

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

SCOPE.

This investigation has been undertaken in order to collect facts and give information relating to the operations of a government sponsored statutory organization and covers the period of six full business years of the organization.

It is a study of organized public marketing of surplus farmers' produce and of farm supplies, and attempts to examine the effectiveness of the organization as a means of (i) extending marketing services to producers, (ii) minimizing the cost of distribution, (iii) and thus rendering essential services to the state.

It is also a study of public monopoly in marketing as regards the export marketing of one farmers' produce (bananas) and of organized marketing in open competition with other middlemen as regards the internal marketing of farm supplies and locally consumed farm produce.

Finally, it is a study of a marketing organization which originated from the integration of three separate marketing units (the Ground Provisions Board, the Banana Board of Trinidad and Tobago, and the Marketing Division of the Agricultural Department), and thus, a study of the benefits, problems and limitations of a large economy in scale of agricultural marketing.

JUSTIFICATION.

No previous work of a similar nature has been undertaken to give detailed unofficial information on the operations of the Marketing Board. Information given in the Board's Annual Reports is but very brief and in the nature of an official "progress report" intended primarily for the guidance of the Governor and the Legislative Council. Such a report can only be of limited scope and can hardly be expected to be of such a technical nature as would satisfy the needs of a research worker.

It is therefore thought that a more comprehensive and critical report by an impartial observer is desirable to give the fullest information possible about the Board for the general education of all. Such a report must deal not only with the present state of the Board, but with its past and future as well. It must mention its achievements, shortcomings and problems, and also make recommendations for its future development.

Finally, as this is the first systematic work of its type to be carried out on any aspect of marketing and distribution in the colony, it is hoped that the information which it gives will serve as a useful ^{example} tool for subsequent work along similar lines. These reasons have led to the present investigation.

SALIENT FACTS.

From the accounts given in the following text, the Marketing Board appears to be a semi-commercial public organization with little profit-making objective. Its origin from three separate marketing bodies has helped much to give it a good start. Apart from that, it has proved itself inherently competent on the whole, with the important task entrusted to it. It has made good progress within the six years of its existence as judged by the rate of expansion of its assets and marketing services. It has, however, proved itself prone to mistakes in a number of ways, and has yet many problems to be solved.

In spite of the Board's shortcomings, it enjoys a growing popularity amongst farmers especially for the reliable services it gives them as regards the marketing of livestock feeds and imported vegetable seeds. These services have induced farmers to increase their purchases of the Board's farm supplies generally, and are likely to have led to some measure of increased farm production. It can therefore be argued that the activities of the Marketing Board might have been a contributory factor in stimulating primary production in the colony.