accordance with this Constitution and without regard to party considerations; (b) dismissed or removed from office or reduced in rank or otherwise punished without just cause".

It would accord with these considerations for the full list of the names of the 568 dismissed officers, as well as their rank, to be published for the information of the people. It is not convincing to create the impression that in the interest of the dismissed persons their names should not be published.

The Law

SLOW JUSTICE—AN INTRODUCTION TO A PROBLEM

By
E. S. Aidoo

I DESCRIBE what follows as 'an Introduction', not because I intend to follow it up with several others on the same subject, but because I do hope that it will stimulate thinking and call for such ideas as may eventually help in necessary reforms.

Ghana is not the only country which suffers from the problem of delayed justice. It is a world-wide problem. Nor is it confined to secular courts. Some readers will remember that about five years ago when Pope Paul was opening the judicial year of the Sacred Roman Rota he exhorted the judges of that court to speed up with the disposal of the large arrears of matrimonial cases before it. The Pope observed that culpable delay in dispensing justice was 'in itself an act of injustice'. And our problem is not new either. Readers of 'Bleak House' will remember Charles Dickens' observations on the problem as it existed in England about a hundred and fifty years ago. The comments made there by that great novelist stirred the reformers to what has been an undoubtedly great achievement in that country. Yet even in England it is not uncommon, as any solicitor would realize, to see cases come up for hearing in the High Court about two years after the filing of the relevant papers. Nevertheless, English justice is still undoubtedly among the best that this world can boast of.

Rumour Parading as Fact

We have in this country heard and read several commentators on the fact and problem of delays in the disposal of cases in court. But it is probably true that most of the comments, even from professional lawyers, have not been based on accurate information. It seems to me that the problem affects practically everybody in the country, because whether one has a case in court or not, the speed with which cases are decided in the country is a matter of considerable importance to businessmen from abroad who go through our courts. Investments are likely to be influenced by this factor; and, what is worse, they may be more influenced not by the facts but by the uninformed rumours which purport to be facts. It is therefore one of the problems that require very careful thinking, even research, and not mere words of condemnation or criticism. If this article succeeds in informing some people of the extent of the problem it would have served a useful purpose.

Normally when people talk about 'delay in the courts' they are using one phrase in two different senses without necessarily realising it. One kind of delay is inherent in the system of disposing of cases. Only a very general description can be given in explanation here. We look at civil cases first.

In the Magistrate's Court a person embodies his plaint or claim in an application to the Registrar who completes the Writ of Summons, passes it on to the Magistrate to sign, gets it served on the defendant, and the case is ready to be heard. In the Circuit Court and the High Court the plaintiff generally files a Writ of Summons in which he states what remedy or remedies he wants. The defendant replies and, in it, admits the claim(s), then counter-claims or states what defences he has. The parties meet later to settle the exact points at issue in the dispute and agree on some preliminary procedural matters. It is then for the Court to fix a date when the case would be heard.

One to 20 Weeks

In the Magistrate's Court the hearing of the case may commence within one to three months; but the length of the trial itself depends on so many factors that it is not safe to state a 'normal' time. Perhaps 'one to twenty weeks' is a safe guess. In the Circuit and the High Courts the case may well not commence for another twelve months or so. This is because there may be other disputes ahead of the one under discussion, and it just has to take its turn on the list. This same cause may account for delays in the disposal of criminal cases, although because of the rule that courts should give preference to the disposal of criminal cases, its effect is not often as obvious as in the civil courts.

In criminal matters, as far as the Magistrates' Courts are concerned, the prosecutor, usually the Police, will either bring the accused, if he is already in custody, or cause a summons to be issued to the accused, who then comes to the court on a particular day; and the case is ready to start. How long it takes in the court is also a matter of concern which depends on a lot of other factors, for example, the availability of witnesses. The main point here is that the delay

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in these cases (assuming efficiency and integrity on the part of court officials) results from the way the system operates. If the case is in a particularly busy centre like Accra or Kumasi then the delays will be as 'long' as I have indicated. If it is in a quiet town like Half Assini or Lawra, then the case may be disposed of well within a month, whether it is civil or criminal.

But there is another kind of delay which has little to do with preparedness and willingness of the Court to go on. This is the kind of delay that is caused by parties and their lawyers. There are various reasons why a lawyer to whom one gives instruction on one's case may not be willing and ready to start when one thought that the lawyer had filed the papers. In this country, for example, lawyers have been known to delay the commencement or conduct of cases as a way of obtaining payment from clients for their services. Also, not many people realise how much a lawyer should do at home or in his office before he can effectively present a case in court. It is probably true to state that 90% of cases are won or lost depending on how well the lawyer had done his 'home-work'. The effect of brilliant advocacy is negligible unless the presiding Judge is inattentive or lazy.

Bargaining Devices

Verbose advocacy is an obvious factor in considering delays (although one does not often hear it mentioned, for fear, perhaps, that laymen may erroneously believe that Judges penalise clients for that). Also, a lawyer may take on so much work that he has not the time to do quickly the necessary preparation for each case to start or proceed. What happens, then, is that he keeps postponing. In many such cases the client thinks that the delay is the fault of the courts. To this one can only say that there is a breakdown in communication somewhere.

Again, even after the lawyer has filed his papers it may be that he has some other reason, for example, matters of tactics or personal convenience, for not pressing for the case to be heard. It is, therefore, not correct to say (and so very unfair even to imply) that most of the delay is caused by the way the system of the courts is operated. As Professor Alfred Conard wrote of the situation in America in 1964, "even if it were possible to elect enough judges, build enough courtrooms, and draft enough jurors to cut down the trial backlog, a part of the problem would remain uncorrected. Lawyers would still threaten to hold out . . . as a bargaining device when they think the nerves or resources of the opponent are unequal to their own . . .". What 'correction' is needed here is really a matter for the legal profession, especially the lawyers in practice. But it is worth noting that lawyer-caused delay is actually a large part of this problem we are looking at.

Perhaps one should say a little about lawyer-caused delays. What is the profession itself doing about this? How can the lawyers tackle it? Why should some lawyers take too much work when others have not enough? Perhaps the profession would be helped by informed comments from the public. Lawyers are not allowed to advertise for work, and clients therefore have no means of knowing in advance which lawyers are good, and in what fields. Lay litigants in England do not necessarily have to suffer under this disability, at any rate not to the same extent. A different system prevails there, from the practical point of view. In Ghana, however, I think that lay litigants can take seriously the fact that what they tell their lawyers about commencement and prosecution of their cases are instructions. It is not being implied that a lay litigant should instruct a lawyer on what to say in court, or things of that nature. The lay client is, however, entitled at least to tell his lawyer at the initial stage that he wants his papers filed at the earliest times allowed under the rules of procedure. And if the lawyer cannot do that he should say so in order that the client may go to another lawyer.

