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At the conclusion of the Conference of Berlin, the following main provisions affecting the Congo Basin were embodied in the General Act of Berlin, dated February 26, 1885:

1. Freedom of commerce and navigation; no discriminatory tariffs.
2. Neutrality of the Congo state in event of war.
3. Suppression of the slave trade.
4. Obligation to improve the condition of the natives, morally and materially.
5. Territorial claims to be invalid without "effective occupation »

All the important countries of Europe had now followed lead of the United States and Germany in recognizing, sovereignty of the International Association of the Congo in its area.

The *Etat Indépendant du Congo*, as Leopold called it or the Congo Free State, as it was termed in English-speaking, countries, was formally proclaimed July 1, 1885, and the date is a holiday in the Belgian Congo today.

The International Congo Association ceased to exist but its flag, a golden star in a field of dark blue, became the state flag.

The Congo Free state existed from 1885 to 1908, a sovereign power, on equal footing with all other free and independent nations. It was a unique and unprecedented creation, and it owed its inception more to United States than to the nation which later acquired it.

Never before had an individual, whether king or commoner, created such an entity and it was all done without the classic assistance of armed conquest, royal marriage, or assassinations.

It was conceived and accomplished, for the most part, by sheer diplomacy, and by a prince whose army, it is safe to say, never caused a sleepless night in any ministry of Europe.

During the life of the Congo Free State, the relations between it and Belgium differed in no particular from the state's relations with other sovereign powers, save that the constitutional monarch of the one was the absolute ruler of the other.

The task confronting Leopold and his group of Belgian backers was immense. They had to settle and put in order an area in Central Africa about eighty times the size of Belgium. This area, for the most part, was unexplored and unknown. It was inhabited by hundreds of different tribes, whose conditions of precarious and savage existence arose largely from lack of a common language and whose mutual hostility and suspicion played into the hands of white extortioners, who later very nearly succeeded in wrecking the whole edifice.

With scanty funds (for Leopold's personal fortune was being rapidly depleted) and limited personnel, an administrative organization, a policing system, departments of finance, of education, of public health—all had to be created, in this African wilderness.

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Old Léo deux will continue as an industrial center, with most of its activities concerned with shipbuilding and repairing. Here is the most important shipyard in the colony and the only one which actually builds vessels as well as repairs them.

Fourteen steel barges, each of eight hundred tons capacity, comprised the first order ever given to any shipyard in the Congo; and most of these were finished and launched on the river in time to be of great service during the last war.

The yard, known officially as *Chantier Naval et Industriel du Congo*, and generally as *Chanic*, is manned nearly wholly by skilled native labour, with a handful of white supervisors.

Today larger, powered vessels are under construction at Chanic and it seems certain that the era of Congo-built ships, ushered in by the exigencies of the war, is here to stay, thanks largely to the adequate body of skilled native labour which Chanic has now graduated from its training school.

One of the biggest interior ports in Africa, Leopoldville in its waterfront activities presents a sense of colour, activity, and apparent confusion (for the African dock labourer will not, and cannot, work without a vast amount of shouting and gesticulation). The river's channel runs close to the shore, permitting vessels of any draught to come alongside the concrete quays. Electric power cranes, rolling on rail tracks, transfer their loads swiftly from ship to waiting freight car and vice versa. The greater part of the produce of Central Africa moves outward through this port, the river journey over, it must here be transshipped to freight cars.

In 1944 a total of 352,992 tons of freight moved through the port on the way out, and 197,665 tons moved through on the way in.

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At Cattier, about a hundred miles down the railway from Leopoldville, is the school for native locomotive engineers maintained by the railway company. All the trains in the Congo, passenger and freight, are driven by native *mécaniciens*. Imagine a woolly-headed Bantu youth of eighteen or twenty, speaking no language save his own Bakongo dialect and a sprinkling of French.

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It is rules, rules, rules, until they know them backwards. The rules are simple and there are no exceptions. The safety record of the road is higher than that of many U.S. lines.

Their course in theory completed, the budding engine-drivers undergo a stiff oral examination from a white officer not their regular instructor. Then they go out on the road for two weeks, all the time under the supervision of a white technician. Next comes a final examination at Thysville by a white who has never seen the candidates before, followed by a final, thorough medical examination. Then a last inspection trip over the entire line with a strange white superintendent and they are ready for the job.

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The engine-drivers receive bonuses in addition to their regular salary. These are given for keeping on schedule (arriving too early at a destination is punishable as well as arriving too late), using coal economically, and generally obeying all the rules.

With normal bonuses, an engine-driver makes from 800 to 1,500 francs (\$18 to \$35) per month, with housing, medical care, pension, and other benefits.

Most important to him, however, is his standing among his fellows. He is of the élite among black professionals in the Congo, along with medical assistants, steamboat pilots, and teachers. He is master of his train while he is on the road (no "conductors," white or black, can give him orders), and in his off -hours he is the social kingpin of his community. But he did not get there the easy way.

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When one considers the number of whites at the station, as compared with the black personnel, it is easy to see that the development of a skilled native staff is one of the significant by-products of the Inéac programme. Trained natives are to be seen on all sides; in the forestry "lab" peering into microscopes, in the specimen rooms classifying leaves and seeds, and in the plantations cutting a delicate graft or gently blowing pedigreed pollen over the expectant blossoms of an oil palm. The black's inborn patience and adroitness serve him in good stead in much of the scientific work at Yangambi.

In the forestry division, new and virtually unknown African hardwoods are being studied. The typical African forest is an extraordinarily varied collection of trees, vines, and shrubs, many worthless, a few priceless, and most of them somewhere in between.

Inéac is conducting experiments in the controlled propagation of the finest of these jungle species; entire artificial "forests" of them have been set out. The value of such timber stands, years hence, will be many times that of Nature's haphazard wilderness.

