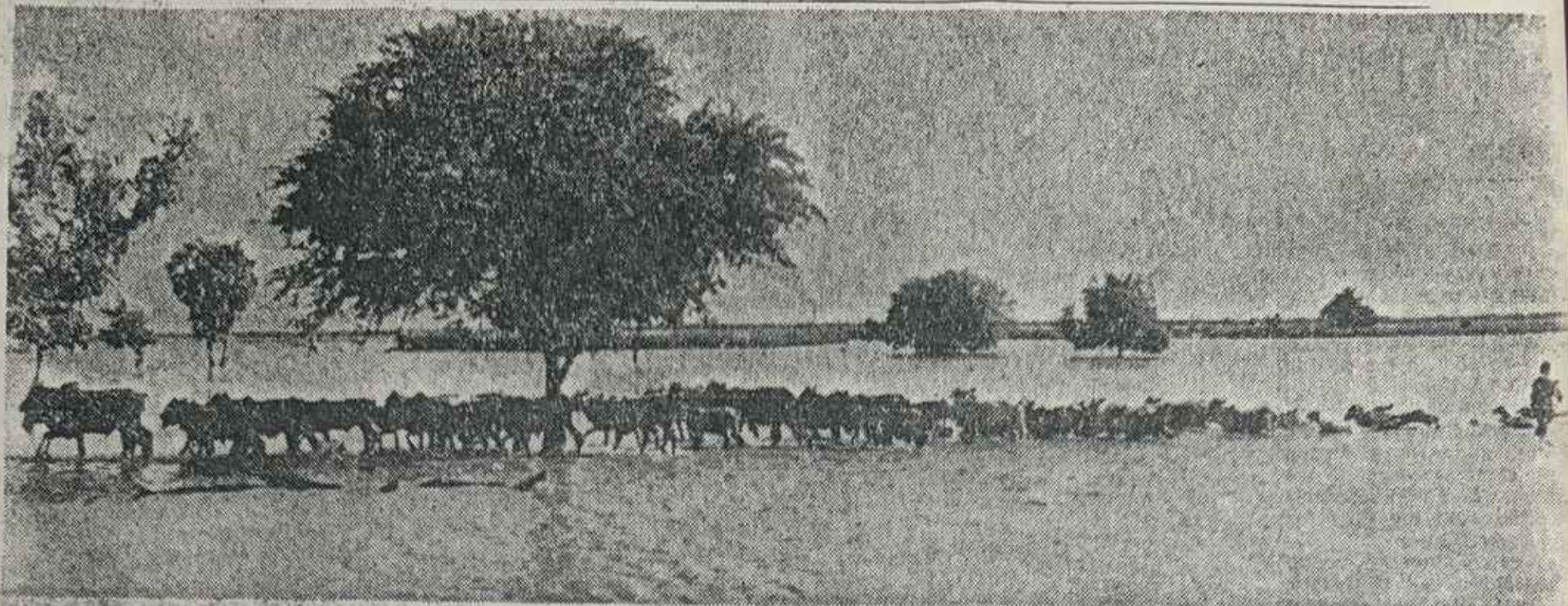




Cattle wading through a flooded area late last August in Upper Volta, on the southern edge of the Sahara, where drought has broken

Rains in Sub-Sahara Area Raise Hopes for Good Harvests Soon

By HENRY HAMM

Special to The New York Times

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DAKAR, Senegal—The countries below the Sahara that suffered from catastrophic famine as a result of drought for the last two years are enjoying a normal autumn rainy season that promises reasonable harvests in the weeks to come.

The crops will be far from sufficient for the population of 25 million in the seven afflicted sub-Saharan countries, but the rains have revitalized the peoples' hopes for survival and the confidence of the Governments that they, in turn, can play a determining role.

Although numbers may never be known in a region in which even the count of the living is far from established, it is as-

sumed that several thousand have died of hunger or of diseases they could not resist because of their weakened state. Most of the deaths have been in Chad, Niger, Mali and Mauritania.

Upper Volta, Senegal and Gambia, the other countries of the Sahel — the geographic name derived from the Arabic word for "fringe"—were less generally or less severely affected.

In all seven countries, which were visited in the course of a two-month tour, hundreds of thousands suffered hunger, illness, the loss of livelihoods and

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tirely dependent on foreign funding and on the willingness of the member Governments to delegate powers to a regional organization.

Whether donor nations are willing to forgo bilateral for regional assistance and whether the Governments of the region are prepared to put aside differences for common programs are questions yet to be answered.

With the rains' return, bringing harvests where there have been none for two years, there have been floods that make roads impassable and invasions of caterpillars and grasshoppers and destructive birds.

Reflecting on nature's apparent anger at the region and its people, Mr. Dadji, the Subprefect of Mongo, in Chad, fell back on a proverb he heard in his childhood and had not recalled since he left for university training in France. "Illness comes at a gallop," he said, "and leaves at a slow walk."

SCIENTISTS

I told Warren Smith a year ago (for his new book "Predictions For 1975" that I would cause the above to happen, in Africa. It has happened.

Owens