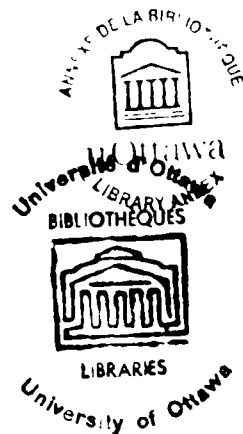


DEVELOPMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION
IN TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO
1498-1968

by Ameer H. Ali

Thesis presented to the School of
Graduate Studies of the University
of Ottawa as partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Education



Ameer H. Ali, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, 1975

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CURRICULUM STUDIORUM

Ameer Heyart Ali was born April 13, 1934, in Trinidad, West Indies. He received the Bachelor of Science degree in Biology from Acadia University, Wolfville, Nova Scotia, in 1962, and in 1963, the Bachelor of Education degree from the University of Ottawa, Ottawa, Ontario. He obtained the Master of Education degree from the University of New Brunswick, Fredericton, New Brunswick, in 1966. The title of his thesis was Federal Aid to Education in New Brunswick: The Effects of Federal Aid on the Development of Technical and Vocational Education in New Brunswick.

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INTRODUCTION

The present study traces the development of higher education in Trinidad and Tobago from the fifteenth century to 1968 and attempts to place this development in the mainstream of the cultural history of this country in the context of the British West Indies.

Until very recently the tendency was to study the development of education as if it took place by its own momentum rather than in relation to the changing needs of society. Harvard Professor Bernard Bailyn attributed much of the weakness of the writings on the history of education to "their foreshortening, their wrenching of events from historical context, their persistent anachronism"¹ and detachment from the mainstream of historical research, writing and teaching. This focus failed to place educational development in its cultural framework and what emerged was a history of schools and schooling and a somewhat indigestible mass of dates and facts. To restrict the matter of educational development in this way is to miss the whole point of historical study for although every type of activity and discipline has its own history, it cannot become meaningful in isolation. Its meaning can only be revealed

¹ Bernard Bailyn, Education in the Forming of American Society, New York, Random House, 1960, p. 59.

through an investigation of the sources in their own context.

Since education institutions and theories did not develop in isolation, a fundamental change² in educational history becomes apparent when education is viewed not only as formal pedagogy but as the entire process by which a culture transmits itself across the generations, when it is seen in its elaborate, intricate involvements with the rest of society and when its shifting functions, meanings and purposes are discerned. Also sharing this approach to educational history is Professor R. Freeman Butts of Teachers' College, Columbia University. His "belief is that education is affected by the dominating institutions and beliefs of a culture and that education in turn affects that culture"³. Culture refers to the political, economic, social and religious institutions as well as the beliefs, ideas and ideals of the people.

In England a similar approach to educational history is discernible. Kenneth Charlton of the University of Keele outlines the role of the historian of education in this way:

2 Ibid., p. 14.

3 R. Freeman Butts, A Cultural History of Education, Reassessing Our Education Traditions, New York, McGraw-Hill, 1947, p. v.

[...] the historian of education [...] must concern himself not merely with what went on in the classrooms of the past but with the transmission and modification of culture; not simply with the institutions through which culture is transmitted, modified and acquired, but also with the ideas which those institutions sought to put into effect, with the ways in which these ideas were set in motion, and most important of all, with the context in which and for which these ideas were developed. 4

In this light the history of education acquires a new outlook as a vital contribution to social history rather than a mere record of dates and facts. Another English historian, Brian Simon⁵, stresses the importance of education as a social function and emphasizes that the main task of historical study is to trace the development of education as a social function and to try and assess the function it has fulfilled at different stages of development in order to arrive at a deeper understanding of the function it fulfills today.

This approach to educational history is also apparent in the contemporary writings of Canadian educators. In their study of Canadian educational development, Wilson,

4 Kenneth Charlton, Education in Renaissance England, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1965, p. ix.

5 Brian Simon, "The History of Education", in J. W. Tibble, Editor, The Study of Education, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966, p. 91.

Stamp and Audet maintain that "educational history should be regarded as social history"⁶. They consider that the "political, economic, social, cultural and intellectual aspects of Canadian history are vital to an understanding of Canadian educational development"⁷. Moreover, for Heyman, Lawson and Stamp education must never be viewed in isolation but must always be considered as part of the mainstream of social development⁸.

In such a context education is viewed as a reflection of the social order. This view implies that the political, economic and social history of a country is vital to an understanding of its educational development and, as a corollary, maintains that as society changes so also does its education system which in turn has an influence on society. It is this interpretation of educational development that this thesis tries to follow.

A people without books lack a national identity. Many of Britain's one time possessions have for too long been in need of national literatures of their own, but the situation is changing quickly. Independence produces the

6 J. Donald Wilson, Robert M. Stamp and Louis-Philippe Audet, Canadian Education, a History, Scarborough, Ontario, Prentice-Hall, 1970, p. 2.

7 Ibid.

8 Richard D. Heyman, Robert F. Lawson and Robery M. Stamp, Studies in Educational Change, Toronto, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1972, p. viii.

desire to know one's own history and knowing that history is a vital feature of true independence. In recent years the primary and secondary levels of education in Trinidad and Tobago have undergone some investigation. In 1961, Earl Gooding⁹ made an examination of all levels of education which included a very brief (less than five pages) treatment of higher education and, in 1969, Ancel Tikasingh¹⁰ made an interesting study of primary teacher training.

So far, the study of higher education in Trinidad and Tobago has remained largely neglected. Some insight, however, can be gathered from a study by Lloyd Braithwaite¹¹. His article outlines the history of various attempts to establish higher education within the British West Indies from the eighteenth century to the end of the Second World War and attributed the failure of these attempts to the nature of the social structure in the region. As a colony in the British West Indies, Trinidad and Tobago naturally

9 Earl N. M. Gooding, Education in Trinidad, Past and Present, unpublished Doctoral dissertation presented to the University of Connecticut, Storrs, Connecticut, 1961, viii-273 p.

10 Ancel Jagjit Tikasingh, Teacher Education in Trinidad, a History, unpublished Doctoral dissertation presented to the University of California, Berkeley, California, 1969, vi-226 p.

11 Lloyd Braithwaite, "The Development of Higher Education in the British West Indies", in Social and Economic Studies, Vol. 7, No. 1, March 1958, p. 1-64.

formed part of this study but, at the time, the British West Indies consisted of nineteen highly individualized and distinct island units each with traits and traditions peculiar to its own spirit and character. Braithwaite's treatment of higher education in Trinidad and Tobago, therefore, could not but be limited. He considered his study to be preliminary to further empirical research and demonstrated the need for historical investigation on higher education in the individual colonies and the adaptation of higher education to their needs and circumstances. The present study is an attempt to further Braithwaite's investigation as far as Trinidad and Tobago is concerned.

It might still be too early, however, to write an exhaustive history of higher education in Trinidad and Tobago. Not only is extensive research on the subject lacking but also the archives of the country are far from organized, to put it mildly, and the resources of the British Museum and the Public Record Office, London, England, on this subject, are somewhat limited. Gathering primary documents on higher education in Trinidad and Tobago, therefore, was rather challenging.

In carrying out the present study material was first located in the libraries of the University of Ottawa, the University of New Brunswick, Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, Trinidad and Tobago High Commission in

Ottawa and the National Library of Canada. Primary sources represent first hand accounts of past events or conditions and are the basic materials of historical research. In an attempt to locate all relevant primary sources, several weeks were spent researching materials in Trinidad in 1969, 1970 and again in 1974.

There is no one source of data concerning higher education in Trinidad and Tobago. A number of useful documents were found in Trinidad in the University of the West Indies Archives, the Law Library, the Government Archives, the Parliamentary Library as well as in other libraries. Primary sources of data found in Trinidad include correspondence between the Governors and the Secretary of State, documents of the Imperial College and the University of the West Indies, periodical articles, and reports of committees and royal commissions from 1869 to 1968. These reports marked significant turning points in the development of Trinidad and Tobago. Photocopies of pertinent material that were unavailable in Trinidad were obtained from the British Museum, the Public Record Office and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, London, England.

Useful secondary sources include theses, monographs and articles. From these sources it was possible to obtain background information on the economic and cultural conditions in Trinidad and Tobago. The works of R. W.

Beachey, Donald Wood, Eric Williams and Gertrude Carmichael, for example, helped in tracing the history of Trinidad and Tobago.

In addition, discussions were held with the staff of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor's Office, with Mr. Russell MacNeilly, Dean of Student Affairs, and several faculty members of the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus. The writer also communicated with the Vice-Chancellor of the University of the West Indies in Jamaica, Dr. Eric Williams, Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Education and Culture of Trinidad and Tobago and Miss Evelyn Shirley, Librarian, University of the West Indies in Trinidad. Correspondence with the Registrar of the University of the West Indies requesting permission to use the University Senate Reports and with Dr. R. T. Green, Lecturer in the Psychology Department, University of London, England, requesting permission to use certain documents in his possession, brought the response that these documents were confidential in nature and were not for public scrutiny. Statistical information on students studying in the United States and Canada was obtained from the Institute of International Education, New York and Statistics Canada, Ottawa. Unfortunately, it was difficult to obtain statistical information from the United Kingdom.

This thesis tries to determine the forces which have played a part in shaping the development of higher education in Trinidad and Tobago from the fifteenth century to 1968 without losing sight of the development of the overall system of education in the country. The questions guiding this study can be expressed as follows: (1) What factors were responsible for the slow development of higher education in Trinidad and Tobago? (2) What were the factors that made for the late adaptation of higher education to the intellectual and professional needs of Trinidad and Tobago? In general terms the questions guiding this study suggest that certain types of social, economic and political conditions provide fundamental motives for higher educational development and reform. This relationship between higher education and society derives from the belief that education never exists in a vacuum but is shaped and influenced by the conditions and needs of the society it serves and that education in turn is also an agent of rapid social change.

Although the present research focuses on the development of higher education in Trinidad and Tobago, wherever proposals for higher education in the British West Indies involved Trinidad and Tobago, they are included as a necessary part of this study. The former British West Indian colonies of Jamaica, St.Kitts-Nevis-Anguilla, Antigua, Montserrat, Dominica, St.Lucia, St.Vincent, Grenada,

Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago, stretch from Florida to Venezuela, as shown in Figure 1. Over the years, Britain had attempted to bridge the miles of sea separating the islands and achieve greater efficiency and economy in administration by linking some or all of them in a variety of ways but by the nineteen hundreds she could point only to the Leeward Islands Federation, the common governorship of the Windward Islands and the unification of Trinidad and Tobago. Although the political federation of the West Indian colonies was the ultimate objective of British policy, the British government had maintained that federation should not be forced upon the colonies but should come naturally from them as a result of a widespread demand for such a change. Nevertheless, to stimulate support indirectly Britain encouraged all types of intercolonial cooperation. Various cooperative schemes among which were proposals for a university in the West Indies were being urged. The feeling of unity culminated in 1958 in the West Indies Federation which unfortunately lasted only until May 31, 1962. Trinidad and Tobago, as shown in Figure 2, immediately began seeking its own independence which it achieved on August 31, 1962. It is impossible, therefore, to talk of Trinidad and Tobago without mentioning the British West Indies. In this thesis the British West Indies refers to the following political units: Jamaica, Barbados, Leeward Islands and Windward Islands.

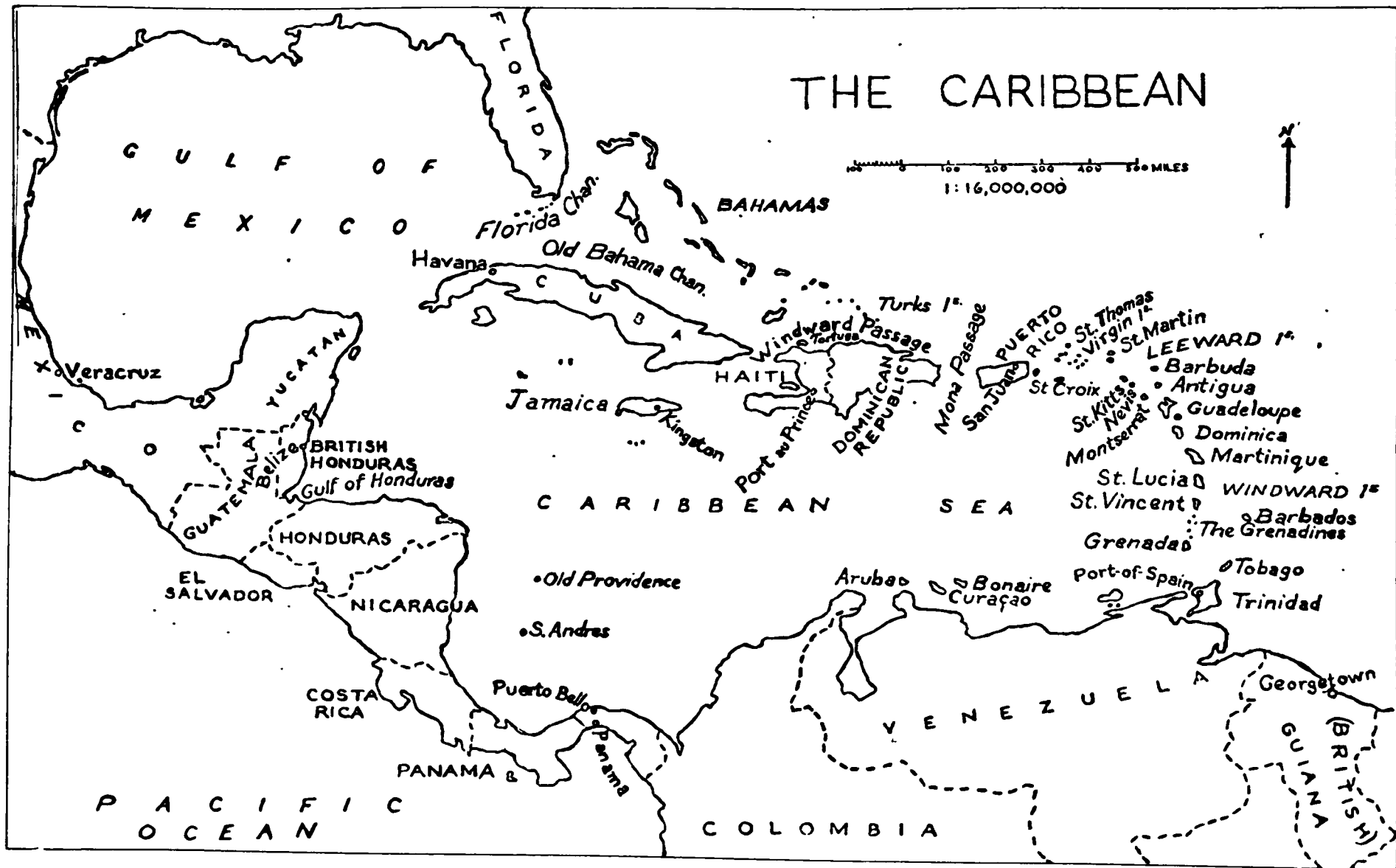


Figure 1.- Map of the West Indies and Adjacent Countries
 R. W. Beachey, The British West Indies Sugar Industry in the Late
 19th Century, Oxford, Blackwell, 1957, (on lining paper)

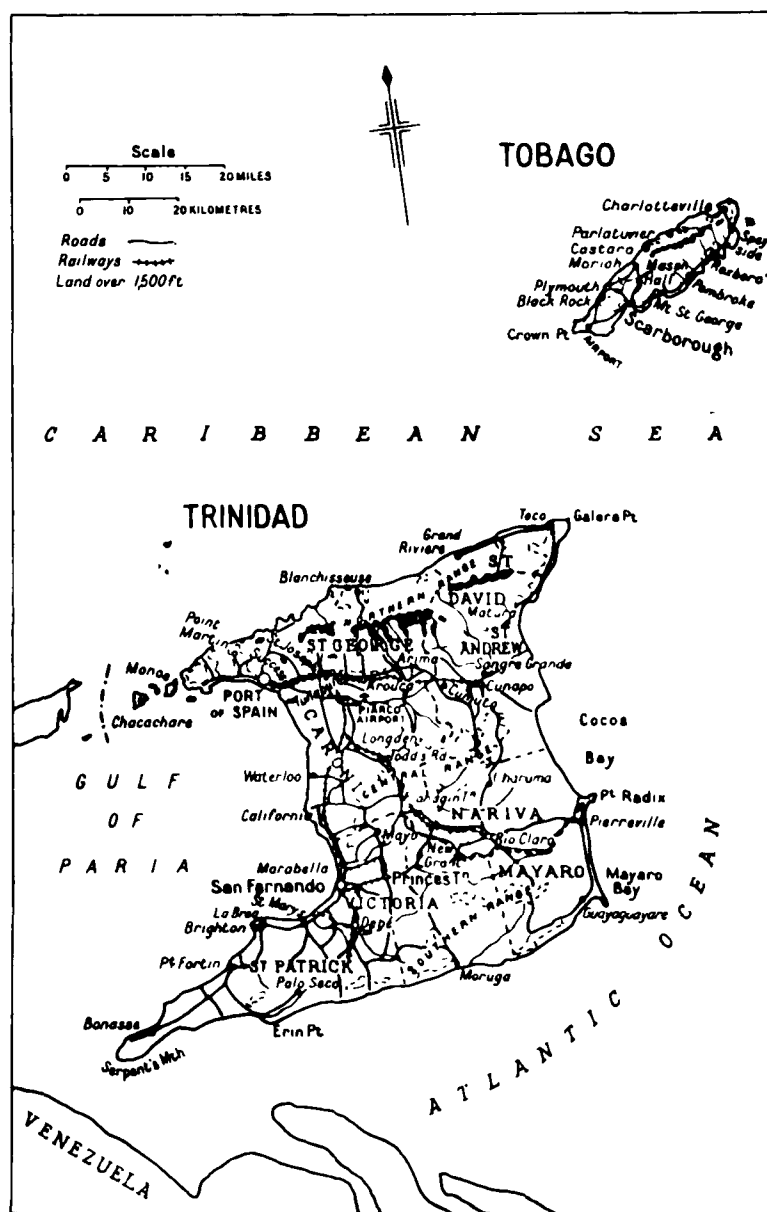


Figure 2.- Map of Trinidad and Tobago
 Eric Williams, History of the People of
 Trinidad and Tobago, London, Andre Deutsch,
 1962, p. ii.

Higher education is used to mean the type of education provided in institutions such as university and liberal arts college for which entry requirement is completion of secondary education at about seventeen years of age and in which courses lead to awards such as degrees, diplomas or certificates.

The report is presented in four chapters.

The first chapter deals with the colonial beginnings of education in Trinidad from 1498 to 1870. It was not until January 1, 1889 that the two islands, Trinidad and Tobago, became one colony and as such Tobago is omitted in this chapter. After describing conditions under Spanish rule, it goes on to establish the relationship that existed between Britain and the colony and examines the education system that formed part of this relationship. Educational provisions reflected the colony's economic, political and social life. Primary education was available for the masses, secondary education was restricted to an elite and higher education, to a handful of scholarships to British universities. There arose no demand for the development of higher education in Trinidad. Higher education concerned mainly the white population but they were divided along religious and linguistic lines and oriented to Europe for intellectual nourishment. Moreover, the need for high level manpower in a society in which the government was

unrepresentative of the people and the economy confined to the production of raw materials for export could be easily filled by expatriates. The only proposal for higher education came from a visitor and was not implemented. The need to develop the other levels of education and form a society outweighed advantages of higher education in Trinidad.

The second chapter considers the various proposals to establish higher education in Trinidad and Tobago from 1870 to 1940. After describing the sugar crisis of the late nineteenth century and efforts for its recovery, it goes on to show how economic pressures and the inability to compete with the scientific agriculture of Europe led to demands for the introduction of higher agricultural education. It was, however, only when Britain realized the advantages of an institution of tropical agriculture to the whole Empire that the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture was established in Trinidad. For secondary school graduates in Trinidad and Tobago agriculture with its association with slavery, indenture and miserable social and economic conditions was an unattractive profession. They preferred to follow the tradition of going abroad to study medicine and law, professions that promised prestige and affluence. Yet there arose no local movement for a more liberal type of higher education. The educated were content to preserve the status quo and were divided in their support of the higher education

proposals of the nineteen twenties and thirties which came from outside and were part of the movement to federate the West Indies. Unfortunately, the world economic crisis obscured the advantages of higher education to economic improvement. Meanwhile social unrest and labour disturbances in Trinidad and Tobago resulted in a searching examination of every aspect of life in the colony and promised far reaching changes in the years ahead.

The third chapter carries the story from the Second World War to 1956. After describing Britain's efforts to improve conditions in the colony during the war, it goes on to show how higher education formed an indispensable part of post-war plans for reconstruction in the colonies. An investigation of the need for higher education in the British West Indies resulted in the establishment of a regional university along the lines of a British civic university. At first there was no problem of adaptation. By training the needed personnel, investigating the problems of the region and stimulating general progress, the University College had contributed to the development of Trinidad and Tobago, but with rapid industrialization, unprecedented pace of political development, the increasing number of students going abroad and the democratization of educational opportunity at the secondary school level in Trinidad and Tobago, the elitist concept of higher education was no

longer viable.

The final chapter traces the development of higher education from 1957 to 1968 and shows how higher education expanded and adapted to the needs of society. To prepare for the West Indies Federation a critical study of the policy and needs of the University College was undertaken and on its recommendations the University College abandoned its residential qualifications, introduced more technical and vocational courses, transformed itself into a decentralized institution and became a full university. With the collapse of the West Indies Federation and the achievement of independence by Trinidad and Tobago came more fundamental changes in higher education. Besides shifting its philosophy from elitist to liberal, the University introduced striking changes in its curriculum and adapted to the needs of its society as defined in part by Trinidad and Tobago in its national development plans.

It is hoped that this study will provide a greater understanding and appreciation of the forces and influences that shaped the development of higher education in Trinidad and Tobago.

CHAPTER I

EARLY COLONIAL EDUCATION IN TRINIDAD 1498-1870

In tracing the growth of education in Trinidad from 1498 to 1870, consideration is given to the people of various races who came and the social, economic and political conditions they lived with under two successive colonial rules. After a brief survey of Trinidad's history during Spanish rule, the many factors which affected the relationship that developed between Britain and the colony and the manner in which the colony tried to solve its problems will be discussed in the following pages. It could be expected that over so many years the method of providing education would change dramatically. The traditional characteristic of education as the sole responsibility of the family and the church was not modified until the government began to see education as the cure for society's ills and to assume the responsibility for the provision of primary education for the masses, while secondary and higher education remained the privilege of the few. As its role expanded, government came into conflict with the church over the control of education. It is from an investigation of this conflict by the Keenan Commission that the first proposal for higher education in Trinidad emerged.

1. Spanish Rule 1498-1797

The Neglected Colony

The history of Trinidad began in 1498 when Columbus discovered the island and took possession of it on behalf of the King and Queen of Spain. This thickly forested island was inhabited by Amerindian tribes¹ whom the Spaniards, in search of precious metals, compelled to work in the mines. In a short time, however, many of the indians, unaccustomed to the harsh labour, white man's diet and diseases, died. Without a labour supply the island was useless to the Spaniards and soon African slaves² were brought to work in the mines. When Trinidad yielded no gold or silver she was quickly abandoned, and for almost three hundred years the island remained a neglected and underdeveloped colony with a population that was never more than a few hundred.

By the mid-eighteenth century conditions in Trinidad were critical and the morale of the colony was at its lowest ebb. The inhabitants³ who, in 1777, numbered 340 Europeans,

1 Eric Williams, History of the People of Trinidad and Tobago, London, Andre Deutsch, 1962, p. 9-10.

2 Eric Williams, The Negro in the Caribbean, New York, Haskell House, 1942, p. 11.

3 Donald Wood, Trinidad in Transition, the Years After Slavery, London, Oxford University Press, 1968, p. 32.

870 free mulattoes and two hundred negro slaves, were apathetic, indolent and poverty stricken and suffered from diseases such as malaria, yellow fever and small pox which were constantly spreading. They depended for their livelihood on cocoa cultivation⁴ but the repeated failure of this crop was disastrous. Appeals for assistance from Spain fell on deaf ears. The Spanish government considered the value of a colony on its ability to produce precious metals and, since the revenue of Trinidad was small, it was of little account to Spain.

Immigration of French Catholics

The colony experienced no real progress until the last fourteen years of Spanish rule when its doors were open to immigrants. A French visitor, P. R. Roume St.Laurent, was so impressed with the fertility that he succeeded in persuading the King of Spain to permit French immigration to the island. In 1783, the Spanish government issued its Royal Cedula of Colonization⁵ which offered generous grants of land to settlers on condition that they professed the Catholic faith and took an oath of allegiance to the King of

4 Gertrude Carmichael, The History of the West Indian Islands of Trinidad and Tobago, 1498-1900, London, Alvin Redman, 1961, p. 34.

5 Ibid., p. 363-369.

Spain. Additional grants were made to immigrants who brought slaves with them. This Cedula coincided with the arrival of the distinguished Spanish governor, Don José María Chacon, and marked the beginning of Trinidad's economic and social development. Hundreds of French families and their African slaves came to Trinidad attracted by its agricultural possibilities and were joined later by an influx of refugees fleeing from the revolt in the French West Indian islands. Under the guidance of Chacon⁶, the colony prospered and the population increased. He encouraged the development of the island by improving roads and bridges and exporting pitch. Moreover, he reorganized the colony into administrative units, removed impediments to the cultivation of land and issued a code for the protection of slaves which gave slave owners responsibility to instruct their slaves in the Catholic religion.

In a short time, the forgotten island of Trinidad was transformed into a Spanish colony run by Frenchmen and worked by African slaves. The French settlers brought with them their language and customs as well as their knowledge of the cultivation of sugarcane, cocoa and coffee. They cleared the forests and cultivated sugarcane on the west

⁶ Williams, History of the People of Trinidad and Tobago, p. 43-46.

coast and coffee and cocoa in the valleys of the Northern Range. In time, Trinidad became a prosperous colony. African slaves supplied the cheap labour and Spain a favourable market.

