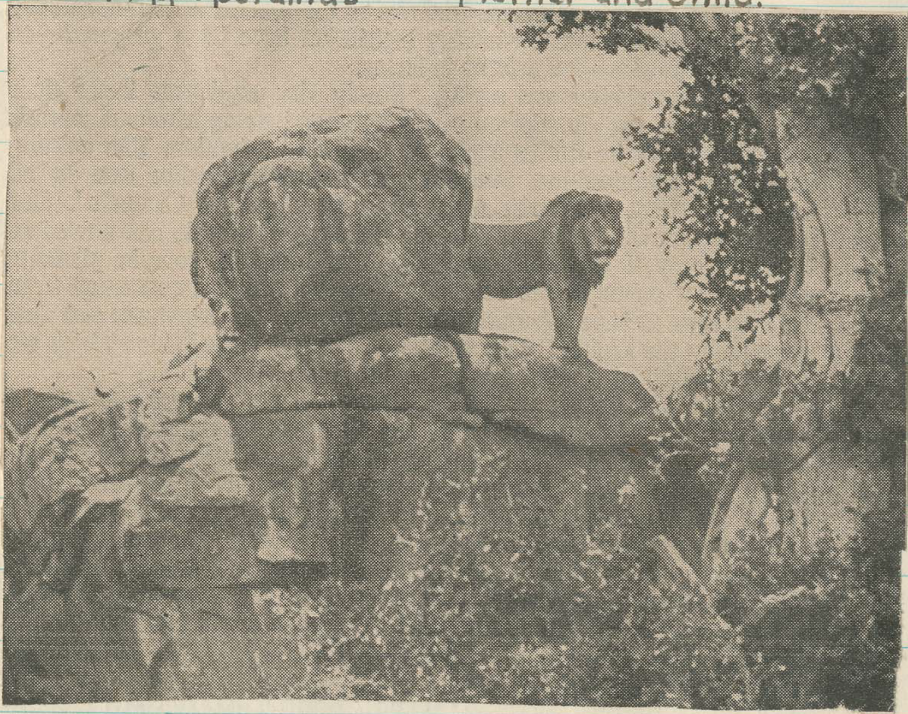


African Animals



Hippopotamus - Mother and Child.



Lions

One year of the biggest farming job in history

I FLEW from Dar-es-Salaam to Kongwa to see how the Government's great groundnuts scheme in East Africa was getting on. The plane flew through a narrow gap in the Nguru mountains and I saw beneath me a vast plateau of 450,000 acres—about fifty square miles.

It is still mainly a barren waste of desolate scrub, but already deep green patches provide evidence that another great tract of Africa is being rescued from the jungle.

Tories who have attacked this scheme and the progress made should at least recognise that they are attacking private enterprise, because it was not until April 1 this year that the scheme was transferred from the United Africa Company to the Overseas Food Corporation.

Transformed

IN fact, however, the United Africa Company deserves nothing but the highest praise. With the wholehearted backing of the Minister of Food, Mr. John Strachey, who is at present touring the plantations, it has initiated the world's biggest farming project. Each unit in the groundnuts scheme covers an area of 30,000 acres, and there will be 107 such units.

A little over a year ago the whole Kongwa area was uncultivated. Its only inhabitants were some four hundred families of one of Africa's most primitive tribes. These people lived by hunting. They had never seen a motor-car or a machine—except for an occasional passing aeroplane.

Three herds of elephants roamed the plateau, together with lions, hyenas and zebras, numerous leopards, an occasional rhinoceros, antelope and buck.

The pioneers

THE pioneer party went to Kongwa in February, 1947. Today there is a huge tented town, with canteens, recreation tents, hospital tents, school tents, residential accommodation and office accommodation. The first permanent houses for Europeans have been built and are occupied; others are going up. A town plan

has been prepared; British girls have gone out to act as secretaries and at the rate of fifteen a month wives are joining their husbands. They are pioneers in the truest sense.

Of all the marvels I saw at Kongwa, nothing was more remarkable than the way in which these young British women brought a sense of normality to the abnormal. In their cool dresses they looked as if they had just left a beauty salon—the nearest hairdresser is 200 miles away!