Hard but Not Insoluble

It is not certain that the differences between lawyers are such that a particular one must be had at all cost in the majority of cases. At any rate, if a client is dissatisfied with the way his lawyer is handling his case, he can always change lawyers, provided he complies with the simple rules in that connection. This aspect of the problem is serious, although we cannot go so far as the 'Edinburgh Review' did a little over one hundred years ago when it complained that there was "scarcely a moment of delay which is not contrived to minister either to the ease or the profit of lawyers, if not to both". If public awareness is pronounced, then one ought to feel that the Bar Association should be capable of containing this aspect of the problem. It is hard but not insoluble.

But the more important aspect is that which is inherent in the courts' system of dealing with cases. What are the reasons why our system does not work as fast as we want? Many people think

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that it is due to the shortage of Judges and Magistrates. Within limits, this is correct. If there were many Judges and many Magistrates with an adequate number of supporting officers, there would be very little justification for delays. But no country can afford to go on employing Judge after Judge. What is required is to have a certain number of Judges who can dispose of cases at a satisfactory pace. And this implies that they should be kept busy all the time without being overburdened or rushed. It is possible to have a Judge in a court who deals with one small case a day simply because there is no other case. If this happens in a remote town you do not correct the balance by transferring him to a busy station and requesting that he sit only once a month in the remote town. For, that would imply that certain cases would have to wait for his arrival; and the parties in those cases will suffer delay unnecessarily. On the other hand, Judges must be good lawyers—people who themselves have succeeded in practice, whether private or public. They must be lawyers who do not find any salary attractive; and so they must normally be well paid. It is a waste to keep such employees only half occupied for purposes of ensuring that every case is disposed of within a month. Some people, of course, maintain that even that is better than our present system; but it is an alternative which our economic conditions do not permit us to take in Ghana.

The Problems are Many

Others suggest the employment of other persons on part-time basis to help clear arrears. This sounds very attractive to amateurs. When the details of the system are worked out, however, one result is the employment of a large supporting staff who may not be occupied all the time. In a country where the transport system is not good, and where accommodation is not easy to get, it is not simple to decide to move people at short notice to areas where they are needed for short periods. In any case, the question of salaries of, or allowances for, part-time Judges arises, and with that a lot of others, for example, whether a lawyer in practice in Accra should be asked to sit for a short time as a Judge in Accra and what happens to his own cases in that court. Then, if he is not to sit in Accra, what arrangements can readily be made for him to sit in other towns in the present situation of shortage of bungalows and absence of rest houses? Cases have been known where Judges have paid as much as NC14.00 per night in our hotels on official duty but where they have been reimbursed only to the extent of NC2.50 by the State. My recommendation here, therefore, is that there should be several Judges in each of the main towns except in the North, but that there should not be too many. What is 'too many' is not a matter that lends itself to a brief general discussion.

Another cause of delay is the set of inappropriate and cumbersome rules to which those responsible for the administration of our Judicial Service are now subject. The Chief Justice as Head of the Judiciary has little control as far as finance is concerned. Under these normal Civil Service rules, even if it is clear that a particular remedy could be profitably applied in a given situation, and even if this would involve nothing more than a transfer of money from one vote to another, that cannot be done otherwise than with the prior approval of at least the Minister of Justice and the Minister of Finance.

More Waiting

It cannot be said that successive Ministers have always proved difficult. But everyone knows that they have not been particularly fast in issuing the necessary warrants or approvals; and a delay of two months is normal for such purposes. At the moment the legal year is 10 months long; so to wait for two months to try a new idea is not encouraging. And this is not the only waiting that has to be done. If, for example, there is a long list of cases in one town and the judicial administrators think a Magistrate has to go on trek from his district to assist there, the speed with which the cases pending in that town could be disposed of will not necessarily be the first factor to consider. It may be that when the Chief Justice instructs one Judicial Officer to help in the manner indicated that Judge or Magistrate will exceed the ceiling of travelling allowance allowed to public servants each month.

The processes of adjustment in such cases are wasteful, because the only alternative in the present circumstances is to station an additional Judicial Officer in that district, even though the amount of work to be done there is not enough to occupy a man of his rank fully. Worse still, this latter alternative takes more time, even if it does not involve the Chief Justice in seeking approval to create an extra post for the said Judicial Officer—a process that may well take six months. This too must be added to the period of waiting for some parties. The remedy here is not merely a wider power to create posts, al-

though that may be useful, but a freer control of funds once they have been allocated to the Judicial Service. If it is replied that this is against "proper administration of public finance" then the public must endure what it cannot cure.

There are yet other reasons for delayed justice; and one of those that I think particularly relevant in Ghanaian circumstances is the attitude of Judges and Judicial Officers themselves. It is a well-known fact that some Judges show little or no interest in how their registries work. For most practical purposes the Judicial Secretary, as the Chief Registrar, is expected to exercise all the control that there is, subject to regular directions from the Chief Justice. This should work well in a country where all public servants are duty-conscious and where the public are fully aware of what they can demand from public officers and what they cannot demand. Ghana has not got to that stage yet. In our circumstances, it should be obvious that 'efficient management of the trial court as a means of combating court congestion is one of the problems of judicial administration'.

Judicial Responsibility

It would be good for our Judges and Judicial Officers, especially outside Accra, to accept the new philosophy of their role which is now current in many countries, namely, that 'it is as much a part of judicial responsibility to administer the courts effectively as to decide the cases wisely'. This means, in practical terms, that if a Registrar in Sunyani, for example, is doing something that appears in any way suspicious, the lawyer or his client involved in the case ought to be able to report this conduct to the presiding Judge. The Judge should then immediately go into the complaint and only if he finds that it involves some administrative matters which would take too much judicial time should he refer the case for disposal to the Judicial Secretary. It would not mean that he would be doing a lot of administrative or personnel work. All he need to do is to conduct a quick preliminary investigation, give on-the-spot instructions to remedy the situation and forward a short report to the Judicial Secretary who will then think out a 'permanent' solution in consultation with the Chief Justice.

Thus if the complaint was that the Registrar was delaying the filing of particular papers, there is no reason why a Judge cannot deal with this immediately, instead of referring it to Accra for the Judicial Secretary to attempt to speak to the Registrar on the telephone (when the lines may be down!) or write a letter to instruct the Registrar on what to do. If, of course, the Judge finds out that the Registrar is right he should say so to the party complaining; and that will save the time of the Registrar as well as everybody else. The said philosophy involves also that the Judges and Magistrates should constantly be making suggestions in writing to the Chief Justice or advisable amendments to our procedural rules and the preparation of court calendars—all based on their experiences in the areas wherein they work as well as their knowledge of legal practice there. These are solutions that may not be ideal everywhere but which need trial in our peculiar circumstances.

