

ABSTRACT

The colonization of Jamaica by Great Britain with the resultant plantation economy and the lack of internal development resulted in a proliferation of small ports around the island near to the hinterlands of production. Geographical features of the island had helped to enhance this result, in addition the topography of the island had held back the early development of a proper road system resulting in a vibrant coastal shipping service in the first half of the twentieth century. The development of new technology in shipping requiring deeper draughts and the concomitant development of steam locomotion on land began to have positive effects on ports and coastal shipping resulting in a contraction in the number of ports and coastal steamers serving the island by the 1930's.

It is demonstrated that the policies of Great Britain towards the colonies had some effect on the development of trade, ports and the shipping industry, and this is seen particularly in World War I and World War II with the lack of shipping and the effect on the trade of the island. This situation led to post war reconstruction and a keen look by Great Britain on the trade and shipping of the island. In addition internal political development in the post war era led to Independence in 1962 which placed additional emphasis on diversification, additional trade and expansion of shipping.

The development of the mining industry in the 1960's led to the development of specialized ports and mechanization to serve

these industries. It is argued that while external and internal influences did in fact affect ports, it is shown that technological advances created a distinct pattern in port hierarchies a) The early 1900's with a proliferation of ports to serve the plantation economy, b) with technological development in shipping, rail and roads and world wide trends in shipping which had the most effect on port development by demanding the restructuring of ports in Jamaica resulting in a contraction of ports from the early twentieth century to 1950, and c) specialization and the call for full mechanization by the late 1960's again showing a diffusion of ports. The 1970's emerged with these new fully mechanized ports to serve the island.