Educational Provisions

During this period there seemed to have been no systematic teaching and nothing to suggest that schools were established. At this time responsibility for education was in the hands of parents and the church. The rigors of the tropical climate, the preoccupation with economic activity and the desire to maintain cultural ties with Europe might have influenced prosperous planters to send their children to Europe for education. On the other hand, less fortunate parents might have imposed on members of the clergy the task of education. The close relationship between the church and state was, no doubt, favourable to educational development, and if by law the clergy were compelled to instruct the slaves in the prayers and doctrines of the Catholic Church, they must have provided some form of education for the white population, especially in Port-of-Spain where the governor, officers and merchants resided. For those desirous of sending their sons to university, however, Europe was the only possible place.

2. British Rule 1797-1833

The year 1797 marked the loss of Spanish control over Trinidad, a loss which was legally established five years later under the terms of the Treaty of Amiens. Britain obtained in Trinidad a colony with an inexhaustible source of asphalt used for caulking ships and a soil that had not been worn out by centuries of agricultural exploitation. Although it was usual for a conquering nation to completely assimilate a conquered people and impose its language and culture, at first, capitulation⁷ to the British did not make a great deal of difference to life in the island. Trinidad was acquired at a time when Britain was showing little enthusiasm in widening the bounds of her empire. With her superior sea power and industrial growth she preferred to build an empire based on trade. But her European rivalries tempted her to take over more sugar islands including Trinidad despite falling returns. The inhabitants of Trinidad were only required to swear allegiance to the King of England, for the laws of Spain remained and Spanish continued as the language of the courts and government offices. Moreover, the British⁸ guaranteed free Catholic

7 Carmichael, op. cit., p. 43.

8 Wood, op. cit., p. 42.

settlers, both white and mulatto, liberty of worship.

Continuation of Immigration

French and Spanish speaking settlers fleeing for safety continued to join their compatriots in Trinidad. By 1803 they swelled Trinidad's population⁹ to 51,725 of which 2,261 were whites, 28,000 free mulattoes and 20,464 slaves. The French speaking settlers were now the predominant group and clung to their language and religion. The slaves had no legal rights but provided the cheap labour so necessary for sugar cultivation. The mulattoes¹⁰, offspring of white and African slaves, were usually freed by their white masters and came to expect equality with whites in legal matters. Members of this free coloured community refused to work on the plantations, despised the black side of their ancestry and identified with their masters by assuming their language, religion and customs.

While Trinidad was a Spanish colony effort was made to keep it Catholic, but now that it was a British colony Protestantism could no longer be prohibited. It was neither persecution nor the threat of war that attracted English

9 Ibid., p. 33.

10 Williams, Negro in the Caribbean, p. 58.

speaking immigrants and their African slaves from the British colonies to Trinidad. For them the island promised an abundance of fertile land where sugarcane could be grown. Since the climate ruled out any idea for a colony of settlement, many of these immigrants were birds of passage and looked upon Trinidad merely as a place of livelihood. They came not to settle and recreate their own civilization but to make profits and return home to Britain to live a life of luxury. In this British influx¹¹ came merchant houses and commercial firms who brought with them clerks and overseers. These firms became active in every aspect of the sugar trade. Their access to British capital and their links with the huge sugar interests in Britain made them the major influential group and gave them an authority which the small resident planters were unable to command. Soon these firms controlled all the commerce of the island and owned huge sugar plantations. Like the expatriate clerks in the business and the expatriate overseers on the plantations, the managers of these firms were usually sojourners instead of settlers. Trinidad was a stepping-stone in their career which they hoped to continue in Britain.

¹¹ Wood, op. cit., p. 35-36.

Raw Material Producing Economy

Trinidad's economic life was concerned mainly with the cultivation of agricultural products for export. With cheap labour and favourable markets sugar was by far the principal product. But Trinidad, which had only been opened to settlers since 1783, was suffering from a labour shortage that became even more critical when, in 1807, the abolition of the slave trade, resulting from the economic skepticism and the humanitarian movement in Britain, put an end to the introduction of any further slaves. Nevertheless, tied to a guaranteed British market, the sugar industry developed and prospered. As a British colony, Trinidad¹² was a market for manufactured goods of British industries and a source of raw materials for these industries. Trinidad was obliged to send her valuable products to the mother country in British ships and in return for this monopoly to purchase all her necessities from Britain. Trinidad's valuable product was sugar and the entire economy was directed to exploiting sugar cultivation to satisfy the demands of the export market for raw materials.

¹² Walter Phelps Hall, Robert Greenhalgh and Jennie Barnes Pope, A History of England and the Empire-Commonwealth, 4th ed., Toronto, Ginn, 1961, p. 263.

The other agricultural product, cocoa, was cultivated mainly by French planters. Cocoa was not one of the valuable products and could be sent wherever there was a market. Spain was the largest importer at the time but she imposed a heavy duty on cocoa that arrived from British colonies in British ships. To survive, Trinidad cocoa growers¹³ had to send their produce to Spanish colonies such as Cuba and Puerto Rico for trans-shipment to Spain. It was, however, sugar that made Trinidad prosperous.

Crown Colony Government

With this wave of prosperity, the British, who owned most of the property, were becoming an elite of temporary sojourners clamouring for their own laws and institutions. Victory against Napoleon had swelled their confidence, and, believing in the superiority of British institutions and culture, they were seeking to anglicize non-British peoples. Although the majority of the British sector in Trinidad were more intent on improving their personal fortunes than on the conscious foundation of a society, they soon began to press for the traditional form of legislature consisting of a nominated council, whose members were appointed by the

13 Wood, op. cit., p. 98.

governor, and an elected assembly. At the time Trinidad was ruled by Spanish law and a government¹⁴ consisting of a governor and an advisory body which comprised the leading inhabitants of the island. The governor had absolute power and was not compelled to accept the suggestions of his Council of Advice. The British planters resented this autocratic rule and sought for themselves the privileges enjoyed by the planters in the other British West Indian islands.

Britain was unwilling to establish the representative form of government in Trinidad. Unlike the other West Indian islands where the white inhabitants formed the great majority of the free population, in Trinidad the majority of the free population were mulattoes who were growing in wealth and beginning to be considered a powerful body. Their presence was perhaps one of the reasons for the British government's refusal to grant Trinidad representative government. If the mulattoes were given equal rights with the white inhabitants in the government they would enjoy preponderant power. On the other hand, if they were denied equality their loyalty might be lost. Moreover, the anti-slavery movement was at its peak and it was important for the

14 H. O. B. Wooding, "The Constitutional History of Trinidad and Tobago", in Caribbean Quarterly, Vol. 6, Nos. 2 & 3, May 1960, p. 148-149.

British to retain full power in Trinidad in order to enforce the abolition of the slave trade and implement the measures of 1823 for ameliorating the lot of the slaves, especially since the conflict with the elected assemblies in the other West Indian colonies revolved around slavery. It could not be expected that Britain would grant the white inhabitants of Trinidad powers which the other colonies were using to obstruct British policies.

Nevertheless, over the years, the British sector of the community persistently demanded active participation in the government. Finally, in 1831, the British government responded by introducing the Crown Colony¹⁵ system of government consisting of an executive council, which was purely an advisory body, and a legislative council with official and unofficial members nominated by the Secretary of State for the Colonies on the recommendations of the governor. Official members were top civil servants and unofficial members leading proprietors of the island. The upper classes, mainly the British sector, now had a greater part in the government, but the governor was chief of the legislative council and the King's representative. No legislation proposed by him and supported by the Secretary of State in Britain could ever be thwarted however unpopular it

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 150.

was in the island. His veto could be overridden only by the Secretary of State. Much of the power of the elected assemblies in the other West Indian islands came from their control over finance but under the new system in Trinidad financial measures could be initiated only by the governor or on his authority. Without an elected assembly to oppose financial measures the government could carry out its instruction from Britain with ease.

Crown Colony government did not represent the people and was not responsible to them. It was designed to promote and maintain British cultural, economic and political supremacy over the island. Superior positions were filled by men sent out from Britain or at best by colonials in high favour with the ruling class. Although the British were outnumbered by the French and Spanish, the government¹⁶ excluded this non-British segment of the population from membership in the legislative council. Such a policy was viewed as a deliberate threat against people of foreign birth and tended to create ill feelings and hostility against all things British. Moreover, the mulattoes were becoming prosperous and resented being looked upon officially and socially as a class apart. The unpopularity of this constitution together with the slave laws encouraged hostility and bitterness among the inhabitants. There were now

16 Carmichael, op. cit., p. 168-174.

racial and religious differences which were soon followed by economic and financial problems.

Responsibility for Education

Crown Colony government had the power to legislate on educational matters but it did not give education high priority on the claims upon its financial resources. Law and order, financial stability and facilities for trade were placed highest on the list as the most essential for economic returns. Trinidad was looked upon primarily as a source of wealth and prestige for the benefit of Britain and not as a society needing economic, political and social development for its own sake. Moreover, at this time, there was little thought of state responsibility for the provision of education. If it was assumed in Britain that any parent who could afford to educate his children should do so and that the church and voluntary organizations were the proper custodians of schools, it was natural for the government to leave education alone.

In a plantation colony where a landowning minority dominated an underprivileged majority, opportunities for social and cultural improvement waned. As in other European colonies in the New World, Trinidad's social progress depended upon the size of the resident white population. Its climate, tropical diseases and a prosperous sugar industry made

Trinidad a colony of exploitation with a small white population. The planters, merchants, professional men, clergy and officials were few in number and too small a group to form an educated body of opinion. Moreover, they were exclusively preoccupied with economic interests. Such a conscious concern with wealth was naturally hostile to literary pursuits and intellectual accomplishments. In addition, far from being united and homogeneous, the dominant white minority, although united as slave owners were divided along the lines of religion, nationality and language. The large French group were Catholics, the small British group Protestants. The British considered the French foreigners and the French were resentful of British dominance and the erosion of French culture. They were far from ready to provide for the enlightenment of their children by joint effort, but their clergy were educated men and by 1823, they had established five primary schools¹⁷ all in Port-of-Spain. No doubt, they also educated youths in the classics. But in this pioneering community the rigid class structure of European education was discernible. Primary education which was designed to provide a minimal literacy

17 Shirley C. Gordon, Compiler, A Century of West Indian Education, a Source Book with Commentary, London, Longmans, 1963, p. 17. Hereafter cited as Gordon, A Source Book.

education was established but secondary and higher education which were regarded as the prime road for the advancement of the upper classes were non-existent. It was perhaps acknowledged that those who aspired to education suitable for a governing class and a truly educated person and gentleman could afford to go to Europe.

Trinidad's white minority must have made some attempt to introduce European culture in foods, fashions and entertainment, but it is doubtful whether they were ever totally isolated from their roots in Europe. The poorer classes perhaps lacked the opportunity to travel to Europe but in an era of frequent shipping and a thriving economy, merchants, landowners and professional men had every opportunity. In general, prosperous planters¹⁸ preferred to enjoy European culture in its authentic setting and absented themselves from the estates leaving attorneys, overseers and clerks to run the sugar business. This white resident population formed a relatively small group and was not occupied in a way that would lead to refined taste and scholarship.

¹⁸ Eric Williams, Capitalism and Slavery, Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1944, p. 85-86.

In such a colony in order to form a society, develop a spirit of community and train people for self-government, education would have an important part to play. But most of the white population¹⁹ was emotionally and intellectually oriented towards Europe and sent their children home for education. For the British home meant Britain, for the French it meant France, where their sons attended schools and universities. The mulattoes of means imitated the Europeans and sent their children to Europe for education. Parents, who could not afford to send their children abroad or who dreaded the long and hazardous journey across the Atlantic, hired a tutor or sent their children to the primary schools in Trinidad. For higher education, however, there was no alternative but to go to Europe.

The demand for professionally trained personnel in Trinidad was small. As a British colony, Trinidad was part of the colonial system to provide employment opportunities in government and commerce for the British middle classes. Since slavery was the backbone of the sugar plantations and British policy was to maintain a purely agricultural and raw material producing economy, technology and agricultural

19 Gordon, A Source Book, p. 14.

methods stagnated. Agriculture separated from manufacturing industry remained largely primitive in technique and the relatively small number of professionally trained personnel required to supervise the preliminary processing of sugar could profitably be imported.

Whenever Trinidad's black majority received instruction, it was of a religious nature. One of the circumstances of slavery was that slaves were kept ignorant. If they were not instructed in any arts or skills other than those required for their labour, they would be less likely to resist their masters. Regarded as property, the slaves existed for and were entirely subordinated to the will of their masters. In 1823, Britain's proposals for ameliorative reform²⁰ included religious instruction for slaves and, in the face of bitter opposition, were enforced in the Crown Colony of Trinidad. To improve the moral standards and social conditions of the slaves, schools²¹ were started in Port-of-Spain for urban slave children but it is uncertain how much instruction took place on the estates where the majority of slave children lived. What was certain was that education would play an important part in any provision to transform the slave society into a free community.

20 Williams, Capitalism and Slavery, p. 197-198.

21 Gordon, A Source Book, p. 12.

3. Education in the Forming of Trinidad's Society 1833-1870

Abolition of Slavery

The ameliorative reform of 1823 brought Britain one step closer to the abolition of slavery and the achievement of free trade. When the cotton manufacturers, shipowners, sugar refiners, industrial and commercial enterprises in Britain joined the various humanitarian movements in their attack on slavery, the issue²² involved was not merely the inhumanity of slavery but the unprofitableness of the West Indian monopoly. Britain's export to the world was in manufactured goods which could be paid for only in raw materials but the West Indian monopoly, which prohibited Britain from importing non-British plantation sugar, restricted the full development of trade with the world. To obtain more profitable world markets for her manufactured goods, Britain had to destroy the monopoly by removing the *raison d'être* of the West Indian sugar industry. First the slave trade was abolished and then, in 1834, slave labour throughout the British Empire.

On emancipation a large number of persons were to be left to fend for themselves without the support of

22 Williams, Capitalism and Slavery, p. 154-166.

traditions of self help, and almost overnight, a system based on the rights of a few to command the services of the many was to change to one in which master and slave were equal. This involved a complete reversal of habits, ways of life and thought which had grown up over the centuries. To create equality before the law was not enough. It was necessary to teach the slaves to survive in a competitive society in which the rules of the game were shaped by the white minority. To avert the social and economic crisis that was certain to result, Britain made provisions in the Act of Emancipation²³ for the apprenticeship system and education. Apprenticeship was to allow the ex-slaves time to learn how to become wage earners while education was to transform them into the working class, give them a knowledge of the principles and responsibilities of free men and citizens and bring peace and prosperity to the Empire. For Britain, education was the best and only sure foundation of social order, industry and happiness.

The Education of Ex-slaves

The abolition of slavery in 1834 gave Trinidad its first education system. Since the introduction of the negro

23 Great Britain, Laws, Statutes, etc., "The Slavery Abolition Act, 1833, 3 & 4 William 4, ch. 73", in Halsbury's Statutes of England, 2d. ed., Vol. 25, p. 996-997.

population no attempt had been made to substitute any type of social organization or moral standard for the elaborate tribal codes of their native land and the British administrators used emancipation to lay the foundation for a society patterned on the British model. The Act of Emancipation made provisions for a grant, popularly known as the Negro Education Grant, which was for the express purpose of promoting religious and moral education of ex-slaves and teaching them to cope with their new status. The British government gave this responsibility for educating the ex-slaves to the missionaries who, so far, had done what they could in education. In 1835, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, London Missionary Society, Church Missionary Society and Methodist Society received eight hundred pounds for the education of 22,359 ex-slaves in Trinidad²⁴. The Mico Charity²⁵ was also asked to provide schools and normal schools for the training of native teachers. Education, therefore, was in the hands of the religious bodies who could open schools wherever they saw fit and teach whatever they liked. The government, although

24 "Colonial Office Memorandum, 8 December 1835", in Gordon, A Source Book, p. 26.

25 F. R. Augier et al., The Making of the West Indies, London, Longmans, 1960, p. 179-180.

providing funds for two-thirds of the cost of school buildings, had no control over the standards of instruction or the quality of the teachers.

The Negro Education Grant was a vigorous plan for education and conversion and all concerned were, no doubt, ambitious for a scheme of education for the whole population. Immediately after emancipation, the number of schools²⁶ in Trinidad increased and were well supported by the apprentices. There were noon and night schools for adults and day schools for children. Instruction was given in reading, writing, arithmetic, catechism and the principles of religion. Within a few years, however, it was apparent that the partnership²⁷ of the religious bodies and the British government would not create an adequate education system throughout the colony. By 1837, the missionaries, unable to meet the recurrent costs of the existing schools checked their expansion. Moreover, as long as the apprentices were on the estates, it was easy to provide a school which would be attended by a reasonable number of

26 "Thomas Bilby, Principal of the Mico Institute, Port-of-Spain, to the Mico Trustees, 12 April 1838", in Gordon, A Source Book, p. 28-29.

27 "Beecham, Secretary of the Wesleyan Missionary Society, to Secretary of State, 12 May 1837", "Coates, Secretary of Church Missionary Society, to Secretary of State, 26 May 1838", and "Abstract of Mico Daily, Sunday and Adult School Returns, July 1840", in Gordon, A Source Book, p. 34-36.

children. But, in 1838, when the period of apprenticeship ended in Trinidad and the apprentices were free to leave the estates, it was impossible to run a school. The Mico Charity alone extended its operations as the non-denominational nature of its teaching was attracting children of the large Roman Catholic population. In 1840, it was operating forty schools with an enrolment of 1,971 pupils. To encourage further educational development the British government allowed the grant to be used towards one-third of the teachers' salaries, but this was still insufficient and the missionaries continued to check educational expansion.

Since Britain's policy was financial self-sufficiency of the colony, she decided to leave education to the revenue of the colonial government. In 1841 a gradual withdrawal of the grant²⁸ began and in 1845 the grant ceased²⁹. Trinidad now assumed the responsibility of providing education for its people.

Primary education in Trinidad had failed but Britain was not to be blamed. Britain itself at this time was only beginning to realize the benefits of educating the poor, and

28 "Circular Despatch, 18 March 1841", in Gordon, A Source Book, p. 38.

29 "Circular Despatch, 1 October 1845", in Gordon, A Source Book, p. 42.

advocates of primary education for the working class were faced with indifference from those who believed that education should be provided by parents and religious bodies. The principle that the state had a responsibility to educate the young was not yet widespread. The period of the Negro Education Grant, however, can be credited with spreading the idea of universal education for children of all social levels. The problem for Trinidad was to find an argument for general education equal to the religious one.

Immigration of Labourers

Although the abolition of slavery deprived the over-committed and inefficient planters of their main prop, education of the ex-slaves was intended to condition them to accept the role of the working class and supply the labour for the sugar plantations. But when the period of apprenticeship ended, they left the plantations and settled on the underdeveloped lands on the outskirts, returning to work only when they needed money³⁰. Such an unpredictable supply of labour endangered the prosperous working of plantation agriculture and Trinidad's economy virtually collapsed. Without an adequate supply of labour, Trinidad planters were unable to keep up production and meet on the

30 Wood, op. cit., p. 46-55.

British market competition with foreign sugar. Immigration of labourers was considered the only hope of restoring prosperity and the short term benefit of reliable plantation labour outweighed any qualms about the creation of troublesome racial mixtures.

From 1838 to 1845 a population already rich and diverse received immigrants from four continents. These immigrants brought with them their strengths, customs and intelligence and contributed to the present intricate racial structure. At first Trinidad adopted a bounty system³¹ under which captains of vessels received a bounty for each labourer they introduced into the colony, no matter from what country he came. This system was expensive and the immigrants were usually unsuited to plantation work. Three centuries of experience in the New World had made planters assume that negroes were the best type of labourers for the sugar plantations, and it was to countries with negro populations that they next turned. Freed slaves³² were brought from the neighbouring Caribbean islands, the United States of America and Africa but, following the example of the apprentices, they soon abandoned the estates to squat on

31 Carmichael, op. cit., p. 188.

32 Wood, op. cit., p. 59-79.

the underdeveloped lands which were plentiful in Trinidad. European immigrants³³ were brought from Madeira but they either died from tropical diseases or left the plantations to take up huckstering or open shops. Although immigrants were arriving, very few wished to become labourers. To be a shopkeeper or dockworker was considered superior to being a labourer on the land. Amidst repeated demands for immigrants to solve the labour shortage, Britain permitted East Indian immigration to Trinidad. These immigrants were obliged to labour for five years at the end of which they were to receive a free return passage to India. With the arrival of the first East Indians³⁴ in 1845, the two existing cultures, European and African, were joined by another from Asia. Into an already complex situation where the dominant Europeans were trying to mould the Africans into their own image, came an intricate culture that was satisfied with its own values and fortified with its own religion. The task of converting the East Indians to Christianity was almost impossible and for a long time they remained on the fringes of society.

33 Ibid., p. 100-106.

34 Ibid., p. 113.

On the whole East Indians seemed to have been satisfactory. They were described as industrious, cheerful, contented, docile and obedient although on some estates they were badly treated. In time, many problems³⁵ vexed the government and planters. Although many East Indians settled down on the estates, others were misfits and unsuited for manual work because of age, caste or infirmity. Still others were prone to vagrancy. East Indian beggars were a common sight as they lay unattended and sick on the roads. Moreover, East Indians suffered from the mud and rain and were as susceptible as anyone to fevers and yaws. They went barefooted and suffered greatly from ulcerated feet and septic cuts. Against such odds, the planters continued to express their confidence in negro labour and were lukewarm about the East Indians who, in time, saved them from utter collapse and replaced the negroes on the sugar estates.

Society and Schools 1845

By the time the first East Indians arrived in Trinidad, little had been done to form a society. Tension between the British and French sectors of the community was becoming worse. The government was consciously pursuing its policy of anglicization aimed at making Trinidad English in

35 Ibid., p. 114-119.

feeling and institutions. Much legislation had been passed – the criminal and civil codes revised along British lines, the administrative and legal framework of the Church of England introduced and the ecclesiastical law of England imposed – but these served only to alienate the British and French and helped in no way to eradicate ignorance among the masses. Add to this, the problem of the immigrants, the different languages spoken and the scattered nature of the population.

The colony's educational provisions reflected the religious, political and racial tensions of the time and seemed to be a dividing rather than a unifying force. Education was in the hands of the religious bodies who were at liberty to open schools where they saw fit and teach what they liked. Although the government³⁶ provided funds towards the maintenance of primary schools and teachers' salaries, it had no control over the quality of instruction or the quality of teachers. In 1845 there were fifty-four schools³⁷ known to exist in Trinidad, twenty-seven were run by the Church of England, thirteen by the Catholics and the rest by other religious bodies. Moreover, at a time when primary

³⁶ Sir Henry Macleod, Governor of Trinidad, Letter to Gladstone, Secretary of State, 18 April 1846, London, Public Record Office, C.O. 295/150, p. 3.

³⁷ Wood, op. cit., p. 216.

education for the masses was still grossly inadequate, the Catholics were operating secondary schools³⁸ for the few who could support education. St. George's College for boys and St. Joseph's Convent for girls, which were established in Port-of-Spain in 1837 and 1838 respectively, were well supported by children of French and Catholic families. These schools aimed at providing children of the upper classes with a superior education. Young men received instruction³⁹ in English, French, Spanish, Latin, Greek, history, geography, mathematics and Catholic doctrine; young women in English, French, profane history, sacred history, geography, arithmetic and needlework. Such an education was intended to produce an educated laity who would become influential members of the community and critics of British colonial policy. With the growing trade between Britain and Trinidad and the establishment of a regular fortnightly steam packet run, however, parents who could afford it preferred to send their children abroad for education, particularly higher education.

38 Gordon, A Source Book, p. 74.

39 L. A. A. DeVerteuil, Trinidad: Its Geography, Natural Resources, Administration, Present Conditions and Prospects, 2d. ed., London, Cassell, 1884, p. 195-196.

Proposals for Secular Education

With the responsibility of providing an education system for all its people, Trinidad had to determine whether priority should be given to the advancement of learning, to the training of a governing elite or to the achievement of a general level of competence spread as widely as possible. The government was not slow to define its aims. In 1846, the Governor, Sir Henry Macleod, dissatisfied with the denominational system of education, was in favour of a secular system⁴⁰ that would extend the rudiments of education to all, increase national unity, reduce sectarian jealousy, deal with the foreign elements and differences of religion and disseminate English culture.

On the model of the Irish national education system, Macleod outlined a scheme⁴¹ that provided for a lay board of education consisting of the governor and six residents. The government was to pay fifty per cent of the cost of buildings and teachers' salaries, and parents were to pay school fees. Moreover, English was to be the medium of instruction. Macleod considered it absolutely necessary that people living under British rule and claiming the benefits of British subjects should be able to read the laws by which

40 Macleod, op. cit., p. 1.

41 Ibid., p. 1-3.

they were governed. Religious instruction was not to be provided but children attending these schools were to have proof that they were receiving religious instruction. East Indian children were obviously to be excluded unless they could produce such a certificate. Macleod's proposal met with opposition from the Anglicans who were afraid of losing their control over education and from the Catholics who had not anticipated an entirely secular plan. In the midst of this uproar, however, Macleod was recalled to London and it remained with his successor to establish an education system in Trinidad.

For the new Governor, Lord Harris, a system of local government was indispensable to the efficient operation of an education system. At the time, Trinidad had no system of local government and no method of collecting local taxes. Before outlining his education plan, therefore, Harris proposed a system of local government⁴² that was to be responsible for local matters including education. Trinidad was to be divided into north and south with each consisting of a number of counties; each county was to be divided into two districts and each district into wards. Each district was to be administered by an unpaid warden who was to be

⁴² Lord Harris, Governor of Trinidad, Address to the Legislative Council, 1 February 1847, Port-of-Spain, Government Archives, p. 1-2.

responsible for implementing the executive decisions of the government. In time, Harris hoped that municipal government would evolve and provide a solid foundation for the development of education.

