

tions. I dare say that it is a crusade worthy of this century of progress."

As a result of the conference, a committee was formed under the name: The International African Association, in which the other nations were invited to participate. Many of them were rather lukewarm, and it fell to King Leopold, aided by a handful of Belgians, to carry on the enterprise almost alone, and almost entirely at the King's personal expense. As the Prince of Wales (afterward King Edward the Seventh) remarked: "Leopold is likely to ruin and impoverish himself by his fantastic philanthropic ideas."

During the following years, King Leopold devoted his great genius to the development of the Congo. It was a formidable undertaking and fortunately a "one-man job," for, as Count de Lesseps remarked on one occasion: "If there is anything important to do, and there are two of you to do it, there is one too many." King Leopold had been the Big Boss—an absolute Monarch, without any control by the Belgian Parliament.

Finally, in 1908, after he had put his African possessions in good shape and in proper running order, he presented it, as a free gift, to the Belgian people, and it became a colony of Belgium under the name of the Belgian Congo.

The Belgian Congo occupies an area of about 920,000

square miles—equal to about one-third of the United States, and about eighty times the size of Belgium. The native population is estimated at somewhat more than ten million, and the present white population (chiefly Belgians), at approximately thirty thousand. The country is extremely rich in natural resources, both mineral and vegetable. Among the mineral products are: copper, gold, diamonds, tin, cobalt, radium, silver and coal. The vegetable products include: palm oil, cotton, coffee, cocoa, hard woods, rubber, jute cane sugar and sesame.

Since the annexation of the Congo to Belgium, the development of these products, as well as the care, education, and physical welfare of the natives, has been the constant concern of Leopold II's successors, King Albert and King Leopold III, both of whom made personal visits to the Congo. As our present King is a prisoner in the hands of the Germans, the administration of the Belgian Congo devolves upon the Belgian Government-in-Exile at London, and especially upon the Belgian Minister of Colonies, Mr. de Vleeschauwer, and his representative in the Congo, Governor General Ryckmans.

All the production of material useful for war supplies goes exclusively to the United States and the British Empire.

*Isiro, a bathing resort near the borders of the Haut Ituri.*





# The United States helped to found Belgian Congo

A few hours before his death, King Leopold II, at the last audience he gave his prime minister, said: "If you yield so much as an inch of the Congo, your old King will rise from his grave to blame you."

On the brink of death, in a palace, the garden of which sheltered immense greenhouses filled with strange African plants, the King remembered the great adventure of his life, his dreams of vast colonial possessions which had become a reality.

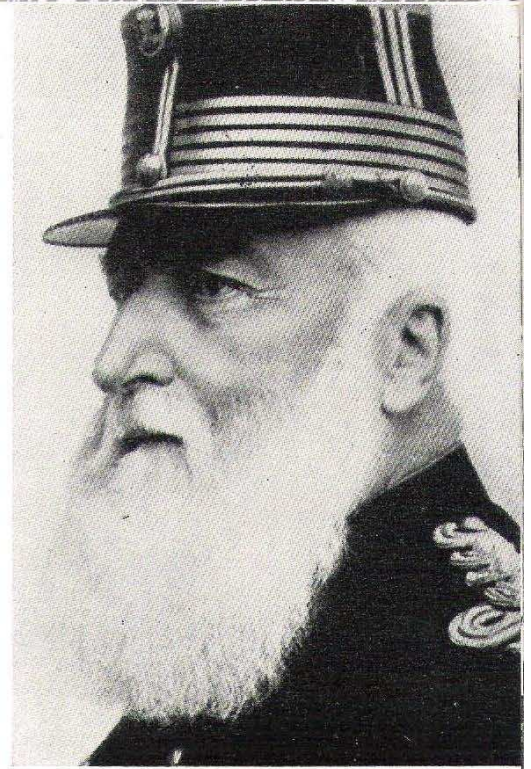
He was only twenty when, addressing an assembly, in 1855, he bluntly told the Belgians "to have a broad vision of world affairs" and he suggested the creation of long maritime lines. Five years later he invited his country to lose no time "if we do not want to see all the best positions, already scarce enough, occupied by other nations more enterprising." Thereafter he waged a written campaign, either writing himself or inspiring other writers, in favor of Belgian colonies, and when he became King (1865) he scanned the map of the world to find a region which had not been annexed by any country.

