

## Introduction - Historical.

Cacao was grown by the Aztecs of Mexico long before the 16th. century. The beans were used both as a beverage and as a form of currency but the commercial possibilities of the crop were not known until some nuns of Guanaca found a method of seasoning the beverage with sugar, vanilla and cinnamon.<sup>(1)</sup> As a result of Spanish monopoly in the production, marketing and even consumption of cocoa, production was restricted, output low and cost very high. Cocoa was therefore selling in England towards the end of the 17th. century at the luxury price of 10-15 shillings per lb.<sup>(2)</sup>

Production and consumption increased phenomenally from the beginning of the 19th. century. In 1806 Humboldt estimated total European consumption at less than 10,000 tons,<sup>(3)</sup> in 1895 it was 76,000 tons; in 1924 it rose to 480,000 tons and in 1953 world supply was of the order of 750,000 tons with a potential demand for 1,000,000 tons. The discovery of block chocolate in the 19th. century was responsible for the increased demand. Production started in new areas and in this way West Africa and other countries came on the scene. The emergence of these new sources of production led to the market distinction of all cocoa into "fine" and "ordinary" types (corresponding to the botanical differentiation of cacao into Criollos or Trinitario and Forasteros.) Though in 1895 "fine" cocoas formed the bulk of the produce (4/5) in 1930 "ordinary" types accounted for 390,000 tons out of a total production of about 480,000 tons because of the astonishing expansion of the industry on the Gold Coast. Since that time "ordinary" cocoas have dominated the market.

Cocoa has been of increasing importance to the British Commonwealth since the 16th. century and the economy of millions of peasants is inseparably tied with it. In 1895 Commonwealth colonies and territories produced 17,000 tons which was a little more than 1/5 of world production. The bulk of the produce was "fine", West Africa being an insignificant producer at this time.

Between 1926 and 1930 Commonwealth production rose to 300,000 tons and  $\frac{3}{5}$  of total world production.<sup>(4)</sup> From this time the Commonwealth has occupied a most commanding position, accounting for about 55 per cent of world output and exporting about \$90,000,000 worth of cocoa to the United States annually after the second World War. Cocoa therefore occupies a premier place among other crops as a "dollar earner".<sup>(5)</sup>