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Early colonists, failing to comprehend the sun's danger to the soil, attempted to cultivate it according to the rules they followed in Europe. Consequences were disastrous. The soil soon lost its fertility; crops withered and died. The puzzled and bankrupt planters, viewing the luxuriant forest at the edge of their cleared land, were embittered and bewildered. What had happened to their soil?

They did not know, of course, what is known now, what has been, perhaps, Inéac's greatest contribution to the Congo's agronomy; that, in the deep tropics, the soil must be nurtured and tended just as carefully as the plants which it is asked to nourish.

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What was a waterless, semi-desert waste, baked by the sun, is now a verdant and smiling community, with green-shaded avenues, brilliant flowers, and vine-bowered cottages. Formerly, even the little gecko lizards must have had to scramble for sustenance; now there is abundance, not only for lizards, but for human beings. Twenty thousand men, women, and children, white and black, have settled there in peace and plenty.

For every white there are about two hundred blacks, but the humblest native worker has a home, a garden, and all that he and his family want to eat. This is Manono, the city that tin built.

The traveller may think he is used to surprises by now, but Manono will leave his head spinning: Here, indeed, is the essence of The New Congo.

For a moment, one cannot account for the almost uncanny effect of this scene.

Something is missing: people. There is not a miner in view !

Instead of a legion of naked-waisted native diggers, of a confusion of baskets borne on the head, of dump cars and wheelbarrows, there are but two or three silent electric-power shovels, tirelessly biting chunks out of the white banks and swinging to deposit their mouthfuls on a moving belt. The ore rides the belt as the latter undulates over its rollers, finally to drop on to another belt, moving at right angles with the first, which lifts its burden up the incline to the concentrators far above. With no yells and shouts—those sounds which are inseparable from a gang of Africans at work—with nothing but the low hum of the shovels and rumble of the belt machinery, electricity is running everything. No mine in the U.S.A. or elsewhere could be more completely mechanized. And this mechanization is the important part of Manono's story.

Water from the Luvua River (largest tributary of the Lualaba) some miles away is led in canals to a hydroelectric generating station, whence the current is distributed to turn the wheels and light the lights of Manono.

Mechanization through electric power made pay dirt out of Manono's vast deposits of low-grade ore. Equally important was the water itself, great quantities of which were required for the washing processes involved in concentrating the ore.

Without the water, plus the power which the water produced, Géomines would have been sorely handicapped. With these, Géomines became more than a mining enterprise; it became a social experiment in which abundant water and electricity played a dominant role.

For mechanization has done more than turn tin into dollars. It has freed the African worker from the drudgery of manual labour under the equatorial sun. It has brought him water for his gardens. It has taught him trades and skills far beyond anything he could ever acquire by swinging a pick or shoving a dump car.

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This black "boy," for instance, high in the cab of a Bucyrus Erie electric shovel, handling the controls of the giant scoop with all the dexterity and precision of a veteran operator .. how many American Negroes are permitted the responsibilities of such a job ? Yet these Congo fellows have not had the background of three hundred years' contact with the whites and they seem to do pretty well.

Thanks to electric power, Géomines could not only mine the tin ore cleanly and easily but it could also turn out ingots of the pure metal by smelting the cassiterite in an electric furnace. Imagine the saving, in freight costs alone, which this means ! In place of endless trains of ore cars hauling the black, powdery cassiterite on the first leg of a journey which has to take it thousands of miles over rail and ocean.

...: in the war years, to bring the Allied victory, sending over 40,000 tons of ingot tin to hungry munitions plants. It is a cold fact that the wheels of American industry literally could not turn without this soft, white metal, of which there exists virtually none in North American mineral deposits.

The rare metal tantalum, another wartime "top priority," is found, as the ore tantalite, in association with tin at Manono.

Géomines shipped its entire production—about eight hundred tons—to the war plants of the United States from 1941 to 1945.

From the mines, shaded streets lead past the homes of the approximately one hundred white technicians who have come to Manono from Belgium, most of them with their wives and children. The buildings are attractive, bungalow-style brick dwellings, set in spacious grounds with greenery and flowers on every hand.

A social club, where motion pictures are shown, dances held, and dinners and other functions given, is the most popular centre of the white community. Its landscaped grounds boast a filtered-water swimming pool and a number of tennis courts. Géomines also maintains a store for its European personnel; it is run on a co-operative plan, with prices below those of ordinary stores, and the profits, if any, are returned to the members at the end of the year.

The store sells everything from clothes-pegs and cotton goods to imported liquors and champagne.

Asphalted streets lined with the yellow-flowering *Cassia floribunda* take us to the airport which has brought Manono within a few days' flying time of Europe or America, then to the little cathedral, the schools, and the hospitals.

Finally, we reach Manono's best exhibit: the native village. It is indeed more a city than a village. It covers an enormous area and shelters nearly 20,000 natives. The houses are of brick with thatched roofs. Géomines engineers laid out the city, allowing each dwelling a surrounding lot fifty meters square. A minimum of ten fruit trees was then planted around each house, thus giving every family its own fruit. These are generally oranges, lemons, guavas, papayas, and cherimoyas.

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Along the straight, wide streets which are laid through the settlement, Géomines has planted more trees, always with a view to the food yield for the population. These are "communal" trees, their fruits are the property of those who pick them. Such trees are for the most part mangoes, bananas, and oil palms.

Miles of such tree-lined streets were laid out, the planting alone was a huge undertaking. More than 50,000 mango trees, for instance, were set out in Manono, and their shade is second only to their fruit in point of usefulness. From one fruit's season to another's, it is simply impossible for anyone in Manono to go hungry

Not that the natives have only fruit to eat ! Fruit is an extra, every worker's family receives full rations scientifically worked out to produce a balanced dietary manioc flour, peanuts, dried beans and peas, palm oil, salt, and fresh meat and fresh fish. Families are encouraged to supplement all this with fresh vegetables from their own gardens.