But assuming that there are enough Judges, that special provisions for financial control vest the appropriate autonomy in the Head of the Judicial Service, that the attitudes of all our Judges and Judicial Officers have been changed in the manner suggested, what other remedies need looking at? The first is the simplification of the Rules of Evidence and of Procedure (especially the parts on Pleadings). This really is a matter for lawyers; but the public can insist that the lawyers should act quickly, and be prepared to pay for the lawyers' work. Is it really necessary, for example, for the lawyers on either side to meet before a Judge for the so-called Summons for Directions in the High Court?

Talking about Ghana . . .

As indicated, above, what happens there is that they agree on the issues dividing them and settle certain procedural matters. But surely justice is administered in the Magistrate's Court without such 'conferences'; and why can't something similar be done in the High Court? One cannot over-emphasise the role which the lay public must play in all this. Let us look at what Professor Ivan, Head of Alberta University and now the Legislative Assistant to the Canadian Prime Minister, had to say two years ago. As he was in fact writing about Ghana, I may be permitted to quote the whole of what follows:

> Legal procedure is only of pressing interest to the average lawyer; not until a lawsuit jumps the normally predictable procedural rails does he turn his attention from the substantive law. As a result, court procedures in many jurisdictions are out of date and show signs of neglect. The litigant, on the other hand, thinks more of law as a function than as a body of jurisprudence His interest in the law is spasmodic, he places emphasis on the

effectiveness of the system rather than on the sometimes complex principles of law embodied in a judicial decision. (And if the litigant is an alien he will be particularly sensitive to any suggestion of procedural discrimination). There is still another reason which explains in part the difference in attitude between lawyer and client. The lawyer lives with the rules of court; if not enamoured of them, he is at least likely to be complacent about their deficiencies. The client, unless unusually sophisticated, does not share his familiarity. For him the day in court is strange and almost unbearably personal. Should the litigant suffer, or receive the impression he is suffering from technical shortcomings in the system, he will likely react with shrill (if ineffective) criticism. To him the procedural aspects of the lawsuit may be the only ones he can identify, and in a sense, understand. They are the ones which he will consider in assessing the legal system.

But let a Judge have the decisive word. Lord Evershed, former Master of the Rolls in England, had already opined that "if the purpose of the law is the welfare of Society and to that end the service of the public, then it is clear that the ordinary member of the public who is the litigant in our civil courts is likely to base his judgment of our legal system largely upon the way which, in practice, it works".

Manipulating Time-Tables

Another suggestion is deliberately so to manipulate court time-tables as to induce parties to settle disputes, that is, if they know that a case will take very long to be heard they are more likely to settle. Therefore those cases which in the opinion of the court ought to be settled will be reserved for later days and others given priority. This is a suggestion that is fraught with dangers and has not succeeded much in other countries where it has been tried. It is not recommended.

A popular suggestion in Ghana is to let Judicial Officers in the lower ranks take the preliminary steps in the trial of High Court cases so that the Judges in the High Court will have more time to deal with the really 'important' stages in those cases. Since however the Magistrates and Circuit Judges may also be very busy, this will in fact save time in the High Court and delay cases in the lower courts. Also, parties are not likely to feel satisfied that lower Judges are dealing with parts of their case which will ultimately be tried by High Court Judges. It is a course that is recommended only with grave reservations.

A situation that often offends the layman's sense of fairness is where a court with a very heavy list rises at about 10.30 a.m. or 11.00 a.m. and the Judge appears to be free for the rest of the day. Non-lawyers often put very wrong interpretations on this. A Judge or Magistrate who is not sitting in court is not necessarily free. He may well be writing judgments in Chambers instead of in his house. If, as is normally the case, a High Court Judge supervises many Magistrates in a district, then the Judge may be working in Chambers on reviews of orders by these Magistrates and making appropriate revisory orders from time to time, after perusal of proceedings in those cases. But supposing that he is not occupied by either of these, then the thing to do to stop him from being free is for the Registrar to put so many cases on the list that even if one or two cases break down there will always be others to keep the Judge occupied in court. This is an acceptable remedy for delay.

Experimenting

But here again the public should realise that it will involve several parties having to sit in court with their witnesses and not having their cases heard on particular days. It would mean, for example, the Registrar putting down five to seven cases for hearing when a court can only hear about two or three a day. The parties in each of the other cases have to be ready for a possible trial that day and at the same time be prepared to accept the position if the case is not in fact heard. Can the public pay this price? It certainly seems more acceptable than to have to wait for a long time for your case to get on the list. The lawyer does not have to sit through in court if he has no other business there. The client only has to arrange for him to be called if the court actually indicates that his case will be called. The caution must be added however that in other countries where this has been tried it has been found that the lawyers whose cases come further down on the list are often not prepared to go on. Will that be the case in Ghana? Present indications are that it will. But this is based on random observation rather than on any careful research. The point simply is that in England a trainee-solicitor knows that it is the duty of the lawyers (i.e. the solicitors and the barristers) to get their clients and wit-

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nesses ready in court about 30 minutes before the court starts sitting. But in Ghana one sees lawyers who stand up and announce themselves as appearing in a case, and then tell the judge their witnesses are not in court. This may be due to the fact that the witnesses could not be told of the hearing date in time, the transport and communications system being what it is. The result, however, is a breakdown in the case because the court then may have to adjourn.

One other remedy that has been put forward for systemic delay is that special tribunals should be created to deal with special cases. This too is very attractive. For example, Labour Courts will deal with labour and industrial matters; Administrative Tribunals will deal with administrative cases; other special courts will handle workers' compensation cases and yet other special courts will dispose of cases of income tax and other revenue matters. This has worked well in several countries; but I think it means only a little more than increasing the number of Judges and supporting staff and training them in special fields so that they can work faster there. No doubt the ordinary courts would then be left free so that they can handle more ordinary cases. But it should be realised that unless all these special tribunals are created within the judicial system, standards of justice may differ. This should be avoided. Otherwise the advantages here are real.

Various Other Suggestions

There are several other suggestions that have been tried in many countries with results differing from country to country. There are also suggestions that have never been tried anywhere, but which could be tried in Ghana. Among the latter are the various systems of settlement and the forms of customary arbitration. Of the former kind, there is the possibility of holding back a Judge's pay if he is in the habit of delaying with the disposal of cases before him. In America where this has been given serious consideration it seems the result was to rush Judges to show returns, and parties did not often benefit. In any case, as has been well said by Professor Rosenberg of Columbia University, "slow justice is bad, but speedy injustice is not an admissible substitute".

Well, it will be seen that none of the suggestions above has been thoroughly worked out or even fully stated. This is only an introduction to the problem. If some of our young graduates would like to conduct research on the field here rather than in the comfortable libraries of Legon, London or Oxford, perhaps the country would benefit more. Unlike in certain developed countries we have not Foundations which can sponsor such researches. But the Government can give subventions to the Universities for the purpose or allow the Judicial Service itself a vote under which certain persons can be employed on temporary basis to look into specific problems and report. After all, the colonial Government did that; and several anthropologists and even land lawyers wrote monographs at the expense of our Government. Could the reading public think of this?