I watched Africans clearing the bush under European supervision. They drove the bulldozers with skill and enthusiasm. The bush has always been the enemy of the African, and he shares the joy of the European in man's mastery over Nature as scrub and trees crash down before the bulldozers.

When the bush has been flattened by the bulldozers, the debris is allowed to lie for three months.

Groundnut Scheme

Kenya

Towns visited in

Kenya, Uganda and

Tanganyika

Ndola } 29th. April
Tabora }

Nairobi 29th - 30th. April

Then it is destroyed as far as possible by burning. The remains are collected and formed into windrows, and then the intervening areas are cross-ploughed to remove the roots.

First fruits

IN December, 1947, the first 7,500 acres were planted with groundnuts. When I saw them, the plants were fully grown, green and healthy, with practically no weed and almost ready for cropping. The whole process of planting is carried out mechanically and the machine drops between each seed a tiny quantity of fertiliser. Hoeing is done mechanically and so is reaping. One African is able to tend 100 acres.

To provide alternative crops a great experimental farm is already in operation, with 70 different species of plants and 140 different varieties. One most promising alternative is the sunflower.

When the scheme was originally conceived, it was calculated that each acre would produce 750lb. of shelled groundnuts. It is clear that the crop will come up to expectations at least.

I went to the tractor "graveyard." There, according to the Tory M.P., Mr. R. S. Hudson, "hundreds of machines are rusting away." Actually there were about 150 machines, secondhand Army surplus machinery which had broken down, and parts of some machines were being used to repair others.

The people at Kongwa were very "browned off" when they read Mr. Hudson's irresponsible speech and his prophecy of "fantastic failure." They are all confident of the success of the scheme, and know they are doing a good job for themselves, for Africa, and for the world.

No food scarcity has been more acutely felt by the British housewife than that of fats. One hundred tons of shelled groundnuts will produce 45 tons of oil, and with the addition of salt and water this will produce 50 tons of margarine.

Even the peanut shells are not wasted. At the moment they are being used as fuel. One of the biggest industrial companies in Britain is interested in their possible use in making cellulose.

I left Kongwa with the feeling that here was enterprise at its highest.

The Groundnut Scheme.

Left to right, Dr. Evans, entomologist, Dr. Hugh Bunting, chief scientific adviser, Leonard Cottrell, and Dr. Bond, agronomist. Our picture was taken outside the banda which the BBC team used both as a studio and as living quarters.



Since its inception the Groundnuts Scheme has certainly not lacked publicity—some of it of a nature which the groundnutters could have done without. The scheme has been discussed in Parliament, in the Press, and on the radio. Newspaper men have visited Tanganyika and sent back reports. There has been some praise and a lot of criticism. But up to now few of the men and women actually working on the scheme have had a hearing.

In March of this year I flew to Kongwa, the headquarters of the Groundnuts Scheme in Northern Tanganyika, with Richard Lane, BBC Recording Engineer, and half a ton of recording gear. Together we recorded statements by and interviews with scores of people, not only high officials like Dr. Hugh Bunting, the forceful, energetic Chief Scientific Adviser and D. L. ('Bwana') Martin, the Agricultural Manager, but field assistants, tractor operators, unit managers, native workers, and the wives of 'groundnutters' who are sharing the primitive life at Kongwa with their husbands.

