

(I) INTRODUCTION.

It is only in comparatively recent times, influenced by the effects of major world upheavals, the great increase in world population, and the rapid advancement of backward peoples, that the full importance of Agricultural Sample Surveys has been realized.

The events of this century have focussed attention on the ever present race between multiplying populations with their desire for higher living standards, and the ability to produce sufficient food to meet the increased demand. This has resulted in a desire to examine the major factors involved, such as, the area, yield, type and distribution of foodstuffs; the numbers of livestock; the number and characteristics of the people who secure their livelihood from agriculture; the number of agricultural holdings and their practical characteristics; the economics of food production; and the amount of extra foodstuffs needed to keep pace with the likely demands.

It was with these objects, among others, in view that the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations initiated the World Food Survey (F.A.O. 1946), and a number of countries have been stimulated into carrying out Agricultural Surveys, partly as a contribution to the World Census, and partly as a basis for the furtherance of agricultural and economic development in the particular country concerned.

The recent awakening of interest in the field of Agricultural Surveys has led to the realization (Douglas and Tennant, 1952) that, although the mathematical principles of sampling surveys are well established, their practical application and the relevant field techniques in the more undeveloped countries still need considerable attention, moreover in such undeveloped countries, conditions vary so greatly, and interchange of information is often so limited, that any account of practical experience - skilled or unskilled, of failure and success - may help others engaged in the vital task of basic fact finding.

The objects of this Survey are to gain first hand practical experience in organizing a survey and supervising the work entailed, and to test some of the theories of sampling in survey work under the particular

/ conditions ...

conditions involved. As far as can be ascertained, no previous work of this type and on this scale has been carried out in Trinidad, so that this survey can claim to be unique as a first attempt in this field of land utilization.

The survey team consisted of five students under the guidance of Dr. A.L. Jolly, the project Tutor. Although the five members involved worked together as a team, as each problem was reached one of the five was detailed to supervise its solving and on these occasions the other four were treated as assistants and subordinates. The object of this was to give each person training and experience in supervising the work entailed in the survey. It was realized that the intelligence and integrity of the assistants in this case was probably much higher than would normally be the case, but as far as possible the supervision was carried out on the assumption that the assistants were of low intelligence. Hence every effort was made to explain each step as simply as possible so that even very unintelligent assistants would have no difficulty in understanding and carrying out the instructions.

It was realized from the beginning that the time available for carrying out a worthwhile survey was very limited, the only time available for the main field work being during the Christmas vacation, so it was decided that the survey should be planned in detail before that time so that everything would be ready for a few weeks concentrated field work during the vacation. With this end in view, frequent discussions were held to decide on policy and to organize the work.

The limited time available had an important bearing on many aspects of the survey which will be mentioned in due course, and at an early stage it was decided that this would have to be purely an experimental survey, that it should be carried out as accurately and extensively as the time allowed, but that the actual practical value of the final survey figures should take a position of secondary importance to the practice and experience in survey methods obtained. In any case absolute truth is seldom the object of this kind of survey, generally what are required are working estimates, although they must be sufficient and accurate in relation to the use made of them.