

Anthropology and the Development of African Studies

Daryll Forde

ABSTRACT

The foundation and the broad policies of our Institute emerged from what proved a fortunate conjunction of diverse interests and opportunities that developed after the First World War. The initial phase of modern economic advance in tropical Africa, following the introduction of the telegraph, railways, all-weather roads, was by the twenties making apparent a wide range of needs and opportunities for further progress in Africa—progress in which both the interests of, and contribution by, its peoples would be closely concerned. Within African territories the demand for literacy and training in new skills both more extensive and at higher levels was becoming more and more obvious and pressing. The significance of the increasing and inevitable association of Africans and their communities with a world economy was beginning to be more widely appreciated. With this growing recognition of the need for a more positive and constructive response many questions arose concerning not only the means of fostering such developments, but also their effects on the attitudes, beliefs, and institutions that had hitherto sustained the cultures and the social life of largely autonomous tribes and chiefdoms.