That very year, an American, Dr. Livingstone, was exploring Central Africa, whose vast expanses were still mysterious and where savage populations were being decimated by Arab slave-traders. After having pushed as far as Lake Tanganyka, Livingstone disappeared. Gordon Bennett, owner of the New York Herald, sent a reporter, the Anglo-American Henry M. Stanley, to find him. The two explorers finally met and Stanley's adventures were widely publicized in America and Europe, through the New York Herald.

The most avid reader of Stanley's reports was Leopold II. Later he read Livingstone's heartrending stories of African slavery. The King's mind was made up: he would assume the task of stamping out slavery and would, at the same time, give an African colony to Belgium.

In 1876, he called an international conference in Brussels, and the "International Association for the Abolition of the Slave Trade" was formed under the King's chairmanship.

However, political difficulties soon piled up and what was now known as the "International Congo Association" had no standing in international law. Leopold II had to negotiate with France about a claim on the mouth of the Congo River. Then Portugal, with the support of England,



*King Leopold II,  
founder of the  
Belgian Congo.*

put in a series of claims which threatened the whole Belgian undertaking. Leopold II acted with such diplomacy that both France and Germany refused to recognize the Portuguese claims and in the end the British government withdrew its support of the Portuguese.

Finally, the United States of America stepped in. On April 10, 1884, the American Government officially recognized the Brussels Association. Thanks to that strong moral help, all political difficulties disappeared. In quick succession, the various European countries admitted the King's peaceful conquest and on February 26, 1885, an International Conference meeting at Berlin recognized the "Congo Free State" under the sovereignty of Leopold II.

The act of Berlin "proclaimed" freedom of trade and of navigation in the Congo basin, excluded all preferential treatment, granted identical commercial and civil rights to foreigners and nationals.

The Congo became, under the King's rule, a colony open to all; nationalism and tariff walls were—and still are—excluded. The slave trade was abolished. Catholic and Protestant missionaries preached the Gospel to the blacks. Hardy pioneers enthusiastically seconded the work of the King. However, the sovereign was bitterly criticized by some people. One of his most violent detractors was Sir Roger Casement, the traitor who was hanged by the British during World War I.

In 1889, the King willed to Belgium the new African Empire but violent and unfair campaigns were launched both against Leopold's administration and the handing over of the Congo to Belgium. However, in 1908, the Belgian Parliament accepted the King's gift. Belgium now possessed a vast and rich colony.





*The main and only street in a village of the Congo jungle.*

*The Mungini Mai (Water village) tribe live in their 60 boats which congregate in the evening at a spot previously agreed upon.*





# Belgian Colonial Policy

King Albert, at the time of his accession, on the 23rd of December, 1909, stated:

"Having a proper sense of her duty, and the means to carry it out, Belgium has mapped out her own course, and intends to keep to it. It entails a policy of humanity and progress. To a nation, whose only aim is justice, the mission of colonization can only be a mission of high civilization; a small nation proves its greatness by carrying it out faithfully."

Belgium has kept her word.

The work of colonization has been carried out methodically. The Belgian and Foreign missions have a staff, which at present exceeds three thousand teachers and educators, who give instruction and education to over 1,500,000 Christians, and to more than one million catechumens, training many of them to act as assistants among their colored brethren.

