



Report of the Committee appointed
to investigate the Possibility of
Establishing a Permanent Bureau
of African Industries.

Ordered by His Excellency the Governor to be Printed.

GOLD COAST :

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REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE APPOINTED TO INVESTIGATE THE POSSIBILITY OF ESTABLISHING A PERMANENT BUREAU OF AFRICAN INDUSTRIES.

The Committee appointed on 11th August, 1933, by His Excellency the Governor to report on the possibility of establishing a permanent Bureau of African Industries in Accra was composed as follows :—

The Director of Agriculture (*Chairman*).
The Acting Conservator of Forests (Mr. H. W. Moor).
The Director of Education (Hon. G. Power).
Hon. Dr. F. V. Nanka-Bruce.
John Buckman, Esq., M.B.E.

At their first meeting, the Committee decided to ask the Director of Prisons (Capt. J. L. Cavanaugh) to join in their deliberations and he attended the second, third, fourth and fifth meetings. The Committee has held five meetings, on 8th September, 6th October, and 3rd November under the Chairmanship of Mr. A. C. Miles (Acting Director of Agriculture) and on 8th December and 5th January, under the Chairmanship of Mr. G. G. Auchinleck (Director of Agriculture).

At the fifth meeting the following were present by invitation and gave evidence on matters concerning the subject under investigation :—

Dr. F. R. Irvine, Achimota College.
H. C. Weston, Esq., Technical School, Accra.

The Committee is indebted to these gentlemen for many useful suggestions.

ORIGIN OF THE COMMITTEE.

The Committee had its origin in two proposals, viz. :—

(a) a scheme put forward, in June, 1932, by the Director of Agriculture, for the establishment of Bureaux or Associations for Rural Crafts and Industries, and

(b) a proposal submitted by Capt. J. L. Cavanaugh, Director of Prisons, and Mr. H. W. Moor, Acting Conservator of Forests, for the founding of a permanent exhibition of local products, and for the development of the natural resources of the country.

In essence, these two schemes were similar. Both were based on a realisation of the need for some organisation for establishing new crafts and industries and for stimulating and improving those already existing. Both envisaged the provision by Government of a building, which should be the centre for exhibition and sale of local products and for the training of local craftsmen and women, and the appointment of a controlling Committee to supervise the work.

The Committee accordingly did not limit itself to consideration of a permanent exhibition alone but discussed also the educative and commercial aspects of the subject.

PROCEEDINGS.

The proceedings of the Committee are given in summary form below :—

First Meeting.—Proceedings included consideration of Government's letter of instructions and terms of reference, of the letter from the Director of Prisons and the Acting Conservator of Forests (No. 1015/928/1933 of 17th July, 1933, of Conservator of Forests) proposing the establishment of a permanent exhibition, and of correspondence between the Director of Agriculture and Government concerning the organisation of Bureaux for Crafts and Industries.

Second Meeting.—The Committee after discussion decided that a permanent exhibition of local products should be established and maintained in connection with a Bureau for developing local industries.

Premises for the Bureau, in the Committee's opinion, would best be situated in the business section of the town if the expense were not found to be prohibitive.

A preliminary list of articles made from fibres, straws, leather, brick-clay and palm-wood was submitted by Captain Cavenaugh.

Third Meeting.—It was agreed that the Bureau should in the first instance develop local crafts and industries for the local market, subsequently giving attention to the possibility of creating an export trade, in the natural products of the country awaiting development.

Further discussion was given to the crafts and industries suitable for the proposed Bureau and exhibition, and additions were made to the preliminary list.

The Committee decided that a vote from Government would be necessary for the establishment and maintenance of the Bureau and Exhibition during the earlier years of operation and until the scheme had been made self-supporting. It was agreed that £50 should suffice for the remainder of the financial year 1933-34 and £100 annually thereafter.

Fourth Meeting.—The functions and organisation of the Bureau were discussed and it was agreed

I. That the Bureau should give sustained attention to the following matters :—

- (a) generally acting as liaison between producers and the buying-public,
- (b) arranging for co-operative purchase and sale of produce,
- (c) arranging for training and guiding producers so as to improve their methods.

II. That His Excellency the Governor be asked to nominate a Committee of Management for the Bureau, with the following prescriptions :—

- (a) the Committee to be small in number,
- (b) it should consist of two sub-Committees, one of ladies to deal with women's sections and the other of men,
- (c) the sub-Committees should have power to co-opt members for any meeting,
- (d) the Chairman of the Committee to be nominated by His Excellency.