With the philosophy that education should be open to talent and every child should have the opportunity to advance as far as his ability would allow, Harris turned to the problem of education. To meet the needs of the community of various races, languages and religions, he proposed a secular system of education⁴³ under the direction of a central board. It was not that Harris was indifferent to religious instruction, but he realized the extreme difficulty of giving such teaching in schools attended by children representing so many different races and creeds. He acted on the principle that, under such conditions, it was the duty of the state to provide secular instruction for its people and leave religious teaching in the hands of parents and their religious guides. English was to be the medium of instruction. Children were to pay school fees and the government, the cost of school buildings and teachers' salaries. Since the maintenance of law and order was of

43 Lord Harris, Message Delivered by His Excellency the Governor at the Honourable Board of Legislative Council of the Second April, 1851, London, Public Record Office, C.O. 295/173, p. 1.

utmost importance, Harris justified government expense on the grounds that

[...] an educated is more moral than an uneducated population, and that the expenses of Government are materially diminished in those departments which are made necessary in order to repress the errors, the vices and the crimes, which ignorance, more than anything else, entails on society. 44

Each ward was to establish primary schools and each district, a school catering to the outstanding pupils from the primary schools. Harris envisaged as the apex of the system a college for outstanding students regardless of their birth. A normal school for training teachers was to be established in Port-of-Spain. Responsibility for selecting the staff and establishing the schools was to be in the hands of a municipal council elected by the rate payers.

Effects of Economic Depression

Economic conditions precluded political and social reform, and such ambitious plans for education and local government had to be temporarily shelved. The closing months of 1847 saw Trinidad sinking into its worst economic depression of the century. The finances of the colony were being stretched to pay for the expensive and as yet

44 Ibid.

inefficient system of East Indian immigration⁴⁵ with the result that there was not one request for East Indians in 1848. The repercussion of the commercial depression in Britain began to affect Trinidad when, in an attempt to save its economy, Britain abandoned its traditional colonial policy of protection for colonial products on the British market. The industrial revolution in Britain was at its peak and British goods required no protection in the small and limited colonial markets. In order to sell her manufactured goods and buy sugar from anywhere in the world, Britain, as part of her policy of free trade, passed the Sugar Duties Act⁴⁶ of 1846 which provided for the gradual equalization of sugar duties until 1851, when West Indian and foreign slave grown sugar were to be subject to the same duty on entry into Britain. With the removal of the last economic foundation, the planters saw themselves faced with ruin.

But when the financial crisis in Britain spread to Trinidad, it dealt the economy some crippling blows. Sugar prices slumped and local credit dried up⁴⁷. For the planters

45 Wood, op. cit., p. 124.

46 R. W. Beachey, The British West Indies Sugar Industry in the Late 19th Century, Oxford, Blackwell, 1957, p. 44-45.

47 Wood, op. cit., p. 123.

this meant disaster. They had come to rely on credit to tide them over till the next crop but for this credit they now had to pay high interest rates. Soon more than half of the sugar estates⁴⁸ were in the hands of British merchants because planters were unable to repay their loans. Merchant houses in Britain also went bankrupt. Moreover, the colonial treasury was as vulnerable as commerce and agriculture. Trinidad suffered from placing too much emphasis on a single crop. When sugar prices were high the colony prospered, when prices were low the economy collapsed. The developing cocoa industry⁴⁹ provided some diversity to the economy but like sugar it was plagued with labour and financial problems which caused a number of cocoa estates to be abandoned. Moreover, cocoa prices were falling as a result of political dissension in Spain which was the chief consumer.

In the midst of such distress, Britain took major steps to help Trinidad. She postponed the date when the sugar duties would be equalized to 1854, took over the liabilities incurred for immigration and provided loans for importing labourers. She did not abandon her policy of free trade and continued to pull down the legislative barriers

48 DeVerteuil, op. cit., p. 477-478.

49 Wood, op. cit., p. 98-101.

behind which the trade of the empire had sheltered. In 1849 she lifted former restrictions and opened colonial ports for the first time to foreign trade⁵⁰. Colonial preference for British goods, however, and British preference for colonial goods still remained. Provisions were made whereby British goods would enter colonial ports at lower duties than foreign goods and colonial goods would enjoy tariff preferences on the British market.

Attempts to Introduce Scientific Agriculture

In Trinidad proposals for restoring prosperity included the application of science to agriculture and improved methods in cultivation and manufacture. Lord Harris⁵¹ tried to sell the planters the idea that new technology was the only means to improve agriculture but the planters had neither the desire nor the means to modernize their methods. Dr. L. A. A. DeVerteuil⁵², a prominent French planter, outlined a plan for establishing model farms, agricultural schools and a central board of agriculture. Through the cultivation of sugarcane and cocoa and the manufacture of sugar these farms and schools were to

50 Hall et al., op. cit., p. 395-396.

51 Wood, op. cit., p. 127.

52 DeVerteuil, op. cit., p. 470-480.

convey to the people theoretical and practical instruction. The farm was to be under the management of a director who had a knowledge of botany, chemistry, meteorology, agrology and the various implements and operations of agriculture. Practical instruction was to run for three years and was to include training in livestock, farming implements, drainage, preparation of land for cultivation and sugar manufacturing. At the end of the year pupils were to take a public examination. Pupils were to pay fees amounting to two hundred dollars for the first year, one hundred dollars for the second year and in the third year they were to receive a salary of one hundred dollars. A central board of agriculture, consisting of representatives of sugar and cocoa planters, was to be responsible for establishing the model farm, collecting facts connected with agriculture and circulating them among the proprietors by means of a journal that was to be aided and supported by the government.

Suggestions for science and improved methods had no impact on the planters. It was difficult to arouse them to their best interest. Reasons for this apathy can be found in their ignorance of agricultural science and the art of husbandry, and in the commercial crisis of the time. Planters were convinced that British policy was the sole cause of their present situation and that no remedy could alleviate their distress except one from the British

government. But by the mid-nineteenth century the sugar colonies were disappearing from the attention of the British public. Britain was doing little to promote colonial economic growth and her capitalists were showing little interest in colonial economic investment.

Immigration of Chinese and East Indian Labourers

Trinidad planters soon realized that prosperity depended on their own efforts. They were now clamouring for immigrants from Asia in the belief that with cheap labour and a soil that was abundant and fertile, their traditional techniques would restore prosperity. Britain's concession for abolishing the preferential sugar duties was a supply of cheap labour working under an indentured system. In 1851 Chinese immigrants⁵³ arrived in Trinidad but, in spite of early high expectations on the part of the planters, they proved worthless on the plantations. In the same year, East Indian immigration⁵⁴ resumed and there started a movement of people that was to continue until 1917 and radically alter the balance of race relations. In time the East Indians became the backbone of the sugar industry.

53 Wood, op. cit., p. 160-167.

54 Ibid., p. 130-159.

Establishment of Primary Secular School System

The commercial atmosphere of a plantation colony preoccupied with making ends meet was not the environment in which to foster literary pursuits. Those desirous of enjoying culture went to Europe and sent their children home to be educated as they had always done. The British went to Britain, the French to France. The well-to-do mulattoes imitated this tradition. In general, however, the social life⁵⁵ of those who could not afford to go abroad was centered around the drawing rooms and dining rooms and the mail packet from Europe. Their children attended private schools in Trinidad but went abroad for higher education. To improve the social and intellectual tone of the colony and foster social and intellectual intercourse, Lord Harris, in 1851, founded the public library in Port-of-Spain but the response was negligible. His education plan, however, was to prove more popular.

With the passing of the Wardens and Territorial Ordinances in 1849, the foundation was ready for the education system. In 1851, Harris established a secular system of education⁵⁶ which provided in essence for the

55 Ibid., p. 171-172.

56 Harris, Message of the Second April, 1851, p. 1-3.

establishment of ward schools, model schools and a normal school in Port-of-Spain. Education was to be free and secular but the philosophy of advancement according to ability was put aside. The cost of ward schools and teachers' salaries was to be met from local taxation while the normal school was to be financed by the government and students' fees. The control of the system was placed in the hands of a board consisting of ex-officio members of the legislative council and laymen to whom an inspector of schools would report. The religious bodies were not represented and government aid to their schools was to cease when a ward school was established.

The government energetically enforced its education plan. In 1852 a normal school and a model school were established in Port-of-Spain. At first the number of ward schools⁵⁷ increased rapidly. By 1856 there were twenty-three ward schools with 1,461 pupils enrolled and, in 1864, there were thirty with 1,823 pupils enrolled. The number of schools and pupils, however, was less than in 1846 when there were fifty-four denominational schools with 2,518 pupils. The ward schools had obviously not kept pace with the growing population and had not extended education to all.

57 DeVerteuil, op. cit., p. 195.

Several reasons can be found for the failure of this attempt to extend primary education in Trinidad. The successors of Harris showed little interest in the education of the masses and the Board of Education which was responsible for the supervision of education seldom met. By entrusting the management of local affairs to each district, Harris had hoped that the people would take an interest in their welfare and prepare themselves for self-government. In Port-of-Spain and San Fernando where the majority of the educated people lived, municipal councils were formed and schools were established. In the countryside the number of persons equipped to participate in local affairs was few and the municipal councils which were to manage the schools were not set up. Perhaps the belief that education of the labouring class would lead to a labour shortage on the plantations hindered educational development in the rural districts.

In the absence of municipal councils the responsibility for establishing schools fell on the wardens but with the pressure of other duties and a weak Board of Education, they tended to neglect the schools. Teaching in the ward schools was in English but many children spoke and understood no language except a common French patois. Also, the demand for education in mid-nineteenth century Trinidad was not great. The mulattoes who had some education sent

their children to school but illiterate parents preferred their children to do field work. The ward schools for a long time remained the preserve of negroes and mulattoes and East Indians shunned the schools on religious, racial and cultural grounds.

Proposal for Secular Secondary Education

By the mid-1850's, with the exception of a few schools operated by the churches, Trinidad had a secular system of primary education. The only schools which offered classical and general instruction to children in the upper ranks of society were run by the Catholics but Catholic parents⁵⁸ who could afford it sent their children to Europe at an early age as much as Protestants in the same position.

In his original plan Harris had outlined as the apex of his secular system a college that would combine training in science and agriculture with a study of the classics. The establishment of such a college was envisaged as the only possible way to discourage absenteeism, keep the body of proprietors in Trinidad and prevent the loss of young men who went to Europe for education but failed to return on completion of their studies. Nothing more was heard about

⁵⁸ "Governor of Trinidad to Secretary of State, 7 August 1857", in Gordon, A Source Book, p. 75.

this college until 1857 when the Governor, Robert Keate⁵⁹, proposed a secular college equal to the great English public schools such as Eton and with a curriculum that was classical. Students would receive a vigorous training in Latin and Greek as well as study mathematics, history, geography, modern languages and chemistry but there was to be no direct religious instruction. With the exception of illegitimate children, this college was to be open to all classes and creeds who could afford the moderate fees. Plans were for the college to be a day school and many were its expectations. It would lessen the religious differences in Trinidad, nationalize and unite the different races, stimulate educational development throughout the colony, improve the moral and social life of the people, supply the colony with young men for the civil service and prepare students for universities abroad.

Secondary education was to preserve and extend British culture. It was to be a potent weapon in the struggle to secure British hegemony over the conquered French population and act as a bulwark against the spread of French culture. There is little doubt that this secondary

59 Robert Keate, Governor of Trinidad, Letter to Secretary of State, 6 September 1857, London, Public Record Office, C.O. 295/196, p. 1-21.

school was planned as a check on the French Catholic influence in this British colony. In 1856, the Catholics had founded an association⁶⁰ to fight for elected representation in the legislative council and to criticize the government's policy. St. George's College⁶¹, the only institution offering classical and general instruction at the time, was the training ground for those who opposed the policy of the colonial government. Its teachers were French priests and French was the language of instruction. It was, therefore, apparent that this College was losing its English character.

The proposed government secondary school immediately aroused a storm of protest⁶² from the Catholic clergy who came out strongly against a system of education which was not founded on religion. In addition, they stressed that the classical curriculum of the government college would be irrelevant to the agricultural and commercial pursuits of the island, and as a day school, the college would be available only to those children who resided in town.

60 Augier et al., op. cit., p. 222.

61 Gordon, A Source Book, p. 225.

62 Great Britain, Colonial Office, Report Upon the State of Education in the Island of Trinidad, by Patrick Joseph Keenan, Dublin, H.M.S.O., 1869, p. 51-52. Hereafter cited as Keenan Report 1869.

The Queen's Collegiate School

Trinidad was a Crown Colony and when the governor was determined on a course of action he could not be swayed. In 1859, the government established in Port-of-Spain a day school, the Queen's Collegiate⁶³, as the apex of the secular ward school system. To maintain standards that were comparable with those in England, the school adopted the classical curriculum and imported young Englishmen as teachers, the assumption being that such an education reflected the best that Britain had to offer. Illegitimate children, whether they could pay the fees or not, were excluded. The Queen's Collegiate laid the foundation for Trinidad's education system. From the beginning its academic standards were high. Four years after its establishment students entered for the Cambridge Local Examination⁶⁴ which was set and marked by English examiners. The whole climate of teaching and learning was consequently supercharged with the stress on acquiring academic knowledge and repeating it in this examination.

63 "Principal's Report, 30 July 1859", in Gordon, A Source Book, p. 236.

64 Gordon, A Source Book, p. 251.

Selective Character of Secondary Education

Trinidad now had a secular system of primary and secondary schools but the two types were not articulated. This system did not seek the social mobility characteristic of an integrative system of education. Primary education was free and open to all, while secondary education was selective and based on the ability to pay. As in England, education reflected the prevailing class structure — one type of school for the masses and another for a minority of pupils. A system that limited secondary education to a few in England came to be looked upon as suitable to a minute fraction of Trinidad's population. If the assumption in England was that most Englishmen did not need more than a few years of formal education, it was natural to believe that most Trinidadians did not need secondary education.

With an economy aimed mainly at the extraction of raw materials for export, Trinidad had little demand for technical and scientific skills. Secondary education was merely an extension of education in literacy for a small proportion of the population and its classical emphasis was intended to contribute to mental discipline. Education was derived exclusively from books and did not develop in the student the powers of independent thought. Moreover, a curriculum locked into an external examination system tended

to lead to the isolation of secondary education from the environment of the student. Consequently, the graduate knew very little of the society in which he lived. Nevertheless, secondary education was vocational in the sense that by providing access to jobs with prestige, such as clerks in government offices and commercial houses, it reflected the demand for clerical skills.

The Queen's Collegiate was an academic success but was a failure in the context of social life. It was the symbol of English Protestant superiority and aimed at ensuring the anglicization of the colony. To strengthen the prevailing British influence, it consciously took the English public school as its model and entered students for the external examination of Cambridge. It was not the apex of an educational system to which the cream of the colony's youth could climb through their own ability. There were no scholarships from the primary schools to the Queen's Collegiate School. All pupils had to pay fees⁶⁵ of fifteen pounds per term. Since all but the children of Port-of-Spain had to board away from home, only the wealthy could afford to send their children, and the wealthy were mainly white and mulatto. Also, illegitimate children were barred even

65 Wood, op. cit., p. 233.

if they were Protestants and could pay the fees. This discrimination against illegitimate children alienated the Collegiate from the black population. A large proportion of Trinidad's youth, therefore, was disqualified for admission. The school was for a small minority who were Protestant, wealthy and white.

Opposition to Secular Secondary School

The government college aroused the anger of the Catholics and to rival this godless college they revamped their secondary school⁶⁶ in 1863. Teachers of the Catholic school, College of the Immaculate Conception, were members of the distinguished teaching order of the Congregation of the Holy Ghost. The College catered to both day students and boarders and did not discriminate against illegitimate children. Three courses were offered – a preparatory course that consisted of reading, writing, arithmetic, English and French grammar, history and geography; a commercial course consisting of reading, writing, mathematics, natural sciences, bookkeeping, grammar, geography, history and literature; and a classical course that consisted of Latin and Greek grammar, great ancient authors and the principal fathers of the Church. English and French were

⁶⁶ Keenan Report 1869, p. 48-49.

compulsory subjects and drawing, vocal and instrumental music also formed part of the curriculum. Students, however, were required to pay fees. The poor, therefore, had no opportunity for a secondary education either at the Queen's Collegiate School or at the College of the Immaculate Conception. Nevertheless, pupils of the Catholic school came from a broader spectrum of the society than those who attended the Queen's Collegiate School.

The organization of education in Trinidad promoted an unevenness in the social and economic development of the society. Primary education was free and available to all, while secondary education was exclusive and based on the ability to pay. By means of separate intellectual training, children of the upper class were to be made into gentlemen whose learning, manners and outlook distinguished them from the lower orders of society.

Prestige of Higher Education Abroad

For parents who aspired to send their sons to university, Europe was the only place. The English looked to Oxford and Cambridge, the French to Paris. Such prospects were open only to the wealthy planters and merchants. In Britain, the principal purpose of a secondary education was to act as a kind of selection process for admission to university, the philosophy being that higher education

should not be available to all qualified candidates who wanted it but that out of the pool of qualified candidates a proportion should be selected primarily on examination performance and subsidized by the state for university education of a high quality. This philosophy was transferred to Trinidad when, in 1863, the government began awarding annually four Island Scholarships⁶⁷ on the basis of the Cambridge examination. These scholarships, which provided a bridge from the Queen's Collegiate in Trinidad to the universities of Cambridge and Oxford in England, became the pinnacle of intellectual life in Trinidad and promised the winner affluence and prestige. Higher education was usually intended to produce leaders but in the Crown Colony of Trinidad such positions in government and commerce were filled by expatriates. Agriculture was largely primitive and based on unskilled labour. With little demand for high level manpower it was more economical for the government to award scholarships to institutions abroad than to build a university. Scholarship winners concentrated on law and medicine and, on return home, provided a continuing backdrop of British concepts and ideas and helped in anglicizing the colony.

67 Gordon, A Source Book, p. 251-252.

Trinidad's Divided Society

By 1866, Trinidad was more than ever a divided society. The British policy of anglicization was splitting the upper classes into factions of nationality and religion. Education, instead of being a unifying force, was a dividing force. The Catholics⁶⁸ were strongly opposed to secular education and had proceeded to establish primary schools in different parts of the island, in many places, where the government already had sufficient ward schools. Educational provisions also emphasized the social order. A small elite was receiving an education which prepared them for higher education abroad. The masses were receiving primary education but had little opportunity for secondary education unless they could pay the fees. The negro population was beginning to settle down and form the peasantry but with only the basic essentials of education they could hardly reach far. The Chinese and Portuguese were adopting European ways and becoming assimilated into the society. They became shopkeepers and merchants and formed the middle class. As East Indians became free from their indenture several of them were settling in Trinidad but they existed on the fringes of society. Their reluctance to send their children

68 Keenan Report 1869, p. 20.

to school inhibited their occupational and professional mobility, maintained their rural way of life and served to preserve traditional patterns of culture. The linguistic and cultural barriers to communication between East Indians and negroes were perpetuated by the plantation society through a lack of common social institutions. East Indians had few available alternatives to their mode of adjustment. Neither the colonial economy nor colonial social and political institutions provided them with assimilating mechanisms.

On the other hand, Trinidad was a financially healthy colony. Sugar was recovering from the depression of the 1850's and nearly every year saw a record export. East Indians were helping to ease the labour difficulties, and large estates had introduced a more efficient method of sugar extraction called the vacuum pan process⁶⁹ which produced a class of sugar that came under the favourable scale of duties in Britain. Cocoa production was steadily increasing to meet new demands in the mother country. Instead of cutting expenses there were plans for expansion.

69 Beachey, op. cit., p. 42.

Plans for Development and Unity

For Sir Arthur Hamilton Gordon, who assumed the governorship of Trinidad in 1866, the most pressing problems were communications, the land question and education. Communication was a requisite of civilization and Gordon set about establishing a network of roads⁷⁰. A main road from east to west was extended as far as the east coast. Such a project was of tremendous benefit to the cocoa planters who could now get their crop from the foothills of the Northern Range to the coast much faster. Older roads from north to south Trinidad were repaired and new bridges constructed. It was now possible for the school teacher and inspector to reach children in the remote areas of the island with relative ease.

Crown lands⁷¹ were opened up allowing negroes and East Indians to purchase small plots and settle down as peasant farmers. After serving their indenture, the East Indians were commuting their return passage to India for land and were settling down and forming their own communities. By the end of the 1860's, their material prospects were changing for the better. Attempts to educate them, however, had

70 Wood, op. cit., p. 269.

71 Ibid., p. 272-273.

failed. They had no appreciation of education and were unwilling to send their children to school. In 1868, a new initiative to meet the intellectual, moral and spiritual needs came from the Canadian Presbyterian Mission⁷² which undertook a special mission to East Indians in Trinidad. Progress was slow but, by 1870, a few East Indians had been converted to Christianity and a primary school had been established in San Fernando.

Not long after his arrival, Gordon's attention was drawn to the education problem. The Catholics⁷³ were demanding that the government withdraw financial support of the Queen's Collegiate School on the grounds that it had failed. The Collegiate cost the government four thousand pounds per year and educated only about forty boys of whom nearly all were Protestants and sons of professional men, government officers and ministers of religion. The Catholic college, on the other hand, did not receive government assistance and was attended by more than one hundred boys. The Catholics reinforced their petition for aid by pointing out that government assistance to denominational schools would help win their loyalty to Britain.

72 Kenneth J. Grant, My Missionary Memories, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Imperial Publishing, 1923, p. 80.

73 Arthur Hamilton Gordon, Governor of Trinidad, Letter to Secretary of State, 24 December 1866, London, British Museum, Stanmore Papers 49244, p. 5-7.

Although Gordon considered the Catholic protest reasonable, he was unwilling to divide the grant between the two schools. Such an action would have substituted two bad colleges for one good one, aroused the hostility of the powerful British minority and helped in no way to fuse those of different creeds and races. He, however, proposed to retain the Queen's Collegiate School as a central institution to which other secondary schools would be affiliated. According to his plan⁷⁴, the Queen's Collegiate would be governed by a council consisting of the governor and an equal number of Catholic and Protestant members, the governor would appoint the principal, and the council, the professors. Students would become members of the college by entrance to any secondary school licensed by the council and would be required to attend all college lectures, pay fees and write examinations. The Catholics⁷⁵ refused this proposition and came out strongly against secular education on the grounds that the system of religious education in the ward schools had failed and standards in general were low. They were demanding a return to the denominational system

74 Arthur Hamilton Gordon, Governor of Trinidad, Letter to Archbishop Gonin of Trinidad, January 16, 1867, London, British Museum, p. 1-5.

75 Wood, op. cit., p. 232-233.

which granted financial assistance to church schools.

Gordon⁷⁶ considered such a system costly and difficult to administer but agreed that the situation warranted a searching examination by an impartial expert in educational affairs.

Keenan Report on Education and the
First Proposal for Higher Education

The British government's response to Gordon's suggestion was prompt. In 1869 Patrick Joseph Keenan, Chief Inspector of the Irish Board of National Education, was sent to inquire into the state of public education in Trinidad and suggest ways for improvement. He found two secondary schools and a range of primary schools. Keenan criticized every aspect of education and recommended that the entire system be abolished and new foundations laid.

The first part of Keenan's report⁷⁷ was essentially a criticism of the ward schools. He found the buildings dilapidated and unsanitary, the teachers unqualified and apathetic and teaching methods poor. The lack of roads and qualified inspectors resulted in inadequate supervision of schools. There was no policy for paying teachers or for determining their salaries. In some ward schools teachers

⁷⁶ Arthur Hamilton Gordon, Letter to Secretary of State, 24 December 1866, p. 7.

⁷⁷ Keenan Report 1869, i-87 p.

were of a different religion to the majority of the pupils. No consideration had been given to the language problem of the pupils with the result that reading and writing were difficult. Keenan also found that the ward school system was being eroded by the clergy who had started their own schools in competition with the ward schools.

Keenan next turned his critical eye to the normal school. Here the practices and methods for providing qualified teachers were so deplorable that he recommended the abolition of the normal school and the introduction of the monitorial system.

The second part of Keenan's report compared the recruitment of pupils at the two secondary schools and their contribution to Trinidad's community. Keenan's analysis of the enrolment at the two colleges concluded that the Catholic College had won the confidence of the people. The majority of the students in this College were the sons of merchants, planters and professional men. At the government College, however, the majority of the students were sons of civil servants. The government, therefore, was using public money for educating a handful of children of transient English civil servants. Keenan concluded that the people flocked to the Catholic College because the religious element was more acceptable to them.

Keenan's main recommendation was an attempt to reconcile the different religious factions into a system that was neither wholly secular nor wholly denominational. His scheme called for a dual system of education with a central board consisting of an equal number of Catholic and Protestant members. The local management of schools was to be placed in the hands of a committee consisting of representatives of all religions. To meet the needs of the community he recommended that the primary school curriculum be extended to include courses in needlework, singing, drawing, geometry, algebra and bookkeeping, and schools should include workshops and school gardens. For a closer supervision of teachers he advocated payment by results. Teachers' salaries would be based on their experience and qualifications, the success of their pupils on the annual examination and the quarterly report of the school managers.

Keenan was not asked specifically to make a study of the needs for higher education in Trinidad but he was led naturally into this field. After examining the education system, he realized that secondary school graduates had to terminate their education or, at enormous expense, venture abroad for higher education because there was no university in Trinidad. He wondered why, since Trinidad had the elements of a society in which learning could flourish.

From the witnesses who gave evidence of the need for higher education in Trinidad, Keenan observed two attitudes. Some expressed a strong desire for a university on the grounds that they would prefer to educate their children under their own eyes. Others held that higher education obtained in Europe was beneficial for health reasons. Keenan sympathized with parents who had to make such tremendous sacrifices to obtain higher education for their children and disagreed with the view that students should be educated in Europe merely for health reasons.

Since few students could afford higher education in Europe, Keenan planned to bring it to them. He justified his recommendation for a university on the great advantages that such an institution and its graduates could impart to local government, the professions and the society at large. Aware that Trinidad alone could not afford a university of any great worth, Keenan suggested that other West Indian colonies should pool their financial and human resources to found a first class university. Their aggregate population was more than a million of which seventy thousand were white. The size of the white population in a colony was to determine the locus of the university and Jamaica, British Guiana, Barbados and Trinidad each held claims. Keenan's preoccupation with the white population, however, must not be misinterpreted, for his university was to be West Indian

in scope and open to all persons irrespective of colour or creed.

The proposed university was to be merely an examining body without teaching function. Its constitution provided for a senate consisting of a visitor, a chancellor and sixty fellows who would include senior officials of the colonial service and high church dignitaries. The senate would have power to confer degrees. Under the senate was to be the university's academic body consisting of a secretary and a body of examiners.

