

## INTRODUCTION.

On the 1st of December 1944\*, a proposed land allocation policy was brought before the Legislative Council. Up till then a thorough knowledge of the ecological factors of Trinidad had been lacking, and had prevented the formulation of an adequate land allocation policy plan.

It was stated, that due to this lack of knowledge, soil erosion, loss of water control and the formation of considerable areas of derelict and abandoned or semi-abandoned lands had been the result. It had also led to the construction and maintenance of a costly and uneconomic network of winding roads to serve such lands.

The proposed land allocation policy plan was based mainly on the results of soil and vegetation surveys, which pointed out that 37% of the land area was suitable for agriculture. This percentage was disappointingly low, rendering the optimum allocation and usage of land a matter of primary necessity.

It was further revealed that, for reasons of soil and/or topography, more than 14% of the land being used for agriculture was unsuitable for this purpose, but it was stated that some improvement might be obtained from drainage, irrigation, mixed farming or contour cultivation.

Other reasons which made land allocation a primary necessity were described in detail. They included the rapid and steady population increase and the system of land tenure, namely that of freehold, which led to the neglect and abuse of land.

From the information available, a list of the areas of land suitable or unsuitable for various purposes was made. It included areas suitable for building and construction, water

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supplies and agriculture, and also land with an oil bearing potential.

At the beginning of the college session in October 1956, it was decided to investigate the soils in areas described as being unsuitable for agricultural purposes, or as being poor agricultural lands.

Six post-graduate students were each allocated a sample strip over these areas. The author's sample strip covered an area containing a soil series stated to be unsuitable for agriculture.

Following these surveys pot tests and field trials on the poor soils in each area will be undertaken. It is hoped that the combined results will help to provide an economic means of improvement to these poor soils.

If this aim is achieved, then it will be a large step towards meeting the food requirements of an ever increasing population.