

A B S T R A C T

The most abundant single tree species in Trinidad is Mora excelsa Benth. In the early years of the Forest Department, timber of ^{Trinidad and Tobago} this species was not in demand. Over the years the demand has increased and mora now forms about 20% of the total home timber production. Local timber production does not meet the full demand for timber and large annual imports are necessary with a consequent drain on the country's finances.

The Forest Department has frequently had to make forest management decisions with inadequate data on which to base these decisions. This has largely been due to shortage of trained field staff. Management of the mora forests has varied over the years. In none of the systems has mora been encouraged. Efforts to replace it completely in the north-east by natural regeneration of other species were unsuccessful. It was decided that management in this area should be changed to a policy of clear felling and pine planting. To satisfy the demand for mora, clear felling is proceeding at a faster rate than planting and a backlog of 12,000 acres of devastated mora forest has accumulated in the north-east which is virtually unproductive. In addition, clear felling on the steep slopes of the remaining mora forest leads to erosion and land slipping.

This investigation has shown that the mora forest can be exploited and maintained as a productive unit with very little expenditure. Results from the investigation provide the Forest Department with data which has not been available before and which can be used as a guide to future management of the mora forest. The data include crop inventory, growth rates and volume increment. It is recommended that clear felling should be discontinued and the mora forest be managed on a Selection System.