"It is not primarily for dietary reasons that we encourage the gardens," explain Géomines' directors. "It's a question psychology. It makes them feel at home. In their bush villa, they had vegetable gardens, so why not here ? Remember, this is no labour camp, full of indentured bachelors living in compounds. This is home, and that means wives, babies, and gardens—the more the better."

It is a happy community, we can tell that by the individual painted designs and floral decorations around the houses, by the way the men greet us and the way the women gather at their self-organized markets, bargaining, gossiping, and "visiting" (a noisy market is a sign of prosperity in any African village). Above all, we can tell by the children, who are plump and lively—and numerous.

Certainly it was bootless to speculate that any obscure charitable urge motivated Géomines' native labour policy. The reason lay in two words: "It pays." Géomines is in business to get the tin out of the ground and into the market.

Forced labour, transported for hundreds of miles from more populous districts and thrown into stockaded compounds to work out its contract, might do it, as it has done in the past and is still doing in some parts of Africa. But the management was committed to a policy of native welfare under the Colonial Charter of 1908 and no such solution was considered.

Instead, a policy was embarked upon of inducing natives to Manono by offering them advantages they could not get elsewhere. No one would be forced to stay but he would be tempted to stay by good food, good working conditions, and good living accommodations. And he would, if unmarried, be encouraged to get himself a wife and settle down (he would observe, for instance, that the best dwellings and most attractive locations were set aside for families).

In short, the problem was that of moving and stabilizing an entire population, drawn from its ancestral tribal homes and transplanted to a region until then barren and unpeopled. Today the job is done. The transplanting has succeeded; the colony has taken root and become a city.

A stable and settled population provides Géomines with all its needed labour. The fame of Manono has spread far and wide among the Congo folk; there is a long waiting list of those who wish to join Manono's native community.

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Looking back on its programme to found a new population, we may observe that Géomines had powerful aids: abundant water and power. With these, used liberally as Géomines has used them, the appeal of Manono became well-nigh irresistible. It was these which assured the success of the whole experiment. From the workers' viewpoint, the advantages were immediate and obvious (the black man does not relish eight hours with pick and shovel under a broiling sun any more than the white man, but running a machine is something else again). From Géomines' viewpoint, main advantages were threefold: increased production, satisfied labour, and reduction of the labour scarcity problem, since the machines could do the work of many men.

There yet remains another effect of mechanization, perhaps in the long run most significant of all: it is creating out of raw material a skilled working class. Congo workers—the brightest and most promising of them—are operating electric excavating machinery, watching, oiling, and maintaining the rollers of the endless conveyor belts, guiding pneumatic drills and electric arc-welders, tending the rattling jigs and the washing pans, throwing the switches in the power plants and the electric furnaces, performing a thousand and one other specialized tasks. They are fitting into the pattern of The New Congo; they are the stuff of which The New Congo is made.

Mines of Kambove

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Some fifteen miles north-west of Jadotville are the mines of Kambove and its neighbourhood, which contain valuable cobalt deposits. Ten miles south of Kambove is Shinkolobwe, where a rich deposit of radioactive minerals has been known since 1915 and worked since 1921. Before the last war the Belgians called it a "radium mine," and from the pitchblende they developed a process of extracting radium in a plant at Oolen, Belgium, which brought the world price of radium down by half. Output of the Shinkolobwe Mine was—it is now generally known—used in atomic-fission research during World War II, when the pitchblende was shipped in great secrecy to the United States.

Even today the mine is closely guarded, though the Congo's wealth of radioactive ore—perhaps one-half the world's known reserves—is no secret to anybody

But what of the human side of these manifold activities at Jadotville?

Here, if anywhere, should be the place at which to view the UM labour policy at work. And so it was. Accompanied by M. Piedboeuf, the assistant general manager, we began with a visit to the hospital.

This hospital, with allied health and educational services, makes up the most elaborate installation of its kind in the Congo. Every worker receives a thorough physical examination upon entering the employ of the UM. A card is filled out for him and filed; on it are recorded all medical data. The card is kept up to date by regular check-up examinations as long as the individual remains on the payroll. An important part of the examination is the X-ray chest plate.

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These are retaken at six-month intervals as long as the worker is on the job. Lesions of incipient tuberculosis or silicosis on the lungs are thus promptly detected, and, if necessary, the man's job is changed and he is given special treatment. The General Electric equipment from America makes the hospital's X-ray department modern and complete.

We passed through the main laboratory and watched a dozen white jacketed natives—medical assistants trained at the UM's school—examining microscope slides, titrating, filtering, and doing routine laboratory work. One group was busy on Wassermann tests, which are part of the regular examination of all employees. "About ten or fifteen per cent of them are positive," according to the Belgian doctor in charge.

"Syphilis is being steadily reduced," he went on, "but our biggest gains have been in infant mortality. Counting from birth to one year of age, infant mortality is now about ten per cent."

"And how much is it in the bush?" I asked.

"About forty per cent—obviously one of the main reasons why the native population in general is increasing so slowly".

We pass into a long, high-windowed, and brightly lighted room, with rows of white beds on either side and black faces staring at us from the white sheets.

"Here in the maternity section, we have roughly a hundred births a month," the doctor continued, "and it's nearly always a case of 'mother and baby doing fine.'"

"Why shouldn't it be? These girls have been under our surveillance since early pregnancy. They've been coming to our classes in pre-natal care, they have to show up at these if they're connected with the company. And they get regular examinations during this period, these are compulsory, too, for the UM 'family.' As a matter of fact, the compulsory rule is mainly for the first-timers, the others enjoy it all."

In the daily distribution of rations, the expectant mothers receive supplementary portions of specially enriched, according to formulas worked out by UM dieticians

"It's not entirely a question of food and physical care doctor said. "Psychology enters into it, too. The women trust us. They understand mortality tables as well as anybody. They know they will get better attention here than they could get in their ancestral villages, giving birth to their babies in black and smoky huts with the help of witch-doctors and self-styled midwives."

