

### INTRODUCTION

The history of small farming in the West Indies may be traced back to the 17th Century. From this time up to the present day small farmers have been both encouraged and discouraged, depending on the many factors affecting the economy of the territories. In early times the dominance of plantation crops and their need for labour tended to discourage small scale farming, though the emancipation of slaves, the importation of indentured labour, slumps in sugar markets, political and social influences have all had their effects. The intricacies of the various factors involved are reviewed by Williams (1954) (20).

An unfortunate though important result of the historical background is the feeling among many people at the present time that agriculture is an occupation of last resort. This attitude, together with the physical handicaps of small scale farming, hinder development to a large extent.

That small scale farming is important in the economy of West Indian territories, certainly in more recent years, is shown clearly by the various land settlement schemes, seen throughout the area of the Caribbean, and the legislative measures, grants, subsidies and other incentives schemes devised to encourage small scale production (9) (18).

The present report deals with four 20-acre dairy holdings recently established by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, which have now been in operation for a period of 8 months.