

This work will be continued and detailed publication will follow in due course.

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SOCIAL AND SCIENTIFIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE WEST INDIES

THE considerable report by Sir John Macpherson, recently issued*, contains much valuable information relating to the work of the Development and Welfare Organisation in the West Indies. The report at once conveys an impression of how much is being done (or is under consideration) and how much there is yet to do. The contemporary situation in the West Indian Colonies, whether agricultural, economic, social or political, is complex. It has been long in the making, and wise foresight, good management, patience, industry and optimism will be needed before matters are put right. It is probably true to say that, in this region, there is now a general demand for conditions which will enable the local populations to enjoy a fuller and better life. In practice this means that improvements must be effected in almost every walk of life and in every branch of official activity.

The report opens with an informative general survey of West Indian affairs. Particular attention is given to such topics as agriculture, forestry, fisheries, education, public health, housing, town planning, labour conditions, social welfare, public works, etc. A special Welfare Fund, granted by the Exchequer of the United Kingdom, is available for promoting schemes for the general improvement of education, health services, land settlement, and the hundred-and-one projects which collectively will make for better conditions and opportunities for the native population of the West Indies.

Space does not admit of an adequate review of the contents of this report. But as an example of the treatment accorded to one major theme, agriculture may be selected. Here, as elsewhere, Sir John is direct and to the point. It is most sincerely to be hoped that his words will be heeded throughout the length and breadth of our Caribbean Colonies. The ideas are not new, but it is good to hear them forcibly restated at this time:

"The greatest need of the British West Indies to-day is the most intensive use of the land according to methods of good husbandry, both for export crops and local food crops. In no other way can a growing population be supported or the demands for higher

* Development and Welfare in the West Indies. By Sir John Macpherson. Col. 212. Pp. 162. (London: H.M. Stationery Office 1947). 3s.

standards of living be met. The intensive and balanced use of the land calls for far-reaching reforms in the basic methods now employed, and for improved education facilities and efficient advisory services. The reforms require special measures, some of which cannot be successfully applied until new knowledge acquired through scientific investigation has been made widely available. The work of the Development and Welfare organisation has been constantly guided by these fundamental facts."

It is heartening to read that the need for soil conservation is being more widely understood, that grass is being introduced as a rotational crop, and that there is an increasing disposition to realize that land, water and forest resources are "the foundation upon which better standards of life can be established".

As improvement in agriculture will necessarily depend on an advance in agricultural education, measures to achieve this end are in hand. Measures to assist peasant agriculture, to promote mixed farming adapted to West Indian conditions, to test communal and co-operative farming, and to improve livestock, etc., each has its place in the new agricultural outlook. The essential place of a wide system of researches, duly co-ordinated, is recognized. This matter has been given much attention, and a number of schemes have already been approved. Some of these, including problems of sugar technology, soil science, the improvement of cacao, genetics of tropical crops, including bananas, etc., will be centred at the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture in Trinidad, while related investigations will be carried out in some of the other islands because of their special suitability for the work.

These notes give but a small sample of the contents of this document as they relate to agriculture. Attention is also given, in due measure, to the several other major topics mentioned above. The text, clearly but closely written, contains much interesting and valuable detail and should be carefully read by all who follow with interest and sympathy the new movement that is undoubtedly afoot in the Colonies.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

(Meetings marked with an asterisk * are open to the public)

Monday, February 2

FARMERS' CLUB (at the Royal Empire Society, Craven Street, London, W.C.2), at 2.30 p.m.—Dr. W. G. Ogg: "Soil and the Farmer".

ROYAL SOCIETY OF ARTS (at John Adam Street, Adelphi, London, W.C.2), at 4.30 p.m.—Prof. A. C. Frazer: "The Metabolism of Fats" (Cantor Lecture).

INSTITUTION OF POST OFFICE ELECTRICAL ENGINEERS (at the Institution of Electrical Engineers, Savoy Place, Victoria Embankment, London, W.C.2), at 5 p.m.—Dr. D. G. Tucker and Mr. F. Scowen: "Modern Approach to Transmission Networks".

SOCIETY OF ENGINEERS (at the Geological Society, Burlington House, Piccadilly, London, W.1), at 5.30 p.m.—Mr. E. E. Turner: Presidential Address.

Tuesday, February 3

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON (in the Anatomy Theatre, Gower Street, London, W.C.1), at 1.15 p.m.—Prof. L. S. Penrose: "Human Genetics".*

BRITISH SOCIETY FOR INTERNATIONAL BIBLIOGRAPHY (at the Institution of Electrical Engineers, Savoy Place, Victoria Embankment, London, W.C.2), at 2.30 p.m.—Papers.

ROYAL ANTHROPOLOGICAL INSTITUTE (at 21 Bedford Square, London, W.C.1), at 5 p.m.—Rev. Prof. E. O. James: "The Social Function of Anthropology".

ROYAL STATISTICAL SOCIETY, RESEARCH SECTION (at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, Keppel Street, London, W.C.1) at 5.15 p.m.—Mr. W. L. Stevens: "Control by Gauging".

CONWAY DISCUSSION CIRCLE (at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London, W.C.1), at 7 p.m.—Dr. J. A. C. Brown: "Group Psychology in Industry".*