

I. INTRODUCTION.

While at the present time it is not claimed that cuttings of cacao necessarily give better trees than seedlings or budded material, it is quite evident that cuttings will play an increasingly larger part in the improvement of cacao. For any precise scientific work uniformity of material is essential, such uniformity not being found in seedlings owing to the heterozygous nature of their parents, nor in buddings on seedling stocks owing to the physiological effects of the different rootstocks. When the cacao research scheme was started therefore at the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture the first problem was to establish cacao on its own roots by vegetative propagation, and thus to build up a stock of clonal material on which future experiments could be based. Side by side with this went the selection in the field of exceptionally good trees for the foundation of clones, and in the first instance one hundred of these were chosen and are briefly described in the annual report of the scheme. (9 - 11) In the propagation work cuttings stools and layers were first tried, and softwood cuttings being found the most successful, the technique in dealing with these was gradually improved and the root and branching systems investigated. (3, 4, 12 - 14) Thus a technique in propagation was evolved, and with a few minor modifications the same technique is used today.