Each colony was to be connected to the university by a deputy council which would affiliate seminaries and secondary schools and be the examining body. These institutions were to have an arts division, offer a three year course and enter students for the bachelor of arts degree. At the end of each year there was to be an examination and for each successful student, a results fee awarded to his school. The arts course was to include no subject peculiar to the area but was to correspond in classics, mathematics, modern languages, history, logic, moral philosophy, political economy, natural philosophy and natural science with the most liberal curriculum of the European universities. Law, medicine and engineering were to be excluded.

In case this university of the West Indies proved impractical and Trinidad had to establish its own, Keenan

outlined an alternative plan. The Trinidad Board of Education was to assume all the functions of a deputy council, affiliate secondary schools and seminaries, select a committee of examiners from these schools, conduct examinations and award results fees. Since this university was to be a purely examining body its recurrent cost would not be high, and Keenan suggested that Trinidad could meet the necessary expenses by reorganizing its secondary schools.

Keenan's report made a significant contribution to education in Trinidad. It was the first examination of the education system by an outsider and the first proposal for a university in Trinidad. Moreover, steps were taken to implement the recommendations at the primary and secondary levels. The result was an education system that was to continue into the twentieth century.

The Education Ordinance of 1870: an
Effort to Harmonize Schools and Society

Gordon's response to Keenan's report was prompt. To appease the Catholics who were discontented with the government's education policy and to encourage educational progress he proposed to maintain government schools but offered grants⁷⁸ to the primary and secondary schools of

78 Wood, op. cit., p. 286.

religious denominations providing they met certain requirements. Such a proposal, which was intended to establish the dual system of education in Trinidad, aroused bitter protest from the Protestants and caused much dispute between Protestants and Catholics. But Trinidad was a Crown Colony and if the governor was bent on a course of action he could not be thwarted.

His resolutions were embodied in the Education Ordinance⁷⁹ of 1870 which went a long way towards improving relations between the church and the state, as both secular and sectarian schools received government assistance. Private schools were to receive government grants provided they met certain requirements. Provisions were made for a board of education consisting of an equal number of Catholic and Protestant members and under its direction were to be government schools and private schools. The latter, however, were allowed a great deal of freedom. Direct religious teaching was not to be a part of the curriculum but ministers of religion were to have access to the school for instructing children of their own faith.

⁷⁹ Trinidad, Laws, Statutes, etc., "An Ordinance with Regard to Education, April 28, 1870, Ordinance 6 of 1870", in Laws of Trinidad, Revised Edition, Vol. 3, p. 263-269.

In addition to the normal school, Gordon introduced the monitorial system of training teachers. The government was also to contribute towards teachers' salaries which were to consist of a fixed sum based on the certificate held by the teachers, a grant in proportion to the success of pupils on an annual examination and a grant in proportion to the attendance of pupils.

Private secondary schools were also eligible to receive government assistance providing they met certain conditions. The Queen's Collegiate School, renamed Queen's Royal College, was to come under the management of a council that had the power to affiliate secondary schools. Students of the affiliated schools were to be considered students of Queen's Royal College and were required to write examinations of this school.

The Education Ordinance of 1870 also provided a bridge between the primary and secondary schools. A limited number (six) of exhibitions for the length of the secondary school course was to be awarded to outstanding primary school pupils. In addition to free primary education, black youths had the opportunity for free secondary education that could ultimately lead to higher education abroad. As they acquired a taste for secondary education, the Cambridge Certificate became the passport for the prestigious positions of clerks in government and commerce, and a literary and

academic education, the most important means of social mobility. Young colonials learned early that this type of education was the best preparation for respectable employment. Consequently, secondary education was greatly sought after by those who saw the benefits. It is not surprising that efforts to provide agricultural education in the later decades met with little enthusiasm.

Keenan's suggestion for a university received little support from the colonial administrators. Gordon⁸⁰ regarded the establishment of such a university as impractical. For the Secretary of State for the Colonies⁸¹ the time was not ripe for a university as primary and secondary schools were not well developed – a misguided opinion since Oxford and Cambridge universities flourished in England centuries before there was a sound system of primary and secondary education. In Trinidad, therefore, higher education continued to be confined to scholarships for study at British universities.

The Education Ordinance became law in April 1870 and was put into immediate effect. The first private

80 Arthur Hamilton Gordon, Governor of Trinidad, Letter to Secretary of State, 8 September 1869, London, Public Record Office, C.O. 295/248, p. 5.

81 Lord Granville, Secretary of State for the Colonies, Letter to Governor Gordon, 12 November 1869, London, British Museum, p. 2.

schools⁸² to receive government recognition and financial support were the Catholic schools, the College of the Immaculate Conception and St. Joseph's Convent, which became affiliated with the Queen's Royal College, adopted the classical curriculum, entered students for the Cambridge examination, admitted exhibition winners from the primary schools and presented students for the Island Scholarships. As a consequence of affiliation both the College of the Immaculate Conception and the Queen's Royal College were to have common classes in certain subjects. Such an arrangement, however, proved unsatisfactory mainly because the Catholic students were French speaking, the Protestant students, English speaking.

At the primary level results did not come up to expectations. In the first year under the new ordinance, only two private schools⁸³ qualified for government assistance. To make matters worse, the system of payment by results was a threat to the teachers. Without the enforcement of compulsory attendance, parents because of poverty, indifference to education or plain ignorance, kept their children away from school. The rainy season also played

82 "Star of the West, 30 July 1874", in Gordon, A Source Book, p. 253.

83 Wood, op. cit., p. 287.

havoc on student attendance. The rains turned the mud tracks into swamps making travel to and from school hazardous. During the rainy season children were plagued with diseases such as colds and fevers. In the dry season, on the other hand, children were needed to work on the sugar estates and supplement parental earnings.

Yet, this ordinance had a calming and moderating effect on society. By providing financial help and granting official recognition to denominational schools, the government removed the forces that were inhibiting social progress and cleared the way for the rapid growth of education. Religious tensions relaxed between Protestants and Catholics, and relations between the British and the French improved as the French lost their emotional bonds with France. The principle of aid to denominational schools was to remain for a long time an aspect of education in Trinidad and encourage the emergence of the assisted schools to a position of prominence.

Trinidad's agricultural economy based on the extraction of raw materials for export placed few demands on the schools. Vocational instruction was hardly necessary for employment in agriculture and the simple extraction of sugar. Physical strength and a degree of training acquired on the job were the main requirements. The primary schools could concentrate on the rudiments of learning and the

secondary schools could devote themselves to an academic curriculum for the few university bound students. If Trinidad made little demand on its schools it made still less on higher education.

The failure to establish higher education during the early period may be attributed partly to the fact that Trinidad was a colony of exploitation where a handful of Europeans dominated a large black population, partly to the fact that the Europeans were divided along the lines of religion, nationality and language, tended to look to Europe for cultural and intellectual nourishment and sent their children home for education, particularly higher education, and partly to the limited development of secondary education. Yet, the inability of the population to determine its own destiny was perhaps the chief obstacle to the development of higher education in Trinidad. Crown Colony government aimed at maintaining British cultural and economic superiority over the island and the award of scholarships to British universities was part of that plan to orient the colony to the belief that British higher education was the best.

By 1870, Trinidad had nothing to show in the form of higher education but scholarships for study at British universities. Since the number of secondary school graduates was small, it was cheaper for Trinidad to award scholarships

than to establish an institution of higher education. On the other hand, it is doubtful whether Trinidad could have absorbed a large number of university graduates.

Administrative posts in government and commerce were filled by men sent out from Britain, secondary school teachers were imported and the preliminary extraction of raw materials for export called for a handful of university graduates which could be more economically filled by expatriates.

What is certain, however, is that Trinidad, with an agricultural economy that furnished its chief export and brought in its revenues, could not develop socially and economically without a body of men trained in tropical agriculture.

CHAPTER II

THE EMERGENCE OF HIGHER EDUCATION 1870-1940: A FIRST CONCERN FOR AGRICULTURE

Over the period 1870 to 1940 there were various proposals for higher education but the need for skilled scientific agriculture had the greatest impact. On analyzing the depression in the sugar industry and its effects on the education system, an understanding is acquired of the subsequent campaign for higher agricultural education and the blueprint it generated for the establishment of a college of agriculture in Trinidad. The establishment and growth of the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture from 1921 to 1933 and its effects on Trinidad and Tobago then may be better appraised.

Unlike the case of agriculture, however, there was no apparent local movement for higher liberal education during this period. The various proposals for a university that stemmed from the federal movement seem to indicate a lack of awareness on the part of local people of the importance of higher education for political, social and economic improvement. The social unrest which ensued in Trinidad and Tobago in the late thirties led to the recommendations of the West India Royal Commission and made Trinidad and Tobago more aware of the necessity of a university for her overall progress. Such are the main trends analyzed throughout the following

chapter.

1. Depression in the Sugar Industry and
the Education System 1890-1900

The Sugar Crisis and Efforts for Recovery

After 1874, Trinidad's sugar industry suffered crisis after crisis. In the 1860's and early 1870's, much of the industry's prosperity had resulted from the constant supply of East Indian labourers and the favourable scale of sugar duties in Britain but the opening up of crown lands in 1863 was creating a labour shortage¹ as the East Indians, who had served their indenture, were leaving the estates to take up parcels of land on which they grew rice and sugarcane. Moreover, the complete removal of sugar duties² in 1874 seriously affected the industry. The price of sugar immediately dropped. A few years later, sugar faced severe competition³ from bounty-fed beet sugar which was coming into Britain at very low prices from France, Germany and Austria. Bounties caused a further drop in the price of sugar and it was this reduced price that aroused the

1 Donald Wood, Trinidad in Transition, the Years After Slavery, London, Oxford University Press, 1968, p. 271-276.

2 R. W. Beachey, The British West Indies Sugar Industry in the Late 19th Century, Oxford, Blackwell, 1957, p. 46.

3 Ibid., p. 51.

planters' protests. Little public or government sympathy⁴, however, could be evoked because Britain was now committed to a policy of free trade, and the boom of bounty-fed sugar to the British consumer outweighed any disadvantage to a handful of colonial sugar producers.

Response to the sugar crisis varied among Trinidad's planters. The typical attitude⁵ was that no other product could supersede sugar and, for the rest of the nineteenth century, complaints and resolutions were loud and frequent. Small resident proprietors⁶, however, unable to compete with British capital and technology, sold their estates and moved into cocoa cultivation where prospects of success seemed possible as the taste for cocoa grew in Britain.

As the price of sugar dropped, the sugar estates became larger and under the control of large firms. In 1866 there were 142 estates but by 1896 there were only fifty-two⁷. These firms, backed by British capital, were able to meet competition from beet sugar and make profits by

4 Ibid., p. 53-54.

5 Sir Norman Lamont, "A Trinidad Plantation, a Century's Vicissitudes", in Tropical Agriculture, Vol. 5, No. 7, July 1928, p. 168.

6 Wood, op. cit., p. 295.

7 Ibid.

introducing modern technology⁸. They continued to convert to the vacuum pan process and established central factories which, with the completion of the railway along Trinidad's west coast, were effective for a time in allowing them to make profits. The central factories processed the cane for miles around and were of benefit to the East Indians who had settled down as peasant farmers on the crown lands.

In spite of the central factories all was not well with the sugar industry. The dumping of beet sugar⁹ on the British market, which began in earnest in 1884, caused the price of sugar to fall to a point where it was equivalent to or less than the cost of production on many estates. By the end of 1884, the profits of the good old days had gone forever and were being replaced by heavy losses. Firms that financed muscovado estates collapsed and Trinidad's sugar economy depended on the extent to which estates had converted to the vacuum pan process.

In the 1880's, as the sugar industry declined serious consideration was given to introducing plants that might replace sugarcane and contribute to Trinidad's economic development. The Royal Botanic Gardens¹⁰, which

8 Beachey, op. cit., p. 58.

9 Ibid., p. 59-60.

10 G. B. Masfield, A History of the Colonial Agricultural Service, London, Oxford University Press, 1972, p. 22-28.

were established in 1819, were actively engaged in testing new plants to see if they could flourish locally and contribute to the economic development of the island. It soon became evident, however, that the demand for more extensive agricultural services was outstripping the facilities of the Botanic Gardens and, in 1891, the Trinidad government established the Botanical and Agricultural Department¹¹. Senior posts in this department, as in all colonial departments, were filled by British civil servants, while junior positions were manned by local citizens with practical experience.

It was during these difficult years that Tobago was wedded to Trinidad. After January 1, 1889, Tobago¹² became united with Trinidad as the single colony of Trinidad and Tobago. Like all the other sugar growing colonies, Tobago had fallen on a period of severe depression, and hopes were entertained that the union with Trinidad would result in a reduction in the cost of administration. These hopes did not materialize and continuing economic decline led to further changes. Ten years later, Tobago was reduced to the status of

11 Ibid., p. 29-31.

12 Trinidad and Tobago, Legislative Council, "Council Paper No. 94", in Trinidad Royal Gazette, Port-of-Spain, Government Printery, 1889, p. 1917.

a ward or local government district and the revenue and government of the two islands were merged.

The Education System and the Agricultural Economy

The economic depression had a resounding effect on every aspect of life in Trinidad and Tobago and only minor changes were made in education. In 1875, the government introduced fees¹³ in all government and denominational primary schools and made provisions for children of poor families to attend school free of charge. This action stimulated beyond expectations the growth of denominational schools¹⁴. In 1868, there were thirty-five government schools and only two assisted schools, but by 1898, there were fifty-seven government schools and 147 assisted schools. Moreover, the Canadian Presbyterian Mission¹⁵ had established several primary schools throughout the colony and was achieving tremendous success in getting East Indian children to school. Despite rapid expansion in primary education, a large number

13 Trinidad and Tobago, Department of Education, Administrative Report of the Director of Education 1949, Port-of-Spain, Government Printing Office, 1950, p. 3.

14 Ibid., p. 5.

15 Kenneth J. Grant, My Missionary Memories, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Imperial Publishing, 1923, p. 133-136.

of poor families were unable to take advantage of the opportunity and, in 1890, the government abolished fees¹⁶ in all primary schools. Primary education was within the reach of the masses and for the rest of the century the number of primary schools increased as church and state cooperated on educational matters.

No comparable effort was made to expand secondary education. As long as the educated classes, that is, those who possessed more than an elementary knowledge, formed a small minority and the wealthier members of them preferred to send their sons to Europe, the demand for secondary education was not great and three secondary schools were adequate. But as sugar prices declined, a large number of civil servants, professional men, merchants, estate managers and proprietors were financially unable to send their sons to Europe and became dependent upon educational provisions in Trinidad and Tobago¹⁷. To have limited these provisions to primary education would have been prejudicial to the best interest of the colony and the government, accordingly, increased its financial support to secondary education. The colony was now spending one-third of its

16 Trinidad and Tobago, Department of Education, Administrative Report of the Director of Education 1949, p. 4.

17 "Governor Longden to Secretary of State, 22 February 1871", in Gordon, A Source Book, p. 243.

education budget¹⁸ on the education of an elite and two-thirds on the education of the masses.

As the financial crisis grew worse, the irrelevance of the curriculum to the agricultural development of the colony became glaring. The schools made no provisions for the study of agriculture. The primary school curriculum¹⁹ was far removed from the realities of life and did not help in the struggle for employment. The secondary schools, with a classical curriculum²⁰ identical to that of the great English public schools in the study of Greek, Latin, French, geography, Roman history, Greek history, English grammar, arithmetic, algebra and Euclid, were providing an education that would prepare any of their students for higher education. Although Trinidad and Tobago had no institution of higher education, such a high class of education was necessary for those who won the government scholarships or those whose means or influence allowed them to go to universities abroad. For the vast majority such prospects were dim and they looked forward to white collar jobs as clerks in government offices and commercial firms while the better paid positions as managers and overseers on the estates were

18 Gordon, A Source Book, p. 109.

19 Ibid., p. 133.

20 "The Palladium, 13 July 1878", in Gordon, A Source Book, p. 253-254.

filled from outside.

Although for a long time to come agriculture would be the mainstay of the economy, nothing had been attempted in the field of agricultural education. The colony had facilities for educating its youths to follow the learned professions abroad but no facilities for agricultural education. Consequently, a literary and academic education became the sign of superiority and an agricultural career, the sign of social inferiority. As the crisis in the sugar industry increased, however, the need for training in the application of science to agriculture arose and led to a demand for higher agricultural education.

Proposal for Higher Agricultural
Education and Government's Response

Sugar duties, no doubt, were the chief cause of the sugar crisis but, to some extent, the lack of scientific knowledge among planters was responsible. Since planters²¹ had little knowledge of the botany and mycology of the sugarcane and of the fertilizers necessary to correct soil deficiency, there was need for agriculturists with a knowledge of soils, botany, proper tillage and appropriate fertilizers. Finally, the Central Board of

21 Beachey, op. cit., p. 92.

Agriculture²², which the government had established in 1889 to organize the planters, collect and disseminate information, recommended the establishment of model farms and an agricultural college as the best means of improving the welfare of the colony and decreasing the prejudice against agricultural pursuits.

Unfortunately, the government did not share this enthusiasm. In the prevailing economic conditions such a scheme²³ was considered expensive because it would turn out a small number of agriculturists too little educated for their opinions to carry much weight with estate owners and managers, and too dignified to become the peasants who were the backbone of agriculture. Since the majority of children would become the labouring class, the government proposed an education appropriate for their rural existence. To create an interest in and a love for agriculture among the children, the government considered as most economical the introduction of agriculture in the primary schools by first training the teachers. With regard to higher education

22 Central Board of Agriculture Committee, "Agriculture and Education", in The Agricultural Record, Vol. 1, August-December 1889, p. 82-84.

23 "Report of the Committee of the Legislative Council on Agricultural Education 1892, Society Paper No.66, by L. A. A. DeVerteuil, Chairman", in Proceedings of the Agricultural Society of Trinidad and Tobago, Vol. 2, January 1, 1896 - December 31, 1897, p. 184-191.

the government considered it sufficient to reserve one of the four Island Scholarships for study at a British school of agriculture. Such plans, however, had to be shelved as the economic conditions steadily deteriorated and the price of sugar continued to fall.

The West India Royal Commission Report

The continuing crisis in the sugar industry was cause for alarm, both at home and in Britain. As sugar planters experienced heavy losses, many of them had to turn to other crops. The decision to replace sugarcane was an important and difficult one. The planters²⁴ had no experience or precedence to go on because they had planted nothing but cane on their estates. Cocoa planters considered that cocoa could not be successfully cultivated on the old sugarcane lands, and the soil was too heavy for coconuts. After experiencing severe losses during the preceding era, planters were very cautious and went slowly ahead. On the advice of the Royal Botanic Gardens and the Botanical and Agricultural Department, they tried rubber, citrus fruits, bananas, cotton, cassava, limes and cocoa but, although some of the attempts failed, they were not as financially

24 Lamont, op. cit., p. 167-169.

shattering as the losses in sugar had been. Of all the crops tried cocoa was the outstanding success.

At the close of 1896 Britain appointed the West India Royal Commission²⁵ to inquire into the conditions of the sugar growing colonies. The Commission recognized that unless drastic steps were taken to save the sugar industry, it would be moribund, and as an immediate solution, recommended the abolition of the bounty system. Such a step was no guarantee that another sugar crisis might not recur and to safeguard against such a possibility, the Commission made recommendations for education and research in agriculture.

To encourage the youth of the colony to pursue agriculture as a career, it was necessary to give them an opportunity to study agriculture. Grants were to be made to primary schools for teaching the theory of agriculture and care of school gardens, and to secondary schools for teaching scientific agriculture. To ascertain whether other agricultural crops could be encouraged and developed, a special department of economic botany was to be established for the Leeward and Windward Islands and assisted by the Royal Botanic Gardens in the other colonies. This department

25 Great Britain, Colonial Office, Report of the West India Royal Commission, C. 8655, by H. W. Norman, Chairman, London, H.M.S.O., 1897, v-173 p.

was to encourage theoretical and practical training in agriculture at primary schools and prepare literature on crops suitable for cultivation, while the Botanic Gardens were to introduce, propagate and distribute all promising economic plants of the tropics, initiate experimental cultivation of new or little known plants, continue research in improved varieties of sugarcane and diffuse accurate information. The Secretary of State for the Colonies wholeheartedly supported these proposals and what actually resulted was the establishment of the Imperial Department of Agriculture for the West Indies and a system of imperial loans for projects that would help the colonies to get on their feet as agricultural producers.

The Imperial Department of Agriculture
and Agricultural Education

The Imperial Department of Agriculture stimulated agricultural study in Trinidad and Tobago and the British West Indies. In 1899, its headquarters²⁶ was established in Barbados and Sir Daniel Morris, formerly Assistant Director of Kew Gardens in England, was appointed the first

26 Joseph Chamberlain, Secretary of State for the Colonies, Letter to Governors of West Indian Colonies Respecting the Organization and Working of the Imperial Department of Agriculture, 6th September 1898, St. Augustine, University of the West Indies Archives, p. 2.

commissioner. In Trinidad and Tobago, the Department's work²⁷ was confined to advice as this colony had its own scientific staff, but in the smaller colonies, it was actively engaged in agricultural education at the primary and secondary school levels and in the cultivation of economic plants. Through its publications, the West Indian Bulletin and Agricultural News, the Department was able to raise the standard of agricultural knowledge and, with the introduction of scientific research went gradually into higher agricultural education. It did not turn out qualified agriculturists, however, since higher education was not its principal function. Its greatest accomplishment was making people aware of the need for higher agricultural education.

Among the projects intended to make the colonies more profitable was a scheme for agricultural education. In 1899, the British government²⁸ provided loans for the teaching of agriculture in primary and secondary schools and scholarships for further study of agriculture. Before

27 Sir Francis Watts, "Tropical Departments of Agriculture with Special Reference to the West Indies", in West Indian Bulletin, Vol. 18, 1921, p. 108-133.

28 Joseph Chamberlain, Secretary of State for the Colonies, Despatch Regarding Agricultural Education, 4 October 1899, St. Augustine, University of the West Indies Archives, p. 1-2.

introducing agriculture in the primary schools of Trinidad and Tobago, however, the Agricultural Society²⁹, which was formed to disseminate information on improved methods in agriculture, recommended that the Government Laboratory and the Royal Botanic Gardens train teachers in agricultural chemistry, botany and horticulture. By 1900, one hundred teachers³⁰ were incorporated into a training programme and for the first quarter of the twentieth century, a great deal of attention was directed to agricultural instruction in primary and secondary schools. In addition, higher agricultural education received its share of attention.

2. Campaign for Higher Agricultural Education 1901-1919

Lamont's University of Agriculture

Towards the turn of the present century higher agricultural education was once more envisaged as the best means of improving agriculture and competing successfully with the skilled scientific agriculture of Europe and

29 "Report of the Select Committee on Agricultural Education, Society Paper No. 82, by P. Carmody, Chairman", in Proceedings of the Agricultural Society of Trinidad and Tobago, Vol. 3, January 1, 1898 to December 31, 1899, p. 7-8.

30 Trinidad and Tobago, Department of Education, Administrative Report of the Director of Education 1900, Port-of-Spain, Government Printing Office, 1901, p. 7.

North America. Sir Norman Lamont³¹, a prominent Trinidad planter, attributed the backwardness of agriculture in the colony more to the abundance of unskilled labour and the lack of scientific knowledge among the planters than to competition with the European bounty system. He proposed a university of agriculture which would train a constant number of men in the value of scientific methods, present agriculture as a dignified profession and raise agricultural pursuits in the community's estimation by giving youth an opportunity to pursue this profession. This last was a laudible objective, since the youth considered agriculture the special province of the ignorant and were reluctant to compete for high posts on the sugar plantations. This reluctance to agricultural pursuits was characteristic of an emancipated population because agriculture as a profession had never been placed before them nor were they provided the opportunity to enter it.

Lamont's university was to start from modest beginnings and build itself up to a renowned institution. To achieve this, Lamont set high standards. The nucleus was to be the recently established Imperial Department of Agriculture, and the Imperial Commissioner, the first

31 Sir Norman Lamont, "The West Indies, a Warning and a Way", in The Empire Review, Vol. 4, No. 19, August 1902, p. 80-91.

principal. The teaching staff was to consist of first class men from any part of the world, and the curriculum was to include agriculture, agricultural chemistry, civil and mechanical engineering (with a special department for railway work), forestry, botany, veterinary science, entomology, horticulture, geology, physics and commerce. Degree programmes were to be offered in sugar technology, commerce, horticulture, cacao processing and forestry.

This university reflected Lamont's intense belief in the advantages of a West Indian federation. It was to be West Indian in scope and cater to full-time and part-time students. Full-time courses were to run for four years and, at the end of each year, examinations were to be held to reject students who were unable to benefit from further instruction. Admission was to be through a severe entrance examination which was to consist of substantial subjects such as English, French, mathematics and geography. Theoretical instruction was to be integrated with practical training, and accordingly, Lamont suggested that existing botanic stations become experimental farms affiliated with the university and an experimental sugar factory, operated by final year students during the harvest season, be established. Lamont was confident that graduates of this university would leave it fully equipped for the battle of life and would command high salaries.

Typical of the era was his casual treatment of the financial costs of a university. Lamont's university was to be financed by Trinidad and Tobago and the British West Indies with each colony paying according to its ability. Tuition was to be free. The locus of the university was to be Barbados where lecture halls, laboratories, professors' houses, residences with separate apartments for each student, dining halls, common rooms, swimming pools and gymnasium were to be erected on a site of about one hundred acres.

Should this scheme receive little support, Lamont ironically proposed two alternatives for providing qualified agriculturists. Parents could send their sons to the State University of Louisiana, or planters could employ American agriculturists. In either case, Trinidad and Tobago plantations would be managed by citizens of, or men educated in the United States of America, and Lamont hoped that this would stimulate the British people to action.

A decade later Lamont³² came to favour Trinidad instead of Barbados as the locus of the university because Trinidad had made tremendous progress in agriculture. He

32 Sir Norman Lamont, "An Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture, a Speech Delivered on February 7, 1913, at a Meeting of the Agricultural Society at Port-of-Spain", in his Problems of Trinidad, Port-of-Spain, Yuille's Printerie, 1933, p. 2.

did not, however, abandon his idea of a West Indian institution, and his higher education philosophy continued to reflect his intense belief in the advantages of a West Indian federation. Moreover, he recommended the establishment of an agricultural college of university rank affiliated to some great British university. Although such an institution was expensive, he stressed that an institution below university rank should not be established because students would not attend a second rate institution. The Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture that evolved out of the Imperial Department of Agriculture was fundamentally at variance with Lamont's scheme. It was a postgraduate institution emphasizing teaching and research in tropical agriculture.