Not All would be Right

If I may be permitted to quote at length from Professor Rosenburg again, "some of the measures" that have been suggested to remedy court delays "would be wrong even if they worked". Antidotes for delay must meet certain minimum tests of principle, among which are the following:

First, the measure should not often or materially warp the results of the litigation process for the parties; or, if it does, the probability of changed results should be known and acceptable as a price for added efficiency.

Second, the measure ought to operate simply as an administrative matter and inexpensively as a financial matter, in comparison to the saving that it produces. All relevant costs, both to the litigants and to the public at large, should be included in the balance.

Third, the remedy should not involve the custodians of justice in sub-terfuge or hypocrisy. That is, it should not do by indirection what the courts are unable or unwilling to do directly.

Finally, the remedy should not breed disrespect for the courts by giving the public an unsatisfactory impression of their fairness or good faith.

The problem is vast, but it must be stated that it is not unsurmountable. It may be that, as they have found in America, it is chronic and therefore not completely curable. But even palliatives are welcome here. In any case we have to learn to live with the problem without frequent painful disturbances.

Education

LIBRARIES IN GHANA'S SCHOOLS AND TRAINING COLLEGES

By

L. H. Ofosu-Appiah

I SUSPECT that if one visited the Ministry of Education and asked about library facilities in schools and colleges in the country one would be introduced to an officer whose schedule is to see that provision is made for libraries at all levels of the educational ladder. If, however, a person decided to go to any of the elementary schools, he would be inevitably surprised to find that hardly any of them has a library. The situation is no better in the secondary schools and training colleges. Although most of these institutions have libraries of a sort, the general impression one gains is that the Ministry of Education has never, in the past decade, regarded the provision of good libraries as vital to educational progress in the country.

The Ghana Library Board, on its own initiative, decided in 1968 to conduct a survey of library facilities in secondary schools and training colleges in the hope that the results of the survey might lead the Ministry of Education to take the question of libraries more seriously in future. A questionnaire was sent to secondary schools and training colleges. Eighty-three secondary schools and 57 training colleges sent replies. The rest presumably did not think the matter important enough to acknowledge receipt, let alone answer the questions.

No Ideal Libraries

The most interesting revelation from the replies to the questionnaire was that little or no attention is paid to the provision of library accommodation in secondary schools and training colleges. There are very few schools with buildings set aside for libraries. Some schools use a part of the administration block or any odd building as a library. This kind of accommodation is common among the majority of the older institutions. Such libraries are not ideal, since often activities take place in the block, and disturb students who want to use the library. In some schools libraries are situated between two classrooms. One school reported that its library is next to the school kitchen! One can imagine the noise that goes on in such places. Some schools use as libraries rooms built for other purposes. These are generally unsuitable for a good library, even when alterations are made to give the impression that they can serve the same purpose as well-planned libraries.

The commonest type of library is the one in shared premises. In some schools the books are kept on shelves in the headmasters' office or in the assembly hall; and some are distributed among various departments and classes. The majority of schools allocated very few rooms for library purposes; and about 85% of the institutions reported that their libraries were housed in single rooms where students studied, clerks received and processed new books, and where the lending of books took place. Since the majority of institutions have over 300 pupils, one can imagine the overcrowding in such "single room" libraries. Of the 119 schools and colleges which provided information about this section of the questionnaire, about 50% indicated that they could provide seats for just over 35 students at a time. Although international standards require that a school library should be able to accommodate a minimum of 10% of its student population, very few of the institutions could satisfy this requirement. If the conservative figure of a minimum floor space of 25 sq. ft. is adopted for a seater/user in the institutions, then very few of the libraries can provide room for 20 students at a time.

Poor Facilities

The furniture provided in a majority of the libraries are poor and generally unsuitable for library purposes. The usual furniture are cupboards, steel chairs, benches and long low tables. In some cases there are not enough chairs and tables to accommodate students who want to study. Only a few libraries had any periodicals at all.

Although most of the libraries are well ventilated and lit, in some institutions very little attention was paid to these essential items.

When we come to book stock, we are shocked to find that most of the libraries are very poorly stocked. In the secondary schools only one library had a stock of between 9,001 and 9,500; one had 8,501—9,000, another had 8,001—8,500, and another had 7,501—8,000. The rest varied from 7,500 to below 500. There are 14 schools with a stock of between 1,001 and 1,500, 11 with a stock of between 500 and 1,000, and nine with a stock below 500.

The bookstock in 57 training colleges varied from one college with 6,001—6,500 books to

nine colleges with below 500. 14 have a stock of 1,001 — 1,500, and 11 have a stock of 500 — 1,000. In a country where students cannot take books home because text books are free, this is really a sad commentary on the professional competence of the Ministry of Education. Put in another way, about 24.1% of the secondary school libraries have bookstocks below 1,000 volumes, while 2.4% have over 8,000 volumes. In the training colleges about 26.3% reported having holdings below 1,000 volumes, and only 5.3% could claim to possess between 5,000 and 6,500 volumes. It has been laid down for British schools that there should be eight to ten volumes per student.

It was not possible to calculate the number of titles held by the various institutions because they were not given. But since some of the titles are duplicate ones, one can assume that the individual titles held must be severely limited.

The Quality of Book Collections

It was clear from the survey that a number of secondary schools and training colleges added nothing to their bookstock in 1965/66 and 1966/67. Of the 89 secondary schools which replied, 20 added nothing to their holdings in 1965/66, while 11 did not make new acquisitions in 1966/67. Ten out of the 57 training colleges which replied added nothing in 1965/66, five added nothing in 1966/67 and four added nothing in both years! Some secondary schools returned "no records" to that question! Many schools also reported that they had no policy regarding the discarding of outdated books; and many never discarded any books.

The members of the survey team found that there were no data available to show in which fields of study emphasis is placed in the acquisition of books. For example, it was not clear what proportion of the additions was made up of reference books, text books and background information material. Furthermore, lack of data made it impossible to evaluate the quality of book collections. But it was evident that most of the books were not suitable for the teaching requirements of the institutions concerned. Some books were tattered, and there were several old editions, as well as propaganda literature from friendly embassies.

The usual reason given for lack of books is financial. At present there are three main systems of financing libraries. A small proportion of schools and colleges get government grants for libraries; and these are the institutions directly managed by the Ministry of Education. But even in these institutions it is not clear whether the grants are specifically earmarked for libraries. The other source is tuition fees, which are now paid as bursaries through government grants. It is from these that Headmasters and Principals use a part for their libraries. Where other more pressing needs must be satisfied, the library does not get any grant. In general, it is only those heads of institutions who do not regard libraries as luxuries who do their best to set aside some money annually for libraries. Also, the fairly large schools and colleges which usually economise on their general administration are able to spend more money on libraries. A third source of income is derived from occasional gifts of money from outside sources.

