

PART I: INTRODUCTION

The area of land over which the present survey was carried out measured 112,645 acres and was in the Northern Plain of Trinidad. The survey had to be completed within 8 months by a team of four Colonial Office Probationers. Each member shared in the planning, collection of field data, and analysis of results, but certain aspects of this work were made the responsibility of individuals. The survey was concerned with the acreage estimation only, of different types of land use occurring within the area, by means of a sampling method.

The limited amount of information to be collected in this survey was recognised by the team to be a necessary restriction, in order to complete the work in the time allowed and with the number of people involved. A government undertaking dealing with a land use survey by a sampling method would probably cover a larger area, and have more staff and time available so that other information could be collected. For instance, in the land use survey carried out in Uganda (Purseglove 1946), the angle of all slopes and erosion possibilities were recorded, also sample homesteads were visited and details of livestock as well as economic and sociological data were collected.

Though the prime object of a survey should be to collect those details that are required, the possibilities of collecting other related or even unrelated information such as the above should be borne in mind, especially if they involve only a small increase in the time or cost of the survey.

Survey work can provide those statistics which are necessary before efficient planning of improvements and new developments can take place. It is also a valuable means of keeping a check on how well these improvements or new developments are progressing. Surveys are used considerably in developed countries but their use is needed just as much, or even more so, in developing or undeveloped countries. The fact that they are

not used to such an extent is due partly to the stage of development, and also to the lack of trained staff and money available to carry out the work.

Complete surveys generally need a lot of staff and a lot of money, but as explained later both of these can be reduced considerably if a sample survey is made. It would seem therefore, that for some time to come any surveys conducted in these developing countries must involve a sampling method.