

INTRODUCTION.

The utilization of land resources to the best advantage is a matter of primary concern. To a large extent the problem is a conflict of policies - short term and long term. This is especially true in agriculture. What is best for the people just now, and are the needs of future generations being safeguarded? But these requirements need not be antagonistic. By intelligent usage, not mere maintenance, but improvement of land fertility and productivity can be attained. This cannot be achieved without some measure of planning and control, and the primary need before any scheme is attempted is basic knowledge from over-all survey of existing conditions.

The present investigation was undertaken to gain such knowledge - to what use is the land being put, how is it being used and why? Two areas are involved. In one, to be known as the Mountain Area, the prevailing conditions of Climate and Topography are favourable to soil erosion, and yet a destructive form of shifting cultivation is being permitted; in the other - the Lowland Area - land-hunger is apparent, and little guidance is given to the cultivators, although there is a Government-instigated Irrigation Scheme over part of the area.

Observations were made throughout the period from October to May, and although every aspect of a year's work could not actually be seen, nevertheless questioning provided much of the unseen detail. This investigation cannot be termed a true survey, because no attempt was made to eliminate the personal factor. Information was not obtained by the official method of attack using tabulated questionⁿnaire forms - that tends to provoke distrust, but rather by frequent informal talks with the cultivators and by personal observation.

The Mountain Area and the Lowland Area are considered separately, and the description of each area is divided into Two Parts - the First dealing with more general features such as Climate, Topography, Soils, etc., and the Second describing various aspects of Land Tenure and Cultivation.

Comments, criticisms and conclusions are occasionally made in the section being described, while a deductive summary is added at the end of each Part II.

Illustrative photographs, referred to in the text, are to be seen in the Appendix. A soil map of the Lowland Area is also appended.