It was agreed to ask His Excellency the Governor to be good enough to act as Patron of the Bureau.

III. That the Director of Agriculture be allowed by Government to second an experienced Agricultural Instructor for one year in order to start the Bureau and to place it in touch with producers.

The Chairman undertook to prepare for the next meeting a draft Prospectus and a Draft Catalogue for use by the proposed Bureau.

Fifth Meeting.—The Draft Prospectus submitted by the Chairman was considered and, after some amendments, was adopted in the form in which it appears in Appendix I to this Report.

The Draft Catalogue was considered and discussed, and after several additions was adopted in the form in which it appears in Appendix II to this Report.

The Committee does not regard the Draft Prospectus and Draft Catalogue as necessarily final in form. The two have been prepared in order to afford some indication of the type of work proper to the proposed Bureau and the associated exhibition and as bases for fuller and more detailed compilations. The Management Committee of the Bureau should place among its earlier tasks the preparation for publication of a revised prospectus, bye-laws and catalogue.

CONCLUSION.

In the course of their deliberations, the Committee have been impressed by the large number of local crafts and industries the germs of which already exist in the Gold Coast and which need organisation and direction for development. There are in addition many crafts and industries which exist in other tropical countries and which can and should be introduced to the people of the Gold Coast.

Some of these industries are rural and other urban. In some, the problem of development is one of education and training, in others it is a matter of finance. It is difficult or impossible, therefore, to allocate to any one Government Department the task of supervising and developing all crafts, and yet it is in the interests of the community that they should be developed. The Gold Coast has for too long relied on imported goods paid for by the export of one major crop, and attention should be given to supplying local needs from local sources.

As in other Colonies, so in the Gold Coast the fostering of local crafts and industries will doubtless best be effected by entrusting their supervision to a semi-official body of public-spirited persons. To ensure Government sympathy and support, that body should contain representatives from the principal "development" Departments of Agriculture, Forestry, Education, Prisons and Animal Health. In addition, the Prisons Department can lend valuable help in testing materials and methods for the Management Committee. Achimota College, too, can give valuable help both as a centre of education and publicity and by virtue of the experience of its staff in matters concerning local arts and crafts.

The Committee, therefore, has no hesitation in advising Government to set in hand at the earliest convenient date the appointment of a Management Committee whose duty shall be the founding and supervision of the proposed Bureau and its associated exhibition. They are satisfied that public-spirited African and European unofficials will be glad to collaborate with officials in making the Bureau a success.

The Management Committee, in addition to supervising other activities of the Bureau, should from the first give attention to the following matters:—

- (a) nomination of local Agents in various Districts to keep the Bureau informed of potentialities and in return be kept in touch with regard to requirements,
- (b) the preparation and despatch abroad of samples in order to obtain commercial valuations,
- (c) interesting commercial concerns both here and abroad in what might become profitable industries,
- (d) acting generally as a liaison between producer and consumer.

APPENDIX I.

GOLD COAST.

BUREAU OF AFRICAN INDUSTRIES.

PROSPECTUS.

1. This institution shall be known as the Bureau of African Industries in the Gold Coast.

2. The functions of the Bureau shall be to encourage and develop existing handicrafts and industries and to provide information required for the establishment of new industries and export-trades in raw products.

3. Any member of the public may become a member of the Bureau upon complying with the terms of membership prescribed by the Managing Committee of the Bureau.

4. The Managing Committee of the Bureau shall be appointed annually by His Excellency the Governor as Patron of the Bureau and shall be composed as follows :—

A President,

A Sub-Committee to deal with crafts and industries normally pursued by men,

A Sub-Committee to deal with crafts and industries normally carried out by women.

A Paid Secretary responsible to the Committee for the work of the Bureau.

The two sub-committees together with President and Secretary shall constitute jointly the Managing Committee.

5. The duties of the Managing Committee shall include the following :—

(a) general supervision of the affairs of the Bureau,

(b) prescribing the terms of membership of the Bureau,

(c) arranging for maintenance of a permanent exhibition in Accra of local crafts and industries,

(d) arranging for sale and purchase of members' produce,

(e) the holding of instructional demonstrations for the improvement of local crafts and industries,

(f) the compilation and maintenance of an up-to-date list of such crafts and industries as are deemed suitable for attention by the Bureau,

(g) prescribing the prices to be paid for members' produce handled by the Bureau,

(h) generally acting as a liaison between members and the buying-public,

(i) arranging scales of commission, fees and other sources of income of the Bureau.

APPENDIX II.

BUREAU OF AFRICAN INDUSTRIES.