Lamont's proposal received little immediate attention. It was difficult to arouse planters to a sense of their best interest because they were under the illusion that only the abolition of the bounty system would alleviate their distress. The bounty system³³ was abolished in 1903, and planters' hopes soared, but soon they realized that this was having no miraculous effect on the sugar industry because the rival European beet sugar industry was

33 Beachey, op. cit., p. 171-172.

firmly established. Science and technology in sugarcane cultivation and the manufacture of sugar were now a necessity.

Economic Diversification and Prosperity
in the Pre-war Years

The abolition of beet sugar bounties and the improvement of the sugar position which ensued, coupled with the turnover to other products, restored a measure of financial prosperity³⁴ to Trinidad and Tobago in the decade before 1914. Agriculture was based on cocoa, sugar, coconuts, foodcrops and livestock but priority continued to be given to export crops such as sugar and cocoa. Sugar remained mainly the province of large British firms while the other crops were cultivated by small resident proprietors. Cocoa was now the leading crop while sugar and its by-products were second in importance. The value of cocoa exports was double that of sugar. Industrial development was confined mainly to the provision of raw materials for European factories, extraction of pitch, and refining of oil which was recently discovered in large quantities. The conversion of the British navy from coal to oil firing placed

34 Eric Williams, Inward Hunger, the Education of a Prime Minister, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1969, p. 13-15.

Trinidad's oil resources in a prominent position.

Secondary industries were non-existent mainly because it was British policy to maintain the colony as a market for the products of its factories. Since the colony's economy depended mainly on export agriculture and the importation of a large proportion of its foodstuffs, commerce was a promising economic activity for hundreds of merchants, principally British, with Chinese, Portuguese, East Indian and Syrian retailers bringing up the rear.

Yet, it would be wrong to give the impression that all classes shared in this prosperity. Social conditions³⁵ reflected the economic structure. The society was dominated by cheap labour, low wages and widespread poverty. For the labouring class, life was a constant struggle for survival. The high cost of living, high fertility and birthrate together with low wages and poor housing bred disease and crime. Social conditions were most deplorable among the East Indians, the lowest paid, most poorly fed and worst housed of the population. They lived in destitution, squalor and degradation, and occupied the lowest rung of the social ladder.

35 Ibid., p. 16-20.

Growth of Primary and Secondary Education

Primary education was expanding rapidly. The upper and middle classes were eagerly availing themselves of the educational opportunities and, by 1910, there were 222 schools³⁶ with an enrolment of 39,980 and an attendance of 24,177. Children of the lower class³⁷, however, were not attending school regularly because parents were unable to provide clothing, food and textbooks and needed the children to work on the estates to augment their low wages. The government's task was to find ways to encourage parents to send their children to school.

The buoyant revenues and expansion in primary education led to an increasing demand for secondary education. The religious bodies³⁸ established several secondary schools. In San Fernando, the Canadian Presbyterian Mission established Naparima College for boys and Naparima Girls' High School. In Port-of-Spain, the Anglican Church established Bishop Anstey for girls, which increased the number of secondary schools in the colony's capital to four. Secondary education, however, remained exclusive and

36 Earl N. M. Gooding, Education in Trinidad, Past and Present, unpublished Doctoral dissertation presented to the University of Connecticut, Storrs, Connecticut, 1961, p. 96.

37 Ibid., p. 84.

38 Gordon, A Source Book, p. 266.

depended on the ability to pay fees or win one of the few government exhibitions. Although there was a strong desire for secondary education, the proportion of the population that could afford to pay for it was small, and it was mainly insufficient means which kept down the enrolment. The expansion in secondary education increased competition for the coveted Island Scholarships and their standard was raised from the School Certificate to the Higher School Certificate³⁹.

Absence of Higher Education in Demands
for Constitutional Development

With more education the people felt justified in demanding more responsibility and representation in government. Primary education was available to all classes and secondary education had greatly expanded and was creating an increasingly informed middle class. The majority of students were taking up positions as clerks in government, industry and commerce. The most brilliant students won island scholarships which took them abroad for higher education. Several students also financed their own higher education abroad. Higher education was thus creating a professional middle class. Travel abroad, no doubt,

39 Ibid.

enlarged their horizons and on return home they were ready to assume greater responsibility in government. But Crown Colony government excluded them from public life and the administration of public affairs. The British government⁴⁰ consistently refused to permit elective representation in Trinidad and Tobago mainly because of the mixed character of the population and the backwardness of large sectors. The community lacked any homogeneous public opinion. Socially it was divided into groups which had very little relationship with one another. The East Indians formed the largest minority group, thirty-three per cent of the population, of which the great majority were illiterate. The government, therefore, remained essentially that of the Crown Colony with a legislative council of official and unofficial members. The power lay in 1910, as it had in 1831, ultimately in London.

Despite the expansion in secondary education and its accompanying appeal for responsible government, there arose no demand for an institution of higher education in areas other than agriculture. It is conceded that since the number of secondary school graduates was small and the demand for high level manpower limited, it was more

40 Hewan Craig, The Legislative Council of Trinidad and Tobago, London, Faber and Faber, 1950, p. 31.

economical for the colony to import highly qualified personnel and send students abroad than to build a university. But economics and numbers could not by themselves account for the absence of a flicker of interest for a local institution of higher liberal education. They did not fail to arouse interest in higher agricultural education. Government pursued the policy that higher education should be exclusive and on the basis of examinations students should be awarded scholarships to British universities. Although the number of scholarships was small, their prestige and material value were sufficient to orient society to the belief that higher education abroad was the best. Scholarship winners sought advancement in law and medicine which offered prestige, independence and affluence. These professions were the only means of social mobility in a Crown Colony where leadership positions in all areas were filled by British expatriates. Moreover, the esteem, prosperity and social mobility that came to university graduates provided a continuous stimulation to the ambitious to go abroad. This tradition⁴¹ was now highly revered and eagerly imitated by secondary

41 Andrew Camacho, The Heritage of British Education in the Caribbean, Address Given at Second Inter-American Symposium on Common Hemispheric Problems, April 9-11, 1968, St. Augustine, University of the West Indies Archives, p. 2-3.

school graduates whose parents willingly sacrificed to obtain higher education for their children. Nonetheless, in their search for identity and equality of treatment with the upper classes, university graduates, on return home, were more concerned with preserving the status quo than with demands for an institution which would extend higher educational opportunity and expose them to competition for the scarce desired positions. Perhaps their presence helped to prevent the emergence of a movement for higher liberal education in Trinidad and Tobago.

Appeals for a College of Agriculture 1913

So far no university student had chosen to pursue agriculture. Their primary and secondary schooling seldom encouraged them in this direction. In the primary schools agriculture was not an integral part of the curriculum and did not enjoy equal status with the academic subjects. This situation contributed to the persisting belief that agriculture was degrading and dirty and that academic education was the means of changing the social structure through increased mobility. In an effort to establish agriculture as an academic discipline, the Queen's Royal College offered this subject for the Cambridge Local

Examination but the emphasis⁴² was theoretical and temperate with no practical application to the local situation. When students pursued this course it was merely for the purpose of winning island scholarships that would take them abroad to study law and medicine. Moreover, agriculture was a recent innovation⁴³ in British universities and had not yet reached the level of an academic discipline. In addition, senior positions in the colony's agricultural department were filled by British expatriates. But conditions in the tropics are so different that several years must elapse before these foreign trained agriculturists could make practical use of their theoretical knowledge.

Since there was no British institution offering training in tropical agriculture, the planters continued to press for such an institution. At the West Indian Agricultural Conference the topic was once again discussed. Dr. A. Fredholm⁴⁴ encouraged the larger West Indian colonies to devote a part of the revenue of their

42 "Burslem, Memorandum to the Trinidad Education Commission, 1916", in Gordon, A Source Book, p. 145.

43 Masefield, op. cit., p. 36-37.

44 A. Fredholm, "The Need for Higher Agricultural Education in the West Indies", in West Indian Bulletin, Vol. 13, 1913, p. 64-80.

departments and boards of agriculture to establish a tropical agricultural college which would supply a body of trained men to conduct the main industry and provide the youth with a new field in which to channel their energy and ambition, both for their own welfare and that of the British Empire. Fredholm was convinced that young people would enter the agricultural profession because the prospective earnings of the agriculturists were higher than the earnings of people in law, medicine, dentistry and the civil service.

Obviously, Trinidad and Tobago did not appreciate the advantages of a college of tropical agriculture. In 1913, a government committee⁴⁵, which was appointed to investigate the colony's needs for trained agriculturists, recommended the introduction of agriculture in primary and secondary schools but made no mention of higher agricultural education. School gardens and agricultural instruction in primary schools merely produced a more intelligent class of labourers and were of little service to future proprietors who needed higher education in tropical agriculture. Perhaps the committee saw no need for

45 "Report of the Agricultural Education Committee Appointed by His Excellency the Governor, by P. Carmody, Chairman", in Proceedings of the Agricultural Society of Trinidad and Tobago, Vol. 13, February 1913, p. 56-61.

an institution to train agriculturists since positions in the colony's agricultural service were filled by British expatriates and agricultural schools in Britain and other countries were open to students from Trinidad and Tobago. Such schools, however, did not meet the requirements of the tropics because they were located in the temperate zone and imparted the theories and practices of agriculture suited to that climate.

The recommendations of the government committee and Fredholm's address combined to stimulate the planters to action. The Agricultural Society⁴⁶ registered its dissatisfaction with the government committee's report and complained that the recommendations were inadequate for the requirements of proprietors and estate managers. Sir Norman Lamont⁴⁷, a member of this society, felt that education should begin with an agricultural college of university rank and then introduce farm schools. Such protests influenced the Governor to nominate a committee of the Agricultural Society to consider and report upon the report of the government committee.

⁴⁶"Agricultural Education, Society Paper No. 540", in Proceedings of the Agricultural Society of Trinidad and Tobago, Vol. 13, February 1913, p. 52.

⁴⁷ Lamont, "An Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture", p. 1.

It was apparent that the crudeness of agriculture in Trinidad and Tobago was due to lack of training among planters and to scantiness of research in agriculture. The Committee of the Agricultural Society⁴⁸, therefore, recommended the establishment of a first class college of tropical agriculture to serve Trinidad and Tobago and the British West Indies and suggested that Trinidad with its favourable climate, vegetation and geographical location be the locus. This recommendation was boosted by the society's standing committee on agricultural education, appointed in 1898, which, in its report⁴⁹ of 1913, came out strongly in favour of an institution of higher agricultural education to serve Trinidad and Tobago and the British West Indies. It recommended that Trinidad and Tobago could either raise funds for an agricultural college affiliated to a British university or obtain an endowment from private sources for a college serving a large part of the British Empire. In either case, this college was to be a postgraduate institution engaged in teaching and research in all branches of tropical agriculture and offer master's and doctor's

48 "Report of a Select Committee of the Society with Regard to Report of an Agricultural Education Committee Appointed by the Governor, by A. V. Stollmeyer, Chairman", in Proceedings of the Agricultural Society of Trinidad and Tobago, Vol. 13, February 1913, p. 52-56.

49 "Higher Agricultural Education, Society Paper No. 562", in Proceedings of the Agricultural Society of Trinidad and Tobago, Vol. 13, July 1913, p. 341-345.

degrees.

The orientation of an agricultural college for Trinidad and Tobago had gradually changed. No longer was it to be an institution offering the youth an opportunity to pursue agriculture as a profession. It was to provide British civil servants destined for the colonial departments of agriculture with the opportunity for training in tropical agriculture.

The report was forwarded to the Secretary of State for the Colonies and the Agricultural Society was confident that such an institution would be established. Unfortunately, a despatch from the Secretary of State⁵⁰ revealed that it was impossible for the British government to finance a college of agriculture in Trinidad because plans were on the way to establish a similar college in the Federated Malay States. This coincided with the outbreak of the 1914-18 war, which was to produce significant changes in Trinidad and Tobago, one of which was the establishment of an institution of higher education.

50 L. Harcourt, Secretary of State for the Colonies, Letter to Sir G. R. LeHunte, Governor of Trinidad and Tobago, September 23, 1913, St. Augustine, University of the West Indies Archives, p. 1.

Renewed Demands for Higher
Agricultural Education

During the war a boom in the sugar industry revealed the need for higher agricultural education. With her markets cut off from the beet sugar suppliers in the Austro-Hungarian empire, Britain turned to her West Indian colonies, and sugar planters made large profits⁵¹ reminiscent of the spacious days of the nineteenth century. Immediately after the war, Trinidad and Tobago, on the wave of this war time boom, desired to expand its agricultural department. Positions in this department were usually filled by men attached to the Colonial Agricultural Service, but the war had depleted its staff and halted recruitment. To stimulate an interest in agriculture and to supply the increasing demand for trained agriculturists, therefore, the government of Trinidad and Tobago, in 1918, set aside one of its island scholarships⁵² for the study of agriculture at a British university. Scholarships to Britain, however, could not meet the requirements of the tropics because several years must elapse before the British trained agriculturist could apply his theoretical knowledge to tropical conditions.

51 F. R. Augier and Shirley C. Gordon, Compilers, Sources of West Indian History, London, Longmans, 1962, p. 79.

52 F. C. Marriott, "Education in Trinidad and Tobago", in The Year Book of Education, London, Evans, 1932, p. 789.

Unlike the government, the Agricultural Society looked to higher agricultural education in Trinidad and Tobago. In 1919, it formulated a scheme⁵³ for an agricultural college that would assimilate the Imperial Department of Agriculture and offer courses in agriculture to university graduates, estate proprietors and managers. Funds for maintaining the college beyond what would come from imperial grants for the Imperial Department of Agriculture were to be provided by Trinidad and Tobago or by Trinidad and Tobago and any other colony that wished to join in the venture. The Secretary of State for the Colonies responded favourably to this proposal.

3. Blueprint for Agricultural College 1920

In 1920, the Secretary of State appointed the West Indian Agricultural College Committee⁵⁴ to consider the feasibility of establishing a tropical agricultural college in the British West Indies. The Committee was fortunate to secure the services of the most eminent men in the field of tropical agriculture and of leading members of the West

53 "General Meeting", in Proceedings of the Agricultural Society of Trinidad and Tobago, Vol. 19, February 1919, p. 49-50.

54 Great Britain, Colonial Office, Report of the Tropical Agricultural College Committee February 1920, Cmd. 562, by A. E. Shipley, Chairman, London, H.M.S.O., 1920, 10 p.

Indian commercial community in England. Among its members were the Director of Kew Gardens, the Sugarcane Expert for India, the Chairman of the West India Committee and the Chairman of the British Cotton Growing Association.

After making a thorough investigation of the need for an agricultural college in the British West Indies, the Committee unanimously recommended the early establishment of a college of tropical agriculture with teaching and research functions. As long as students were trained to attain the expansion of British trade in the markets of the world, it did not matter where the college was erected, but the Committee recommended Trinidad.

The advantages of a college of tropical agriculture were spelt out in detail. The college would place not only Trinidad and Tobago but also the British West Indies in a position to compete successfully with other countries in the production and marketing of tropical crops and provide an opportunity for secondary school graduates to become experts in tropical agriculture. It would also offer British university graduates the opportunity for graduate work in tropical agriculture in a tropical environment, develop production throughout the Empire and create a body of experts in tropical agriculture.

The Committee made recommendations in some detail for the constitution. Like British universities, this

college was to be autonomous. Incorporation by royal charter, which would enhance its standing and influence, was postponed until it was permanently established. In the meantime, the Committee recommended that the college be incorporated in the United Kingdom as a Company. This was the method of procedure commonly adopted by British institutions to provide the necessary legal status and facilities as preliminary to acquiring a royal charter.

The constitution provided for a close relationship between the college and the Imperial Department of Agriculture with the Imperial Commissioner as the first principal. A governing body, an academic board and the staff of the college constituted the authority of the college. The governing body was to be stationed in London and consist of leading merchants, scientists, the academic board and members nominated by British universities. From its members the governing body was to appoint a finance committee, which was to meet in London, and an executive that was to meet in Trinidad.

The academic board was to consist of the principal and professors, deal with the course of studies and student discipline and correspond with the governing body through the executive committee. The initial staff of the college was to consist of the principal, ten professors and two lecturers. Professors were to be appointed in general

agriculture, mycology, entomology, agricultural chemistry, agricultural bacteriology, organic chemistry, agricultural botany, genetics, sugar technology, agricultural engineering and physics, and lecturers in stock, veterinary science and bookkeeping. Although development of the curriculum was the academic board's responsibility, the Committee made proposals for a junior course for secondary school graduates, a senior course, a postgraduate course and postgraduate study of special subjects in tropical agriculture and practical training in a model sugar factory.

In view of the invaluable service that this college would render to Trinidad and Tobago and the British Empire, the Committee recommended that these governments provide financial support. Trinidad and Tobago and the British West Indies were to contribute one half of one per cent of their average revenue during the preceding three years and the Imperial government one pound sterling for every pound contributed by these colonies. In return for being the locus of the college, Trinidad and Tobago had to provide the initial sum of fifty thousand pounds.

The Committee's report was well received by the British government. The Secretary of State for the

Colonies⁵⁵ welcomed the opportunity to set up an institution which could provide instruction in tropical agriculture but he questioned the suggestion that the imperial nature of the college necessitated imperial funds since institutions in Britain that performed a similar function for the colonies did not receive imperial assistance. Surely, the long association of Trinidad and Tobago and the British West Indies with the Empire and the services rendered by them to the development of British industry and capitalism were sufficient to justify imperial support.

The agricultural and commercial interests in Trinidad and Tobago also welcomed the report. The Agricultural Society⁵⁶, Chamber of Commerce⁵⁷, Legislative Council⁵⁸ and Board of Agriculture wholeheartedly accepted

55 Lord Milner, Secretary of State for the Colonies, Despatch to the Governor of Trinidad and Tobago, 27 January 1920, St. Augustine, University of the West Indies Archives, p. 3-4.

56 "Special Meeting", in Proceedings of the Agricultural Society of Trinidad and Tobago, Vol. 20, March 1920, p. 98-99.

57 "The West Indian Agricultural College", in Proceedings of the Agricultural Society of Trinidad and Tobago, Vol. 22, October 1922, p. 692-695.

58 Trinidad and Tobago, Legislative Council, "Debates, 9 April 1920", in Debates in the Legislative Council of Trinidad and Tobago 1920, p. 112.

its recommendations. Such was the unanimity with which the colony assumed the responsibility of providing an institution of concern to the British Empire at large, and of special interest to Trinidad and Tobago that the Agricultural Society⁵⁹ decided to raise by taxation the fifty thousand pounds for establishing the college. In 1920, the Legislative Council⁶⁰ passed the ordinance to raise funds for establishing the college by an additional tax on agricultural produce during the year 1921.

No sooner was the Committee's report accepted than it became the blueprint for establishing the West Indian Agricultural College. Trinidad and Tobago would now have an institution that would carry out research and train youth in the art and science of tropical agriculture, and the British Empire, an institution that would provide a postgraduate orientation for agriculturists of the temperate zone.

59 "Special Meeting", p. 99.

60 Trinidad and Tobago, Laws, Statutes, etc., Agricultural College (Produce Tax), Ordinance No. 57 of 1920, p. 1-4.

4. The Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture 1921-1930

Events followed closely the Committee's recommendations. On September 2, 1921 the Association of the West Indian Agricultural College⁶¹ was incorporated under the British Companies Act as an institution not carried on for monetary gain but to provide instruction in the principles of agriculture, carry out research, propagate and cultivate tropical crops. At its inaugural meeting on September 21, 1921, the governing body⁶² appointed Sir Francis Watts as principal. Trinidad and Tobago and the British West Indies⁶³ supported the College by contributing one half of one per cent of the annual revenue. The Imperial government's contribution⁶⁴ stipulated that the functions of the Imperial Department of

61 Great Britain, Board of Trade, Memorandum and Articles of Association of the West Indian Agricultural College, London, H.M.S.O., 1921, 15 p.

62 "The Agricultural College", in The West India Committee Circular, Vol. 36, No. 600, September 29, 1921, p. 401-402.

63 Sir Francis Watts, "The Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture", in Proceedings of the Ninth West Indian Agricultural Conference, Kingston, Jamaica, January 1924, Kingston, Government Printing Office, 1925, p. 181.

64 Sir Arthur Shipley, Address at the Laying of the Foundation Stone of the New Buildings of the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture, 14th January 1924, St. Augustine, Trinidad, St. Augustine, University of the West Indies Archives, p. 1-5.

Agriculture be maintained.

In return for being the locus of the College, Trinidad had to provide an appropriate site within easy reach of a populated area. A site⁶⁵ was chosen at St. Augustine, seven miles from Port-of-Spain, and the government handed it over to the College on a lease of ninety-nine years at a nominal fee of one shilling per year. The College lies in a beautiful plain watered by the St. Joseph's River, and with the Northern Range in the background.

Since an old yaws hospital and a house occupied the site, the College began work without waiting for permanent buildings. The hospital was converted into classrooms and laboratories, and the house, the principal's residence. In October 1922, the College⁶⁶ opened with fifteen students, four from England, four from Trinidad and Tobago and seven from the other British West Indian colonies. Four courses⁶⁷

65 J. R. Chancellor, Governor of Trinidad and Tobago, Message of the Governor to the Legislative Council, February 15, 1921, Council Paper No. 17 of 1921, Port-of-Spain, Government Printing Office, 1921, p. 1-4.

66 Watts, op. cit., p. 182.

67 Sir Francis Watts, Address at the Opening Ceremony of the West Indian Agricultural College, 16th October 1922, St. Augustine, Trinidad, St. Augustine, University of the West Indies Archives, p. 5-12.

were offered and every effort was made to maintain work of a high level to keep it of university standard so that it might rank with that of institutions in other countries. Postgraduate research was in connection with plant pathology, agronomy and physiologic botany. Questions bearing on the pests and diseases of tropical crops required special knowledge but although these pests and diseases occurred frequently, it was not until they assumed prominence in connection with the development of some tropical industry that information was available. It was the duty of the College to investigate these problems in advance of immediate requirements and furnish information to tropical industries. The course for agricultural officers supplemented work of temperate agricultural colleges and provided special training for those destined for the colonial services in tropical agriculture departments. The Empire Cotton Growing Corporation⁶⁸, a research organization set up to improve the quality of cotton lint marketed in Britain, was the first to use the College as its principal overseas research station and as a training centre for its research staff.

68 P. J. Wilson, "The Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture, Past, Present and Future", Reprinted from Caribbean Agriculture, Vol. 1, No. 1, December 1962, p. 2.

The youth of Trinidad and Tobago had a choice between a three year diploma course and a one year elementary agricultural science course. The latter imparted practical knowledge of the scientific aspects of tropical agriculture while the former provided instruction in the principles and practice of tropical agriculture. Although entry to the diploma course was the Cambridge Examination, the same matriculation requirements of a British university, students on graduation could only obtain junior posts in the agricultural department, which provided no incentive to study agriculture.

While the academic life of the College slowly advanced, the governing body was raising funds to establish a permanent institution. In 1923, at the request of the Rhodes Trustees that it would be easier to raise funds if the name of the College suggested an empirewide institution, the Secretary of State for the Colonies⁶⁹ changed the name to the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture. This change expressed the views of the governing body that the College should have an imperial outlook and its influence and teaching extend beyond Trinidad and Tobago and the British West Indies to the tropical regions of the Empire. This

⁶⁹ Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture, Silver Jubilee 1951, Birmingham, Hudson, 1951, p. 4.

change, however, did not deprive Trinidad from having the College situated locally as it continued to train diploma students and carry out research in the problems of tropical agriculture. By 1926, the College rested on solid foundations and was incorporated by royal charter⁷⁰ which enhanced its standing and influence. The existence of the College signified the recognition of tropical agriculture as an academic subject in its own right and inspired in the graduates a new confidence and pride in their field and an awareness that they were better trained in the subject than anyone had been before. Their training, however, made them realize the tremendous lack of knowledge in tropical agriculture.

After 1925, the College became the centre for postgraduate training in tropical agriculture for the British Empire. The colonial agricultural departments needed skilled scientific assistance but the Colonial Office⁷¹ was finding it difficult to recruit qualified personnel. To solve its recruitment problem the Colonial Agricultural Service decided to offer annually twenty postgraduate scholarships to be held for two years. The

⁷⁰ Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture, Royal Charter of Incorporation, London, Solicitors' Law Stationery Society, 1926, 18 p.

⁷¹ Masefield, op. cit., p. 38-40.

first year was to be spent at the University of Cambridge where scholars were to pursue a course in the statistics of field experiments and the practical application of science to agriculture, while the second year was to be spent at the Imperial College. Such an action boosted the morale of the colonial agricultural staff and gave them a pride in their profession, a pride which had not existed before. Entry for senior personnel in the Colonial Agricultural Service now became a university degree or its equivalent plus two years of postgraduate studies in tropical agriculture.

Unlike the case of agriculture, no institution of higher liberal education had developed in the colony. The agricultural interests had actively campaigned for higher agricultural education with favourable results but there was no local movement for higher liberal education. Nevertheless, as the federal movement gained momentum, the need for an institution of higher liberal education became apparent.

5. Political Development and Higher Education 1919-1933

Scheme for a Polytechnic

In 1919, the first proposal for a regional institution of higher liberal education in Trinidad appeared. Popham Lobb⁷², the administrator of St. Vincent, outlined a scheme that would start from modest beginnings as a polytechnic in Trinidad and evolve into a university. Trinidad was chosen as the locus because the largest number of students could get there at the least expense. Besides turning out skilled craftsmen, this polytechnic, which was to be West Indian in scope and financed by the colonies, was to act as a center for fostering the spirit of high ideals and the consciousness of common aims and interests among West Indians. Departments of agriculture and tropical medicine and a teachers' college were to form the nucleus and vocational courses such as applied mechanics, electricity, handicrafts, economics, surveying, forestry, commercial bookkeeping, law, accounting and Spanish were to be offered. This proposal failed to arouse any interest. The professional middle class, who were actively involved in a movement for constitutional reform, had vested interest in

⁷² Popham Lobb, "Memorandum on Education in the West Indies", in Education Conference 1921, Proceedings, Council Paper No. 67 of 1921, Port-of-Spain, Government Printing Office, 1921, p. i-v.

maintaining the elitist system and apparently ignored the importance of higher education in political development.

