

## I. INTRODUCTION.

The early history of the tobacco crop is too well known to need description here. The discovery of the plant and its several uses in the New World, its consequent distribution throughout the East by Portuguese traders, and eventually its world-wide occurrence, afford a fine illustration of the value of plant introductions.

In spite of its wide distribution no other crop shows greater variability in quality, arising, primarily, from differences of soil and climate.

In the past the reputation of producing special types of fine leaf has rested with such countries as the United States, Cuba and Sumatra. More recently the British Empire has made a bid at tobacco production; some countries, notably Rhodesia, Nyasaland and the Union of South Africa, have made a determined effort to break down this prejudice in favour of foreign types. Their energy has by no means been wasted and these Colonies have now secured a market in Great Britain for Virginian types previously mostly produced in the United States.

As far as the West Indies are concerned good examples of what can be done are seen in Cuba and Porto Rico. Trinidad in the past, more especially when the island was a Spanish possession, was a considerable exporter of quality cigar leaf. In the south of the island the light sandy soils of the Oropouche and Siparia districts are eminently suitable for tobacco growing. That a considerable export industry might again be started is unlikely. Nevertheless concentration on the local market might profitably be made. For this a high quality leaf does not seem essential - the tobacco for use as cigarettes made at the local factory being suitably blended with imported American leaf. With the present import duty of \$1.31 per lb. in favour, there is ample room for the Trinidad tobacco grower.

The tobacco crop on the College Farm in the past, has generally proved very remunerative and has warranted the erection of a curing barn. As a money crop for the peasant it would appear,



on first sight, to be excellent. Only a small area, even a mere fraction of an acre, need be grown, giving quite a considerable return at, say, 48 cents per lb. The main difficulty appears to be psychological. In the past the East Indian peasant has been content with growing a few acres of sugar cane or cacao from which he receives a definite, yet meagre, return. To such crops he need give little attention between planting and harvesting. With tobacco constant attendance is vital and to the peasant these duties seem tooirksome to warrant any consideration of its cultivation.

Thus, so far, with the exception of a few ambitious individuals, tobacco growing on a small commercial scale does not really exist in Trinidad. One encouraging feature is the increasing demand for pure seed from the College Farm.

Better prices than those ruling in Trinidad for tobacco from the grower's point of view, would be difficult to imagine.

Owing to the practical absence of the tobacco crop in the Colony before its inclusion in cropping scheme on the College Farm, little was known of the best conditions obtaining for its cultivation locally. For this reason growth investigations have been carried out and are still continuing.

The manuring and spacing experiment this year is really a continuation of work in past years, and it is hoped that some light may be thrown upon the optimum conditions for the successful growth of tobacco in these respects in this island.

At the end of this paper some notes on curing pertaining to the College barn are included.

Summarizing, it will be clear that the north end of the field should be in a higher state of fertility than the remainder, and that the trend of the yields should roughly increase from south to north. It may be mentioned that Yellow Hornmouth - a potential high yielding variety - is very prevalent in this northern portion of high fertility.