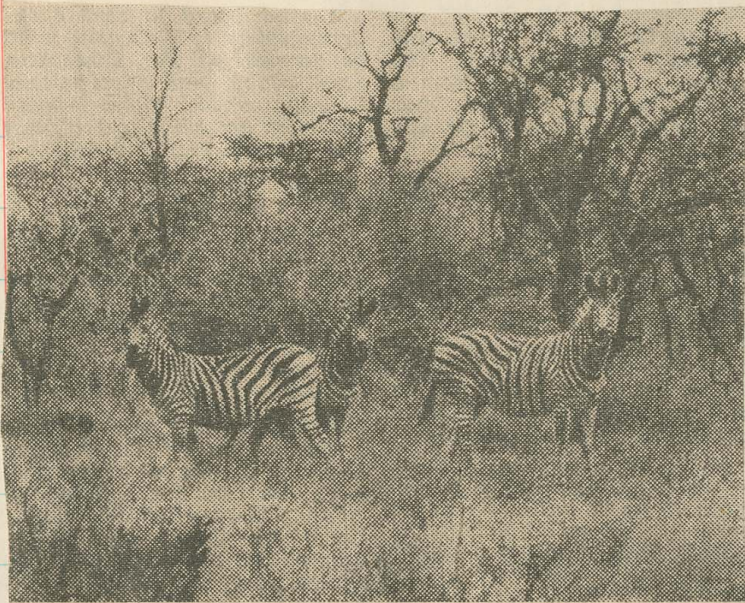
For life at Kongwa is still very primitive. The place is just a collection of tents on a grassy plain surrounded by forested hills; there is no town for hundreds of miles, no made roads and one branch railway line which joins up with the single railway running from Dar-es-Salaam on the coast westwards to Tabora and beyond. There are only a handful of semi-permanent houses. The vast majority of the staff live and work under canvas, either in tents or 'bandas', which are mud-walled huts with tarpaulin roofs. The banda in which Lane and I lived at Kongwa served as sleeping quarters at night and an improvised studio by day. Outside stood an ex-R.A.F. trailer which was our recording car, an all-metal job in which Lane sweated over his gear under a scorching sun. Inside the banda I

interviewed a stream of visitors, brown-armed men in shirt sleeves and shorts, straight from their tractors, work-shops and laboratories, while outside lorries full of singing native workers roared past on their way to the Units; and often the speakers' voices were interrupted by the sound of tractors and bulldozers.

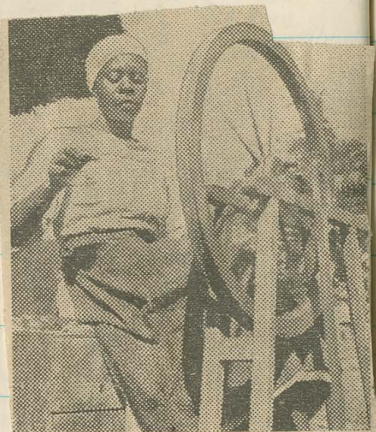
The programme which I have built up from these recordings is a progress report on the first year's work at Kongwa, from the arrival of the advance party in the spring of 1947, when Kongwa was a native village surrounded by virgin bush, to the present day when 7,500 acres of 'bush' (which we in England would call forest) have been cleared and planted. Unless one has seen the conditions under which the work has been done it is very difficult to realise what an achievement this is.

The Groundnuts staff have not only had to cope with natural obstacles, such as an unhealthy climate, insect pests, and the clearing of tough, tenacious vegetation, but they have had to do this largely with second-hand equipment which gave constant trouble during the initial period. There were problems of labour, equipment, of accommodation, and camp organisation. There were problems of transport. But I came away with the conviction that in spite of setbacks the scheme is going to succeed.

No one could come away from Kongwa without being aware that here is a great pioneering adventure in which the resources of science and technology are being harnessed by energetic and determined men to develop a new kind of tropical agriculture. No one who has seen the men who are working on the scheme could doubt the skill, enthusiasm, and idealism they are bringing to their task. This programme gives the first opportunity for these people to explain their problems and describe their achievements



A Trio of Zebras in Kruger Park



Basutoland, half as big again as Wales, is anticipating the visit of the Royal Family to its capital, Maseru. This native woman is at work with a spinning-wheel outside her kraal.



