

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MINISTERIAL COUNCIL ON REGIONAL RESEARCH

The following Report on the meeting of the Ministerial Council on Regional Research, held at the University of the West Indies Faculty of Agriculture, Trinidad, on the 3rd and 4th December, 1962, is submitted for the information of the Honourable House.

The Common Services Conference which was held in Trinidad in July, 1962, to consider and take decisions on the future of certain services which had been administered by the Federal Government of the West Indies, examined the future of the Regional Research Centre and its relationship with the Agricultural Faculty of the University of the West Indies, and arrived at the following decisions:-

- (1) that the Centre should continue on a regional basis;
- (2) that a Ministerial Council comprising one representative from Jamaica, one from Trinidad and Tobago, and one from the "Eight" should assume responsibility for policy and finance in future;
- (3) that the Centre should be more closely linked with the University of the West Indies which would be responsible for the organisation of scientific work;
- (4) that changes including expansion, contraction or modification where necessary might be made by the Ministerial Council in the existing schemes where a shift in emphasis or area of research was in the interest of the region;
- (5) that the Council should consult organisations or Governments making special contribution towards any work carried on at the Centre, during discussions in respect of contributions and other policy decisions affecting their special interests;
- (6) that a meeting of the Council should be convened not later than 31st December, 1962, to decide on a programme of work.

2. In keeping with decision (2) the first meeting of the Ministerial Council was held at the Faculty of Agriculture in Trinidad on Monday 3rd and Tuesday 4th of December, 1962 and was attended by:-

Hon. John O'Halloran,	Minister of Trade, Commerce and Agriculture, Trinidad and Tobago.
Hon. J.P. Gyles	, Minister of Agriculture and Lands, Jamaica.
Hon. J. LeBlanc	, Chief Minister of Dominica, representing the "Eight".

Also

Also in attendance, as observers or advisers to the Council were:-

Dr. Philip Sherlock	Pro-Vice-Chancellor of the University of the West Indies
Mr. S.L. Martin	Acting Registrar, U.W.I.
" A.Z. Preston	Bursar, U.W.I.
" E.W.A. Scarlett	Representative of the Department of Technical Co-operation of the United Kingdom
" W.G. Stuart	Chief Technical Officer, Ministry of Agriculture and Lands, Jamaica
" J. Spector	Spectrographic Chemist, Regional Research Centre
" G.K. Maliphant	Chemistry Department, " " "

3. The Council held its first session on Monday, 3rd December, under the Chairmanship of the Hon. John O'Halloran. Following an introductory statement by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor of the University on a conference paper which he had prepared on the future organisation and work of the Regional Research Centre, members of the Council proceeded to make a tour of the various departments of the Centre and the Faculty of Agriculture to meet members of the staff and to discuss their work with them. The Departments visited were as follows:-

(1) Crop Physiology and Plant Breeding

Work mainly concerned with production of improved cacao varieties (from which Jamaica has received clonal rooted cuttings and, more recently, hybrid seed for our Cacao Expansion Scheme) and the relationship between response to fertilizers and density of shade. The point was stressed that whereas the improved varieties of cacao produced at the Centre have been selected for resistance to Witches' Broom disease (which does not occur in Jamaica), the most important disease of cacao in Jamaica is Black Pod - and that attention should be given to producing varieties resistant to this disease.

Work also being done on the physiology of the banana and on vegetative propagation of Pimento. In addition this Department is responsible for organising the Regional Citrus Research Scheme under which a sub-station is being established in Jamaica.

(2) Stored Products Entomology

Work on identifying the main insect pests of stored products and devising methods of elimination or control. Special emphasis on Rice and Pulses.

(3) Food

(3) Food Crops Breeding

Work on selection and breeding of improved varieties of food crops, with special emphasis on sweet potatoes, congo peas and yams.

Members of the Council unanimously expressed the view that this work should be intensified and given the highest priority.

(4) Weed Control

Work on the application of chemical weed control in various crops. Limited in scope by reason of the fact that a single scientific worker is engaged in this field. The point was made that Jamaica's special needs are in relation to:-

- (a) control of "Rice Grass" in rice cultivation;
- (b) control of weeds in vegetable crop culture (e.g. onions);
- (c) control of weeds in pineapple cultivation; a main hindrance to possible development of a substantial pineapple industry.

(5) Soil Science

Work mainly concerned with:-

- (a) Soil Surveys - Jamaica has been given priority and all but three parishes have been completed - Manchester, Trelawny and St. Thomas.
- (b) Soil Analysis - for which a general analytical laboratory and a spectrographic laboratory are maintained.
- (c) Soil Physics - mainly concerned with study of moisture regimes of West Indian soils and methods of determining irrigation requirements in relation to meteorological data.
- (d) Radio Isotopes - used in examining the uptake of nutrients by various crops and rate of diffusion through the plant tissues.

