# INTRODUCTION
# & LITERATURE REVIEW

The importance of detailed quantitative data on soil percolation rates in the construction of anti-erosion drainage and irrigation work has now been appreciated for some time. Thus work done on seepage losses from American irrigation canals at the turn of the century showed that variability in soil permeability lead to heavy losses in some sections which could have been at least partly avoided by preliminary survey work. Similar studies in Europe in the same period led to similar conclusions.

More recently, though has been refocussed on the subject by the work of the American Soil Conservation Service, and the crucial importance of soil percolation rates in determining a soil's resistance to erosion realised.

Various methods of estimating soil percolation rates have been employed, using both field and laboratory techniques, and recently the view has grown up among certain workers that laboratory techniques are only of relatively little value.

As far as the writer is aware, however, no really comprehensive critical review of the work already done has been carried out, and there is much evidence of duplication in the results already published. In this report, therefore, an attempt has been made to investigate the relative utility of the several standard techniques already known and to determine the value, in a range of Trinidad soils, of an instrument known as a sphygmomanometer which has shown promise of being useful in giving quick results in the field.