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Other considerations

The Group felt that it was desirable to comment on the institutionalisation of heavy levels of subsidies to boards to cover operating deficits. It was felt that even where boards were not primarily profit motivated, for budgeting reasons and in the interest of autonomy of boards, subsidies should not be regarded as a permanent feature of board operations and where initially granted for whatever reason (the provision of agricultural infrastructure to assist peasant type farmers and eliminate marketing inefficiency), these should be progressively phased out. It was also observed that where boards had been set up to perform, almost exclusively, export promotion functions and where agriculture was perhaps the only foreign exchange earner of any significance, the question of subsidies to boards did not arise as there were no other sectors to carry the burden of such subsidies.

Extra-Regional Marketing Cooperation

It was agreed that the areas for effective cooperation were, though important, limited. In particular, it was felt that cooperation could be used to provide:

- (a) market research
- (b) transportation facilities
- (c) minimum satisfactory export levels
- (d) levelling of fluctuations in supply.

It was further agreed that perhaps the main advantage to be derived from cooperation for purposes of the marketing of produce extra-regionally lay in its potential for facilitating intra-regional cooperation.

Summary of discussion of Workshop Report

One participant suggested that the Workshop Report emphasised implicitly at least the objective of reasonable prices to the consumer without a commensurate concern about reasonable return to the producers. It was agreed that if this impression was conveyed that was not the intention or consensus of the Workshop participants: prices satisfactory to the producer were as important as prices reasonable to the consumer.

The question of whether marketing planning was viewed in the wider context of economic planning was raised. The Workshop felt that they did not overlook this important consideration. In their view when one considers prices to be paid to producers one is in the realm of economic planning. Similarly, when one is considering an integrated marketing system as a prelude to looking at production one is in the realm of economic planning.

The question of marketing arrangements facilitating the establishment of common barriers in the Region was raised. It was agreed that through marketing arrangements there was scope for further cooperation among the regional units - an extension, as it were, of the CARIFTA idea.