SECTION I. Introduction.

The problem of obtaining seed for green manure crops has only recently been felt, but the practice of green manuring is rapidly becoming more common, particularly throughout the tropics and, unless steps are taken to satisfy the future requirements of such seed, the difficulty will arise much more acutely.

Many of the big sugar estates, and other large scale cultivators, are only now realising the value of green manuring; and some of them are adopting the practice on a very extensive scale. But the greatest demand will arise when the backward African natives become more enterprising, discard their "shifting cultivation", and settle on, and cultivate, certain plots permanently.

Throughout most of the tropics there is hardly any indigenous seed trade, and there are very few seed merchants. Individual cultivators keep their own seed, for both feeding and sowing. They have very primitive methods of storing, although sometimes a village will combine to erect a comparatively damp proof and pest proof hut for storing seed. Many cases of seed deterioration and consequent shortage must occur.

It is evident that the problem has very different aspects in different parts of the world and under varying conditions. Large scale permanent cultivators do not feel the same problem as small farmers growing annual crops.

Before attempting to solve the problem it is necessary to realise, and desirable to state clearly, exactly what the problem is; what difficulties have to be overcome and how they differ from one district to another.

With this object in view data has been collected regarding the conditions in various countries.

This is intended to serve two purposes:-

1.
1. It will afford examples of practical methods at present used in dealing with specific seed supply difficulties.

2. It will show what problems remain to be solved by research work on seed supply or by the organisation of a seed trade.

SECTION II. A Survey of the Problem in Different Parts of the World.

Information has been received by means of correspondence with various Departments of Agriculture, by personal observations and questionings on estates in Trinidad, and from bulletins and publications dealing with green manuring.

The following extract from the Kenya Colony Agricultural Report for 1926 affords an example typical of what the conditions are in many places. We quote verbatim:

"One of the greatest difficulties in connection with green manuring will be the seed supply. Dolichos lablab, field peas and the Embu cow pea are native grown crops and can be obtained, though sometimes with difficulty. The Phaseolus irramoenus was obtained in a native Shamba but none has been seen on the market. A small supply of lupins is available, but not sufficient to meet the demand. About 30 lb of Crotalaria incana has been issued for multiplication purposes, while next season the supply of C. intermedia seed available at the Scott laboratories will allow of a similar issue being made. These small issues will permit of the recipients having sufficient seed to green manure a small area only. At the present stage of the demands for green manure seeds it would not be a safe procedure for a farmer to undertake the production of seed;"