PROGENY TESTING UNDER TROPICAL CONDITIONS

INTRODUCTION

The need for stock of all classes, which are better producers under tropical conditions and which are capable of taking advantage of improvements in the standards of peasant husbandry, has often been stressed. In Trinidad peasant standards of poultry husbandry are generally low (Williams 1943; Jones, 1950). It was felt that the College should be concerned not only with devising a system of poultry management suitable for local conditions, but also with the breeding of improved stock to meet the demand when it arises. Such breeding plans should also demonstrate to students and others interested a modern constructive breeding programme.

The College flock consisted of pure bred Rhode Island Red (Parmenter Strain) R.O.P. stock imported from America as day old chicks in March 1950, together with their progeny. Previously importations were made regularly as production in the first and second generation birds fell rapidly. Lowered production was also general in the second laying year (Williams, 1943; Asem, 1948; Jones, 1950). The new breeding programme was planned to begin in 1952 with a progeny testing scheme of imported cockerels. The day old chicks imported proved to be 98% pullets. Locally bred cockerels had therefore to be used in the first year. Stock was imported in 1953 to provide the second male line strain to be tested.