Contrasts in the Belgian Congo: left, a 'giant' Batutsi chief in the Ruanda district; right, pigmy hunters



Boys in Mozambique dressed for the initiation ceremony which admits them to the rights and duties of manhood

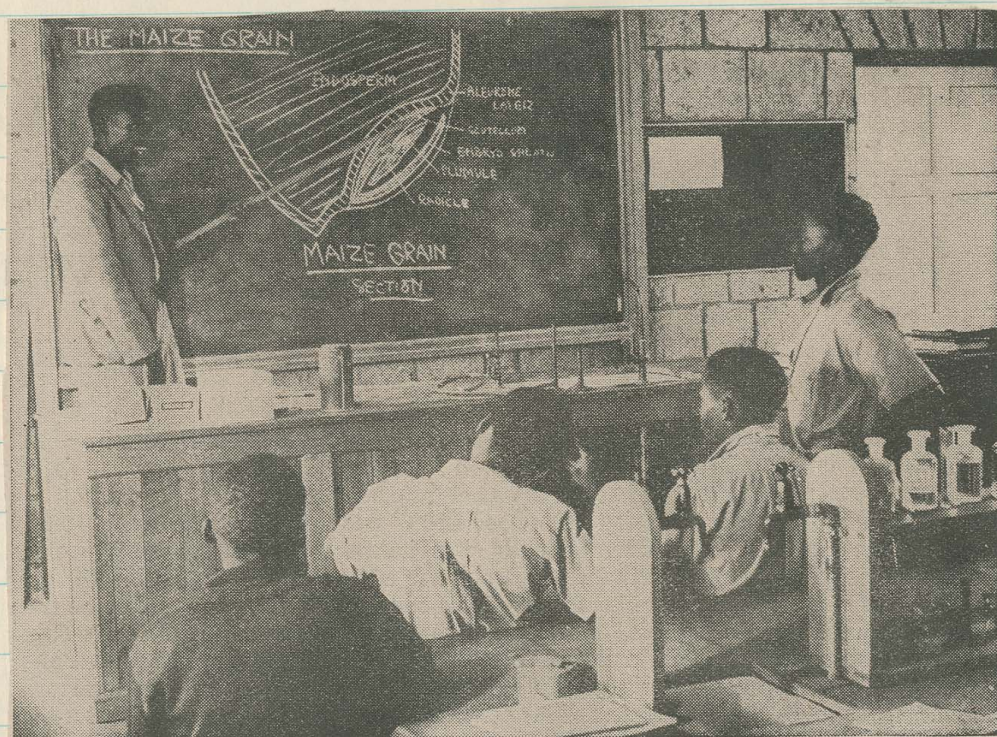


Hindu fire-walking initiate making first crossing over pit of red hot embers at a settlement near Durban



African houses in Mombasa: in many districts the Government by its housing schemes is replacing such dwellings by modern brick houses

Kenya - Nairobi 29th-30th April



A lesson on maize—chief food of Kenya—in the High School at Kikuyu, near Nairobi



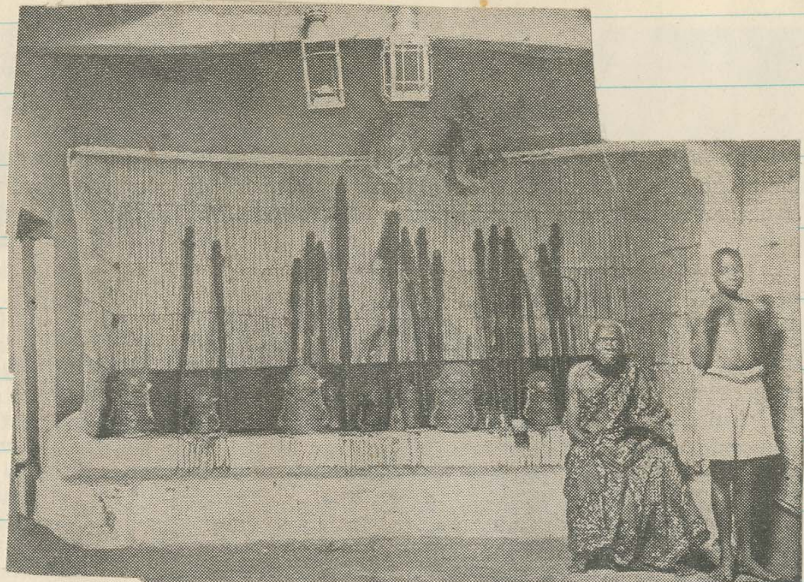
Funeral rites of the Ibu tribe in Southern Nigeria. The men gathered under the cover confer with the spirit of the dead man and their ancestors



A solemn moment. Small negro children pose for their photograph



Man-eating lion in British East Africa



A Benin Chief's room: the long sticks are rattles used to invoke the spirits of ancestors at the annual rites. The ancient bronze heads represent ancestors with the head-dress of chiefs



White Sails on the Nile

~~These~~ three little Europeans who live in Cairo love to watch the graceful Egyptian river boats sailing by.

