

INTRODUCTION

This is a report of the subject for investigation - "Sugar Cultivation and mechanisation in Trinidad", set by the Director of Agriculture, Nyasaland, and submitted, with the approval of the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture, as part requirement for the Diploma in Tropical Agriculture.

[Not eligible for DTA. Cornish was a special course student not eligible for a Certificate. 5/8]

The title alone gave an indication that the possibilities of sugar production in Nyasaland, assisted by mechanisation, were being considered and with this in view every endeavour was made to obtain the fullest and most detailed information regarding the production of sugar in Trinidad and of the methods used in mechanisation in the hope that knowledge so obtained would be of value to the new industry.

At an early stage it is necessary to record the fact that the writer has spent 22 years in Nyasaland and that sugar as a crop, coupled with mechanisation, were both very new but interesting subjects and certainly provided the ideal material for the refresher course.

During the three terms of the course at the Imperial College it was only possible to pay short visits to nearby estates and peasant farmers but later, with the extra time granted, determined efforts were made to visit a number of sugar estates and to discuss with their staff some of the various aspects of production. The time however was limited, and thus it is not claimed that all branches have been covered in detail but every effort was made to explore each and every possibility, and obtain the soundest advice from those who knew more, and who were so willing to impart their experience and knowledge to one who knew so little.

A short visit was paid to Barbados, B.W.I. where the Central Sugar Cane Breeding Station was visited and where, through the kindness and hospitality of a colleague, two weeks were profitably spent on a large and modern sugar estate where cane had been growing for over 300 years - the average of the 1948/49 crop being 7.7 tons of cane to 1 ton of sugar.

As a member of the Imperial College Tour to British Guiana, this country was also visited, but here conditions are atypical and could not be applied to those of Nyasaland, unless there is the possibility of a large irrigation scheme from the vast resources of Lake Nyasa.

This report provides the opportunity of comparing conditions in Trinidad, such as soil, climate, ecological factors, methods of production, and mechanisation for application to those conditions which prevail in Nyasaland. There is no doubt

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whatsoever that the possibilities of sugar cane production are sound and most encouraging but there is very definite need for accurate and reliable work before this knowledge can be given, with absolute assurance, to those who will be dependent upon the crop for their livelihood, namely the future cane farmers of Nyasaland.

due to If, as a result of the printed words contained in this paper, which is merely the first thrust of the initial survey, a definite project is established, then it is only too evident that the philosophy of extension is fully justified and that its aim and objectives have been achieved.