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suggestion that certain Government Departments should be amalgamated, an assumption that there will somehow or other come to the head of the new Department someone who will be capable of doing the job that one wants to be done ; but that does not follow, although it would be the only virtue of the rearrangement. The problem will not be solved merely by juggling with the machinery of government ; it requires concentrated, intelligent and scientific work, and it requires Societies such as this to enlighten the public as to the real elements of the problem.

On the motion of the Chairman, a vote of thanks was accorded to Mr. Douglas for his paper, and, also on the motion of the Chairman, the thanks of the meeting were accorded to the Council of the Institution of Electrical Engineers for granting the Society the use of the Hall of the Institution for its meetings whilst its own premises were not available.

The meeting concluded with a vote of thanks to the Chairman.

MR. E. H. SAMS writes : There was no time for me to add to the long and interesting discussion which followed Mr. Douglas's paper. I should, however, like an opportunity to mention a point which was not emphasised that afternoon, viz., the pollution of land and water caused by the present system of sewage disposal. Under our present system fish are destroyed in rivers and sea, so that our fishing fleets have to go to more distant waters for their living, thousands of acres of valuable land are acquired for the dumping of refuse and sewage ; the sea around our coasts is, in many places, made unsuitable and dangerous for bathing, and seaweed which used to be a valuable manure has to be thrown back into the sea owing to the offence which it causes when washed up. The cost to the nation for these processes of pollution is between £25 and 10 millions per annum and the returns sickness, disease, and breeding grounds for vermin and other pests. Yet, the cost producing valuable humus from the wastes is less than the cost of dumping them, and the result in increasing soil fertility and improving the nation's health is immeasurable.

GENERAL NOTE.

INTERNATIONAL ARTS CENTRE.—This Centre has been started in London in order to bring together artists of all nationalities and those interested in the arts. Its activities will include lectures, musical and gramophone recitals, exhibitions, and poetry and dramatic readings. The annual subscription is one guinea.

A series of evening lectures and musical recitals is planned to begin this month, and full particulars can be obtained from the Organising Secretary, E. Margaret Dighton, International Arts Centre, 22, St. Petersburg Place, London, W.2. (Telephone : Bayswater 5194.)

NOTES ON BOOKS

ENGLAND AND THE FARMER. Edited by H. J. Massingham. B. T. Batsford, Ltd. 10s. 6d.

Much of the ground covered by this symposium has already been covered by Lord Northbourne's *Look to the Land*. Dr. L. J. Picton's contribution on *Diet*

and Farming, for example, is almost identical in its arguments, as in many of its references, with Chapter Two of that book. A certain impatience, amounting to testiness in places, makes it the less valuable piece of work. In his preface to the book, Mr. Massingham urges, in fact, that the two books should be read together, a suggestion with which I cordially agree. Chosen, but apparently not guided by Mr. Massingham, the seven contributors put up a formidable case for the revaluation and regeneration of the land of England generally, and for farming as "the critical link in that unceasing flow of material substance which is the physical aspect of man." Lord Lymington on *The Policy of Husbandry*, Sir Albert Howard on *Soil Fertility*, Mr. C. Henry Warren on *Corn*, Mr. Adrian Bell on *The Family Farm*, Mr. Rolf Gardiner on *Rural Reconstruction*, Dr. Picton on *Diet and Farming*, and Sir George Stapledon on *The Reclamation of Grasslands*, all arrive, in Mr. Massingham's words, "at an identical conclusion as to the means to be followed for the salvation of Rural England." Of these essays, Mr. Adrian Bell's is surprisingly clumsy, inefficient and unconvincing; Mr. Rolf Gardiner's is flavoured rather too much with Teutonic ideologies for my liking, though he strikes hard and justly at a church "that is simply not doing its job"; Mr. Warren's essay on corn is apparently an offshoot of his recent book on the same subject, but is very good for all that; Lord Lymington makes a sound and passionate plea, in which there is the very sensible suggestion that "there should be a Chair at Oxford for the right uses of dung." This essay, together with the contributions by Sir Albert Howard, whose examination of the Indore system is masterly, and by Sir George Stapledon, make the backbone of the book. Towards Sir George Stapledon's essay, and indeed towards all his work for the land, there are two courses one may adopt: to devote to it nine-tenths of the review, or to say, simply, here is a great man. I would like to choose the first; I have no option but to choose the latter.

The conclusions drawn by the contributors are black, but nevertheless remain, I suggest, incomplete. The book would have been more telling, to my mind, if the cases of the smallholders and of the farm labourer himself had been included. As it is, the book appears to be rather too rigidly devoted to the thesis that the rural England of to-day is only the blighted skeleton of that fat and golden age of yesterday. Essential though the need for rural regeneration is, a sense of proportion needs to be kept. In reading *England and the Farmer*, therefore, one may very profitably take down from the shelves some such work as *The Village Labourer* and remind oneself that the past, on which Mr. Massingham urges so emotionally that we should model ourselves, was, for the poorer people of the rural community, rarely fat and never golden at all.

H. E. BATES.

PRIMITIVE ART. By L. Adam. Pelican Books. Allen Lane, Penguin Books. 6d.

This is a little book of great interest. It should appeal not only to artists but to all who, in the words of Dr. Marrett's foreword "would devote their spare moments to the contemplation of the constructive rather than the destructive energies of the human race." In the purely bibliographical sense it is quite amazingly good value, with its numerous text illustrations and its sixteen pages of photogravure plates.

When we come to a critical appreciation of its contents we are plunged at once into the deep waters of philosophic problems. What is "primitive"? What is "art"? Dr. Adam himself says: "It is difficult, if not impossible, to give a satisfactory definition of 'primitive man' as distinct from 'civilised man.'" I think one may conclude that the author meant to deal only with "uncivilised" art but could not avoid the inclusion of much that is primitive neither in the technical, the historical nor the æsthetic sense. It is clear, also, that he found the æsthetic