Unawareness of Importance of Higher Education
in Constitutional Development

Whether it intended to do so or not, the British government, by training an educated elite for entry to institutions of higher education, had been laying the foundation for political consciousness which the black and professional middle class, stimulated by the democratic feeling engendered by the war and the knowledge of the social and economic conditions in other parts of the world brought back by men who had been abroad, transformed into political activity. The Workingmen's Association under the war veteran, Captain Arthur A. Cipriani, was demanding racial equality in the civil service, democratic institutions, widening of the franchise and constitutional reform⁷³. These demands, however, did not receive the support of the Chamber of Commerce and the Agricultural Society, which represented the commercial, industrial and agricultural interests of the white middle and upper classes who had formerly actively campaigned for elective representation. They were now afraid of the power that a broadly based

73 Craig, op. cit., p. 29-32.

franchise would confer upon the black and mulatto population and were content to shelter under the Crown Colony system. In spite of objections, Major E. F. L. Wood, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, was commissioned in 1921 to investigate constitutional problems in Trinidad and Tobago and the British West Indies.

On his recommendation, a dash of participatory democracy was added to the Trinidad and Tobago legislative council. In 1925, for the first time in its history, the colony introduced an elected element⁷⁴ in its legislative council, a concession which had been withheld until the coloured population had developed sufficiently to take a considerable part in the political life of the colony. The status of the elected members was little more than that of an advisory element but short of granting responsible government there was no means by which the demand for constitutional change could be met other than by admitting an elected minority to the council while, at the same time, ensuring that legislative power continued to rest with the governor and his officials. Perhaps other reasons prompted caution in proceeding with the new constitutional experiment in Trinidad and Tobago. A large part of the population was

74 Ibid., p. 34-42.

still backward and could not be given the franchise. Moreover, outside corporations had invested considerable capital in asphalt and oil and it was important that this confidence in the stability of the local government should not be disturbed.

Under such circumstances higher education could have played an important part in training leaders and preparing the people for further constitutional changes. The need for higher education, however, was avoided by restricting the privilege of voting and of membership in the legislative council to the handful of whites who were the monied group and a fraction of the middle class who could meet the high property qualification or were educated enough to have a substantial salary. No demand for higher education arose from the elected members or from the electorate. The elected members were not eager to expose themselves to competition for the high level positions and the electorate concentrated on imitating the esteemed tradition of going abroad for higher education. It was no doubt difficult for the aspiring to criticize practices which they would rather share than abolish. The stimulus for higher education in Trinidad and Tobago, therefore, had to come from outside.

Regional University on Agenda
for West Indian Conferences

In its continuing effort to stimulate support for federation indirectly, the British government was encouraging all types of intercolonial cooperation and from one of these gestures emerged the subject of a West Indian university. In 1926, delegates from Trinidad and Tobago and the British West Indies met in London to discuss the formation of a loose association. Unanimous agreement⁷⁵ was reached on a standing West Indian conference a purely advisory body with no executive powers, and a list of subjects of common interest was drafted for consideration by future conferences. Included on this agenda, which had as its basic aim the common good of the West Indies, was a regional university. This action resulted in considerable discussion on the feasibility of establishing higher education in the region and led to a debate on the topic in the legislative council of Trinidad and Tobago.

Attitude of Legislative Council
towards a Regional University

The debate in the Council⁷⁶ revealed local attitudes towards higher education. Captain Arthur A. Cipriani, leader

75 Great Britain, Colonial Office, Report of the West Indian Conference 1926, Cmd. 2672, London, H.M.S.O., 1926, 14 p.

76 Trinidad and Tobago, Legislative Council, "Debates 13 May 1927", in Debates in the Legislative Council of Trinidad and Tobago 1927, p. 224-233.

of the Workingmen's Association and staunch supporter of federation moved that the legislative council express its willingness to cooperate with the other West Indian islands towards the great common aim of establishing a university which would be a lasting boom to every inhabitant. J. A. A. Biggart of Tobago supported the motion on the grounds that the time had come when the people should be offered every opportunity for higher education. In opposing the motion, the planter, A. V. Stollmeyer, stressed that the general atmosphere and climate of the area were not conducive to higher education. He endorsed the tradition of sending students to Britain where the climate tended to increase their physique and naturally their mental capacity and power and concluded that a university would serve no great educational purpose or benefit to the area since no particular sector of the population expressed a desire for it.

F. C. Marriott, Director of Education, took a more balanced view of the subject. He pointed out that the success of a university depended upon its demand, standard of learning and financial practicability, and that unless these three conditions were met, there was no need to establish a university. If the colonies wanted a university, they should expand an existing college such as the Imperial College. In spite of strong opposition, the legislative

council supported the resolution of the West Indian Conference on condition that it was "found possible to put forward a scheme which fulfills the two main conditions of high standard of learning and financial practicability"⁷⁷.

Attitude of First West Indian Conference
towards a Regional University

The need for a university was discussed in greater detail at the First West Indies Conference which was attended by delegates from Trinidad and Tobago, the British West Indies, British Guiana and British Honduras. The Conference⁷⁸ revealed the delegates' conception of a university and their attitudes towards establishing such an institution.

A. G. Nash, the Jamaica delegate, was wholeheartedly in favour of establishing a first class university affiliated with the University of London. He was fully aware of the benefits to be derived from such a scheme but emphatically stressed that the university should aim at high standards, and in time, confer its own degrees. Nash proposed that Codrington College in Barbados and the Imperial College in Trinidad together with the establishment

⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 233.

⁷⁸ Report of the First West Indies Conference Held in Barbados, January - February 1929, London, Crown Agents for the Colonies, 1929, p. 72-88.

of a college in Jamaica could be combined to constitute a West Indian university with faculties of medicine, law, engineering, economics and agriculture, the last three being in Jamaica. This proposal involved a degree of cooperation which for geographic, political and economic reasons was not possible at the time. Moreover, the suggestion of including the Imperial College was impractical. The College was not merely a West Indian institution but was financed by the imperial government and other tropical colonies.

In view of the geographic and financial difficulties, Douglas Jones, the Guianese delegate, supported a decentralized university consisting of the Imperial College, Codrington College and the teachers' colleges in Barbados, Jamaica and Trinidad. These colleges were to be united to form a university with teaching function while the University of London, whose external degree was already recognized throughout the British Empire and could be taken in any colony was to perform the examination function. Since the decentralized university would be merely duplicating the function of London's system of external examination, it was difficult to see its advantages.

On the other hand, the Barbados delegate, Dr. W. B. H. Massiah, strongly favoured a single centralized residential university which would foster high ideals and

common aims and objectives among West Indian youth. He did not indicate his preference for the locus of the university, but it was difficult to imagine the university in any other colony than Jamaica which had about half the total population of the British West Indies. At the same time, difficulty of communication and isolation of Jamaica from the other colonies would have made the university not a university of the West Indies but a university in the West Indies.

In supporting the idea of a university, T. M. Kelshall of Trinidad stressed the status and prestige that such an institution would bring to Trinidad and Tobago and the British West Indies. Although Dr. A. H. McShine, another Trinidad delegate, supported a university offering courses in arts, science, music, commerce and agriculture, he vehemently opposed one offering courses in law, medicine and engineering. The high cost involved, the close proximity of the islands to Britain, the belief that a West Indian university would be second rate, and the existence of tropical schools of medicine in England overruled any idea of the feasibility of establishing law, medicine and engineering. At the same time, he acknowledged that admission to medical schools in England was becoming very difficult.

Joining the ranks of the opposition was Trinidad's Gaston Johnson. His argument was that few students were

clamouring for degrees and those who wanted higher education were interested in law, medicine and agriculture. The Imperial College was already meeting the agricultural needs, and the barristers, the legal needs, and if medicine formed part of the university, it would be of an inferior standard. Moreover, since other important areas were in need of development, he considered it irresponsible to use public funds for a university. He favoured sending students abroad for higher education because contact and atmosphere, essential elements in fostering character and mental development, existed only in the larger centers of the Empire.

In response to the argument that there existed no demand for a university, T. A. Marryshaw of Grenada pointed out that the question of a university was revived in recent years at the insistence of students abroad. He cited the Gamma League, a West Indian student association in Canada which was continually asking what the West Indies was doing to promote higher education.

The campaign for higher education reached its climax at this Conference which submitted that the time had come to found a university but the problems of finance and communication were obstacles to this end. The delegates disagreed on the faculties and were unable to decide whether the university should be centralized or decentralized. Since

the function of the Conference was purely advisory, it recommended that Sir James Currie, Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture, and R. R. Sedgwick of the Colonial Office, prepare a report on the preliminary steps which should be taken to establish a university on practical lines.

Hesitancy to Use Public Funds for Higher Education

In their report⁷⁹, Currie and Sedgwick examined the suggestions of the First West Indies Conference. They indicated preference for a centralized West Indian university but this involved cooperation which for geographic, economic and political reasons could not be realized at the time. They, therefore, stressed that higher education concerned mainly Trinidad and Tobago and Jamaica which could first appoint a commission to survey secondary education on which higher education would be based, and second, request financial help from the imperial government to establish a university because expenditure for the improvement of education was not outside the scope of the Colonial Development Fund. This was a surprising suggestion

79 Sir James Currie and R. R. Sedgwick, Report on the Proposed West Indian University, London, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 76640/30, 7 p. (Typewritten).

since under this Fund⁸⁰ education was not generally eligible for aid, although some vocational training schemes were assisted. Time, however, was inopportune. The demand for higher education was becoming insistent at a time when world economic trends seriously endangered the maintenance of present standards of living.

Investment in people by means of education was not then as widely acknowledged as it is today and, in the midst of a worldwide depression, whatever value was accorded higher liberal education was obscured. In response to the Currie-Sedgwick report, the Secretary of State for the Colonies⁸¹ commented that the Colonial Development Committee would not regard with favour a project for increasing facilities not strictly connected with the economic development of a colony but would be glad to consider any project that could be shown to be so connected. Moreover, although the Marriott-Mayhew Commission⁸², which was

80 Great Britain, Central Office of Information, Britain and Education in the Commonwealth, RF.P. 5678, London, Central Office of Information, 1964, p. 1-7.

81 Currie, op. cit., p. 7.

82 Great Britain, Colonial Office, Report of a Commission Appointed to Consider Problems of Secondary and Primary Education in Trinidad, Barbados, Leeward Islands and Windward Islands, 1931-32, Colonial No. 79, by F. C. Marriott, Chairman, London. H.M.S.O., 1933, p. 97-99. Hereafter cited as Marriott Report 1933.

appointed in 1931 to examine problems of primary and secondary education in Trinidad and Tobago and the British West Indies, recognized that the future of secondary education depended to a great extent on the local provision for university training in all the subjects of the secondary school curriculum, it could not justify public funds for higher education. If the colonies wanted to develop higher education, the Commission recommended that they should use some of the money set aside for Island Scholarships. No such action was taken and Trinidad and Tobago students continued to go abroad.

6. Higher Agricultural Education and Its Effects on Trinidad and Tobago

The effects of the worldwide depression did not spare the Imperial College. Numbers of postgraduate students⁸³ dropped to less than ten per year. Not only did numbers decline but it was also impossible to find jobs⁸⁴ for the graduates. As the depression hit the British colonies the price of colonial agricultural products fell rapidly reaching its lowest point in 1934 and the governments had to economize wherever they could. Short of

83 Masefield, op. cit., p. 44.

84 Ibid., p. 49.

revenue in these sad days, the colonies drastically reduced the number of posts in the agricultural departments mostly by leaving vacancies unfilled and abolishing some posts. At the Imperial College, staff members accepted voluntary cuts in their salary to save the College from bankruptcy, and research tended to concentrate on the important export crops.

By the 1930's the Imperial College was the only institution of higher education in Trinidad and Tobago. Although it could not be fairly described as a unit of the local education system, it was expected that its presence in the colony would influence a large number of native youth to pursue an agricultural career, especially since the College offered a diploma course to secondary school graduates. This was not the case. For example, in 1931, there were only seven Trinidad and Tobago students⁸⁵ at the College. F. C. Marriott⁸⁶, Director of Education, pointed out that although the College offered annually ten scholarships for its three year diploma course, it had on more than one occasion been unable to discover the number of candidates willing to accept nomination.

85 Marriott Report 1933, p. 96.

86 Marriott, "Education in Trinidad and Tobago", p. 789.

This attitude was not surprising. The study of classics was considered the necessary intellectual equipment for socially desired positions while agriculture with its association with slavery and indenture was considered degrading and dirty. Not even the award of one of the coveted Island Scholarships for the study of agriculture at a British university could persuade students to pursue the agricultural profession. So few students⁸⁷ competed for this scholarship that in 1924 the government had to withdraw it. The lack of interest in agriculture was, therefore, psychological and arose from a deep-seated feeling that the study of agriculture was a means of tying native youth to the land from which they had recently been freed.

Such an attitude could be corrected by education but agriculture was not an important part of the school curriculum. In the primary schools, it prepared the students for the task of an efficient labourer, while in the secondary schools, it was irrelevant and bookish. The primary school curriculum was unrealistic while that of the secondary school was oriented towards preparing students for the Cambridge examination in subjects that had little

87 Ibid.

relevance to the needs of the students in the economic and social life of their community. In fact, the secondary schools with a curriculum drawn up to meet the needs of the prospective scholarship winner rather than those of the majority of students were providing an adequate preparation for university or professional careers while their main object should have been to prepare students for careers in commerce, industry and agriculture. Such a system permitted the education of a community predominantly engaged in agriculture to be based upon a literary curriculum fitting students only for white collar jobs. Even when unemployment was rife among clerical employees, Trinidad and Tobago students refused to take up agriculture.

Since an emphasis on agricultural education would have better fitted students to play an important part in the major industry, the Marriott-Mayhew Commission⁸⁸ recommended a new type of secondary school which would not replace the grammar school but would be different in scope and definition. The modern secondary school for boys was to stress courses with an industrial, commercial and agricultural bias while the school for girls was to provide courses in domestic science and commerce. The Commission stressed the

88 Marriott Report 1933, p. 84-95.

importance of preparing students for successful participation in the economic life of the community and in an effort to raise the image and dignity of vocational education, it recommended that this new school be given equal recognition as the grammar school. On its recommendations, there was a great deal of educational activity in Trinidad and Tobago at the primary and secondary school levels, and time alone would tell what changes the schools had on the students' attitude towards agriculture.

The lack of interest in pursuing an agricultural career could also be linked to the conditions prevailing in the colony. Since 1920, Trinidad and Tobago was experiencing periodic agricultural and economic depressions which, with accompanying unemployment, low wages and deplorable social conditions, increased the unprofitableness and unattractiveness of agriculture as a profession.

Agriculture was so deeply entrenched in production for export that when markets became scarce and diseases attacked the crops, the entire economy and life of the people suffered. Immediately after the First World War, there was the tendency for the world demand of sugar and cocoa to exceed the supply and accordingly prices were very satisfactory. But, by the early 1920's, world

production⁸⁹ of these crops had undergone rapid expansion, supply exceeded demand and prices fell to unremunerative levels. Many planters were unable to make ends meet and carried on by making loans. To ease the situation, the British government offered imperial preference on sugar and the Trinidad and Tobago government, subsidies on cocoa. Such assistance helped for a while but prices continued to slump. By 1929, these industries faced other crises. In the sugar industry the cost of efficient production exceeded the market price of sugar while in the cocoa industry the witchbroom disease was spreading rapidly. On the sugar estates the installation of new and improved machinery and the use of modern methods of chemical control, together with increased preferential assistance helped somewhat to improve the sugar situation but the diminishing income from cocoa prevented all but a few planters from keeping the disease under control with the result that there were heavy losses in crop and large areas lapsed into semi-abandoned condition. With the prospect of a further decline in the price of cocoa, planters within easy reach of sugar factories were contemplating the conversion of their estates

89 Great Britain, Colonial Office, Trinidad and Tobago Disturbances 1937, Report of Commission, Cmd. 5641, by John Forster, Chairman, London, H.M.S.O., 1938, p. 12-19. Hereafter cited as Forster Report 1938.

to sugar plantations, but the export quotas of the International Sugar Agreement of 1937 made this impossible. Nevertheless, this agreement increased the price of sugar significantly and helped the industry to attain a degree of stability although it checked expansion of the sugar industry and decreased the volume of employment.

This depressing economic outlook on agriculture was no advertisement for the agricultural profession. The hopes of economic recovery were dim, the supply of tropical products exceeded world demand and the trend of world conditions was adverse to the development of tropical products for export. The need was to develop food production but the cultivation of foodcrops did not stand high in the estimation of the farmer. For an improvement, it was necessary to advance agricultural knowledge among all classes and provide better economic inducements and marketing facilities. The Imperial College was providing an opportunity for education in tropical agriculture and was the keystone to the agricultural development of Trinidad and Tobago but local youths discriminated against the College. As long as literary education was a sign of superiority, the reactions of youth were understandable. They were trying to escape the drudgery of subsistence farming and social inferiority which agricultural education displayed when compared with the prestige to be achieved by the study

of law and medicine.

Moreover, living conditions among the labouring population provided no inducement for secondary school graduates to pursue a career in agriculture. The severe agricultural depression made itself felt chiefly through a disastrous reduction in the amount of employment available, low wages and deplorable social conditions⁹⁰ while the rapid increase in population⁹¹, as a result of the high birthrate and the decrease in infantile mortality was giving rise to unemployment and underemployment. Malnutrition due to insufficient and ill-balanced diet was common. Health conditions were far from satisfactory and much of the ill-health arose from poverty and ignorance. Housing was deplorable and sanitation primitive. The prevalence of diseases such as dysentery and worm infection was a sign of low standards of sanitation. The occurrence of many cases of tuberculosis, leprosy, yaws and venereal diseases, resulted from the over-crowded housing conditions. Meanwhile, in the absence of any means of collective bargaining, the welfare of labour depends on the goodwill of the employer but the conditions of life among the

90 "Murchison Fletcher, Governor, Address in the Legislative Council of Trinidad and Tobago, 9th July 1937", in Forster Report 1938, p. 112-113.

91 Forster Report 1938, p. 26-41.

agricultural workers indicated that management displayed a disregard for the wellbeing of their labour, which could not fail to create an underlying current of discontent and resentment.

7. Social Pressure for Change in the Late Thirties

Despite the severe depression in agriculture, the financial position of Trinidad and Tobago was very satisfactory. The oil industry⁹² was largely responsible for the colony's buoyant revenues. Since 1930, Trinidad was the leading Empire producer of oil and the industry, which provided twenty-five per cent of the public revenue and sixty per cent of the total exports, exerted a stimulating effect on the economic activity of the colony. This new and vigorous oil industry, in what was essentially an agricultural colony, was a disturbing factor in the economic and social life. Agricultural labourers did not earn a living wage and many sought jobs in the oilfields but as usually happens, industrial development led to a demand for a better quality of labour. The colony had a surplus of unskilled labour and a scarcity of skilled workers with the result that while unskilled labour was depressed, the

92 Ibid., p. 22-23.

skilled man⁹³ got a considerably higher wage sometimes about 150 per cent.

At the same time, labour in the oil industry was as little equipped as labour in the agricultural areas with the means of collective bargaining. Management⁹⁴ was smugly indifferent to the welfare of its workers and they, in turn, had no way of giving vent to their feelings or communicating to their employers their dissatisfaction with low wages, deplorable housing and poverty. The development of trade unions was one way of ensuring participation in parliamentary democracy but in Trinidad and Tobago strikes were a crime and trade unions illegal associations. Nevertheless, the spread of education, inadequate and unsatisfactory though it still was, the world events conveyed by the radio, cinema and press, the spectacle of standards of living of white people, the experience of those who had returned from the war and the reports of local men who had worked and lived abroad were contributing to the formation of a public opinion conscious of its grievances and demanding change.

The government was ignorant of or indifferent to this general sense of dissatisfaction. Although, since, 1925,

93 Ibid., p. 112.

94 Ibid., p. 75-76.

the legislature included elected members the high property and income qualifications for these members were sufficient to ensure that they came from the same class as the nominated members who were chosen from among men prominent in law, business, agriculture and industry. By virtue of the limited franchise⁹⁵ under which the members were elected, they did not represent the majority of people. The legislative council was dominated by vested interests and only the representatives of such interests were successful in exercising their influence.

Moreover, as a Crown Colony, Trinidad and Tobago was unable to take the initiative in measures designed to secure an improvement of social and economic conditions. The long range policy of the colonial administration permitted the development of an unbalanced society where the majority of the people found themselves hopelessly restricted to the bottom of the social and economic ladder. The government's economic policies provided little opportunity for social and economic mobility and prosperity was shared by an extremely small group. Facilities for secondary education, which provided the best passport for advancement, though limitedly available, could not be afforded by the average person.

95 Craig, op. cit., p. 131

There was as result, widespread frustration among the people who found their avenues blocked, and efforts for social, economic and political advancement impeded.

Armed with the passport for advancement, secondary school graduates hesitated to pursue careers that did not offer prestige and affluence. Some might have entered the three year course in agriculture at the Imperial College if they were assured of remunerative employment upon graduation but the government of Trinidad and Tobago⁹⁶ was unable to give this assurance. Openings for graduates of the diploma course were naturally in the Caribbean area, since the training they received was in tropical agricultural methods. The main outlet for these men was on the plantations, but the diploma holders considered this kind of employment unremunerative for the years spent at the College. As a result, students preferred to follow the tradition of going abroad for higher education and concentrated on law and medicine, although industrial development was creating a demand for engineers.

Economic, political and social conditions also engendered increasing racial prejudice. The employing class was largely white, the employed wholly coloured. On the oilfields⁹⁷, the employing class contained a number of

⁹⁶ Marriott, "Education in Trinidad and Tobago", p. 789.

⁹⁷ Forster Report 1938, p. 78-79.

white South Africans who were allegedly using their racist techniques on employees. Moreover, to attract high level manpower from other countries, the oil companies not only offered expatriates a standard of wages and living conditions far better than that of the local employees but also took on several white expatriates in higher positions to the exclusion of senior coloured men. The accusation⁹⁸ that the Imperial College was discriminating against local students disclosed the growing resentment towards the appointment of expatriates to influential positions. The appointment to the colonial service of men taking the postgraduate course and the local recruitment for the undergraduate course and junior positions emphasized the social order and helped in no way to alleviate feelings of inferiority. For the masses education was chiefly a means of social mobility and the teaching rather than the research function of the College was more evident.

This general feeling of dissatisfaction reached its culminating point when the cost of living⁹⁹ jumped seventeen per cent in one year and the wages of the oil

98 Trinidad and Tobago, Legislative Council, "Debates 4 April 1930", in Debates in the Legislative Council of Trinidad and Tobago 1930, p. 149-150.

99 Forster Report 1938, p. 80.

workers were not adjusted to meet its effect. The workers knew that the companies were making tremendous profits and felt that they should get a share. When this hope did not materialize, the widespread reaction was that a strike was the only means to secure increased wages and obtain redress for grievances. In 1937, labour disturbances¹⁰⁰ started on one of the oilfields and later spread to the sugar industry. The demands of the striking workers were for industrial and social legislation, slum clearance, adult suffrage, land settlement, better wages, trade union organizations and full democracy. The disturbances represented positive demands for the creation of new conditions that would render possible a better and less restricted life. In fact, subsequent political, social and economic changes seemed to suggest that they marked the beginning of a new era in Trinidad and Tobago.

100 Ibid., p. 57-82.

8. Recommendations of West India
Royal Commission 1940

Such unrest was cause for alarm and the British government sent out a commission in 1939 to inquire into all aspects of life in Trinidad and Tobago and the British West Indies. The full report of the West India Royal Commission¹⁰¹ which described in vivid details the horrible social and economic conditions of the mass of the people made such a great impact on the British government that it was withheld from publication until June 1945 perhaps because of the use that enemy propaganda might have made of it. However, the bare recommendations¹⁰² were published in February 1940. The findings of the Commission were that discontent in Trinidad and Tobago arose from the social and economic conditions which could only be remedied by a general rehabilitation of the society.

The recommendations called for the establishment of a welfare fund to be financed from the Imperial Exchequer for a period of twenty years, and a special organization to administer this fund under the charge of a comptroller. The objectives of the fund were to finance schemes for the

101 Great Britain, Colonial Office, West India Royal Commission Report, Cmd. 6607, by Lord Moyne, Chairman, London, H.M.S.O., 1945, xviii-483 p.

102 Great Britain, Colonial Office, West India Royal Commission 1938-39, Recommendations, Cmd. 6174, by Lord Moyne, Chairman, London, H.M.S.O., 1940, 30 p.

general improvement of education, the health services, housing and slum clearance, the creation of a labour department and the provision of social welfare facilities. The Commission justified this grant on three points. First, the extreme specialization in the production of tropical products for export encouraged by the mother country had exposed the colony to the full force of long and continued depression, and consequent deterioration of the standard of living might be expected to spread rapidly unless special measures were taken. Second, the bulk of the population had lost their original cultures and constructive efforts to provide a satisfactory alternative were long overdue. Third, contact with white people and the example of the United States of America and neighbouring territories set for Trinidad and Tobago a social standard to which the local citizens naturally aspired.

The Commission's recommendations embodied a new conception of the work of the imperial government. The assumption by the state of functions formerly left to private endeavour was to be extended to Trinidad and Tobago and the British West Indies. The British government would not merely protect but actively further the interest of the mass of the population who were not to be the passive receivers of schemes for reform but were to participate actively in the work involved. The idea of trusteeship

was to be modified by the introduction of the element of partnership in Britain's relations with her colonial peoples.

Political consciousness was sufficiently widespread to make it doubtful whether any schemes for social reform would be completely successful unless accompanied by a considerable measure of constitutional development. If the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago were to play an important part in the reconstruction of their society, they would need to share in the undertaking. More participation by the people in the work of government was a real necessity for lasting social advancement, and the Commission attached more importance to the truly representative character of the legislative council than to any drastic change in its function. The Commission considered that the time for self government had not come to Trinidad and Tobago and recommended that as long as the need for financial control by the imperial government continued constitutional reform should be directed towards making the legislative council more fully representative of all the important sectors of the community through the wise use of the power of nomination. Also, the colonial government was encouraged to give early consideration to the reduction of the qualification for voters and elected members of the legislative council. The conclusion was that political

federation of the West Indian colonies was the end to which policy should be directed and not the appropriate means of meeting the pressing needs of the colonies.