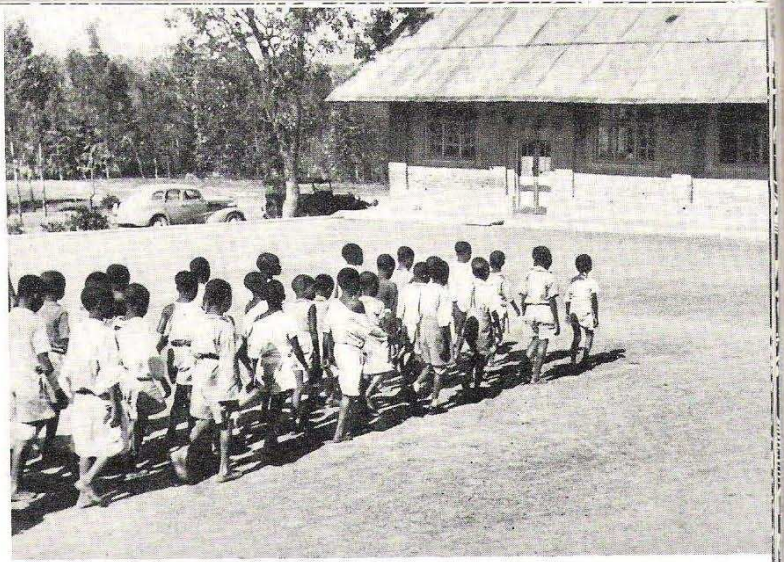
All the mission stations are busy evangelizing the natives, besides educating them, and teaching them the rudiments of hygiene. They also till plantations, and go in for cattle breeding.

Instruction is given to both European and native pupils. Classes for European pupils have been organized in many important towns. As far as the native pupils are concerned, schools have been opened for them in the most important centers of colonization. They are being taught in collaboration with the mission stations. There are now 300,000 black pupils attending 5,000 schools.

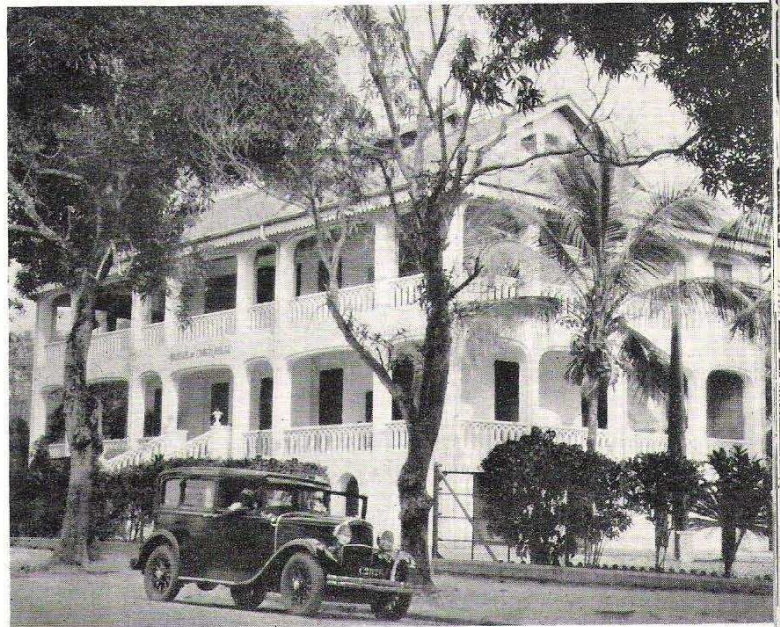
Besides their military instruction, the native soldiers attend trade schools, where lectures are given in workshops and schoolrooms. This is done to enable them to obtain work in private concerns after their demobilization.

The Colony has undergone a great change as far as hygiene is concerned. Social centers and medical clinics have sprung up everywhere, broadcasting instruction on health topics. The government, private enterprises, and the Congo Red Cross Society (Foréami) have taken useful prophylactic measures; medical attendance in the bush territories is also organized.

Rail and water transport services connect the most important places of the Colony. The "Federation of Transport Services" (Comité de Coordination des Transports), grouping the representatives of all the companies interested in transport throughout the colony, has made some very fortunate decisions which are having a favorable influence on the carrying trade. The network of communications is being dealt with in another chapter of this brochure.

