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Discussion Report

The paper read by Mr. James was not distributed. This was a progress report on a land-settlement scheme which has been published and which was distributed at the conference.¹ Discussion was centred on this report.

Mr. James had mentioned that in one year the project had a glut of plantains which could not be sold. In reply to the suggestion that better planning by the project would have avoided the glut, Mr. James said that they had been told by the Central Marketing Agency that any amount of plantains would be accepted. The weakness seemed to be with the C.M.A. which was unable to sell plantains wholesale at eight cents despite the fact that at the same time plantains were retailing at twenty-three cents. The situation had since improved and now the project can sell all the plantains it produced.

In reply to questions, Mr. James elaborated on several details of the project. Gross income was quoted on pages 57-58 as this differed little from net income in the first year of cultivation.

¹L.J. James, *Lot 10, The Introduction of a Small-Farm Project in an Oilfield Area*. U.W.I. Department of Agricultural Economics and Farm Management, Occasional Series No. 4.

Some mechanisation was slowly being introduced. Power saws were used from the start for felling trees and some contour-ridging was being done by tractor. Shell had put no ceiling on investment in the project; their object was to set up viable farms. Close liaison had been maintained with the Ministry of Agriculture and the land for the project had been given by the government. The project had not concentrated on livestock as this was a capital-intensive enterprise but improvement of livestock was encouraged; at present livestock number about 65 head.

A local company agreed to supply all material inputs on credit, free of interest. In the event the company had proved loathe to supply materials for which it was not the agent and delays had resulted. The farmers repay the credit when they can, and there have been no defaulters to date.

Asked if the agricultural diversification which Lot 10 represented was not in conflict with regional specialisation within CARIFTA, Mr. James replied that the question would only arise if the project grew much bigger.

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