Social, economic and political conditions precluded any need for higher education. Although the Commission recognized the correlation between higher education and social, economic and political development, it considered that in view of more urgent developments involving heavy financial outlays it could not justify the establishment of an institution of higher education at the time. For higher liberal education, therefore, Trinidad and Tobago students had to continue to go abroad.

Whatever blame may be attached to the imperial government for the conditions that gave rise to the disturbances, it was not slow to grasp the implications and adapt its policy to meet the changed circumstances of the society. The recommendations of the West India Royal Commission received the unanimous support of the British government. Prompt action was taken to implement plans for the economic, social and political development of Trinidad and Tobago. Unlike the West India Royal Commission, however, the British government considered higher education indispensable to such development and, as will be seen later, it took steps to establish an institution of higher education for Trinidad and Tobago.

By 1940, Trinidad and Tobago had higher education facilities in agriculture but had nothing to show in the form of higher liberal education except scholarships for study at British universities.

The requirements of economic development had helped in setting priorities and in Trinidad and Tobago an economic depression in agriculture had led to the realization of the importance of scientific agriculture to economic development and ultimately to the establishment of a college of tropical agriculture. The Imperial College made valuable contributions to research in tropical agriculture and supplied agriculturists to the tropical region of the British Empire but it did not meet the intellectual and professional needs of Trinidad and Tobago youth.

Four centuries of slavery had left the people the conviction embedded deep in their consciousness that academic education was synonymous with white collar occupations on the one hand and, on the other, vocational education, especially agricultural education, with manual labour associated with slavery and indenture. They resisted, deliberately or instinctively, the imposition of an agricultural education that seemed designed to keep them at the lower level of manual workers and in a subservient position economically and politically. They could sense in all kinds of subtle ways and eventually could see for

themselves that this was not the kind of education that the colonial administrators had. They did not want a vocational education deemed appropriate for the coloured races only but one that would emulate the education of their white rulers, that is, a liberal education.

Unlike the case of agriculture, there was no local movement in Trinidad and Tobago to establish higher liberal education. Institutions in Britain were already offering students the opportunity to pursue higher liberal education but there was no institution of tropical agriculture in Britain. Moreover, the economic instability of Trinidad and Tobago and the world made it easy to see the financial benefits of a local college of tropical agriculture but, at a time when the importance of education for the country's future was not generally recognized, it was difficult to establish the financial advantages of higher liberal education especially when leadership positions in government and commerce were filled by men sent out from Britain.

With little demand for local high level manpower, Trinidad and Tobago made no attempt to establish higher education in areas other than agriculture. The opportunity for secondary education was very limited, and the government policy favoured higher education for the select few who made the highest marks on the Cambridge Local Examination.

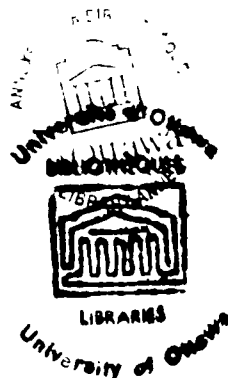
Moreover, the emphasis on all things British led to the belief that British higher education was the best and the award of island scholarships for study at British universities strengthened this belief so that, in time, the tradition of going abroad became highly esteemed and was eagerly imitated by all. The people of Trinidad and Tobago who received higher education abroad enthusiastically defended the tradition probably because the establishment of higher education in Trinidad and Tobago would have exposed them to competition for the scarce desirable social positions.

In a country where the people had little voice in the control of their affairs and found themselves confined to the bottom of the social ladder with no avenues for advancement and where the economy was confined to the production of raw materials for export, the need for a handful of qualified personnel could be met by importing expatriates or sending students to institutions abroad. But, as will be seen in the next chapter, the establishment of higher education became imperative when Britain decided to develop the colony to stand on its own politically, economically and socially.

DEVELOPMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION
IN TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO
1498-1968

by Ameer H. Ali

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CHAPTER III

THE EXPANSION OF HIGHER EDUCATION 1940-1956: THE PROSPECTS OF INDEPENDENCE

Over the period 1940 to 1956 as the impetus for independence gained momentum the expansion of higher education became imperative. Britain's efforts to improve conditions in the colony during the war laid the foundation for the important position that higher education was to occupy in post-war plans for colonial development. It is in such a context that the definite blueprint for establishing higher education in Trinidad and Tobago and the British West Indies can be interpreted. The blueprint, the establishment, and the growth of the University College of the West Indies from 1946 to 1956 are indeed closely related to the political, economic and social development of Trinidad and Tobago.

1. Efforts to Improve Conditions during the War

Following on the recommendations of the West India Royal Commission the Crown Colony of Trinidad and Tobago entered a new phase of development. Despite the war, unprecedented plans for reform were initiated. A Comptroller General for Development and Welfare in the West

Indies¹ was appointed on September 1, 1940 and stationed in Barbados to advise the colonial governments and help them to work out long term social and economic programmes. With his team of experts in education, agriculture, labour, social welfare and economics, he became a sort of projection of the Colonial Office in the colonies. Any scheme advanced by the colonies was examined on the spot, the difficulties ironed out and the estimates checked, thereby reducing the time required for approving the scheme when it went to Britain. Moreover, with the passing of the Colonial Development and Welfare Act² of 1940 large scale aid was allocated for colonial development. This Act drove a breach into the old rigid system of colonial self-sufficiency which meant that a poor colony, because it was poor, was unable to start those reforms and developments which alone held out any promise of increasing its permanent wealth. No territory, however, could receive a grant under this Act until it introduced labour legislation and established trade unions, which, by providing experience in organization and leadership, were one of the best methods of education for political

1 Great Britain, Colonial Office, Development and Welfare in the West Indies, Colonial No. 184, by Frank Stockdale, Comptroller, London, H.M.S.O., 1943, p. 1.

2 Great Britain, Parliament, Parliamentary Debates (Commons), 5th Series, Vol. 391, 1943, col. 64.

responsibility³.

For economic and social reconstruction to succeed, greater participation of the people in the business of management and government of their own affairs was necessary. Colonial policy which only a few years ago had denied political responsibility to the majority of people in Trinidad and Tobago, now seemed directed to prepare them for further and future responsibilities. The realization that the colonies could not solve their problems on their own and that Britain could not solve them without the help and cooperation of the colonies induced Britain to enter a new and fruitful era of partnership⁴ with her colonial peoples, the ultimate goal of which was the development of all the colonies, by and for their own people, as self-respecting and self-governing units within the British Commonwealth.

Constitutional reform was in fact considered a matter of great urgency. The West India Royal Commission was no doubt partly responsible for this change of attitude but perhaps the American and Russian criticism of Britain's colonial policy stimulated her to action. By 1941 Trinidad and Tobago had made considerable progress in its

3 Great Britain, Parliament, Parliamentary Debates (Commons), 5th Series, Vol. 387, 1943, col. 1093.

4 Ibid., col. 1083.

constitutional development. For the people to participate actively in the reconstruction of their society, the government reduced the number of official members and increased the number of elected members in the legislative and executive councils. Moreover, the question of the possible extension of the franchise was referred to a committee consisting almost entirely of unofficial members⁵.

Nevertheless, the essentials of the Crown Colony system were maintained. The role of the executive council remained purely advisory, and the governor retained the power to give the force of law to any measure rejected by the legislature which he considered necessary in the interest of good government. Such power normally accompanies the development of semi-representative and representative government and is a means whereby the necessity for the governor's retaining final legislative authority is reconciled with that of increasing the representative character of the legislature in a developing community.

Britain was pledged to guide the colonies along the road to self-government within the framework of the Empire. Her policy, however, was to grant further political advances and self-government only to those who were adequately

⁵ Hewan Craig, The Legislative Council of Trinidad and Tobago, London, Faber and Faber, 1950, p. 143-153.

trained for it. At the same time, it was up to Britain to see that circumstances justified political advances and to ensure that the people were trained and equipped for eventual self-government.

2. Importance of Higher Education for Post-war Development

Britain's plan⁶ to stimulate and encourage the staffing of the colonial public services by the people of the colony meant that it was up to her to afford to the people the necessary training which could enable them to take on the day to day administration of the colonies. In other words, it was up to Britain to provide sufficient higher education to train the leaders for self-government.

Any scheme for political development had to be based on sound economic development. Freedom in poverty could not flourish and neither could political institutions among people who are poor and uneducated. Since there could not be any real self-government if the colonies were financially dependent and their economies confined to the production of raw materials for export, Britain⁷ intended to make them self-supporting by developing an adequate and

⁶ Great Britain, Parliament, Parliamentary Debates (Commons), 5th Series, Vol. 391, 1943, col. 63.

⁷ Ibid., cols. 63-66.

sound economic base. The growth of secondary and manufacturing industries tended to be the aim of her post-war economic policy in the colonies. Her balance of payment difficulties which were expected to arise after the war provided the incentive to increase the processing of raw materials in the colonies before export to the developed areas. In the long run it was expected that the expansion of manufacturing and secondary industries in the colonies would prove beneficial to British export trade. The more the colonies were able to supply their own cheaper necessities, the more would be available to buy the better class of goods which need skill in their manufacture, and in which the export industries of Britain would be able to compete.

A prime prerequisite for industrial development was the supply of trained personnel. As long as Trinidad and Tobago was a raw material producing colony, it only had need of a few trained agriculturists and no effort was made to establish higher education. But plans for industrial development called for specialists to design, construct and maintain plant and equipment and supervise technicians and skilled workers. Modernization of agriculture required increasing numbers of agronomists, veterinarians and agricultural specialists. Moreover, the supply of tropical products exceeded world demand and it was necessary to find new uses for agricultural products and enlarge the scope

and basis for agriculture. To make the colony self-supporting and advance its prosperity and self-confidence, research in the industrial use of local raw materials and land use was necessary. The development of higher education, therefore, constituted one of the essential tasks for the industrial development of Trinidad and Tobago.

Every economic and political development would make an increasing demand upon the people who would be able to respond only if social conditions improved. Attention was to be directed to the improvement⁸ of health, housing and sanitary conditions. Such improvements called for trained personnel. The extension of medical services required large numbers of doctors and other medical personnel to prevent and cure diseases, carry out nutrition studies and teach the people proper health measures. The improvement of housing required architects, engineers and a host of allied personnel. The dispassionate objective study of the social and economic conditions in Trinidad and Tobago was a prior necessity of all social advancement and called for the prosecution of studies in institutions of higher learning within the territory itself. Improved standards of living,

8 Great Britain, Parliament, Parliamentary Debates (Commons), 5th Series, Vol. 387, 1943, cols. 1107-1112.

therefore, depended on the wide application of research to the social and economic problems of the colony. Moreover, the new trade union movement⁹ which was floundering because it was unable to find responsible and capable persons to assume leadership positions, emphasized the need to develop higher education in the colony.

The success of economic, social and political development did not only depend on the provision of higher education to train leaders but also on the ability of the community to respond. Every new health measure, every improvement of agricultural methods, new cooperative machinery for production and distribution and the establishment of secondary industries would all make increasing demands upon the people, and they would be able to respond only if they had some educational opportunity. Primary and secondary education, however, were far from adequate in quantity and quality. The tremendously high birth-rate¹⁰ during the last fifteen to twenty years made provisions for education extremely difficult. Moreover, education was based largely on the nineteenth century education of Britain¹¹, that is, there was almost complete

9 Great Britain, Parliament, Parliamentary Debates (Commons), 5th Series, Vol. 391, 1943, cols. 60-62.

10 Great Britain, Parliament, Parliamentary Debates (Commons), 5th Series, Vol. 387, 1943, col. 1080.

11 Ibid., col. 1108.

divorce between education and life. The spread of education was a necessity but education could not be adequate until the colony itself produced teachers of sufficient quality in sufficient numbers. Higher education, therefore, had an important part to play in providing teachers.

In all these new plans for political, economic and social reform, the greatest need was for local men and women, capable by their education and training, to assume responsibilities. It was upon them that the future of Trinidad and Tobago depended but, with the exception of the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture, the colony had no institution of higher education and sent students abroad. It was obvious that for social, economic and political measures to succeed, the need for high level manpower could no longer be met merely by importing expatriates and sending selected students to British universities. Fortunately, the British government shared this view.

3. Blueprint for Higher Education 1945

With plans for unprecedented social and economic expansion in the post-war years, Britain anticipated the need to keep her trained personnel at home and send more of her students to universities. To relieve the situation in the colonies she was prepared to establish institutions of higher education¹². She was convinced that universities and colleges in the colonies would contribute in no small measure to their political, economic and social development. First of all, they would provide the enormously increased need for trained professionals which increased economic and social services would necessitate – the agriculturists, engineers, doctors, teachers, veterinary surgeons and the specialists and technicians which the approach of higher standards of life would entail. Secondly, they would carry out an immense amount of research, and as the knowledge of colonial problems widened, more and more gaps would be disclosed and more and more subjects would call for investigation. Thirdly, they would engage in extramural activities which would stimulate general progress and encourage the production of leaders from those who gain

¹² Great Britain, Parliament, Parliamentary Debates (Commons), 5th Series, Vol. 391, 1943, cols. 52-53.

their knowledge and experience from daily life.

To encourage the constructive growth of colonial universities and colleges and to accelerate their wise development, Britain looked to her home universities for guidance and help. These universities had already done a great deal for the colonies by training colonial men and women, but they could do a great deal more. The whole sphere of opportunities and possibilities had been widened by the aeroplane which, after the war, would provide an easy method of communication between the home country and the colonies. Britain envisaged an intellectual lend-lease¹³ between the universities at home and the colonial centers of higher education, between the old established centers and the new rising centers in the colonies. The colonial centers would gain immensely from having the enormous intellectual resources of British universities standing behind them and they, in turn, would be enriched by the knowledge of the colonies which they would acquire from the visits of teachers to and from the colonies.

Consequently, on July 13, 1943, Britain appointed a commission, commonly called the Asquith Commission after its chairman, Justice Cyril Asquith, to enquire at large into

13 Ibid., col. 53.

higher education in the colonies¹⁴. It was hoped that the findings of this Commission would establish general principles that could be applied to all colonial territories.

Six months later a committee of the Asquith Commission was appointed to make recommendations on higher education in the British West Indies¹⁵. The chairman of the Committee, Sir James Irvine, Vice-Chancellor of St. Andrews University, was assisted by Sir Raymond Priestley, Vice-Chancellor of Birmingham University, Margery Perham, Reader in Colonial Administration at Oxford, and two West Indians, Hugh Springer of Barbados and Philip Sherlock of Jamaica.

After careful consideration of the needs and conditions of the British West Indies, the number of potential candidates for higher education and the absorptive capacity of the colonies, the Irvine Committee came to an unanimous decision. It recommended the early establishment of a single centralized university college situated in Jamaica. The need to develop a West Indian outlook, educate

14 Great Britain, Colonial Office, Report of the Commission on Higher Education in the Colonies, Cmd. 6647, by Cyril Asquith, Chairman, London, H.M.S.O., 1945, 119 p.

15 Great Britain, Colonial Office, Report of the West Indies Committee of the Commission on Higher Education in the Colonies, Cmd. 6654, by James Irvine, Chairman, London, H.M.S.O., 1945, 81 p.

a steady stream of West Indian students for professional life and train leaders, made the argument in favour of immediate university development exceptionally strong. In light of the rapid social, economic and political changes in the area, the Committee was firmly convinced that the adoption of its recommendations was a matter of urgency.

Unlike the West India Royal Commission, the Committee was able to recommend a single centralized university because it anticipated that air transport would play an important part in the development of the colonies after the war and replace the primitive nature of the existing communications between the colonies. Landing facilities, which had been created for operational purposes during the war, would also fit in with any civil aviation scheme. Moreover, by encouraging inter-colonial cooperation through this British West Indian university, the Committee was indirectly stimulating support for the federation of the West Indian colonies. In 1945 Britain was also encouraging federation directly by instructing the governors of all the colonies to place the issue of federation¹⁶ before their legislatures for debate.

¹⁶ Jesse H. Proctor, "The Development of the Idea of Federation in the British Caribbean Territories", in Caribbean Quarterly, Vol. 5, No. 1, June 1957, p. 5.

The blueprint for establishing the West Indian university was conceived according to British tradition and experience, the basic assumption being that a college suitable to Britain was appropriate for Trinidad and Tobago and the British West Indies. Also, West Indians wanted a first-class university which was synonymous with a British one. There is no evidence that the Committee considered any other university system as being more appropriate.

The West Indian university was to educate men and women of high standards for public service and with the capacity for leadership if the colonies were to prepare adequately for self-rule which Britain intended to give them. It was to provide for four to five hundred students annually, although in 1943 there were twelve hundred Trinidad and Tobago and West Indian students¹⁷ qualified for higher education by means of the Cambridge School Certificate, three hundred in American universities, three hundred in Canadian universities, the same in British universities, and sixty taking external degrees of the University of London. The West Indian university was obviously to perpetrate the British belief that higher education was to nurture an elite and should not be available to all qualified persons who wanted it, but that

¹⁷ Eric Williams, Education in the British West Indies, New York, University Place Book Shop, 1951, p. 83.

a proportion of them should be selected primarily on examinations and subsidized by the government for higher education.

The Committee recommended that the university be completely residential in the belief that by residing together students would be transformed into men and women with a deep sense of West Indianism suitable to be leaders of the people. The cost¹⁸ of living in residence in Britain was higher than tuition fees, and to ask Trinidad and Tobago and the British West Indies to finance students to live in hostels was to spend on the few money needed by the many.

This university was to be self-governing and the proposed scheme of government was framed along lines identical to a British civic university which called for a two tier system of government consisting of a council and senate. The council was to be the supreme executive and legislative body on which Trinidad and Tobago and the British West Indies, guild of graduates, inter-university council for higher education in the colonies, and ex-officio members (chancellor, principal, vice-principal and deans of faculties) were to be represented. The senate was to be the academic authority and consist of the principal, deans of

18 Ibid., p. 85.

faculties, all professors, director of extramural studies, the librarian and a few of the non-professorial staff.

To establish high standards and win public confidence and esteem, the West Indian university, like English provincial universities, was to begin as a university college and pass through an apprenticeship period before becoming an independent university with its own degree granting power. The Committee recommended that the college spend this period as an affiliated college of the University of London because of London's experience in this sphere and the high repute of its degrees among West Indians. This meant that the college would have to demand the same admission requirements as the University of London, follow the curriculum of London and award London degrees on the recommendation of London external examiners.

The Committee anticipated criticism of this system in which people of one country worked upon curricula designed in another, for the curricula of one country however perfect were unsuitable to another. It was no doubt a relief when the University of London expressed willingness to modify its syllabus to meet the special needs of Trinidad and Tobago and the British West Indies and arrange for visiting examiners and close personal and academic cooperation on syllabus requirements.

The proposed curricula were to be limited initially to the faculties of medicine, arts and natural science and a department of extramural studies.

To meet the urgent needs for doctors, the Committee recommended a temporary and a permanent medical scheme. The temporary scheme provided that all clinical courses be conducted at the Port-of-Spain General Hospital, Trinidad, with McGill University as the degree granting institution. In the permanent scheme admission was to be a degree in pure science, teaching was to begin with anatomy, physiology, pathology, bacteriology, pharmacology, therapeutics, medicine, surgery and obstetrics, London University was to be the degree granting institution and the British General Medical Council was to approve the medical qualifications and look after the standard of medical education. Provision for postgraduate courses in subjects of importance to Trinidad and Tobago and the British West Indies such as social medicine, public health and hygiene and nutrition were to be made later.

In the faculty of natural science residence was to be three years and courses were to include mathematics, physics, chemistry, geology, botany, zoology, anatomy and physiology. The faculty of arts was to offer courses in English language and literature, modern languages, Latin, geography, political science, economics, psychology and education. To

avoid criticism of the arts curriculum, the Committee was careful to suggest the introduction of West Indian history, geography and general courses.

The Committee saw no antithesis between liberal and vocational education and courses in science were considered necessary preliminaries to professional studies. To become engineers and specialists in scientific agriculture, students were to do a three year science course at the college and then proceed to a British university for two more years of professional training. General agriculturists were to spend two years at the college and two years at the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture. The relatively few students expected to enrol in engineering and agriculture did not justify, in the opinion of the Committee, the heavy investment involved in establishing these faculties. Had agriculture and engineering been among the Committee's recommendations, there might have emerged a different pattern of higher education with agriculture and engineering at the core, while pure science would have arisen naturally from these disciplines.

The growth of social and political consciousness in Trinidad and Tobago and the British West Indies called for an informed public. To meet this need the Committee recommended a decentralized extramural department which, through its centers in the various colonies, was to spread

the influence of the college.

Since it was the responsibility of the staff to build up new departments, set high standards of achievement and win international recognition, the college was to attract first class men irrespective of their nationality. To achieve this the Committee recommended that the college offer higher salaries than those current in other countries.

A prestigious college must do research even if it provided excellent teaching. In addition to fundamental research the West Indian university was to study the local history, geography and culture, with a view to introducing them in the undergraduate curriculum. The Committee, therefore, recommended the establishment of a research institute devoted to these subjects.

The imperial government, Trinidad and Tobago and the British West Indies were to share the financial cost of the college. Initial cost of building and equipment was to be met by the imperial government through its Colonial University Grants Advisory Committee, and all future costs by the governments of Trinidad and Tobago, the British West Indies, British Guiana and British Honduras. The imperial government was to provide an endowment fund, the income from which was to support research. Recurrent expenditure was to come from students' fees and the contributions of participating

colonies which were to adopt a block grant method of paying their contributions to the college general funds.

The Irvine Committee's recommendations for a university college in the British Caribbean were consistent with the findings of the Asquith Commission and contained no element at variance with its fundamental principle. Through the scheme of special relationship with the University of London, the creation of an inter-university council and a system of temporary staff secondment, the Asquith Commission ensured the active cooperation of British universities in the establishment of colonial universities.

With the help of the University of London, the Commission devised a special relationship scheme for all university colleges in the British colonies. This scheme was designed to remove such disadvantages of London's external degree system as the separation of teaching and examination, the imposition of common syllabuses insufficiently adapted to the teaching needs of the local area, and the exaggeration of the importance of examinations as part of higher education.

The inter-university council was to have two distinct functions. It was to cooperate with university colleges and help them attain full university status. Each British university was to nominate a member to this council

which was to bring the colonial universities and colleges into the family of commonwealth universities, serve in a purely advisory capacity and provide the necessary assistance when called upon to do so. In particular, this council was to help colonial universities fill staff vacancies.

The university colleges were to be staffed in part by members of British universities seconded for one to three years on agreements that protected them from loss of seniority and superannuation rights at home. Such intellectual lend-lease was to make available to university colleges in a continuous and intimate way appreciation of British academic standards and experience, overcome isolation of colonial institutions, create in home universities an increasing number of men and women with personal knowledge of the Empire, its needs and opportunities, and lead to individual and cooperate research. For British universities this was an opportunity to develop high standards in colonial university colleges. With regard to the problem of differential salaries for staff recruited overseas and those recruited locally, the Asquith Commission concluded that it was necessary to pay high salaries to attract staff of superior quality because the future of the university colleges depended on the intellectual standards, wisdom and experience of those who would mould the university colleges and carry them through their first years.

At long last Britain had declared a policy for higher education in the colonies. The Asquith Commission's report was Britain's blueprint for the export of universities to her peoples overseas, and the Irvine Committee's report, her blueprint for a university in the British Caribbean. Provision for higher education in the colonies was naturally not only for colonial progress but also for furthering the interest of the British Commonwealth. The graduates of colonial universities were to be the future leaders of their country, and if they were grateful for the British influence in their universities, they would be predisposed to British tradition in their laws and government, and British products in their markets.

4. The University College of the West Indies 1946-1956

Britain emerged from the Second World War desperately impoverished and fighting to regain her position in world trade. Victory brought her stress and strain but she was still a power with worldwide interests and commitments although the strain of maintaining them permanently as they were in 1945 could not be contemplated. It was beyond her capacity or desire to hold on to unwilling colonies by force. In any case, heavy imperial expenditure was incompatible with building the welfare state at home.

Fortunately, the government that came into office in that year was anxious to help the more developed parts of the dependent empire acquire their independence. In spite of financial stringency at home and difficulty of payments abroad, Britain set about educating the colonies to hold their own by establishing colonial institutions of higher education.

To advance Trinidad and Tobago and the British West Indies to self government, provide them with the means to develop their natural resources, build up their social and economic foundations and provide trained professionals which the approach to higher standards of living entailed, the British government accepted the recommendations of the Irvine Committee and the Asquith Commission¹⁹. Higher education was the key to political, economic and social development and, with the full support of Trinidad and Tobago²⁰ and the British West Indies²¹, plans were on the way to establish a university.

19 Great Britain, Parliament, Parliamentary Debates (Commons), 5th Series, Vol. 421, 1946, col. 207.

20 Trinidad and Tobago, Legislative Council, "Debates 2 November 1945", in Debates in the Legislative Council of Trinidad and Tobago 1945, p. 406-413.

21 Great Britain, Parliament, Parliamentary Debates (Commons), 5th Series, Vol. 425, 1946, col. 249.

Laying the Foundations

No sooner were the Irvine Committee's recommendations accepted than they became the blueprint for the establishment of the University College of the West Indies. At last Trinidad and Tobago and the British West Indies would have their own University College with teaching and research in faculties of arts, natural science and medicine, and a department of extramural studies. The blueprint did leave room for minor modifications in the syllabus to suit local conditions and for research in West Indian culture but the fundamentals of constitution, standards, curricula and social purpose of an English civic university remained virtually unchanged with the result that the subsequent history of higher education was to be the adaptation of a British model to the realities of West Indian life.

