

# URGENT NEEDS OF EDUCATION

## Too Few Primary Teachers

By N. C. KAY

WHEN the Nigerian Constitution was revised in 1954, primary education became the responsibility of the Regional Governments, which set about adapting the existing system to suit their own needs. Universal free primary education schemes were introduced in the South and more recently by a pilot scheme in the North leading to a vast increase in the number of children in the primary schools. The present figure is over 2,500,000, of whom one third are girls. In all, there are over 15,600 primary schools in Nigeria. Two-thirds of these are managed by religious organizations such as the missions and the remainder by inter-denominational bodies such as local authorities. Although direct control of the primary schools is in the

hands of non-government agencies, the running expenses are largely met by Government grants, which are enough to cover teachers' salaries and basic equipment. About £10m. is disbursed annually by the Regional Governments through officials to the managers of primary schools. Strict grant-in-aid regulations to safeguard public funds ensure that the system works well, and all 500 schools are assisted in this way. The enormous expansion of primary education created a shortage of teachers, and though teacher training facilities were rapidly expanded they could not

cope with the vast numbers involved, so that today 66 per cent of Nigeria's 80,000 primary school teachers are untrained, although there are over 26,000 teachers in training (about one-third of them are women) in 300 training colleges throughout the Federation. The expansion of teacher training created another problem—the supply of suitably qualified staff for the training colleges, and this has not yet been satisfactorily solved, though Nigeria is getting valuable help in this matter, particularly from the United Kingdom Government under the Commonwealth Education Scheme, from Canada and from the United States through International Cooperation Administration. Because of the high proportion of untrained teachers in the schools, Regional ministries give a great deal of guidance both in regard to the content of the course and to methods of teaching by issuing detailed syllabuses showing what is to be taught in every subject and at what stage. This degree of ministerial control may appear irksome to teachers of the United Kingdom, but without it there would certainly be a lowering of present standards in Nigerian schools.



A primary school on the new housing estate in Lagos, the Federal capital.

Today's students—tomorrow's technicians: This girl is one of the many chemistry students at University College, Ibadan.

it is realized that if services are to be maintained at good standards after Independence, then the rate of production of technical staff and semi-professional and skilled workers must be increased considerably. There are only four technical institutes, 12 trade centres and a number of training schemes run by

## More Facilities Needed

the public corporations and some of the commercial firms. The combined enrolment in these institutions at present is about 4,000, and they all cater for the products of the primary schools. This therefore raises the unsolved question of the primary schools.

By F. I. AJUMOGOBIA

tion of effective selection for post-primary education and the question of extension of existing facilities for secondary education.

There are about 290 secondary grammar schools, of which about 130 are approved for the West African School Certificate Examination organized by the West African Examinations Council in cooperation with the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate. The council helps to maintain standards, for no school can present candidates for the School Certificate examination without the council's approval. Lack of qualified teachers and facilities have held up the development of sixth form work. Last year only about 20 schools ran post-school certificate classes leading to the Overseas Cambridge Higher School Certificate Examination in arts and/or science. Only about 32 per cent of the teachers

in the grammar schools are graduates. Vast numbers of young men and women take correspondence courses from overseas. Full inspections of the grammar schools are often organized, on invitation, by members of the Advisory Service of the Federal Ministry of Education. Sometimes, however, a Region organizes the full-scale inspection of its own schools. There is no central direction in respect of any educational matter. There is fortunately the Joint Consultative Committee on Education which, though advisory in nature, helps to maintain professional standards so far as possible throughout the Federation. The committee is composed of representatives of the Federal and the Regional Ministries of Education, the Teachers' Union, the University College and the Department of Education of the Nigerian College of Technology.

There is room for optimism, for the governments are aware of the problems. Indeed, in Nigeria, it is fully realized that education is the best form of investment. It is therefore not surprising that the Eastern and Western Regions in particular spend over 40 per cent of their annual budget on education.

By A Special Correspondent

Region and Abenakura in the Western Region have become available. There is no legal restriction on girls' and women's education and no discrimination against them in the awarding of scholarships. Parents in the urban areas of southern Nigeria appear to be equally anxious for the education of their sons and daughters, particularly at the primary level in regions where school fees have been abolished. In post-primary education the question of equal

## Demand Exceeds Capacity

By J. R. BUNTING

level in West Africa and overseas, while the host countries have generally played a seldom publicized part by providing places subsidized by their own taxpayers.

Another university, however, is opening in October at Nsukka in the Eastern Region, thanks to the vision of Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, through whose initiative the Eastern Region Government secured the cooperation of British and American experts to help plan the University of Nigeria. It is intended, without sacrificing widely acceptable standards, to be cultural and vocational and predominantly Nigerian in its courses, content and character. Although education in the predominantly Muslim North has advanced more cautiously than in the South, there has been remarkable progress recently and

the Nigerian College of Arts, Science and Technology, a similarly financed institution, is now in operation in London.



Some young colliery engineering students recording an experiment in a laboratory at Enugu.

## What Chance Have Girls?

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