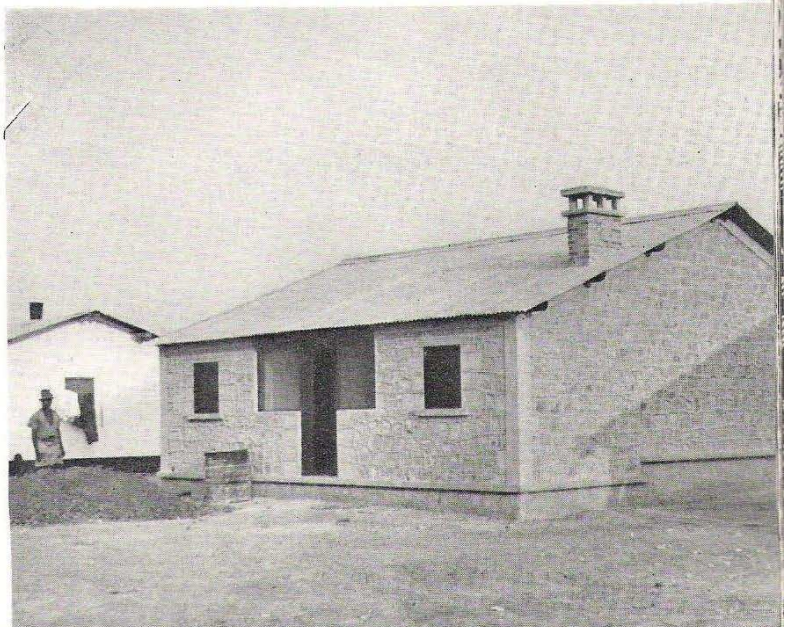


*Each mine in Katanga has its particular native settlement with schools, native children and all modern institutions to take care of the native population.*



*The Belgian Congo Bank at Leopoldville.*

*A native worker's house*





The total length of navigable waterways is 21,000 miles. This includes the network of rivers formed by the Congo and its tributaries, the lakes, etc. They are open to steamer traffic. The Colony possesses four seaports: Banana, Boma, Ango-Ango and Matadi.

The outside harbors are provided with up-to-date appliances, and all conveniences for bringing steamers and mail-ships into port.

The principal vegetable products now produced in a scientific way are: palm oil and nuts, copal, sesamum, cotton, rubber, bindweeds, cocoa, coffee, precious wood, tanning barks, castor oil, kola nuts, tobacco, rice, maize, sorghum, vanilla, pepper, manioc, peanuts, potatoes, beans, sugar cane, bananas, pineapples, kapok, raphia, jute-hemp, sisal, papyrus, milla panza, koma, etc.

The principal ores found in the colony are: copper, tin, iron, gold, manganese, raw silver, platinum, cobalt, uranium, coal, etc. Diamonds are also found there.

Among the animal products we will mention the following: ivory, beeswax, skins, leather, etc.

Many industrial enterprises are already established in the

colony. They embrace the following activities: foundries, engineering shops, yards for machine building, engineering shops for engine repairs and for motor car repairs, cement works, brickyards and potteries, quarries and limekilns, saw mills, wood-coke plants, joineries, furniture factories, buildings yards, hydro and thermo electric works, printing houses, spinning and weaving mills, cotton shelling plants, rice factories, salt works, soap factories, oil works, aerated water factories, breweries, flour mills, sugar mills, oxhydric gas works, ice factories, coffee factories, cocoa factories, rubber dressing plants, laundries, bakeries, cannell and tobacco factories, plants for the manufacture of explosives. drums, etc.

It was only in 1910 that the Belgian Congo began to be developed commercially. About a thousand industrial and commercial enterprises were already operating.

In 1920, 2,650 concerns were registered there, among which were 14 transport companies, 19 agricultural societies, 13 mining companies. Today, this number has grown to 7,000 commercial, industrial and agricultural enterprises, half of which are Belgian firms.

The total Belgian investment in the Congo amounts to over three hundred million dollars.

*A hotel at Butembo. Each guest has a little house of his own.*