"Who takes care of the baby when it arrives?" I asked as we walked across the flowered court.

"The mother, of course, but she does it with the knowledge we've taught her and with our equipment and help. Our doctors examine every baby once a week for a year, and after as often as may be necessary. Our nurses instruct the young mothers in washing, dressing, feeding, and generally looking after the baby. Don't think these "children of nature" know all this by instinct; they don't.

"Mamma must come every day to the baby baths. At first she's shy and scared, but she soon looks forward to it, for she meets dozens of other young women, all with their infants.

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The mothers make more noise exchanging their greetings and experiences than their babies do in yelling. We've succeeded in making the baby baths a popular meeting place, bathing baby is the social event of the day for most of them."

Fresh milk and porridge are distributed daily to the babies the after weaning, while the older children continue to receive special diets or treatment when necessary.

Trained nurses from Belgium and Catholic sisters head the staff of the infant-welfare section, but one notices a number of white-clad native girls assisting the white women. They are students from the UM nursing school receiving practical instruction in infant care. Their presence is reassuring to some of the patients, particularly to those who have never been in a hospital before.

We continued past endless rows of beds, through white operating rooms, the pharmacy, the dispensary, the laundry, the kitchens with their gleaming steam kettles.

"Every sick native in the whole area is our responsibility," the doctor went on. "Whether he is working for the Union, Minière makes no difference. Look in here"—and we entered the accident ward.

"Here's a fellow bitten on the leg by a poisonous snake. Next to him, that boy with the broken ribs; he got them from being tossed by an elephant. Chap in the corner was carried in with a cracked knee and lacerations of the thigh and a story of being charged by a wild pig. It happens none of them works for us. They're all making a good recovery, we'll turn them out soon and probably never see them again."

"What are your most serious diseases, Doctor?" I asked.

"Malaria, pneumonia, and tuberculosis," the physician replied promptly "The black man gets malaria, make no mistake about that. But he does seem to build up some resistance and I have noted that the blacker his skin the higher his malaria resistance. But for tuberculosis, the opposite seems to hold true. T.b. is on the increase among our natives and we are concerned about it."

At lunch in the company's guest house M. Piedboeuf explained further aspects of the UM labour policy

"Native recruiting is practically finished," he began. "We have now established a new native population in the Katanga. Our labour requirements are now nearly met by this settled population."

The great majority of the Katanga people, he said, were drawn from the district between the Lomami and the Kasai Rivers, about 500 miles to the north-west.

"We encourage family life in every way we can. That is only natural, since the family is the kernel of our labour stabilization programme. We want our workers to have wives and children. A large family will not mean suffering and want; the more children there are, the more we provide for them.

"Say an employee wants to marry but can't scrape up the money to pay for his bride, as is the native custom. He comes to us with his problem, we advance him the necessary sum—usually around 1,500 to 2,000 francs—and he gets his girl. Then he pays us back in regular instalments. We would willingly make it a gift but that would be against native custom.

"This couple want a home of their own, no community barracks. You can't blame them.

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So we provide the individual homes and, in doing so, foster their sense of stability, of proprietorship, of belonging somewhere. Then the babies arrive, the house becomes too small. Very well, they move into a larger house, with ample space around it for the children to play in. We have the houses in all sizes.

"You've already seen how we take care of those babies. They're going to be working for us some day, and their children, too. Did you notice how healthy they looked?"

I admitted that the babies, and the adults as well, looked solid and strong, hardly suffering from undernourishment.

M. Piedboeuf smiled. "We are rather proud of our rations. Our own doctors planned the diet. It includes sugar, flour, fresh and salt meat and fish, sweet potatoes, green vegetables, fats and fruit, with milk and cod-liver oil for the children."

So much flour was needed for the rations that the UM established a subsidiary company to operate two complete flour mills—the first ever built in the Katanga—with a combined capacity of over a hundred tons a day. The flour is milled from manioc, maize, and wheat.

"There is another advantage which stabilization brings to the native," M. Piedboeuf continued. "It gives him an opportunity for self-improvement, for training he could not possibly receive as a seasonal, itinerant labourer. Because the native remains with us, our white technicians have the time to train the most promising of them, raising them to the artisan class.

In this way, we are building up an élite of skilled workers out of a population which, only yesterday, was unschooled and unskilled. We have more than 5,000, out of a total of about 16,000 employees of the Union Minière, who have been with us fifteen years or more. These we call 'senior workers'; their service medal entitles them to special privileges, higher pay, and, most important, to a position of dignity and respect in the eyes of the others."

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"WE ARE PUTTING SOMETHING BACK "

On the train to Elisabethville, as I studied the statistics and read of the, activities of the Union Minière, the concern began to take shape, not simply as a big mining enterprise, but as a huge colonization effort, planned, controlled, directed.

The UM dealt in copper and cobalt and manganese and zinc and a dozen other world commodities, but its biggest activity, as I saw it, was people ... people who used to live in grass huts along the headwaters of the Lomami and the Lubilash, the Lulua and the Kasai.

And now they were Katanga people and their children attended compulsory schools—the girls to learn domestic science, household management, baby care, the boys to acquire skills and trades; some of the adults to learn to read books, to use libraries, to write letters ... to join the social centres in the mining settlements, to attend lectures and entertainments.

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The list of activities went on: family assistance, especially where there were many children, visiting nurses, legal advice, dental care, Boy Scout and Girl Guide movements (what better place for these than the Congo and what better scout material than these keen-eyed black youngsters ?), old-age pensions, employee-savings plans, annuities for disabled workers. Where did it stop?

The answer was, it didn't stop. Once you started a project like this, there was no stopping. You were unloosing forces which couldn't be stopped even if you wanted to stop them.

Nobody pretended it was uplift for uplift's sake.

