

August 26, 1955

The Tanganyika Victoria Memorial Institute, Abercorn, was founded in 1902 as a memorial to Queen Victoria in the same manner as was the Victoria Memorial Institute at Fort Jameson. The name "Tangantika" incorporated in the title commemorates the fact that this area was originally know as the Tanganyika Province of Northern Rhodesia and, despite some slight tendency towards confusion with the name of the adjoining territory, members have defeated suggestions that the name be changed, preferring to retain the historical character of the title.

It is a cultural institution, intended to support and develop all cultural aspects of life at Abercorn, but in practice it has concentrated mainly on maintaining a lending library of a good average cultural standard, and a small reference library.

Despite the interruptions caused by two world wars, the library activities of the Institute have been continuous throughout its history, although it has suffered serious losses of books through the resultant disturbance.

The original minute book of the Institute is one of Abercorn's most interesting historical documents.

The Institute's original building was ~~subscribed~~ constructed with funds contributed by the general public and the present building, ~~constructed~~ completed in 1952, was also financed without Government assistance by means of most generous contributions from a few residents and smaller but equally valued contributions and proceeds from sales of work and produce made by all Abercorn residents over the years.

The maintenance of the Institute, purchase of books etc. has been accomplished by annual subscriptions of £2 a year and by periodical functions raising funds for various purposes. Its secretary and librarian have been voluntary throughout its history.

In recent years the Institute has succeeded in obtaining small grants from the Cultural and Sporting Fund for the purchase of book-cases, chairs for its hall and reference books.

On the completion of the new building, Abercorn being without any suitable

school building, a lease was arranged with the Department of European Education under which the main hall, the room designed as a Committee Room, and a small store-room ~~is~~ are rented by that Department for a school. The premises, which were designed with cloakroom accomodation etc., have been pronounced eminently suitable for that purpose by inspectors and the school has been conducted there for \_\_\_\_\_ years.

~~This~~ The fact that the main hall is not ~~generally~~ fully available to members has thus somewhat delayed its full use for cultural activities; but with the full co-operation of the Department, it has been possible to use the hall for a number of performances by the Abercorn Operatic and Dramatic Society and for a lecture by Professor Raymond Dart during the recent Third Pan-African Congress on Prehistory when it visited Abercorn.

The Institute is planning a small museum of local historical and cultural objects which will be placed on display as soon as accomodation and furniture is available.

Among objects already on display are: The propellor of the first self-propelled boat to be launched on Lake Tanganyika the mission vessel "The Good News"; the ensign of the gunboat H.M.S. Fifi which operated on Lake Tanganyika during the 1914 war; a bronze bust of Cecil Rhodes; a portrait of Livingstone, of historical interest; a particularly fine set of table and chairs made of local timber by a recently deceased settler and other items.

Articles awaiting display (some of which ~~it~~ is hoped will be on view) include certain 1914 war relics, Chartered Company government badges etc., a small mineral collection, a comprehensive collection of stone tools and artifacts found in the neighbourhood.

The present chairman of the Committee is Mr. J.L. Carlin, proprietor of The Lake Press, Abercorn, and the ~~xxxx~~ honorary secretary for many years has been Miss A.H. Gamwell, a settler of 25 years residence who, with her sister Miss A.M. Gamwell O.B.E. has taken a continuous active interest in the Institute's affairs throughout that time.

On the eventual provision of a school for Abercorn it is hoped to expand and develop the activities of the Institute. Its site is held ~~on a leasehold~~ *as a free gift from the B.S.A. Co* and it is incorporated under formal charter whose provision control *free of all rates & taxes.* the use to which land and building may be put.