

Book Reviews

The New Nigerian Elite. Hugh H. Smythe and Mabel M. Smythe. Stanford University Press, Stanford, Calif., 1960. ix + 195 pp. Illus. \$5.

The Smythes' study of the emergent Nigerian elite is timely not only because of Nigerian independence but because there is pressing necessity to understand the leaders of nascent nationalism in Africa generally. In the latter context, this book is recommended as providing knowledge about that sort of elite without which, as in the case of the Congo, independence becomes chaos.

The authors show some conceptual and methodological inelegance in the derivation of their list of the 156 people who constitute the upper-level new elite. The list can, however, be accepted as including a large proportion of the Nigerians in top prestige and power positions in institutions deriving from Western contact. The contribution of the study lies in its analysis of the characteristics of this group, its regional variations, and how it came into being. The new data collected in 1957-58 are set in a historical framework, the early portion of which leans heavily on Sir Alan Burns' *History of Nigeria*, reproducing its anthropological inaccuracies but eliminating its British colonial bias. Discussion of the more recent period traces the development of the elite from their beginnings in the urbanization and westernization of Nigeria.

One of the clearest factors in the formation of the elite is the impact of Western education. All of the top elite speak English, and almost half hold one or more university degrees, largely from foreign institutions. Seventy percent occupy government-connected positions of some sort, which is to be expected in a country whose productive and commercial activities are either small-scale or in foreign hands. Businessmen make up only 12 percent of the elite, and only three trade union officials are found in it. A majority of the top government officials are professional men, and only nine members of the

elite are traditional rulers who have assumed roles in the new forms of government. The break with the past is not abrupt, however, for a third of the new elite come from old ruling families.

An insightful part of the study analyzes the style of life of the elite, who have assumed many of the manners of the colonial British, living in Western style houses equipped even to electric fans, maintaining staffs of servants, and belonging to social and sports clubs. Divergences from the British pattern are also revealing. Although the elite work in European clothes, they assume native dress at home, for comfort, and at important social functions, as a mark of national identification. While the physical attributes of the home are Western, the level of housekeeping is low by Western standards, for the wives of the elite do not have the same background as their husbands.

As the elite have assumed the power and manners of the British, they have also inherited the public image of "exploiters." The acquisition of the amenities which are the identifying marks of the elite is, in the popular mind, evidence of the self-seeking of public officials. The idealistic forces for freedom and national improvement which the elite symbolize are in conflict with their class values.

The new elite with roots in the old are politically more conservative than their self-made colleagues. With the progressive realization of independence, the radicals have, in a sense, lost their cause by winning it. The moderates are in control.

Understanding of the forces which shape the elite runs throughout the Smythes' account of the formal characteristics of the group. It is this which makes social science of what might have only been a social survey. It is social science without jargon. A unique and unbiased work on an important subject, the book is worthy of wide attention.

HORACE M. MINER
Departments of Anthropology and Sociology, University of Michigan

The Kirtland's Warbler. Harold Mayfield. Cranbrook Institute of Science, Bloomfield Hills, Mich., 1960 (order from University Publishers, New York). xv + 242 pp. Illus. \$6.

Life Histories of Central American Birds. 2. Families Vireonidae, Sylviidae, Turdidae, Troglodytidae, Paridae, Corvidae, Hirundinidae, and Tyrannidae. Pacific Coast Avifauna No. 34. Alexander F. Skutch. Cooper Ornithological Society, Berkeley, Calif., 1960. 593 pp. Illus.

Bird Portraits in Color. Two hundred ninety-five North American species. Thomas S. Roberts. Revised by Walter J. Breckenridge and others. University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1960. Illus. \$5.95.

Among recent publications on American birds, the three reviewed here deserve special mention, two of them for the new material they contain, and one for its illustrations.

Mayfield's volume *The Kirtland's Warbler*, is a unique monographic study, unique in that it presents a study of the entire population of a species. This warbler has the most restricted breeding range of any North American song bird; it nests only in a few counties in the northern portion of the Lower Peninsula of Michigan and in 1951 had a carefully estimated total population of 1000 adult individuals. It is apparently a relict species now severely limited by its requirement of a specialized nesting habitat which exists in a gradually diminishing area. In addition to this, the parasitic brown-headed cowbird has recently moved into the area and has become a very serious problem to the warbler, which has no adequate defense. In other words, we have here what may be a disappearing species and one which is certainly in a critical state. Mayfield presents a meticulous account of the history, distribution, and life history of this bird; he includes a special study of the cowbird in its relations to the Kirtland's warbler and a closely reasoned quantitative appraisal of its reproduction and mortality. All through the book one finds a most welcome mathematical approach, but an approach that probably can be attained only in treating a compactly situated species of very limited numbers.

Skutch's volume, the second in a series, presents a wealth of new observations on the vireos, warblers, thrushes, wrens, titmice, jays, swallows, and flycatchers of Central America. This is pioneering work, dealing with pro-