DRAFT CATALOGUE OF ARTICLES SUITABLE FOR SALE.

Straw and basket-work.

Waste-paper baskets.
Basket-work trays.
Produce baskets.
School-satchels, straw.
Straw-work shopping-bags.
Grass-work hand-bags.
Straw fans.
Cane chairs.
Cane tables.
Mats, small for table (straw).
Mats, floor (straw).
Woven straw hats.
Sibiri-mats (floors).
Blinds.

Fibre-work.

Rope.
Twine.
Hammocks (string).
Tennis-nets.
Produce-nets.
Fishing cast-nets.
Raffia-string.
Sisal-hemp baskets.
Fibre-brushes.
Brooms (piassava).
Loofah sponges.
Cane-boxes.
Lunch-baskets.
Coir-mats.
Boat-fenders.

Weaving.

Keta cloths.
Ashanti cloths.
Cloth mats.
Woven cloth, other kinds.

Needlework and Fancywork.

(To be drafted by Ladies Sub-Committee of the Committee of Management.)

Preserves, Jams, Jellies, etc.

Guava-jelly.
Guava preserve.
Chutney.
Marmalade.
Pickles.
Papaw-preserve.
Canned produce.
Preserved ginger.
Honey.
Candied peel.

Preserves, Jams, Jellies, etc.—contd.

Toffees and sweets.
Pineapple jam.
Roselle jam.
Brown sugar.
Vinegars.
Chocolate sticks.

Gold, silver and tortoise-shell work.

Tortoise-shell cigarette cases.
Tortoise-shell trays.
Tortoise-shell backing for combs and brushes.
Tortoise-shell slave-bangles.

Silver or gold rings.
Silver or gold bangles.
Silver or gold ear-rings.
Silver or gold chains.
Silver or gold hair and hat-pins.
Silver or gold emblems and ornaments.
Silver or gold scarf pins and brooches.
Silver or gold toilet-trays.

Brass work and Ivory work.

Inlay ivory tables.
Ivory cigarette holders.
Ivory napkin rings.
Ivory jewel-boxes.
Ivory bangles.
Ivory cigarette boxes.
Ivory necklaces.
Ivory paper knives.
Ivory castor-sets.
Ivory ornaments.
Brass finger bowls.
Brass cigarette boxes.
Brass flower-pots.
Brass trays.
Brass ash-trays.
Brass statuary and models.
Brass produce and food-bowls.
Brass inkpots and stands.

Wood-work.

Inlay tables.
Inlay trays.
Cabinets.
Book-cases.
Chairs.
Picture-frames.
Office-rulers.
Pin-bowls.
Pen-racks.
Cigarette and Jewel-boxes.



APPENDIX II—*Contd.*

BUREAU OF AFRICAN INDUSTRIES.

DRAFT CATALOGUE OF ARTICLES SUITABLE FOR SALE.

Woodwork—contd.

Store-boxes.
Ashanti stools.
Wood-carving.
Cool-boxes.

Pottery and clay-work.

Flower-pots.
Soup-bowls.
Chop-bowls.
Water-jars.
Floor-tiles.
Roof-tiles.
Statuary and models.
Glazed tiles.
Brick-making.

Leather-work.

Cushion covers.
Cigarette boxes (leather covered).

Leather-work—contd.

Jewel-boxes (leather covered).
Decanters (leather covered).
Covering any article in leather.
Bedroom slippers, morocco-leather.
Hand-bags.
School-satchels.
Whip-lashes.
Dog-collars.
Suit-cases.

Miscellaneous.

Soaps, dyes, burnt lime.
Ground coffee, roasted coffee.
Furniture-polishes.
Castor-silk.
Gum arabic.
Edible oils and fats.

MEMORANDUM.

After full consideration, Government has decided to accept the recommendations contained in this Report, and the Finance Committee of Legislative Council on November 23rd, 1934 approved of a grant of £50 from Government funds for the inception of the proposed Bureau and Exhibition. This grant will cover initial expenses during the period December, 1934 to March, 1935. A further grant-in-aid of £100 will be provided in the Estimates for 1935-36. It is hoped that the Bureau will have been made self-supporting by the 31st March, 1936.

The Bureau will be required to provide its own accommodation and running-expenses, the costs to be met from commissions on sales and any other sources of income devised by the Bureau. A Committee of Management, under the Chairmanship of the Director of Agriculture and composed of two Sub-Committees, one to deal with handicrafts normally carried on by women and the other for men's industries, will be appointed by Government at an early date.