The Union Minière was organized by hard-headed businessmen to mine and market the Katanga mineral wealth. A healthy and contented labour pool big enough to carry on, as operations expanded, was *a sine qua non* of the whole programme.

This the UM set about to create where none had existed before. At the outset they could have little realized where it would lead them: to fishponds, stock farms, irrigation projects, to building flour mills, endowing a school of music, casting bells for cathedrals...

You could say that UM regarded its strong, well-fed labour with the pride and satisfaction of a successful cattleman, or the proprietor of a stud farm, and there would be enough truth the characterization to obscure the whole truth. For there was more to it than that.

There was the inspiration of seeing the people growing, developing, fitting themselves into their new life; using, at first awkwardly and soon adroitly, the tools which the whites put into their hands. There was the satisfaction building something and seeing that, on the whole, it was good. No one could talk with the top officials of the Union Minière as I did, and not become aware of something like creative pride for their part in building the modern Katanga. As one UM director said to me:

"Agreed, a strong, healthy worker can dig more copper and hence is a better investment for us. But mining companies are always criticized for taking out the wealth of a country and not putting anything back. We are putting something back into our Congo. Maybe it is worth more than the things we are taking out."

LUBUMBASHI, KIPUSHI, THE BCK

Several small home industries help keep Elisabethville busy: a cigarette factory, two printing plants which publish origin works of Katanga authors, a Belgian leather-tooling shop where excellent suitcases and ladies' handbags are fashioned—and, of course, since it is a Belgian town, there is the brewery, whose foaming product, called *Simba* (lion), is a favourite beverage throughout the Katanga.

And little wonder, for *Simba* is assuredly the best brewed in Africa. Not too pale or thin, full-bodied and aromatic without a trace of sweetness, *Simba* has the never-cloying qualities of the best Belgian brews. It was brewed, throughout the war, and may still be, from American materials and wit water from the brewery's own wells. Elisabethville and the other Katanga communities easily took care of the entire output, one has only to go to the Katanga to see why.

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Establishment of a brewery in their new mining town in the heart of Africa was as natural to the Europeans who settled there.

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Back at the surface, a bath is the order of the day, after which we inspect the carpenter shop, where skilled natives trim the beams and shape the varied woodwork needed below, then the medical services where Dr. Dedecker leads us through the X-ray rooms, the maternities, the infant-feeding section ... exactly as at Jadotville but on a smaller scale.

Schools for all the children of the mining community are provided, as well as sports facilities, a playing field, and so on. The 400-odd white residents of Kipushi have a social club, tennis courts, and a swimming pool for their distraction. Here, as at the other mining centres, one has the impression that a serious effort has been made to make life cheerful and pleasant for all the workers, whether black or white.

The Bas Congo-Katanga Railway, in both tonnage and mileage, leads the Congo railroads, and its shops at Elisabethville are the most extensive by far of any in the colony.

Under supervision of eighty Europeans some 600 natives work in the BCK's shops.

Many have become skilled craftsmen, particularly in the car-building departments, where hand-trimmed mouldings and sheathings of Congo lumber are fitted over steel underframes to form the bodies of freight and passenger cars, and where interior fittings such as seat-frames, panelling, lamp brackets, and luggage racks are all hand-turned. The passenger cars, first, second, and third classes, were of unpainted, hand-rubbed, varnished wood both outside and in. "It would cost less to paint them," the shop superintendent said, "but Brussels wants 'em this way"—and he shrugged his shoulders expressively. It must be stated that Brussels' choice, aesthetically, is a good one.

A brand-new caboose was undergoing its finishing touches before entering long-distance freight service. Built over a steel underframe, the car was fitted with an office complete to desk, chair, and built-in pigeonhole files; cosy bunks for sleeping; a small galley for cooking on the road; a toilet; and—railway brotherhoods please note—a shower bath for the comfort of its all-black crew ! Woodwork, both outside and interior trim, was from high-grade Congo hardwoods, resulting in a severely functional yet beautiful job of craftsmanship.

The BCK, in common with the other important Congo roads, was built to a gauge of 3' 6" It is, however, the only line in the Congo which actually enjoys the advantage of interchanging its rolling stock with both the South African and the Rhodesian railways; its rails, reaching Sakania 160 miles south of Elisabethville, join the Rhodesian lines just beyond that frontier post. A car could travel from Capetown, 2,300 miles to the south, all the way to the Katanga and on into the interior of the Congo for 1,000 miles more, finally ending its trip at Port Francqui some 525 miles from Leopoldville via the Kasai and Congo Rivers.

Someday the gap to Leopoldville will be filled in, but it will be a formidable undertaking, mainly because of the many rivers which will have to be crossed. Meanwhile, the BCK is content to pick up and discharge passengers and freight to and from the river steamboats at Port Francqui. Its average annual tonnage has been around 4,000,000—more than half the

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total rail tonnage of the Belgian Congo—and most of it attributable to the immense business of the Katanga mines. The BCK's mileage, 1,650, is greater than that of all other Congo roads combined.

The 600 BCK workers at Elisabethville live with their families in a large area reserved for them near the shops. Nearly all the houses are one-family dwellings of brick, though some two-story houses of a new type are under construction. There is a kindergarten where the mothers may leave their youngsters while they go to market, a playing field, sewing classes for girls, and various other educational and welfare services. Homes of the élite among the BCK workers—enginemen, clerks, carpenters—are a little larger and better kept than the others, their greater degree of decoration outside and cleanliness within attest their occupants' pride and progress along the path of the *évolué*.

One evening, not long ago, a round dozen of us were at dinner in a beautiful country home near Elisabethville. The

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Tabacongo has a newly finished plant rising just outside of Elisabethville, whence it had moved after outgrowing its quarters in the city. Some of the buildings, including new concrete homes for the native workers, were still in the construction stage when I last saw them; an interesting detail was the covering of the foundations with a layer of powdered slag before the floors were laid on, thus rendering the dwellings termite-proof.

