

1.

THE USE OF FERTILISERS IN TRINIDAD-
PARTICULARLY BY SMALL GROWERS.

PREFACE.

The Purpose and Scope of the Report.

At the outset it was suggested to the writer that this report should serve a far wider purpose than merely to bring together numerous facts concerning fertilisers and fertiliser use in Trinidad. The following were suggested as being the main objects of the exercise:-

To develop powers of observation and analysis.

To provide experience of Tropical people, environment and problems as a standard of comparison.

To provide experience in report writing and the formulation of agricultural policy.

To add to the knowledge of the local situation.

In fact, at the time of writing, it does appear that the most worthwhile result obtained from the exercise has been the development of a respectful approach to the local peasantry and their problems - an approach that may well be of use when dealing with similar folks in the future.

This is not a comprehensive survey of fertiliser use and associated problems in Trinidad; with the time that has been available it could not possibly be so. The collection of data concerning estate practice was relatively easy. Opportunity was afforded to gain impressions and glean information during the course of college weekly excursions and during private excursions. This information could always be supplemented by correspondence and by reference to the literature. In contrast, there was no easy way out when information was sought on the use of fertilisers by small growers and peasants. Personal contact and the need for a good deal of patience made the collection of information much slower and it was decided, early on, to concentrate particularly on two

main types of peasant production, namely, market gardening, as exemplified by the Aranguez area, and, in rather less detail, peasant cane farming.

As the title would suggest, the preference for space has been given up to dealing with the fertiliser practices and problems of small growers. The result of this has been the leaving out or condensing of much information available concerning estate crops; in particular, details of experimental work have been considerably reduced.