

INTRODUCTION AND OBJECTS

The biological process of growth has attracted the attention of philosophers throughout recorded history. As early as the fifth century B.C., Greek philosophers developed the technique of incubating hens' eggs, opening one each day, and observing the changes which took place. In spite of these early studies, it is only during the past one hundred years that the scientific technique of observation by measurement has been employed.

The growth of the domestic fowl, based upon a number of quantitative measurements, has been widely studied in the temperate regions, especially North America. Standards have been established which are proving of invaluable assistance to research workers in nutrition, genetics and breeding, as well as to commercial poultrymen interested in egg and table-bird production.

Growth rates established in the temperate regions may not apply to the tropics because of differences in climate, nutrition and disease. With cattle it is already apparent that breeds developed in the temperate regions, when introduced into the tropics grow at a slower rate than is normal in their accustomed temperate environment. There has therefore arisen a necessity to develop breeds adapted to the tropical environment and capable of increased growth and high production.

With poultry however, breeds from the temperate regions introduced into the tropics, are giving almost comparable egg yields. This probably eliminates the necessity of developing heat-resistant breeds; rather, the performance of the temperate breeds will be studied under the tropical environment. The present study is therefore climatological and is basically meant to supply some information on the growth of single comb Rhode Island Red birds under the climatic conditions of Trinidad, from hatching till twenty-four weeks old. Climate in this sense can refer only to the wet and dry seasons and to the transitional season between them, since the island of Trinidad is too near the equator to warrant the terms "Summer" and "Winter" either in respect of temperature or day-light length.