Before the war, some Congo leaf was exported to Belgium; but it was during the war, with communications to Europe cut off, that Tabacongo really got started. Today, with 200 natives and a dozen whites in its employ, Tabacongo turns out 3,000,000 cigarettes of Congo tobacco per day with its new equipment from the Cincinnati Rolling Machine Company. Congo cigarettes are sold to both natives and whites from one end of the colony to the other, and some may soon be packed for export. Already a cigar factory in Jadotville, begun by a retired Belgian and now carried on by his widow and daughters with the help of about sixty trained natives, produces cigars which would be pronounced excellent in any country.

HELPING THE NATIVE TO "EVOLVE"

Elisabethville's native city represents one of the most ambitious programmes for native housing and physical and moral welfare thus far undertaken by the government in the Congo. It compares favourably with the similar projects launched by the big companies, which we have already examined.

Supervising the social-welfare activities of the native city is M. A. Verbeken, honorary *Commissaire de District* and a veteran of many years in the Congo. M. Verbeken enjoys the confidence of the natives, whose Kingwana language he speaks like one of their own. M. Verbeken has, in fact, compiled a French grammar and dictionary of this Swahili dialect.

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He is the editor of a weekly newspaper for the natives, subsidized by the government and printed in French and Kingwana.

Kingwana is spoken throughout the eastern part of the Belgian Congo, from the Lomami River to the Great Lakes. It is closely related to the Swahili of Mombasa, called Kimvita, and to that of Zanzibar, called Kiunguja; with these and countless other dialects it forms a *lingua franca* throughout East Central Africa, to the Indian Ocean.

With M. Verbeken as my guide, I paid a visit to this native settlement established on the outskirts of Elisabethville.

"How is it governed?" I asked him as we drove through the city streets.

"A native chief presides over the centre, assisted by twelve native counsellors. We try to give them as much self-government as possible. When necessary, we suggest administrative orders to the chief and counsellors, who see to their execution. For the most part, the inhabitants of the centre are natives who have their own small businesses in Elisabethville, or who are employed in small white enterprises, in shops, restaurants, or as domestic servants."

Certain sections of the centre are also set apart for the homes of workers in sizeable concerns, such as the brewery, the printing plant, and some of the large department stores.

"This system is unlike that of Leopoldville," M. Verbeken continued. "There, the native city forms a part of the administrative whole. Here, the native city is a separate corporation from the City of Elisabethville. It has its own budget, its own courts of justice, for example."

The Centre Extra-Coutumier is similar in its set-up to that at Usumbura, although much larger. It contained, on my last visit in 1946, some 21,000 out of the total of about 70,000 natives who lived in and around Elisabethville. The others represent, in the main, employees of the large companies who live in homes provided for them in special districts.

At the entrance to the centre, before the brick-and-concrete administration building, we met M. V. Sips, the Belgian manager of this city of detribalized black folk.

"We are in the midst of a building programme," said M. Sips, as we shook hands. "Come with me and I'll show you the older houses and you can see the new ones we are erecting to replace them."

We stopped before a brown adobe structure with one doorless opening, no window to shed light in its murky depths, and a rusting iron roof. Nearby were community toilets serving the inhabitants of a dozen or more of these homes.

"That's yesterday's style," observed M. Sips. "By the end of the year we'll have them all torn down and everyone will be living in new homes." He indicated, with a sweep of his hand, a long row of nearly completed brick-and-concrete dwellings, each surrounded by garden space. Some were already finished and occupied by their proud possessors.

"We are trying to instil a sense of ownership," M. Sips went on. "As you know, the native, by heritage, is more or less of a nomad. Home is any practical shelter convenient to his crops. A sense of stability, of having a fixed abode, was unknown to him before he came here. But he catches on pretty fast."

Natives pay rent to the government for their houses, based on a monthly rate of five francs (more or less, depending on the style of house) per square metre of space. They may, however, own their homes by paying for them in easy instalments.

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A typical purchase plan would call for payment of 300 francs (about \$6.60) a month for ten years, at the end of which time the house would be owned outright.

M. Sips knocked on the door of one of the finished houses, it was opened by a calico-gowned native woman who, after a smiling "Yambo" ("How do you do?") to each of us, broke into a chatter of Kingwana with M. Verbeken.

"She says she didn't know we were coming and hasn't tidied the house for us," M. Verbeken explained--the familiar apology, I thought, of housewives from Kokomo to the Katanga!

But she let us enter anyway, and the house was neat, as neat as any home regularly lived in should be. Religious pictures in bright colours hung on the walls, and beneath them were many snapshots of native groups. Sunlight filtered through white starched curtains in the windows. The dining table had been cleared of breakfast things and the beds made.

Though at first I felt like an intruder, entering her house for an unexpected scrutiny with these two high white officials, I soon realized that our hostess was proud of her home and happy to have us see it. She watched us and was quick to note the approbation in our comments, though she knew no French. Her husband had gone to work, and the children were playing outside.

Rooms consisted of a living-room, dining-room, bedroom, and kitchen, the latter with a built-in stove and chimney. A concrete, enclosed toilet stood at a distance behind the house.

The family was evidently of a superior standing, and I mentioned this to M. Sips.

"Yes, the husband is a trusted bank employee downtown," he said, as we bade good-bye to our hostess. "Here are some less elaborate homes," and we turned into another street where the houses, equally clean and new, were smaller and more modest. They had flat, galvanized-iron roofs instead of pitched roofs of tile and fibro-cement. There were also fewer windows.

"In the bush, their grass huts are dark and windowless," M. Sips continued. "They like them that way. New arrivals at the centre are ill at ease in houses with windows, and some even board up the few that they have. As they get on, they become used to the windows, which we encourage for sanitary reasons. You can almost tell the degree of evolution of a native by the number of windows in his house. These modest little homes are occupied by messengers, labourers, natives working for other natives. As they rise in life, the people living here will aspire to larger houses, with more windows, for which they will pay more rent. The idea is to give every householder who wants it the type of house suited to his degree of evolution and his pocket. Notice, though, that all the houses, from the biggest to the smallest, have individual outside toilets."