Egypt

Khartoum 30th April

3rd May

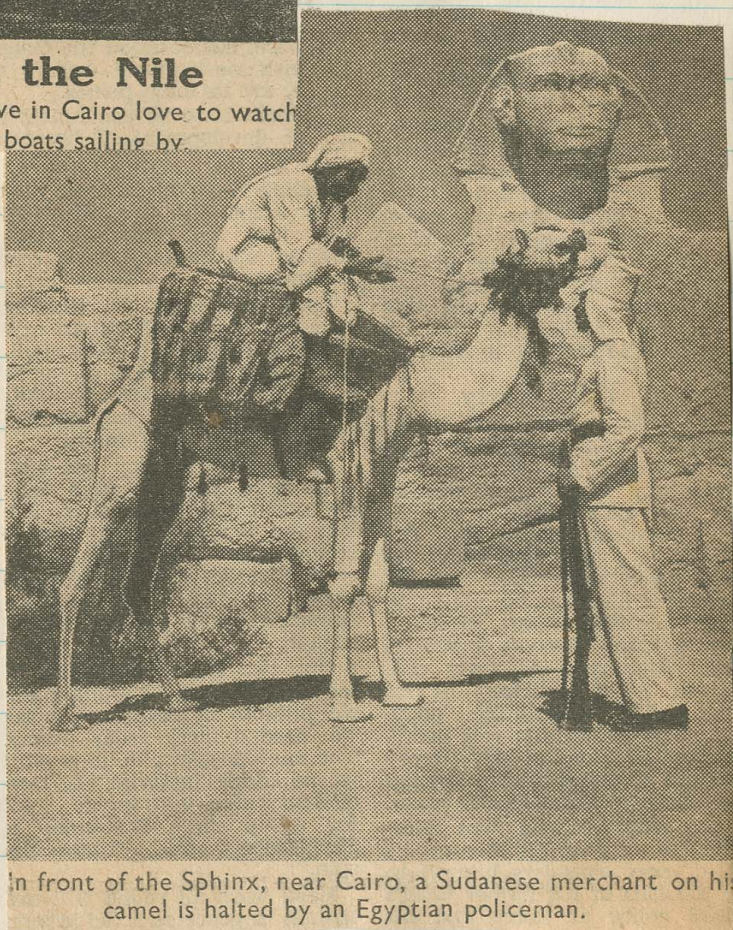
Wadi Halfa 3rd May

Luxor 6th May

Cairo 30th April -

3rd May

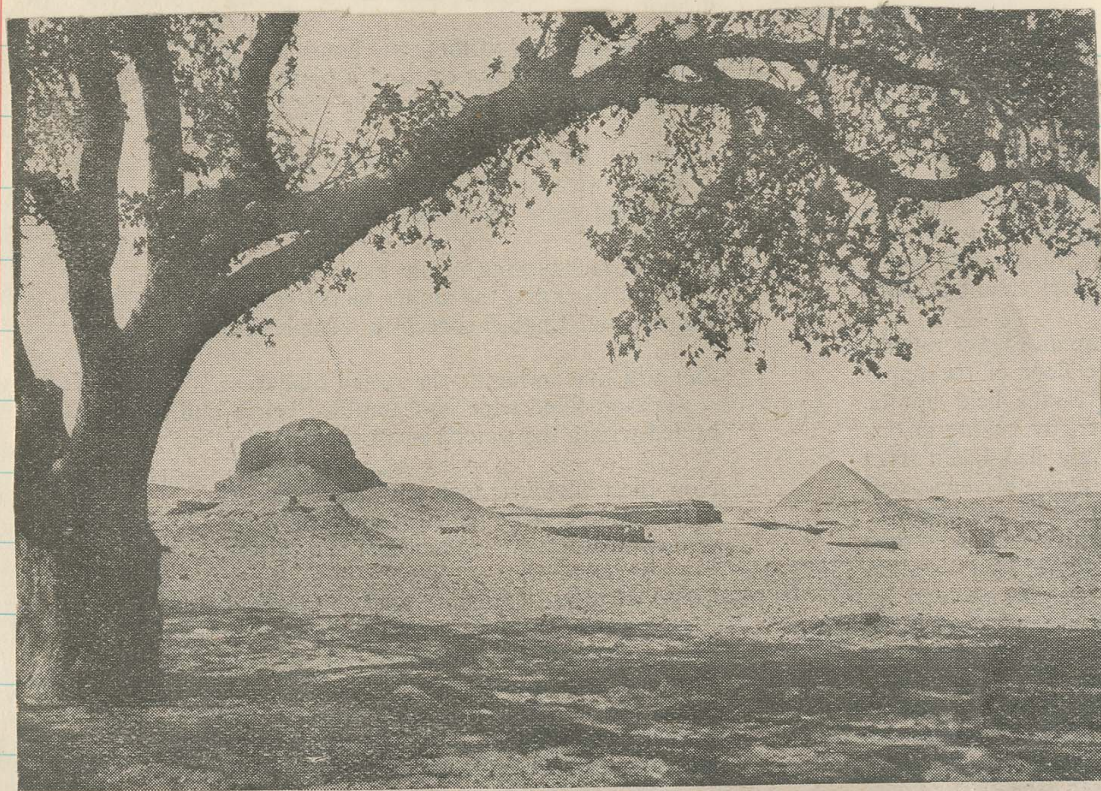
6th-8th May



In front of the Sphinx, near Cairo, a Sudanese merchant on his camel is halted by an Egyptian policeman.

