

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. 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.