Library Expenditure

The survey revealed that 22 institutions receive government grants for libraries and 107 depend on tuition fees. Four schools depended on outside aid as well as fines, while 13 institutions did not specify the sources of their income.

It is interesting to note that the library expenditure in the various institutions varies from a few hundred cedis a year in some schools to almost no expenditure at all in others. A number of institutions showed no library expenditure since the 1965/66 academic year; a minority showed an increasing yearly expenditure on the library. A few institutions added to their book stock by subscribing to the Ghana Library Board Book Box system. Only 34 out of the 136 institutions which answered the questionnaire take advantage of this system.

Apart from books, periodicals form a very important part of a library's collection. Very few schools, however, attach any importance to periodicals and newspapers. Of the 136 reporting institutions 21.3% do not receive any periodicals; 35.5% take no foreign newspaper, and 9.6% receive no local newspaper!!

The survey indicates that 62.4% of the institutions use the teaching staff for organising and supervising the libraries; 22% employ full-time staff, some of whom have elementary library training of a sort, while others have no training at all. About 16% of the schools use office clerks to take charge of the library in addition to their normal office duties, and

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almost all schools encourage student participation in the running of libraries. None of the institutions has a full- or part-time professional librarian.

What appears evident is that the Ministry of Education does not regard the staffing of libraries in schools and colleges as an important and necessary educational requirement. Since the establishment of the Ghana Library Board, a number of professional librarians have been trained, and the University of Ghana has been running courses in librarianship for some years now. But the Ministry has not found it necessary to send teacher librarians on study leave to gain professional qualifications which would improve the school libraries. And since books have a lower cultural value than dancers in Ghana, the budget allowed to the Ghana Library Services for employing professional librarians is less than the money spent on dancers visiting the United States, Europe and Algeria!

Trained Librarians Needed

But for the school libraries to be efficiently run, and their contents properly utilised, there should be trained librarians to catalogue and classify the books. At present this work is done well by the Peace Corps teachers in some schools, but when they leave the gap is not easy to fill. Besides, none of the schools have guides to classification and cataloguing of books such as the *Dewey Classification Scheme*, *The Simplified Cataloguing Code* and the *Introduction to Dewey Decimal Classification for British Schools*. Some schools even lock up their books in cupboards, and open them periodically for borrowing because of fear that they might be stolen. Cataloguing and classification in such cases are out of the question.

Very few schools keep accession records; but this is a very important feature of a library. Although in theory all students are allowed to borrow books, in some schools borrowing is limited to forms four and above; in other instances the right to borrow reference books is limited to members of staff only.

A good school library must issue books to all students, since the reading habit can only be cultivated by having access to books. And in a country where very few homes have libraries, it is just commonsense to insist that libraries be open to all students. Students should also be allowed to use reference books in the library even if they are not allowed to borrow them.

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OR

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Civil Servants, employees of Statutory Boards and Corporations, or Government sponsored Institutions must forward their applications through their Heads of Departments. Persons under bond are ineligible.

NOTE: Persons who have already applied in response to an earlier advertisement for this post need not apply again.

The rule may be relaxed by allowing reference books to be borrowed occasionally.

The survey shows that 37 out of 80 responding secondary schools and 30 out of 56 reporting training colleges set aside special library periods once a week on the timetable. During such periods some students work under the supervision of their form masters, form mistresses or the library clerk, while some read on their own. Only three institutions showed that the librarians or the supervisors use some parts of the periods to explain how to use libraries and to care for books. But since very few students know much about the books on their subjects or how to select information for themselves, guidance is necessary during the library period. It is very important that first year students should be taught the use of library material.

Little Access of Libraries

In most schools the library is open during school hours, but because of a lack of supervisory staff they are closed after school hours. A few schools, however, open until 'night studies' period. Where libraries have no clerks, and consequently are obliged to use teacher librarians or prefects, they are opened for only a few hours during and after school hours, mainly for borrowing and returning books. In day schools and colleges, students have very little access to library facilities. The number of hours they spend in the library differs according to the free time they are allowed during school hours; and since all the buildings are locked up after school hours, students cannot use the libraries. Those critics of boarding schools who come from countries with good public libraries might make a note of this point, and stop lecturing Ghanaians on the necessity for turning our institutions into day schools.

The time has come for drastic changes in the running and provision of libraries for our educational institutions. As a first step the Ghana Library Board should be granted more money for employing qualified staff and for increasing the number of children's libraries in all the regions. The aim should be to have a children's library in every town and village where there is a school. The Ministry should set aside more of the money spent on dancers for the provision of libraries for the villagers who have been dancing long before dancing became an academic exercise. Until the secondary schools and training colleges can employ professional librarians, the Library Board should be helped to employ more staff to organise school libraries, and to assist in training clerks for the routine work in the libraries.

The Ministry of Education should also employ librarians in all the regions to see that books are available for schools and colleges. A special vote should be set aside for libraries in all educational institutions, and elementary courses in librarianship should be started in certain training colleges. Graduate teachers who are interested in library work should be given study leave to qualify as librarians; and all Boards of Governors, as far as possible, should include librarians. Old students should endow library funds in all the regions.

For the 1970's we must emphasise universal culture, which is transmitted through books, so that we can have a generation which will portray Ghana's culture in the way in which the Ancient Greeks portrayed theirs through books, the plastic and graphic arts, and gymnastics. The Ministry of Education could then embrace the Greek conception of Mousike and Gumnastike, i.e. culture! Above all, individual Ghanaians should contribute to a library fund for establishing libraries in all parts of Ghana. The first town to do so has been Bolgatanga, and it is hoped that citizens of Ghana who have good children's books to spare will help in this adventure to make reading a necessary part of our education.

Observer Notebook

International VIPs in Africa

THE RANGE in variety among the reasons which bring world figures visiting to Africa these days is amply illustrated by the variety of the involved Very Important Persons themselves. The contrasts in motivation and the speculative potentialities suggested by the calls of three such men as U Thant, Marshall Tito and U.S. Secretary of State Rogers offer a fascinating study, in the context of Africa's unsettled political condition combined with its challenging economic probabilities. And if to these individuals you add the Pope and his (earlier) entourage, Japanese trade missions, and the never-ending flow of foreign experts of one kind or another, the visible picture becomes complete. The invisible implications are, however, quite another matter.

Every one of these persons and groups represents a distinct and identifiable interest, which to describe as "vested" is admittedly no more than to point, with apologies, to the obvious.

No-one is ever going to be able to outdo George Orwell's masterpiece of sardonicism; so to say that the trouble with these international interests is that some are more vested than others is not to try to match Orwell for any mere cleverness of the effort, but simply to indicate where we think the caveat signs should be posted. U Thant we know; the brave, revered champion of ideological and moral independence from Yugoslavia we accept, in good faith; but who are these others, these peddlers of promises?