(6) The Experimental Farm

In a state of transition due to proposals for exchange of land with the Trinidad Department of Agriculture.

Work at present on grazing and management of various fodder grasses (including Pangola Grass), establishment of a museum collection of various grass and legume fodder species, trial of varieties of food crops under the Food Crops Plant Breeder, maintenance of a grade-Holstein dairy herd for teaching and research purposes.

The council met in final session on Tuesday, 4th December, and dealt with the following matters:-

(1) Areas of Research to be given priority.

The Council considered a report prepared by a Mission headed by

Professor

Professor Richard Bradfield of Cornell University which visited the institution in January, 1962, to advise the University College of the West Indies on the future of the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture and which made recommendations in regard to the Regional Research Centre and suggested certain broad areas of work for its attention. After considering these recommendations the Council took a decision that the following areas of work should be given priority:-

- (a) the development and improvement of food crops for local use by breeding, introduction and selection of improved varieties as well as by the control of weeds, crop pests and diseases;
 - (b) the marketing, processing, distribution, transportation and storage of agricultural produce;
 - (c) the development of the livestock industry, covering poultry as well as large and small stock, including work on pastures and forage crops and the nutrition and feeding of farm animals;
 - (d) problems of soil genesis, soil classification and soil fertility with a view to developing sound systems of soil management and soil conservation.
- (2) Appointment of a Technical Advisory Committee

The Council accepted a recommendation by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor of the University that a Technical Advisory Committee be appointed to make detailed recommendations including estimates of cost, and deployment of technical staff for future organisation of the research work of the Centre within the funds provided for the purpose and in keeping with the priorities laid down by the Council. The Committee is to consist of:-

- (a) One representative of the Department of Technical Co-operation of the United Kingdom;
- (b) two representatives of overseas universities or centres of agricultural research;
- (c) two representatives of the staff of the Faculty of Agriculture of the University of the West Indies;
- (d) three technically qualified persons representing Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, and the "Eight".

(3) Finance

The Council took note of the basis of financing the work of the Centre which was accepted by the Common Services Conference and of a proposal that the financial provision for the work on Weedicides (hitherto supported by a separate C.D. & W. Scheme R 1055) should be amalgamated with that of the Centre, so that the basis of contributions to the cost of operating ...

operating the Centre over the four-year period 1962-1966 will be as follows:-

	<u>1962/63</u>	<u>1963/64</u>	<u>1964/65</u>	<u>1965/66</u>
Jamaica	£ 13,175	£ 17,400	£ 21,625	£ 26,350
Trinidad & Tobago	13,175	17,400	21,625	26,350
United Kingdom	<u>131,750</u>	<u>123,300</u>	<u>114,850</u>	<u>105,400</u>
	<u>£158,100</u>	<u>£158,100</u>	<u>£158,100</u>	<u>£158,100</u>

The Council agreed that the estimates of expenditure for the year 1962/63 as presented by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor of the University should be accepted and approved. Consideration of detailed estimates for the period 1963-1966, however, was deferred for the next meeting of the Council pending the recommendations which are to be made by the Technical Advisory Committee in regard to a revised programme of work for the Centre.

(4) Banana Breeding Programme

The Council considered a paper presented by the Representative of Jamaica in regard to the Banana Breeding Scheme which is now being financed by contributions from the Jamaica Banana Board (£10,000) and the Windward Islands Banana Association (£9,000), the remainder being obtained from C.D. & W. funds which will not be available to Jamaica after March 31st, 1963. It was noted that the projected estimates for continuing the work over the three-year period 1963-1966 call for annual expenditure amounting to approximately £36,000 and that provision of approximately £17,000 per annum will therefore be required in addition to the local contributions from Jamaica and the Windward Islands.

The Council were unanimous in the view that the programme of work is of value to the region as a whole and that it should be continued. It was therefore agreed that an approach should be made to the Department of Technical Co-operation in the United Kingdom with a view to obtaining additional funds from that Department's research allocation to meet the estimated annual deficit of £17,000.

(5) Next Meeting of the Council

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Council should be held in Trinidad on Monday and Tuesday, 13th and 14th May, 1963, and that the Technical Advisory Committee will be expected to prepare and submit its recommendations with regard to the programme of research work and the allocation of funds within the total amount provided, for consideration by the Council at that meeting.

Ministry of Agriculture and Lands
13th November, 1962.

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