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PREFACE

This collection of papers is a by-product of the Third West Indian Agricultural Economics Conference held on the Mona Campus of the University of the West Indies during the first week of April, 1968. The particular theme of this year's Conference — Agricultural Development and Planning in the Caribbean — was chosen for a number of reasons. First, many Commonwealth Caribbean governments are in process of preparing new development programmes and there was general feeling that a stock-taking exercise in relation to past planning efforts would be timely. Second, the relatively poor performance of the agricultural sector (particularly "domestic agriculture") has been of great concern to economists in the region. The governments are also perhaps equally concerned for they have invested much in trying to promote agricultural development. So great has been this effort in Jamaica, for example, that Owen Jefferson was led to comment during the Conference that "given the performance of the sector it is quite possible that never has such a large outlay been made for so little return". Third, there is the feeling among some of our economists that one of the chief reasons for the general failure to "get agriculture moving" in the West Indies, is that our planners are caught in an unenviable position of having to plan without theory and without facts.

Some twenty papers on the theme were presented at the Conference. Many of these were notable contributions that, however, do not appear in the present selection. This requires some explanation, not just to the authors concerned (for this could be done by private correspondence) but to readers as well. Most of the Conference papers not appearing here dealt with past planning efforts in individual countries of the region. All of those contributions revealed a familiar story: planning for agricultural development in the region has been largely unsuccessful. And the reasons advanced for this were the familiar proximate ones: inadequate administrative machinery for plan formulation, implementation and evaluation; insufficient technical knowledge; shortage of capital; inappropriate policies (stemming from a confusion of objectives for social welfare versus economic growth); and so on. Implicit in these analyses was the view that all is well with the *theory* which is to inform the planning exercise. However, serious doubts were raised about this aspect in at least three papers. And since no previous attempt has been made to formulate theory *from the Caribbean experience* this was regarded as the most fundamental need at present. The selection process was, therefore, guided by this consideration.

The present collection is designed to provide a meaningful description of the social and institutional structure of the agricultural economies of the region. Since the region is historically rooted in the sugar plantation, the

contribution is more generally in terms of understanding the development problem in plantation-type economies. The material is presented in four sections. In the first, two papers dealing with methodological issues in theory and planning, respectively, provide a general introduction. The second section groups together three papers which throw some light on the particular Caribbean environment in a general historical and social setting. In the third section, two papers attempt a description of how plantation-type economies function and an analysis of the mechanisms of adjustment. One of these is a specially invited contribution by Phillipe Hein on Mauritius, a country which is structurally similar to Caribbean countries. Two prepared comments on these papers complete the section. The fourth and final section consists of one paper which provides a kind of case study of recent agricultural development performances in one country — Barbados.

The collection of papers is intended to be a contribution toward the development of theory derived specifically from and relevant to the Caribbean experience. The hope is that it will be of value to all scholars interested in and committed to solving the problems of underdevelopment and development in this and similar regions. If it helps better to inform research and teaching much will have been achieved. But it is hoped as well that all economic practitioners in the region will find value in it.

Dr. Irving Johnson who was co-organizer (with the editor) of the Conference itself shares fully any credit for the ideas underlying the Conference theme and for the types of papers which were commissioned. The Conference Committee, particularly its Chairman, David Edwards, are to be credited for staging the Conference. We are grateful to have been asked by them to organize the effort and to have been allowed complete freedom in undertaking our task.

For the publication of these "selected papers" we are grateful to the General Editor and the Editorial Committee of *Social and Economic Studies* for their encouragement and support, and to Miss A. Wood, Mrs. K. Miles and Mrs. R. Williams for their speedy re-typing of the papers for publication. The Publications Editor of the Institute of Social and Economic Research, Mrs. Carley, was invaluable as a guide in the editing and was solely responsible for taking the manuscripts through the final printing.

Finally, the authors and discussants are the people who, by the seriousness with which they undertook their assignments, have made this publication possible. The readiness with which they all agreed to participate in the Conference in spite of many other pressing demands on their time is adequate testimony of their commitment to the task of trying to promote development in the region.

Mona, Jamaica.
June 17th, 1968.

G. L. Beckford.