Half the world is audibly grateful to the United States government and some of its peoples for economic aid and military guarantees of national and international security. The Nato Powers — for all Charles de Gaulle's erstwhile towering repudiations and rejections — no less than the Seato group, are terrified sick at the threat of American military withdrawals from their respective areas of exposure and vulnerability. We in West Africa too are grateful to America for much. Yet, in contrast to our feelings about President Kennedy's enabling act with respect to the Volta Dam Project, we cannot conceal our permanent dissatisfaction with the Valco agreements, for one instance, and what we feel the majority of us don't know about them; we cannot forget the experience with and the lessons of the Abbott Affair; and thirdly we cannot pretend to be less than disgusted with the monstrous "Hypocrisy Plays" which the Western powers, led by good old England, substitute for morality plays on the subject of southern African crimes. So the fair words of Mr. Rogers could have impressed us — and did impress us — only so much and no more.

Again, both in Nigeria and Ghana it is obvious that Japan (to turn to that most enterprising country next), sells more to us than she buys from us; our confidence in her will begin to be built up, therefore, only when this imbalance begins to be corrected. Besides, we hold reservations about Japan's African policies on two other grounds: one, her well known trading activities with those pariah countries, South Africa, Rhodesia and Portugal; and two, the suspicion that Japan also is moving in just for the kill in Nigerian oil and Ghanaian mineral potentialities. Here too it will take much more than V.I.P. visits and mutual diplomatic pleasantries to prevent us from warning our countrymen to beware of our Japanese and other important visitors, even when they bring presents and promises.

R.I.P. — Kaleidoscope

THOSE tellyphiles who have been regretting the sudden demise of the popular, vocal, free-wheeling and articulate "Kaleidoscope" programmes on Ghana Television will learn with pleasant surprise that their favourite programme is being positively mourned at GBC-TV. There you find notice boards and doors generously sporting obituary notices, complete with a black cross and its shadow. For the truth of the matter is that this programme, which was born in April 1966, in the "what went wrong" hey-days, had established a solid following on the basis of the quality of its output.

What happened? The Minister of Information held a press conference on the 13th of January this year, during which he is reported to have expressed his displeasure at the handling of certain topical issues by the Kaleidoscope panelists of that occasion. These included the establishment of the National Service Corps, the K. B. Ayensu affair, and the Beer Bottle rumpus. Somebody somewhere must have taken fright at this announcement, for a fortnight after the press conference, all attempts to assemble a panel for Kaleidoscope failed. A week later, a panel was assembled, but GBC-TV would not record the programme. Then, another week later, a letter went to the regular host of the programme announcing the Corporation's decision to rest the programme for a while.

The question which arises is, did the Corporation not feel the need to give the panelists a chance to vindicate their position? If the statements made on the programme were factual, could the two sides not have been brought together for a confrontation? All this bears on the larger issue of the relations that should exist between an institution like the G.B.C. and the Information Ministry, or the government of the day, for that matter. For anyone to take umbrage at the mere advocacy of the publication of the committee report which led to Mr. K. B. Ayensu's departure from the Civil Service is, to say the least, odd. Surely, we have got to the stage where justice must not only be done but must be manifestly seen to be done?

Or if anyone justified the feeling that the present government was bypassing Parliament in fiscal matters by pointing to discrepancies in the votes announced by the N.L.C. and those released periodically by the Busia government at durbars, surely the record can be checked in full public view without recourse to veiled

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threats?

Readers would recall that another TV programme involving articulate debate on matters of public concern, namely "Viewpoint", also died a mysterious death a little while ago. One wonders really whether any useful purpose is served by inaugurating "Face to Face" on the grave of Kaleidoscope. What lessons are the panelists of the new programme supposed to draw from what happened to Kaleidoscope? Two other points: "Face to Face" is a misnomer in any case, for what the new programme actually is, namely, Kaleidoscope under another name. Secondly, if so, why take the trouble to cancel one programme for another which turns out to be the same, *except* in name only?

If our media of information are free, they must be left in no doubt about this. They would be the first to acknowledge the (legal) perimeters of this freedom. The government's attitude in all this will, one hopes, be seen to reflect the fact that it has as massive a parliamentary majority as it could wish for, and that any signs of panic or impatience one may have detected in this episode were imaginary.

The Black Stars-and-Sudan Affair

THE Ghanaian press is to be commended, on the whole, for the mature way in which it has handled a highly disturbing episode: the case of the Black Stars, our national soccer team, whose fine performances in the field during the Sudan-staged African championships, 1970, were marred by the distressing contrast of their expulsion from the country almost immediately after the Cup Final. To this unusual situation the Ghana press has reacted on the one hand with the praise due to one-half of the result, and on the other with due dignity and restraint in respect of the other half. It was so easy to have become hysterical about the deportation of our national team, just as easy as it would have been to pounce on the Stars for their alleged bad conduct.

We too, naturally, congratulate the Black Stars on their showing in the field of play. The fact that they did not bring back the cup, to keep it forever this time had they won it, was second-place to the fact of their having played themselves into the final without losing a match; of losing in the end by the narrow margin of 0-1, on the opponent's own home ground and before a reportedly most hostile crowd; and of acquiring in the process the enviable reputation of having carried in the squad no fewer than three men popularly adjudged to be the best in their respective field positions in the whole competition.

This record—made at a time when we had almost all agreed to write off the Stars—is what makes it so painful that their story in the Sudan should have ended in the extraordinary incident of their being deported for social behaviour (or, that is, alleged misbehaviour) arising out of the very game they had played so well. The version of the incident that each side gives is mutually improbable when placed side by side. That the Stars, however sore they were feeling about whatever cause, would have refused point-blank to go up for their silver medals from the hands of the military Head of State of the host country, as alleged by the reports (including one by a Ghanaian), sounds so bush we cannot believe it of our men, especially as they were led by a junior minister and our Director of Sports.

On the other hand the version the Ghanaians give is equally puzzling: that there was such confusion after the end of the game as not only to have prevented them permanently from getting to the Presidential dais but also to have made them look—or so the allegation said—like refusing to go up for their prize! Now how could that be? How could it have been possible for them to have failed completely to demonstrate their predicament and get themselves extricated? And how could they then have reacted to the situation in such a way as to be seen to have refused to follow the standard formula of behaviour? Surely they should have waited, confusion or no confusion, to make sure of their position in the whole situation before leaving the field for the dressing room without having been presented—if that is what they did? On the other hand, how could the Sudanese authorities have taken so extreme a step as the order and execution of deportation, without a fair and just enquiry into the facts? The whole thing sounds so unbelievable.

