INTRODUCTION.

The Sweet Potato Pyralid moth, *Megastes granadalis* Guen., is one of the major limiting factors to the economic production of sweet potatoes in Trinidad and Tobago. *Megastes* which is a native of South America was first described from Brazil by Guenee (1854). Urich was the first to record it as a pest in Trinidad in 1919. There is no other record of *M. granadalis* in any of the other West Indian islands. Another species *Megastes pucialis* Snell. has been recorded by Bondar (1922) in Brazil and by Cleare (1926) in British Guiana. This may be a synonym as a description of its attack is similar. Also specimens which were sent from Trinidad to the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture were determined by Dr. Carl Heinrich as *M. pucialis* Snell.

No satisfactory method of control has been devised, although a certain amount of work has been done on this subject in Trinidad. That a means of control should be discovered is of considerable importance if Trinidad and Tobago are to produce sufficient sweet potatoes for local consumption. Imports of sweet potatoes have been increasing considerably over the past few years and make up a considerable proportion of fruit and vegetable imports as shown in table 1. (Extracted from Reports for Trinidad & Tobago 1952-55).

**TABLE 1.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>1951</th>
<th>1952</th>
<th>1953</th>
<th>1954</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sweet Potatoes</td>
<td>1,206</td>
<td>1,178</td>
<td>2,425</td>
<td>3,478</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Vegetables and fruits</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>1,557</td>
<td>1,157</td>
<td>1,964</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>1,322</td>
<td>2,735</td>
<td>3,582</td>
<td>5,442</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cultivation of sweet potatoes in Trinidad and Tobago is limited to consumer producers who only utilize small garden
patches for production. Could sufficient control of *Megastes* be obtained, these cultivations could be extended and a useful addition would be made to the cash crops already grown by the peasant producer. Production of disease-free tubers would in addition, facilitate storage and consequent easing of supplies during the July and August shortage.

Work on the control of *Megastes* has proceeded spasmodically over the last 35 years. Biological, cultural, and chemical methods have been considered, but no adequate control has yet been achieved. The main points learned from previous work have been extracted below.