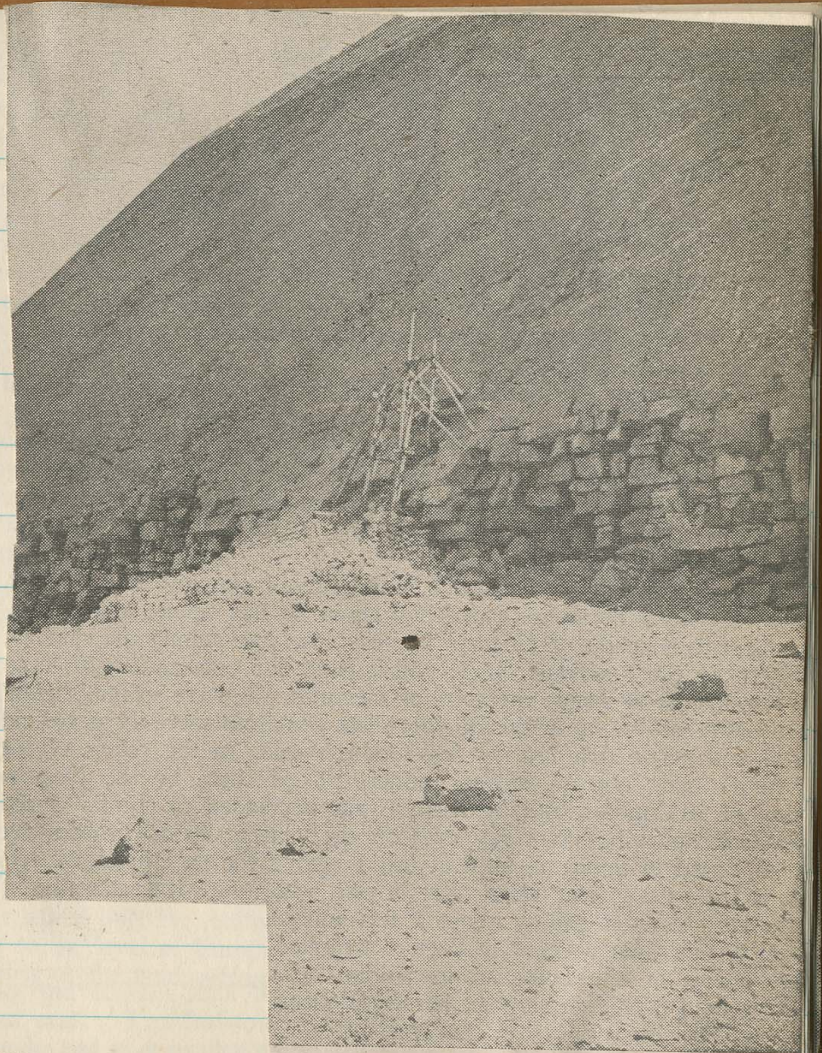


Contrasting scenes in the Arab world: above, view of Cairo from the Citadel; left, shepherds of the desert in Saudi Arabia



The southern pyramid at Dashur (on right) previously attributed to King Snefru, and the rhomboidal pyramid to the north now believed to be King Snefru's tomb

Egypt



Scaffolding on the north face of the Pyramid of Snefru, marking the entrance from which a 300-ft. gallery descends into the rock beneath the tomb



Egypt's Ancient Plough

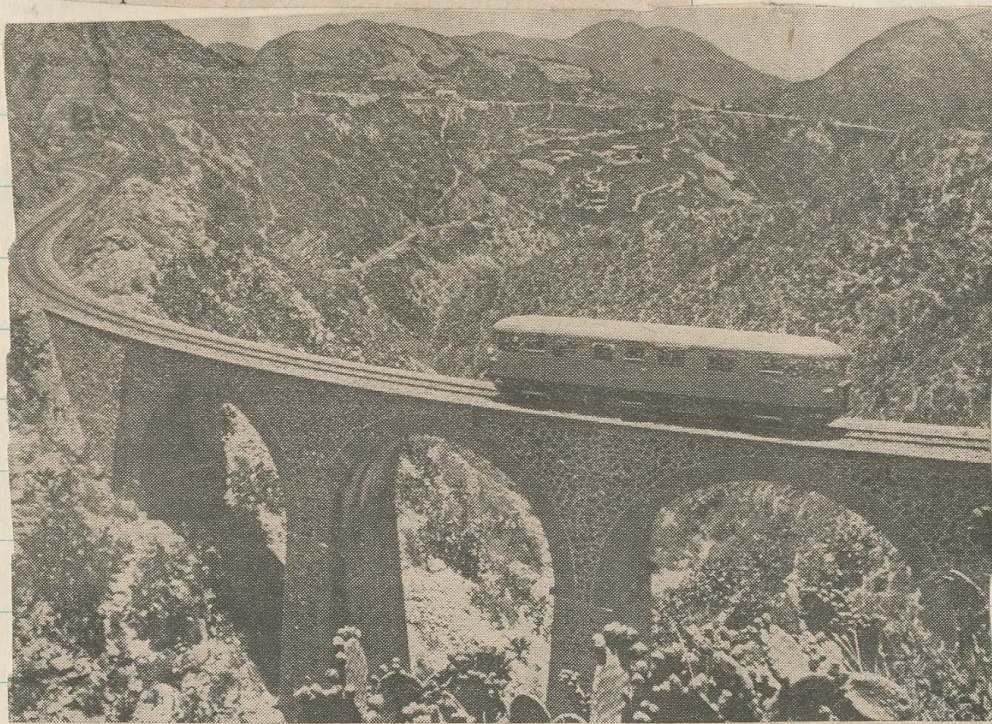
Farmers beside the Nile still scorn modern agricultural machinery and use the camel-drawn plough, fitted with various home-made gadgets, which served their forefathers in the days of the Pharaohs.



A relic of the Roman Empire in North Africa: the arch of Septimius Severus, Leptis Magna, Tripolitania

Eritrea

Asmara 3rd. 6th. May.



Diesel train on the narrow-gauge railway which climbs 8,000 feet between Massawa and Asmara. Right: Asmara, capital of Eritrea, 'a bit of Europe in Africa'. The photograph shows the cathedral and Corso Italiano



Asmara, capital of Eritrea. - Corso Italiano



Desert Pipeline

The old ways and the new met when a camel caravan passed a trench which was being dug for the laying of a new oil pipeline across the desert in Iraq.

Basra - 8th. May