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The need exists for an agricultural school to provide practical education for farmers, their families and prospective farmers. In a situation such as Dominica's where about one-third of the working population is engaged in either full-time or part-time farming, there is no institution where an individual may get training in the application of new techniques to agriculture. There is need for the replacement of primitive tools and implements by modern farm aids. Also required are roads, and a better qualified and expanded extension service.

Marketing

The present Government marketing agency can hardly fulfil its allotted functions. What is needed is a central marketing organisation to serve both the domestic and regional markets. This agency should also be equipped with the necessary staff capable of undertaking market surveys, and of performing the useful functions of fostering agricultural co-operatives, commerce and agri-industries. At the moment co-operative education among farmers for the marketing of produce and other economic activities is sadly lacking. However, the Citrus Co-operative and the Petit Savanne Bay Oil Co-operative both constitute a start in the right direction though these barely scratch at the surface. The fundamentals of co-operatives must be taught at the family, farm and community levels to groups and individuals, not as spectators, but as participants.

The growing of crops commercially, if not tied to a sound marketing system, is unlikely to be successful. Any crop, no matter how suitable it is on agronomic grounds will only be attractive to the farmer if it is commercially viable. The establishment of co-operatives or commodity associations would solve the disposal of produce from small-scale farms.

Processing

An equally useful development would be industries to process raw materials. This envisages a canning plant capable of utilising the raw materials of agriculture and converting them into processed goods. The need for such a plant has not yet been

met. Such a project can prove workable if it has the active support of Government and the farming community. Government would provide loan-funds to be repaid when the plant is fully operative.

PRICES AND POLICIES

The prices realised for agricultural products sold on the world markets compare unfavourably with the high prices charged by the developed industrialised countries for their manufactured products, severely affecting the development of the farm and the capacity of the farmer. World trade depends upon the ability of the producing countries to sell profitably and the manufacturing countries to sell their manufactured goods to these countries. The problems of trade, therefore, should receive government attention. It should provide incentives for reliable and speedy shipping facilities and research in storage. Government should, therefore, set policies designed to improve the efficiency of the marketing system in the interest of both producers and consumers.

Agricultural Credit

For the development of farming the need for supervised credit cannot be over-stressed. A progressive agricultural community needs, as an ancillary, organised credit facilities. The farmer must be given credit and technical assistance to increase his productivity. Only then will rural progress be achieved. Credit of this type must, however, be properly supervised in order that better farming practices can be assured.

Land Ownership

Records of land rights, titles and inheritance in these parts present a sorry picture, of fragmentation leading to the development of subsistence farmers, and of land held in common discouraging investment in agricultural production.

These factors which I have outlined are both 'essentials' and 'accelerators' for the agricultural development of Dominica.

Discussion Report

Discussion centred on the suggestion that agricultural lands in Dominica could be 'zoned' - with four zones specializing in different crops. The basis for zoning would be the suitability of soil, rainfall and customary cropping practices of the

farmers. Economic returns from cultivation would probably be more important as a factor in zoning than particular preferences of the farmers. The suitability of land for different crops would be determined in the first instance from land-capability surveys.