We conclude from this contradictoriness that it must all have been due to a misreading of the signs on both sides and to the misunderstanding which must result from such. And yet if our conclusions are valid this would surprise us the more. How could two parties like these have allowed such things to come to pass? Meanwhile, nothing more convincing than the above stories has been heard officially since they were first told. Until the whole near-tragic incident is cleared up at the diplomatic level and the results are, hopefully, made public, we reserve further comment.

Letters

Afro-Americans and Africa

R—It is a pity that Mr. J. K. Obatala, an Afro-Ameri- student at Legon, is encountering some difficulty in ng accepted as an African by some Ghanaian stu- nts; I hope things may soon change for him in this gard. But before that time, he has got to show that really wants to be regarded and accepted as an rican!

Regarding the reaction of the student in respect of . Obatala's suggestion that "servants should be sent trade schools, and that students should do for them- ves what the servants are doing for them", I would t blame the Ghanaian student for his comments about suggestion. First, both gentlemen have different nceptions about student life. Secondly, in Ghana e finds servants in almost every home, in a situa- n in which economic factors make this pattern not ly inevitable for the time being but helpful to those employed. But soon, I hope, following the departure most of the alien servant labour force, Ghanaians ll have to do for themselves what the servants had en doing for them.

Thirdly, the colleague might not have understood meaning of "freedom of expression", and no doubt s not yet developed the ability to criticize and then gue out his points constructively and convincingly. ter all, some African or Ghanaian students abroad ve occasionally suggested more serious reforms than r. Obatala did.

However, Mr. Obatala raises the question of Pan- ricanism in his article (**L.O.** V/3), and I have this say. More often than not the Afro-American is an rican only when he is in a "traumatic racial identi- ation dilemma", and sometimes when he wants to have f-confidence; it is then that he would perhaps feel more solidarity with the African: After all, "our black others" in Africa are governing themselves and "we ack people" of America feel proud of them and of hat they are doing to fight European domination in olitics and economics, . . .! We African students road, in our encounters with some Afro-Americans, ten sense in their attitude that they regard us as imitive!

May I ask Mr. Obatala this question—Is it really ue that the so-called "Black Intellectuals of America", hose talents are being "exploited, abused and wasted", e willing to give up their America and come to settle rever in Africa? And even if so, the Afro-American ay have to accept that he is an American first by ltural orientation and environmental conditions: and at he is an African secondly and historically. From is he may gather some psychological inspirations om Africa.

ordahl Brunsgate 22 **J. Amoako-Addo**
slo 1, Norway

These Promises!

R—It is disheartening when one takes up our local wspapers to contemplate some of the news items ublished. A close study of the news items, especially ose covering interviews with Ministers or Junior Ministers of development ministries, reveals that the contents of the news have not changed since Gold Coast became Ghana. The only novelty about them is that they are said by different people at different times.

A case in point is what the Ministerial Secretary to the Ministry of Agriculture is reported to have said in an interview quoted in the **Daily Graphic** (Accra) issue of Thursday, 22nd January, 1970, under the caption "Rice imports may stop in 3 years". After seeing such a caption, one could predict that in the subsequent paragraphs mention would be made of a paper plan or programme which envisages some imaginary amount which would be saved by the country in terms of foreign exchange. This time it was NC6 million. Is this the first time such a thing has been reported only to find it turn out to be a paper plan?

We are bored almost to the point of being sick. We have heard all these stories before and nothing happened. Please tell us something new, or better still do not tell us anything at all.

147 Queen's Hall **C. C. T. Blankson**
U.S.T.
Kumasi

Explaining Government Policies

SIR—In the **Legon Observer** (Vol. V/4), I read two letters, the first headed "Meddling with Mass Media" by Mr. Michael Bonnie, and the other headed "Financing the National Service Corps" by Mr. David Akuetteh of the U.S.T., Kumasi.

Mr. Bonnie accuses the Minister of Information of preparing fertile ground for rumours, taking panellists off the screen, seeing to it that Kaleidoscope goes off the air, insisting that what is said on Kaleidoscope suits his taste, and gagging artistes psychologically. All I have enumerated above are, to me, diametrically the opposite of what the Minister's press conference aimed at.

It is a very important responsibility of any Minister of Information to correct and explain basic misconceptions about Government policies, and that was, precisely what Mr. Brodie-Mends did. He said, loudly and clearly, that any person has the right to criticise the Government, no matter how violently, but in doing so, the person should "keep faith with the facts". In other words, the person must get his facts straight, and should not twist facts to suit his petty personal, political or any other inclinations.

I think Mr. Akuetteh's letter was sheer bluff. If he knows—and that is what he says in his letter—that Mr. Brodie-Mends quoted from the Prime Minister's speech to give the lie to Mr. Cromwell Quist's misleading comments on the TV, why is he so worried about what, allegedly, was said by Mr. R. R. Amponsah?

I do not rule out the possibility that Mr. Amponsah was misreported. In any case, I think Mr. Akuetteh wasted his time and energy by his unnecessary incisiveness. I say this because he stated himself that Mr. Brodie-Mends's explanation came after the alleged statement by Mr. Amponsah.

House No. D111/2, **Kweku Ngyeduam**
Jackson Street
Cape Coast

Unedifying Newspaper Attacks

SIR—In its front page comment of 14th February, a local newspaper criticises the G.B.C. for not screening the Kaleidoscope programme in recent weeks. The paper was at pains to show that the excuses offered by the G.B.C. for this failure were also likely to create the impression that the Government was interfering with the programme. So far very fair.

But the paper goes on to describe the G.B.C. as "a veritable dosshouse propped up with dead wood eaten right through with the cankers of obstinacy, chicanery, pomposity and in particular lack of imagination."The top personnel of the Corporation is said to consist of "spineless toadies." As for the Acting Head of Television, he "is famous only for having discovered (the comedian) Issa Abongo on sound radio."

A local wit has said of the defunct "Evening News" that it could never make a point unless it resorted to irrelevance and vituperation. For instance, a cabinet Minister had to be "a Tsombe-faced nincompoop" and "a Catholic slave" as part of an argument for his removal from office. Some of us had expected that this paper would recognise that it owed it especially to its sponsors not to go down as another party press; or if the paper could not care less about this responsibility, it hould at least have some regard for young people who are learning how to compose English prose in schools: paragraphs of inelegant writing dished out out twice weekly could hardly help.

University of Ghana **Ebow Daniel**
Legon

The Compliance Order

SIR—The social and economic benefits emerging from the government's quit order need not be over-emphasized, hence the great exultation which has been going on among Ghanaians ever since the order was enforced late last year.

Most shops and market stalls formerly occupied by aliens have been taken over by Ghanaians, who sat behind their wares under the scorching sun prior to the quit order. Many shopkeepers have extended the size of their shops and the market women have been able to increase their wares, with varieties of commodities which were formerly sold exclusively by aliens.

