

More Light on Africa

ON July 20, 1796, the explorer Mungo Park got his first glimpse of the Niger "glittering the morning sun as broad as the Thames at Westminster." Nine years later, on another exploratory voyage, the river was to claim his life after he had traversed over 2000 of the 2600-odd miles of its length.

Last year, a century and a half after Park's death, a new kind of explorer made a journey in Nigeria, a journey to document and illuminate the progress of this, Britain's largest colony. *Journey by the Niger*, to be broadcast in ZB Sunday Showcase on October 7, is one of the Commonwealth series on Africa, two of which have been broadcast earlier in the year (*The Fullness of the Nile*, and *Africa*, 1955).

To gather material for this programme, René Cutforth, journalist and widely-travelled radio reporter, travelled three thousand miles by road and river among the Hausa, Nupe, Yoruba, Ibo and other peoples of the colony of Nigeria.

He was accompanied by three Nigerians; his driver, a devout Moslem Northerner; his cook, an Ibo; and the interpreter, Mr. Ohiari, an Igbirra.

After passing through three distinct climates, and a dozen peoples of separate cultures and languages, Mr. Cutforth returned to England convinced that below the surface differences among Nigerians there is a great fund of mutual goodwill which, in the end, will shift all difficulties.

Writing of his travels in the BBC *Radio Times*, he said: "It wasn't until the fourth week that sometimes, when I was lying in the bottom of a canoe, for instance, or drowsing through the middle hours of the day in a deserted rest-house, the impressions began to sort themselves out into patterns. The drums, the crickets, the sunshine, guinea corn, ju-ju, palm wine and Mr. Ohiari's learned exploration began to make a coherent whole. I began to see and feel a picture, or at least a poster, which certainly couldn't be called 'Nigeria,' but might be called 'Journey by the Niger.'"

In this one hour programme, based on a representative selection of the material recorded on the spot, John Bridges, the producer, was assisted by six African students who supplemented the professional cast.

TAX EVADERS

AS long as there has been a State or its equivalent in any part of the world, as long as history has been recorded, there has occurred that phenomenon which is dreaded by rich and poor—taxation.

T-Men, which will be heard from 12B on Monday evenings, starting on October 1, concerns a fictional taxation authority, the Federal Department of Taxation and Revenue, whose chief special investigation officer is Jack Ketch, appropriately named after the notorious hangman. Ketch is like no real tax investigator anywhere, except in his hatred of tax evaders who, he says, "make the going a little tougher for honest taxpayers year after year." Every



RIVER STEAMERS moored off the wharves at Calabar, Eastern Nigeria

Lake Victoria—to be heard next week from 2YC and 4YC—was written and told by Marjorie and Edward Ward, and is, like *Journey by the Niger*, part of the Commonwealth 1955 "Operation Africa." This is the story of a journey around Lake Victoria, illustrated by recordings made in Uganda at the ports of Mwanza, Musoma and Kisumu, and on the lake steamer.

On their journeys round the shores of the lake—the second largest freshwater lake in the world—the Wards found many signs of European influence in the most unexpected places. In a remote corner of the jungle they discovered a notice which read: "Any gentleman wishing a good European haircut may call here" (the nearest village where this unlikely activity could take place was ten miles away).

Another time they crossed a line on the road which signified the Equator. And once, when they stopped at a dingy mud hut by the roadside to gather some impressions of local living conditions, the mistress of the hut was highly offended. "They should have written," she explained through an interpreter, "and made an appointment. Then I could have had the place looking tidy." So it seems that housewives are much the same the world over.

Contributors to this programme include a shopkeeper; a community development officer; a dispensary doctor; the captain of the steamer Usoga on Lake Victoria; the headmistress of an

case dealt with by Ketch is a completely fictional creation of the author, Donovan Joyce, who says "All I do is create a character. Once I have him it is absurdly easy to evolve a way in which he, because of his character, will go to work to evade tax."

Throughout the series it is emphasised that no schemes for evading tax—at least none on a large scale—can hope to succeed. It is considered unlikely, too, that listeners might be encouraged to attempt one of the many evasion methods presented. It is undoubtedly true that many of the types of taxation evasion methods used in this programme have actually been used all over the world. They are presented, says the synopsis of *T-Men*, as a warning to the listening audience that each is a known method, and that they have no hope of getting away with something similar.

African Girls' School; fishery officers, and Sir Andrew Cohen, the Governor of Uganda.

Lake Victoria will be heard from 4YC, 9.30 p.m., Monday, October 1, and 2YC, 7.0 p.m., Saturday, October 6.

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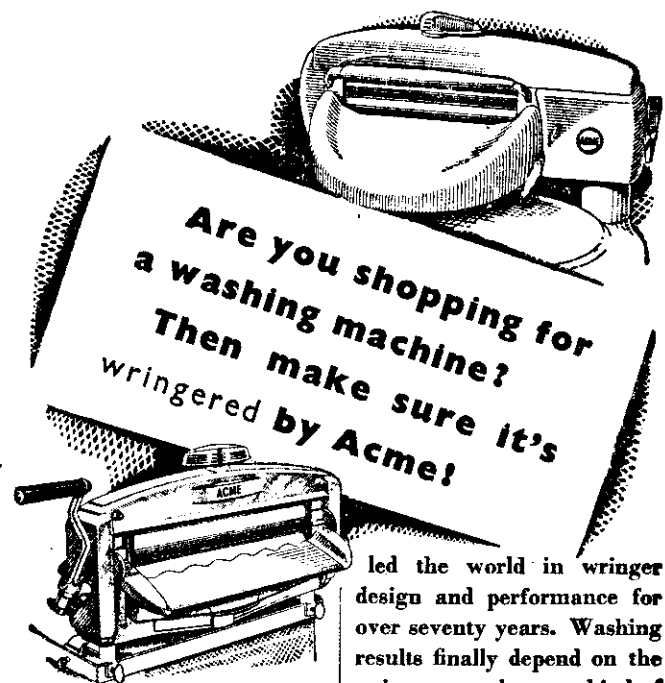
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