Apart from being both sanitary and gratifying to the native's sense of privacy, this feature is apparently a powerful psychological factor in the programme whose aim is to make the native feel that his home is his own, that he belongs in it and nowhere else.

I commented on the public water taps at street intersections throughout the wide area of new homes. "It is the same water which is supplied to Elisabethville," M. Sips explained, "but in the city it is metred and charged for. Here it is free. Even so, it costs the government money to provide it and we don't like to see it wasted. At first the women, who do most of the water-carrying, were very careless about leaving the water turned on and allowing the children to play with it and waste it.

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We got round that by asking the chief to instruct his police to report all cases of misuse of water and, after a warning, to turn off the water at that particular fountain for twenty-four hours, thus forcing all the women who depended on that fountain to walk to the next, twice as far away, with their pails. " Water is heavy, as the women who have to carry it on their heads well know. By inconveniencing the innocent as well as the guilty parties, we showed them that the responsibility of enforcing the proper care of the water rested on the whole neighbourhood. This had never occurred to most of them before. Thus we made the example of the water fountains a kind of lesson in community spirit." Bathhouses, with hot and cold showers, were also connected with the water system.

In addition to the homes, there are also the market, the Hôpital Prince Léopold, the dispensaries, the schools: an amazing succession of practical, working services which are helping the native to grow and learn. The market is one of the cleanest in the Congo, though perhaps the Katanga climate should have part of the credit for the absence of flies. The new hospital provides full courses for native medical assistants, qualifying them to enter government service upon graduation.

There is also a special section devoted to pre-natal and maternity care and infant welfare. Women report as early as six months before the baby is due, for regular examinations and consultations. They receive vitamin-enriched special rations during the pre-natal period. When the baby arrives, its weight and general condition are noted and it is brought to the hospital once a week for a year, and longer if necessary, for successive weighings and examinations.

About 1,100 pregnant women report weekly for their examination and instruction, while the number of babies brought in for weekly checkups is around 700. The discrepancy is explained by the fact that hundreds of women from all parts of the Elisabethville area come to the clinic for the same free services which are given the permanent residents of the centre.

The women not expecting an addition to their family are not neglected. "We don't want them idle and listless, with too much time on their hands," said M. Sips. "In the bush, they'd be doing all the heavy work of the village, which is too much of a good thing. Here, they 'play house."

The women—and these are grown-ups, most of them married —attend a special school of domestic science and household arts. The government maintains it but its actual operation is entrusted to a volunteer organization of Belgian women called the *Assistance Sociale*, a kind of Elisabethville Junior League.

To learn how to run a house, one should have a house in which to practise, and so the government has turned over one of its new homes for practical demonstrations of housekeeping and general home management. No one lives in the house; it is used as a model only.

Here, every few days or so, one may see the smartly dressed society leaders of Elisabethville showing shiny-faced, big-bosomed Baluba women how to set a table, to hang curtains, to use eating utensils, and to vary their menus and surprise their husbands with appetizing cooked dishes. Needless to say, the native women love the course and their appreciation and devotion amply repay the white instructresses.

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The Assistance Sociale also runs dressmaking and knitting classes for small girls of the centre.

Another unusual feature of this community is its *hospice* for the aged, consisting of apartments arranged in long rows, giving on a verandah facing an attractive grass-covered court, the entrance to which is through a decorative archway in the tile-topped stucco wall. The home is open to all elderly natives who have no means of support and no near relatives who, according to native tradition, would support them.

THE WIDENING GAP

There is no question but that the Centre Extra-Coutumier in Elisabethville, along with corresponding institutional activities by the big companies, such as Géomines and the Union Minière, represents the highest development of native welfare service in the entire Congo.

Inspired as it was by the remarkable results in improved health and morale which the UM achieved with its native personnel, the government's programme goes, in some ways, even farther. It embraces the rounded cultural development of the individual and does not stress any particular trade or skill.

The Centre Extra-Coutumier (may they soon find a better name for it !) encourages the evolution of the native by providing many incentives to education and adjustment.

The *évolué* can read the weekly newspaper which M. Verbeken edits for the residents of the centre as well as natives of the whole province and beyond. He can understand the subtitles in the cinema shows which are held regularly in the centre. He can borrow and enjoy books from the centre's library, and listen to the radio plays and talks which are broadcast in French.

He may join clubs and discussion groups, which are always being organized with the friendly assistance of MM. Verbeken and Sips.

The newspaper *Nyota* ("Star") is filled with "personals" of the centre, with minutes of the various club meetings, and with letters written by its native readers discussing such topics as the mounting cost of living, the problem of mulattoes in the Congo, the social acceptance, by the whites, of *évolués*, and other live topics.

Here, as elsewhere, one notices the widening gap between the thinking, well-trained, ambitious men and the virtually illiterate women. Closing of this gap is becoming one of the most pressing needs of the Congo, for what is the good of all this effort to bring up a native boy as an educated citizen, when in the matter of family life he is offered no choice but to espouse an ignorant, unlettered girl ?

Virtually everyone to whom I put this question agreed with me that the need was great, already, indeed, plans are under way to remedy the situation through long-delayed secular schools throughout the Congo.

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As a matter of fact, Belgium herself has no great tradition of female education, and this lag is probably reflected in the colonial attitude. As late as 1914, there was still not a single state secondary school for girls in the whole Kingdom. Since then, great strides have been made. Belgian women have entered schools of higher education, with no apparent damage to their morals, as was feared in many quarters; let them soon take the lead in demanding that their colonial sisters of darker skin receive a worthy education in Belgium's New Congo..

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purpose of catching diamonds, and the Congo mines receive their grease supplies from the Union.

