

ANTHROPOLOGY

New Caledonia a Melting-Pot With Two Races Blended

Tropical Island Occupied by American Forces Also Has Traces of at Least 20 Distinct Languages

NEW CALEDONIA, tropical island east of Australia occupied by American forces by agreement with its Free French government, is a melting-pot of the South Seas, ethnographic data assembled at the Smithsonian Institution indicate. The people are a blend of two racial stocks, the small-statured, very dark Melanesian and the taller, more robust, lighter-skinned Polynesian.

Before the coming of white men encouraged freer movement among the people, the population of New Caledonia was divided into small, jealously isolated, mutually hostile tribal groups. This was largely the result of the island's topography, reminiscent of the ruggedness and inaccessibility of the Scottish highlands which gave the place its name.

Five hundred miles in length and 35 miles wide, the island has a high backbone of mountains, with spurs running down almost to the water's edge, forming many closely penned valleys with fertile floors. In such a situation there was every inducement to stay at home, every discouragement to travel.

Early isolationism on the part of New

Caledonian tribes is reflected in the language setup. Traces of at least 20 distinct languages have been found in the speech of the natives. The old original language, however, is fast losing its outlines as it blends into a lingua franca which is basically a degenerate French.

Not much is known about the ethnology of the natives. The only scholarly study extant is that of a missionary, Rev. Maurice Leenhardt, who spent a quarter-century among them prior to 1930. This, however, does not pretend to be complete, but represents the notes of a man whose primary occupation was in the mission field.

The native religion was a primitive polytheism, and included belief in a kind of shadowy double for each person, called a "ko," who remained "in residence" during waking hours but went out on its own affairs during sleep, frequently getting into serious mischief. Hence it was strictly tabu to awaken a sleeping man, lest his "ko" fail to get back on time from its wanderings.

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can Society for development of agriculture. Popularly known as SHADA, it was formed last year as the outcome of discussions with United States agriculture advisers. It is a cooperative venture between this country and the South American Republic which a few years ago faced economic disaster from wartime loss of trade.

Foreseeing the Pacific tragedy, SHADA began preparing itself to supply this country with rubber, fibers, drugs, now cut off from the Netherlands Indies, Philippines, Malaya and India. Today SHADA's rubber plantations have a head start on the big job of increasing rubber planting in the Americas; her rubber enterprise is surpassed only by the Ford plantations in the Amazon valley.

Major operations, as reported by SHADA's youthful president and general manager, Thomas A. Fennell, are:

Bayeux Division—This plantation has nearly a million growing rubber plants and about 2,500,000 rubber seeds. Tapping of old rubber trees at Bayeux has started.

Forests Division—A sawmill at Morne de Commissaires has been turned over to SHADA for operation. In the last three months of 1941 the mill cut about 100,000 board feet of pine lumber. A second and larger mill is being installed.

Grand'Anse Division—A state-owned tract of approximately 30,000 acres under preparation. About 1,000,000 Hevea seeds planted in nurseries.

SHADA also is attempting to develop handicrafts for Haiti's large labor supply. Samples have been sent to New York importers.

SHADA hopes the battle of production may be won in the American Hemisphere through just such cooperative ventures among the Americas.

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RESOURCES

Tropical Haiti Hastens Production of Rubber

Production Now Is at Rate of 350 Pounds a Month; Some 2,500,000 New Rubber Plants Have Been Set Out

RICH, verdant Haiti, where once the tom-toms of horrid Voodoo rites boomed, has settled down to hard work among her once-abandoned rubber trees, and in cooperation with this country is producing the precious stuff at the rate of 350 pounds per month from the few old trees now bearing.

Some 2,500,000 new rubber plants have been set out, and estimates reveal at least 100,000 acres which could give

the United States a large near-by supply. Haiti is tapping her old trees with newest, proved techniques, experimenting with splitting Hevea seeds to get two plants from one seed, growing rubber seedlings.

Behind this forward-looking enterprise is a unique organization, begun well before the war in the Pacific. It is called the Societe Haitiano-Americaine de Developpement Agricole—or the Haiti-Ameri-

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