A visit to our hospitals will indicate that the long queues seen at the hospitals during the pre-quit order days have considerably shortened, leading to quicker service. Congestion in the cities have been reduced and the sanitary labourer's work is lessened owing to decrease in population. Sanitation is fast improving. Thanks to the government for the firm manner in which the order has been handled.

But up till now, especially in the cities and some rural areas, there are some aliens without resident permits who have turned deaf ears to this order and are carrying on with petty-trading. This shows disrespect for our laws which must not be allowed.

Commonwealth Hall **deBeck A. Asare**
Legon

SIR—The **Observer** (Vol. IV/26) editorial on the reaction of the Ghanaian population to the Government's aliens' registration order was a welcome piece.

Since arriving in London a few weeks ago I have had to face a barrage of questioning and cross-examinations concerning the ethical evaluation of the Government's action. Like their countrymen in Ghana, the number of Ghanaian students and residents I have met so far have received the news with varying degrees of mixed feelings. Some see in it a welcome opporunity for the creation of job-openings which will attract their eventual return home to take part in national reconstruction and development

Others however, are apprehensive of its probable repercussions on the international level. To the latter the present order poses a threat to their continued existence in Britain especially at this time when Enoch Powell is doing his best to enstrange aliens in the minds of the British, and is actively campaigning for a similar enactment to send immigrants back to their countries. The medium of communication among Ghanaians here is very poor indeed and I advocate that the authorities do something about this situation.

278 Ferme Park Road **T. G. Kumi**
Hornsey, London, N. 8

Miss Hereward and Western Liberalism

SIR — By her statement (**L.O.** V/3, page 12) "to allow an educator or a missionary to open a school and go his own way is **one thing which liberal western countries do and which totalitarian countries do not"** (emphasis mine), Miss Daphne Hereward seems to say that liberal actions are seen only in Western countries and totalitarian ones in countries certainly not Western. Miss Hereward and Western Europeans of her thinking should be told that their holier-than-thou attitude towards Eastern European, African and Asian countries in such matters cuts no ice these days with black Africa.

Would she be good enough to say whether the following are examples of the "...one thing which liberal western countries do...": Britain rushing with gusto to Anguilla to crush the black rebels there while excusing herself with much double-talk from dealing the same blow to the white rebels in Rhodesia; and the American State Department using legalistic argument to condone South Africa's blatant refusal to allow Arthur Ashe, the Afro-American tennis star, to play in the South African National Championship because he is a non-white?

P. O. Box 7287 **Kwame Bosque**
Accra-North

The Observer Language

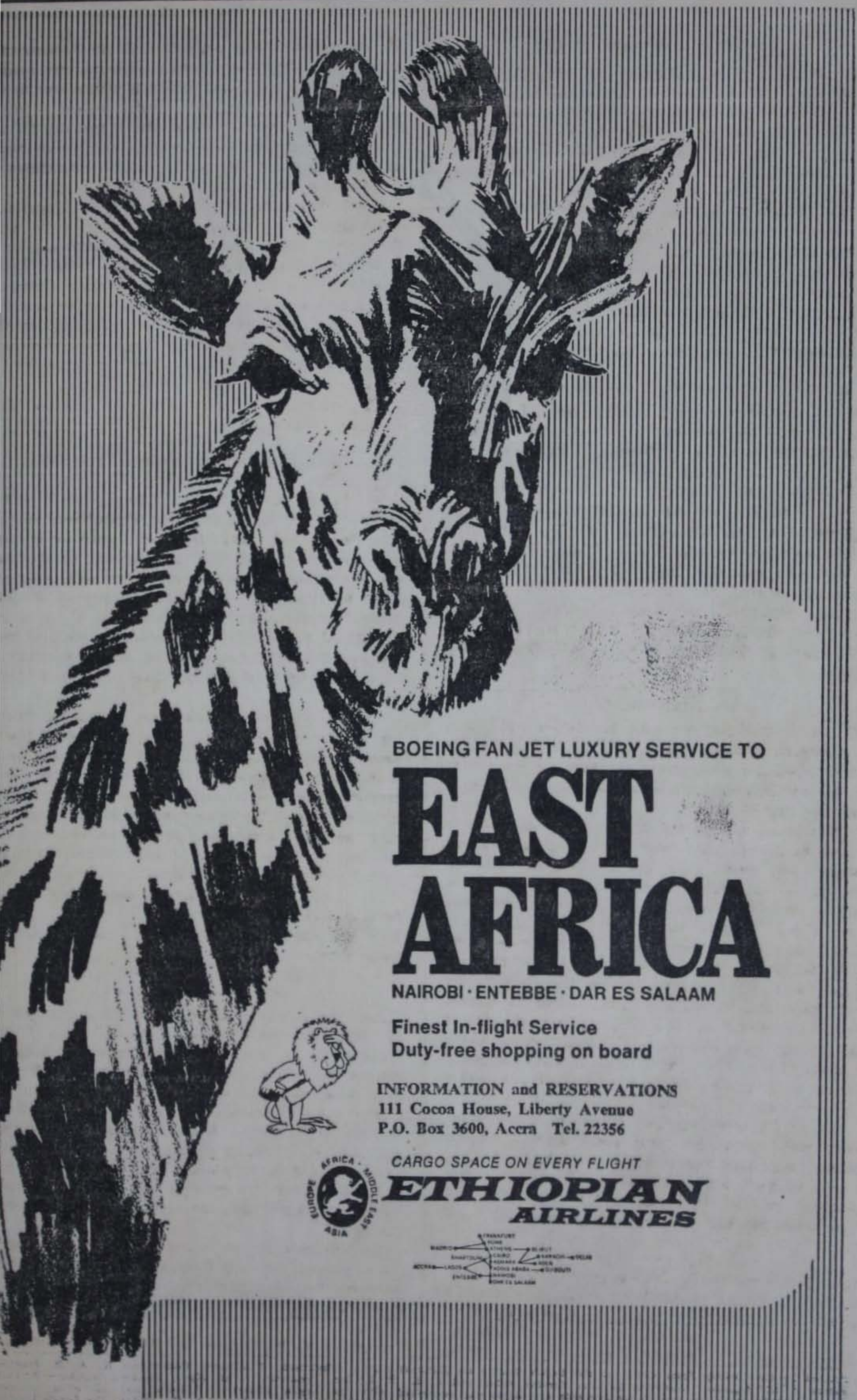
SIR—There is one important point some contributors to **Legon Observer** overlook, if the sole aim of the magazine is to keep its readers well informed of matters of national importance and interest. That is, they must lower the standard of their English.

May I ask them whether they are aware of the fact that many people do not read the **Observer**, not because the articles are not worth it, but because the standard of the language is too high for them? Then also, would the exclusion of all latin and French words and phrases not make their articles more understandable?

The **Observer** is very informative, and I am sure if my suggestions are considered and accepted, its readership would increase greatly.

Survey Party **A. K. Manteaw**
Lawra

Editor's note: The suggestion is well noted, with thanks.


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