A layman has less difficulty discerning a rough diamond in its natural company of pebbles and grit than in picking out a cut gem from a tray of sparkling imitations. There is an unmistakable glint, dull and imperfect though it be, in the aspect of a rough diamond rolled between the fingers, which is never apparent in less dense aggregates of quartz or other glassy particles. Some of the little diamonds (they are nearly all under one carat, though one freak of 560 carats has been found) have an odd wet or "fatty" appearance, as if they had a film of dirty oil on them. Others are tiny triangular crystalline chips, which blaze with white reflections.

A large brick-and-stone compound has recently been completed at Bakwanga, with accommodations for 120 native workers. The men live in small dormitories surrounding the central court. They have no communication with those outside the compound. Every day they pass to and from their work through a single gateway. The picking tables where they work are also in a special room closed off from the outside, so that, during the life of their contract, the compound men pass every hour either at work or in the compound. The men in the compound handle diamonds worth thousands of dollars every hour of their working day. Opportunities for concealment and theft would be nearly irresistible if some sort of tight control were not kept, according to M. Arend.

"The men sign on voluntarily for an indefinite term of from two to four months," he explained. "A dishonest worker cannot lay careful plans ahead to conceal a diamond on the day his contract expires because he doesn't know exactly how long it is to run. He never knows, as the time of expiration of his contract draws near, just which day we will tap him on the shoulder and say, 'All right, Joe, your time's up. Go to the showers and get your clothes.'

"When a worker is told this, he trots to the baths, strips, and returns the clothes we lent him when he entered [at which time he turned in his own clothing and everything else he carried with him]. He gets his bath and is given a very thorough examination. The chances are nothing will be found—at least,

nothing ever has been, so far—and so his own clothes and possessions are returned to him and he goes to the office to sign out and receive his pay. He has the option of signing in again after a few days' holiday, and more than half avail themselves of it.

"After all, the life is not too bad. Notice, for example, the concrete swimming pool we've dug for them in the centre of the court. Games and music are provided during their off-hours. It all makes them feel they're living in an exclusive club and getting paid for it." Exclusive it certainly was, or perhaps "inclusive" would be more exact.

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Purges are not administered to the compound inmates upon leaving the compound, either at Bakwanga or the other Congo mines, which is a departure from the practice in many diamond fields. Apparently the authorities never considered them necessary, in view of the fact that detected thefts have been just about nil.

The increasing use of very hard steel alloys, such as the tantalum-titanium carbides and others, has not displaced diamonds for industrial purposes; rather it has increased the demand for them. None but diamond-faced machine tools can machine, trim, and shape these special steels. Automatically, the increase in the use of the one increases the demand for the other. The United States alone, at the height of the war effort, was consuming industrial diamonds at the rate of more than a million carats a month. Most of these were Congo stones.

A single diamond with a tiny hole bored in it (making diamond dies is itself something of a special art) can be used to draw 20,000 miles of the hardest wire without repolishing. The next best material used as a die is good for about 200 miles before wearing out. Tungsten filaments for electric light bulbs are drawn through tiny diamonds, most of them of Congo origin.

Before the war, M. Arend said, sale of gem diamonds represented nine-tenths of the total diamond business. Bort was regarded as a by-product and there was always a surplus. Industrial diamond mining is now big business in the Congo.

There is a compound at Tshikapa similar to that at Bak-wanga, although here there is a steel netting stretched over the courtyard to discourage the tossing of a diamond over the second-story roof.

"The boys sign on for a two to four-month stay," said M. Parmentier. "Most of them are young bachelors planning to marry and saving their money toward the purchase of a wife. They know they'd never get the cash together living on the outside. They may leave us at the conclusion of their first contract with about three hundred francs in their pocket. It's more than most of them ever had before and it's enough for a down payment (which goes to the future father-in-law) on the girl of their choice.

"About eighty per cent of them, however, elect to sign on for another term and accumulate more money. They enjoy the life; they have no living expenses, no family responsibilities, and the work is easy. Most of them put on weight during their stay; some as much as seven kilos."

We entered the restricted precincts while the fifty-odd young men who lived there were at work in the sorting room. The compound resembled a small model prison. Two tiers of sleeping rooms gave on to double balconies running around three sides of a grassy courtyard with a decorative palm in the centre and a swimming pool at one end. There was a recreation room on the ground floor, with equipment for native games, playing cards, a few illustrated magazines, and a wind-up gramophone with records. Next door was a small chapel where professed Christians could worship. About half the compound's floating population were in this category; the rest remained unconverted.

One white lived in an apartment on the second floor overlooking the court. He was responsible for the general morale of the group and for the security of the company's fortunes, as far

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as his charges were concerned. One of his duties was to supervise the distribution of food rations. The food was brought from the outside into a special room and there transferred from baskets to special containers which never left the premises. The empty baskets then went out the way they came in, the door was again bolted, and an inside door was unlocked and the food brought into the compound. Rations included fresh meat, dried fish, manioc, and fresh fruit. An experimental fishpond has been constructed by Forminière on the outskirts of Tshikapa and the plan is to supplement the workers' diet with fresh fish from the pond. Tilapias and American sunfish, or bluegills (*Lepomis sp.*) are being tried as possible food sources, following success with these varieties in South Africa and other parts of the Congo.

There had never been any disturbances in the compound, nor has any of its inmates ever been caught in concealment or embezzlement of diamonds, notwithstanding the usual searches and surveillance. It is evident that the natives are satisfied with the system, and so is Forminière. The management has a waiting list of applications for admission to the compound. Perhaps this state of affairs owes less to the charms of life within the compound than to those of the marriageable maidens waiting without.

At any rate, it is not unpleasing to reflect that some of the diamonds which seal the troths of white-skinned lovers have helped at this business before. Some of them, even as the concealing mud of centuries is scraped away, are paying the bride-price for a happy Tshikapa boy and girl.

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