



**CROP FOR CASH**—In one misty rain-forest area, the trees grow so very rapidly that they form a profitable crop for tree farmers who grow them to cut and sell.

United States. Many people there are engaged in tree farming because the return is so fast that it makes it very profitable.

In another misty belt in Southern Rhodesia, Dr. Lowdermilk saw in a remnant grove of about 200 acres, at Mt. Salinda, a giant mahogany tree nine feet in diameter and 170 feet tall. But these forests are constantly endangered by the practice of burning over the land. On fire-swept savanna, he saw what he calls "cripple trees," damaged and deformed by burning so that the wood is worth nothing except for fuel.

#### Pilot Projects as Models

To solve Africa's tremendous twin problems of over-population and agricultural underproduction, Dr. Lowdermilk urges the establishment of pilot projects designed to show African natives in a concrete, visible way what can be done to turn their land to greater production.

Such projects offer a pattern for point four assistance; they could serve to demonstrate measures of rural reconstruction, Dr. Lowdermilk points out.

These pilot projects of rural reconstruction should have three legs to stand on. The first leg, agriculture, would demonstrate improved production per acre, but more important, increased production per man, which will give farmers greater purchasing power.

They will show the people what a modern farm is like. They can go home, imitate, and turn their stone-age farms into modern food producers.

But more efficient agriculture would release man power. If there are not jobs to take up the manpower, the agricultural program would bog down. So the second leg would be decentralized rural industries to make articles that would improve

living for the people—tools, vehicles, home furnishings.

The third leg would be village improvement: roads, transportation, sanitation, communication, water supply, clinics, schools.

These three aspects of the pilot project should move along together. They would also serve as training grounds for the people and for teachers of the people. The education in model schools should then be tied in to the community life, to the land and to reconstruction. The church should also be located there, forming a part of

the activity for the betterment of living conditions.

On his way home, Dr. Lowdermilk visited the "ground nut scheme" of Tanganyika. Dr. T. P. Phillips, well known agriculturist of South Africa, recently accepted directorship of the agricultural activities of the project. Under his leadership, this rash undertaking has a much better chance of growing peanuts for vegetable oils for England. In drier areas, Dr. Phillips is growing sunflowers for oil seed and in suitable soils, peanuts.

Science News Letter, September 9, 1950

#### GEOLOGY

## Wegener Theory Disputed

➤ EUROPE and America never lay cheek by cheek in a past geological era only to drift apart and form what is now the Atlantic Ocean.

The famous Wegener theory of continental drift advanced over two decades ago was disputed in Birmingham before the British Association for the Advancement of Science by a Dutch geologist, Prof. J. H. F. Umbgrove of Delft.

Even if there was a mysterious mechanism that allowed continents to drift over the face of the earth, data presented by Prof. Umbgrove contradict the supposed consequences of the drift.

Prof. R. D'O. Good, botanist of University College in Hull, agreed that the idea of vast continental movements does not fit the facts. The distribution of flowering plants in the world is usually explained by assuming that the isolation of the chief land masses was once less than it is today, but Prof. Good finds that this is not necessarily so.

The discontinuous distribution of animals in the world favors the Wegener

theory, however, Dr. H. E. Hinton, zoologist of Bristol University, said.

Science News Letter, September 9, 1950

#### WILDLIFE

## African Rats Reach National Zoo

➤ LOOKING somewhat like undernourished porcupines, two strange, shy African rats have come to the National Zoological Park in Washington. Their technical name is *Lophiomys*—meaning giant crested spiny-haired rat; their home, the British protectorate of Uganda in East Africa. Strictly vegetarians, and believed by Dr. William Mann, director of the national zoo, to be in a rodent family all to themselves, the animal newcomers may be the first of their breed ever to have reached the United States.

Science News Letter, September 9, 1950

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