Events followed closely the recommendations of the Irvine Committee. Under its Colonial Development and Welfare Act, Britain agreed to pay the initial capital expenditure²², and the contributing colonies to provide recurrent funds, each sharing the cost in relation to its population. Trinidad

22 T. W. J. Taylor, "The University College of the West Indies", in Caribbean Quarterly, Vol. 2, No. 1, 1950, p. 11-12.

and Tobago's contribution was 17.9 per cent. Universities in Britain and the colonies were invited to nominate representatives to serve on the Inter-University Council for Higher Education in the Colonies. These universities accepted the invitation and, on March 8, 1946, their representatives met in London and formally set up the Council²³. On its recommendations, Dr. T. W. J. Taylor, a distinguished Oxford chemist, was appointed principal²⁴. He assumed duty on October 1, 1946.

The College had no constitution yet important decisions had to be made. The Secretary of State for the Colonies entrusted policy-making decisions to a provisional council²⁵ which convened in Jamaica in January 1947. Two important decisions emerged from this meeting. The first concerned the choice of a site. In return for being the locus of the University College, Jamaica had to provide an appropriate site within easy reach of a populated centre. A site was chosen at Mona, seven miles from Kingston, the capital of Jamaica, and the government handed it over to the College on a lease of 999 years at a peppercorn rent. The

²³ Great Britain, Colonial Office, Inter-University Council for Higher Education in the Colonies, Report 1946-47, Cmd. 7331, London, H.M.S.O., 1947, p. 5.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 7.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 8.

site occupies the end of a valley which is encircled by the foothills of the Blue Mountains. It is very beautiful especially at sunrise and sunset. The second decision concerned the establishment of the College as a legal corporation. Because of the participation of several colonies in this College, it was decided to ask Britain to grant a royal charter²⁶. This charter was drafted along the lines set out by the Irvine Committee and presented to the Privy Council which granted royal assent on January 5, 1949.

The University College started its work in the tradition of established universities offering extramural studies, research facilities and teaching, all of which got on their way within two years.

Decentralization of Extramural Studies

The immediate concern of the new College was to transmit to the people of the contributing colonies its purpose and meaning. The first department that it established was naturally the decentralized extramural department which brought together those persons who grasped the purpose and meaning of a college. In 1947, extramural classes were started in Jamaica²⁷, and, in 1948, in

²⁶ University College of the West Indies, Royal Charter of Incorporation, Mona, Jamaica, U.C.W.I., 1949, 6 p.

²⁷ Gloria Cumper, "Extra Mural Activities", in Caribbean Quarterly, Vol. 1, No. 1, April - June, 1949, p. 25.

Trinidad and Tobago²⁸. By 1949 there were five main centers²⁹ in Trinidad and Tobago, and classes were given in economics, government, French, English, natural science, mathematics, drama and art. The people regarded education as the key to success and eagerly availed themselves of the opportunity to obtain certificates that would enable them to get better jobs and gain entry to a university. Hence, the first extramural classes were influenced by this attitude. Moreover, the extramural department sought to foster the spirit of free enquiry, objective debate and criticism of ideas, liberties that were seldom encouraged by a colonial government.

The function of the extramural department was not purely academic. It became a clearinghouse³⁰ for a wide range of skills. In a developing society higher education usually gives preference to economic development and academic matters. The College would hardly be able to afford time for such activities as steel-band, calypso, folk-dance and carnival that have little relevance to the curriculum. The extramural department filled this void.

28 Andrew Pearse, "Outside the Walls", in Caribbean Quarterly, Vol. 2, No. 4, 1950, p. 36.

29 "Resident Tutors' Notes", in Caribbean Quarterly, Vol. 1, No. 3, 1949, p. 51.

30 Robert Henry, "What the Extra-Mural Is All About", in Sunday Guardian Supplement, Trinidad, January 26, 1969, p. 13.

Establishment of Research Institute

Not long after the establishment of the extramural department, the College directed attention to investigating the West Indian heritage that would form the essential background to much of the work that students would do after graduation. In September 1948, the College established the Institute of Social and Economic Research³¹ whose task was to study the history, geography and culture of the region with a view to introducing these subjects in the undergraduate curriculum. The headquarters of this Institute was at Mona, Jamaica, but its staff were dispersed in Trinidad and Tobago and the various British West Indian colonies and engaged in long range fundamental research.

Teaching Programmes in Medicine, Natural Science, Arts and Education

Since wooden army huts occupied its site, the College began its teaching programme without waiting for permanent buildings. The quality of teachers³² was a matter of great concern for on them rested the future standards of the College. Few local persons had the required training, knowledge and experience, and teachers were appointed on the

31 H. D. Huggins, "Social Science Research", in Caribbean Quarterly, Vol. 1, No. 1, April-June 1949, p. 22.

32 Taylor, op. cit., p. 11.

basis of the best available person irrespective of their national origin. During the first decade the proportion³³ of West Indians on the staff fluctuated between twenty-five and thirty-three per cent. Staff members were given three-year contracts³⁴ which were not renewable unless some work had been published. The effort involved in moving teachers, complete with books and children into another country, for one to three years, was considerable, and fringe benefits³⁵, such as allowance for travel, research and study leave, were offered.

The educated elite of Trinidad and Tobago and the British West Indies wanted a replica of a British university at its best and the University College entered a special relationship scheme with the University of London. Under this scheme³⁶, students of the University College were to receive

33 H. W. Springer, "The Historical Development, Hopes and Aims of the University College of the West Indies", in Journal of Negro Education, Vol. 31, No. 1, Winter 1962, p. 13.

34 Unesco, "Trinidad and Tobago", in World Survey of Education, Vol. 4, Higher Education, Paris, Unesco, 1966, p. 1098.

35 University College of the West Indies, Ordinances, Mona, Jamaica, U.C.W.I., 1952, p. 4-7.

36 Great Britain, Colonial Office, Inter-University Council for Higher Education in the Colonies, Second Report 1947-49, Cmd. 7801, London, H.M.S.O., 1949, p. 7.

degrees that were equal to those of internal students of the University of London. Since graduates were to come out with a prescribed and guaranteed certificate it followed that admission qualifications were those of London. For admission³⁷ candidates were required to have passes in five subjects of which at least two were at advanced level, or passes in four subjects of which at least three were at advanced level. The subjects in which they had advanced level passes were usually those they had to continue to study.

The urgent need for doctors led to the immediate adoption of the Irvine Committee's permanent scheme with minor modifications. In October 1948, the first students began studies for the degree of bachelor of medicine³⁸ but, instead of a degree in pure science followed by clinical study as recommended by the Irvine Committee, they pursued a five year course followed by one year internship. In 1952,

37 After four or five years at secondary school in Trinidad and Tobago a pupil took the School Certificate Examination of Cambridge University. If he passed he went into the sixth form where he worked for the Higher School Certificate. This took two years and was usually confined to three subjects. The normal entry to the University College of the West Indies and all British universities was after advanced level.

38 University College of the West Indies, "General Introduction", in Calendar 1960-61, Mona, Jamaica, U.C.W.I., 1960, p. 16.

when the College teaching hospital was completed, students were admitted for clinical work. On completing their final examination, medical students received provisional registration to practice from the British General Medical Council³⁹. Full registration was granted after a successful year of internship in an approved hospital.

The faculties of natural science and arts followed in quick succession. In 1949, the departments of botany, chemistry, zoology and physics, which were housed in the faculty of medicine, formed the nucleus of the faculty of natural science⁴⁰. In October 1950, the first students began studies in the faculty of arts⁴¹ with history, French, Spanish and English. By 1956, the departments of education, economics, Latin and Greek were added. Arts and science students read for a general degree⁴² for which they studied three subjects. In addition, arts students had a special or honours degree in which they specialized in one or sometimes two subjects. Although the fashion of specialization⁴³ was

39 Louis Grant, "Training for Medicine in the West Indies", in Caribbean Quarterly, Vol. 12, No. 1, March 1966, p. 11.

40 University College of the West Indies, "General Introduction", p. 16.

41 Ibid.

42 University College of the West Indies, Calendar 1955-56, Mona, Jamaica, U.C.W.I., 1955, p. 78-79.

43 Sir Eric Ashby, African Universities and Western Tradition, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1964, p. 8-9.

at its height in British universities, there was no obligation on the part of the University College to follow this trend since the need of its community was for a broad stream of graduates with general degrees to man the civil service and teach in the schools. But the desire to imitate the British pattern was irresistible. Moreover, the expatriate staff encouraged specialization since they themselves were trained in this way.

At the University College the degrees were awarded by the University of London, and all examinations were conducted by London examiners who acted in association with examiners nominated by the University College. The College examiners prepared draft examination papers and carried out the first marking of the scripts while London examiners were responsible for the final form of the examinations and for determining each candidate's results⁴⁴. By carrying the achievement of one university to another, the external examiners ensured the common standard for degrees at the University College and British universities. Britain's greatest gift to higher education was to demonstrate to Trinidad and Tobago students that they could compete successfully in the European academic world.

⁴⁴ University College of the West Indies, Calendar 1955-56, p. 17.

The success of higher education depended not only on the quality of staff, teachers and degrees but also on the previous training and education of the student body. It was essential that the secondary schools from which the students were recruited should have well qualified and trained teachers but there existed no facilities in the area for training secondary school teachers. Trinidad and Tobago met its needs by importing trained teachers from Britain. With the establishment of a postgraduate diploma programme in education, the University College, in 1953, provided university graduates with the opportunity of obtaining professional qualifications in the local environment. It can be expected that this programme would produce teachers capable of developing their students to live as part of the community and make a contribution to it.

Need for Degree Studies in Agriculture

In its first six years the University College had made a most remarkable beginning which naturally encouraged it to look ahead with confidence to new ventures. As a service to its community, the College proposed a number of new academic developments for the quinquennium 1953 to 1958. Among its proposals were the establishment of a faculty of agriculture and departments of chemical technology and economics. This proposal for a faculty of agriculture resulted

from years of study of the matter of higher agricultural education of degree status. Students were hesitating to pursue the diploma programme at the Imperial College but were going to institutions abroad or to the University College to obtain degree qualifications. In the light of the importance of a degree qualification for a professional career in the government services, the principals of the University College and the Imperial College drew up a joint memorandum⁴⁵ outlining a four-year degree course in agriculture to be provided either wholly by the University College or jointly by the University College and the Imperial College, but clearly indicating a preference for the first alternative. The memorandum did not consider in any detail the financial implications but merely expressed the view that any capital expenditure could be met from the Colonial Development and Welfare Fund.

After considering the proposals of the University College, a conference of representatives of governments of Trinidad and Tobago, the British West Indies, British Guiana and British Honduras met in Jamaica to consider the

⁴⁵ Great Britain, Colonial Office, Agricultural Degree Education in the Caribbean Colonies, Despatch 757/52, 26th July 1952, London, H.M.S.O., 1952, p. 1-2.

finances of the College⁴⁶. They agreed to make provisions for the establishment of departments of chemical technology and economics but declined to recommend the establishment of a faculty of agriculture. The general consensus was that an undergraduate degree in agriculture should be speedily provided in the region but only after studying the existing faculties for higher agricultural education and the financial aspects of introducing agriculture at the University College. In addition, the conference called on the Secretary of State for the Colonies to issue a statement of policy clarifying financial obligations to the University College and the Imperial College. The conference further specified that the College undertake no new commitments capable of involving the colonies in further expenditure without their approval. The College, therefore, embarked on comparatively little provisions for new developments, and the needs of the region for trained agriculturists remained unsatisfied.

46 "Report of the Conference of Representatives of Governments of the British West Indies, British Guiana and British Honduras Met to Consider Finances of the University College of the West Indies, Jamaica, 1st-4th September 1952", in Supplement to Trinidad and Tobago Official Gazette, September 10, 1953, p. 17.

Since Trinidad and Tobago and the British West Indies were primarily dependent upon agriculture for their livelihood, the problem of higher agricultural education continued to receive attention. In 1955, Sir Robert S. Wood had carried out a thorough investigation of the need for agricultural education of degree status in the region⁴⁷. His major conclusion was that the tremendous financial cost did not justify the creation of a faculty of agriculture at the University College and students should pursue a three year science course at the University College followed by a two year agriculture course at the Imperial College. Such a programme was intended to produce agriculture specialists and not general agriculturists and was not implemented. The need for a general degree in agriculture, therefore, remained, unsatisfied.

47 Great Britain, Colonial Office, Report on the Provision of Agricultural Education of University Degree Standard in the British Caribbean Territories, Colonial No. 313, by Robert S. Wood, Chairman, London, H.M.S.O., 1955, iii-17 p.

5. The University College and Progress of Trinidad and Tobago 1946-1956

Higher education was designed to train a class of native leaders capable of manning the institutions of self-government and a modern economy. By 1956, Trinidad and Tobago had succeeded in providing opportunities for higher education in agriculture at the Imperial College, and in medicine, arts, natural science and education at the University College. For the period 1952 to 1956, Trinidad and Tobago had received a total of seventy-two graduates⁴⁸ from the College, twenty-nine in arts, nineteen in science, six in medicine and eighteen in education. At the same time, political, economic and social changes had been proceeding rapidly and in all these developments, higher education had an important part to play. In fact it was considered indispensable.

Higher Education and Constitutional Reform

The provision of higher education was an essential part of British strategy to prepare the colony for self-government, and over the period 1946 to 1956, Trinidad and Tobago had proceeded from recognition of the representative principle to the stage of almost complete responsible

⁴⁸ University College of the West Indies, Principal's Reports 1951-52 to 1955-56, Mona, Jamaica, U.C.W.I., various pages.

government. In 1946 for the first time in its history elections⁴⁹ had been held on the basis of universal adult suffrage. Although this extension of the franchise gave the working class a decisive vote, the function of the executive council remained purely advisory and the governor retained power to give law to any measure which he considered essential to good government. Such constitutional limitations on the powers of the elected members made it impossible for them to secure a majority on any measure but they were necessary in the light of the inexperience of the now greatly enlarged electorate and its representatives.

The general aim of British policy was the early provision of a constitution under which the government of Trinidad and Tobago would be directly responsible to the people whose affairs it controlled. As a result, in 1950 the executive council⁵⁰ was transformed into a responsible body which was the chief instrument of policy-making. This constitution⁵¹ offered political leaders the opportunity to gain experience in public administration. Any unofficial member of the executive council could be called upon to

49 H. O. B. Wooding, "The Constitutional History of Trinidad and Tobago", in Caribbean Quarterly, Vol. 6, Nos. 2&3, May 1960, p. 157.

50 Ibid.

51 Craig, op. cit., p. 171.

administer the government while the five elected members had the responsibility for the departments of health, agriculture, industry and education. The people had the dominant voice in the control of their affairs but the full use of that power had to await the development of a party system on which the success of parliamentary government depended.

By 1956, the development of responsible political parties with coherent and definable programmes brought about significant changes in Trinidad and Tobago. Under a new constitution⁵² total power was given to the elected members and nominated unofficial members were denied any voice in policy making. Moreover, with the establishment of a minister of finance, financial autonomy was achieved and the people of Trinidad and Tobago, through their elected representatives, assumed the responsibility for their financial affairs.

It was inevitable that this political drive would clash with British efforts to establish a federation of the West Indian colonies. It was not that this new government was opposed to federation, but the British idea of federation was behind the times and was part of the old colonialism of consolidating the Caribbean colonies in

52 Wooding, op. cit., p. 158.

order to facilitate government. Britain was encouraging a federation of the islands indirectly through the University College of the West Indies and the Colonial Development and Welfare organization and directly through active discussion of the topic. In 1947, a conference⁵³ of Trinidad and Tobago and the British West Indies held in Jamaica had unanimously accepted the principle of federation and appointed a Standing Closer Association Committee to draft a constitution. At the second conference⁵⁴ in 1953, Grenada was chosen as the federal capital and the draft constitution, which called for an executive council to include ex-officio members and a governor general with unlimited powers, was approved.

Ultimately, in 1956, despite strong island loyalties and jealousies, the personal jealousies of the political leaders, the fear of the larger and wealthier territories that were being asked to support the smaller and poorer ones, and the fear of the more politically developed islands that their progress in local self-government might be delayed by association with the less developed islands, Trinidad and Tobago and the British West Indies accepted federation as the

53 Eric Williams, History of the People of Trinidad and Tobago, London, Andre Deutsch, 1962, p. 253.

54 Ibid., p. 254.

only means of achieving dominion status and independence within the Commonwealth and exerting their power in international discussions that affected their interests. Under the federal constitution⁵⁵, the governor general was to have enormous reserve powers in the field of defence, foreign relations, international obligations, currency, constitutional amendments, imposition of duties, security measures and financial assistance. The question of customs union, internal free trade and freedom of movement were postponed. Moreover, the federation⁵⁶ was debarred from the income tax field and restricted to a ridiculous fixed revenue of \$9,120,000 that was to be derived from a mandatory levy of all the territories over the first five years. Trinidad and Tobago agreed to operate this disgraceful constitution but immediately took steps to amend it and introduce dominion status after the first five years.

Constitutional development and higher education acted and reacted on one another. By providing the men and women with the standards of public service and capacity for leadership, higher education had played an important part

55 Great Britain, Laws, Statutes, etc., The British Caribbean Federation Act 1956, 4 & 5 Elizabeth 2, ch. 63, p. 1-5.

56 Williams, History of the People of Trinidad and Tobago, p. 254.

in the political development of Trinidad and Tobago. With the attainment of a considerable measure of self-government, there was an urgent need for an increasing number of persons trained for administrative duties and for work in the professions, but there was a lack of university graduates to meet this requirement. Until this deficiency was made good, further development would be impeded.

Higher Education and Socio-economic Development

In addition to advancing the colony to self-government, higher education was intended to provide it with the means to develop its natural resources and build up its social institutions. The post-war economy of Trinidad and Tobago experienced significant changes facilitated by funds from the Colonial Development and Welfare Act. The economy⁵⁷ was now based on agriculture, mining, industry and manufacturing. Among the most important agricultural products were sugar and its by-products, rum and molasses, cocoa, citrus fruits and coconuts. By far the most important mineral products continued to be oil and asphalt. To encourage industrial growth and attract capital investment, the government⁵⁸, in 1950, began providing pioneering

⁵⁷ Texaco Caribbean, Vol. 10, No. 1, August 1967, p. 10-11.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

industries with a five-year import duty holiday on plant, machinery, tools and equipment, and in cases where they were non-residents, with facilities for the remittance of capital and profits abroad. As a result, Trinidad and Tobago received manufacturing industries in food processing, brewing, building materials, cigarettes, clothing, glass, paints, cement, textiles, pharmaceuticals and typewriters. Moreover, since 1955 the economy was growing at the rate of ten per cent per annum, and the colony displayed all the signs of an economic boom. This economy required professional and semi-professional personnel trained in science, engineering, agriculture and the allied fields but at the University College agriculture and engineering were non-existent and the natural sciences accounted for a small fraction of the total graduates, the majority being in the faculty of arts. While the arts have an undeniable value and importance, national development required a good many things besides.

There was an unquestionable need to provide a healthier balance in the student output of the College, but until the quality of secondary education improved, the number of science graduates would remain small and Trinidad and Tobago would have to import qualified personnel to sustain its growth. The post-war economic expansion had created urgent demands for engineers both in government and private

enterprise but the College provided no facilities for studies in engineering. Trinidad and Tobago, therefore, still had to send its students to foreign universities or import expatriate engineers. The need for providing engineering studies in the region, however, was recognized as evidenced by the appointment of a committee⁵⁹ to survey the demand for higher technical education in the Caribbean.

With the impetus and support given to agriculture as a vital industry, there was an increasing need for general agriculturists who would be employed on large estates, in government, commerce and industries ancillary to agriculture but the University College had no faculty of agriculture. The enormous expense involved in establishing such a faculty and the existence of the Imperial College had hindered development. Finally, in 1956, the Imperial College set up a special committee⁶⁰ to consider the establishment of a course in tropical agriculture and the possibility of closer relationship with the University College. Such a move

59 Great Britain, Colonial Office, Report of the Mission on Higher Technical Education in the British Caribbean 1957, Colonial No. 336, by G. S. V. Petter, Chairman, H.M.S.O., 1957, p. 1.

60 Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture, Report of the Governing Body and the Principal's Report 1956-57, St. Augustine, Trinidad, I.C.T.A., 1958, p. 8.

perhaps stemmed from the threat to the position of the Imperial College as a Commonwealth postgraduate school. As dependent territories achieved or even approached political independence within the Commonwealth, they would tend to taper off the recruitment of staff for their agricultural departments from Britain and these have formerly formed the great majority of the postgraduate students at the Imperial College. Governments that had relied on recruitment in Britain would increasingly tend to recruit their staff locally. Moreover, the universities of the tropical Commonwealth were rapidly developing their own agriculture faculties, and it was expected that they would be disinclined to rely indefinitely on the Imperial College for postgraduate training. Also, as the colonies attained independence, a steadily decreasing number of men and women would be appointed to permanent positions in the Colonial Agricultural Service because these governments would wish to replace expatriates with their own. The undergraduate and postgraduate enrolment at the Imperial College would eventually dwindle and the logical move in 1956, with the decision of Trinidad and Tobago and the British West Indies to federate, was to consider a close relationship with the University College. On its recommendation, the University College would have a faculty of agriculture.

Higher Education and Other Levels of Education

The development of professional and semi-professional personnel in Trinidad and Tobago was dependent not only on the expansion of higher education facilities but also on the quantitative and qualitative increase in secondary education on which the fortunes of higher education depended. The marked characteristic of educational development in Trinidad and Tobago was the growth of primary education brought about by the increase in funds and the need to educate the people to a degree sufficient to make them aware of their increasing political responsibility. In 1945, primary education was made compulsory throughout the colony⁶¹. In 1950 there were 306 primary schools with an enrolment of 115,309 but by 1956, the mounting educational aspirations of parents and their children, the stress of government policy on education as a precondition of overall national development and the tremendous increase in population, resulted in the provision of ninety additional primary schools with an enrolment of 145,512⁶². In comparison, secondary education remained small. In 1950, there were thirty-one secondary schools with an enrolment of 8,897

61 Earl N. M. Gooding, Education in Trinidad, Past and Present, unpublished Doctoral dissertation presented to the University of Connecticut, Storrs, Connecticut, 1961, p. 137.

62 Ibid., p. 147; 159; 168.

students and, in 1956, there were forty-five secondary schools, fifteen recognized and thirty private, with an enrolment of twenty thousand⁶³. Although secondary education was expanding at a greater rate than primary education, its development was determined to a large extent by the ability of families to support their children at secondary schools or to sacrifice their potential earnings. Government policy offered every child a chance for primary education but imposed a severely selective process for those who went on from there. In this way, primary education seemed to screen the academically bright and hold down the students in secondary and higher education to a manageable number and thereby maintain quality. This policy was intended to produce an educated elite which would provide society with its essential leadership but it wasted the human resources represented by those it rejected, who if given a fair chance for advanced education would profit and pass the benefits on to society. No modern economy, if it is to prosper, could afford such waste of human talent.

Qualitatively secondary education retained its nineteenth century character. The secondary school continued to function as an institution for classical education with a curriculum based on the subjects offered for the

63 Ibid., p. 163.

Cambridge School Certificate and Higher School Certificate. Trinidad and Tobago would be short of skilled personnel until the largely literary character of secondary education was reduced, the facilities for science teaching increased and the intellectual quality of schools improved. Moreover, the greatest immediate need was for an increased entry into the teaching profession at the secondary school level where non-university graduates⁶⁴ with qualifications consisting of a School Certificate or Higher School Certificate comprised the vast majority of the staff, but the number of graduates from the University College was small. At the same time, the small number of secondary school graduates and the high cost of higher education tended to limit the capacity of the University College. The quantitative and qualitative development of secondary education was, therefore, dependent on higher education to provide the graduates, particularly the science graduates, to staff the secondary schools, while the development of higher education was dependent on the increased output of secondary schools and the improvement of secondary education.

64 H. R. X. D'Aeth, Secondary Schools in the Caribbean, London, Longmans, 1956, p. 34-35.

Failure of University College to Cope with
Educational Needs of Trinidad and Tobago

The colony's social, economic and political development called for a supply of graduates in education, social science, agriculture, industry, commerce, government and the professions far above what it was obtaining from the University College. Opportunities at the College did not keep pace with educational developments⁶⁵ at the lower levels in Trinidad and Tobago. The restricted annual intake of new students⁶⁶ at the College meant that a proportion of qualified Trinidad and Tobago students failed to secure admission and moved abroad especially to Britain in search of higher education for which they knew they were qualified. Of the qualified applicants, it was likely that some went to American and Canadian universities paying their way through university by money earned from vacation work. In 1956-57, for example, there were 485 Trinidad and Tobago students in Canadian universities, 184 in American universities and 430 in British universities, as compared

65 Williams, History of the People of Trinidad and Tobago, p. 244-245.

66 University College of the West Indies, Principal's Report 1958-59, Mona, U.C.W.I., 1959, p. 2.

with only ninety-eight at the University College of the West Indies⁶⁷.

History had conditioned the people to believe that anything British was the best. For years the privilege of a higher education in Britain was enjoyed by the upper class and the scholarship winners. Secondary school graduates came to appreciate the tradition of the upper class and looked askance at any higher education institution in the Caribbean. By awarding scholarships to the most outstanding scholars for study at British universities, scholarships that were not confined to courses unavailable at the University College⁶⁸, Trinidad and Tobago strengthened the tradition of going to Britain for higher education and seemed to sanction the colonial belief that anything local was inferior and anything British was superior.

Moreover, the entrance requirements of the University College in Jamaica were identical to those of the University of London and when transferred to Trinidad and Tobago few students were able to attain them because of the colony's exclusive system of secondary education. For example, in 1948 and 1953, there were only 118 and 131 Trinidad and Tobago

67 Trinidad and Tobago, Department of Education, Triennial Survey 1955-1957, Annual Summary for 1957, Port-of-Spain, Government Printery, 1963, p. 63.

68 A. M. Carr-Saunders, New Universities Overseas, London, George Allen and Unwin, 1961, p. 95.

students⁶⁹ respectively, who had the basic entry requirements of the College. Entry requirements appeared more exacting than for universities in the United States of America and Canada, as several students from Trinidad and Tobago were offered places in these institutions.

Not only did higher education fail to increase its intake of students but it also failed to meet the need for professional training, except in medicine and education. Demand for the missing fields could be judged from the numbers of Trinidad and Tobago students pursuing agriculture, engineering and law at universities abroad, as shown in Table I. The University College, however, was offering courses in medicine, natural science, arts and education, yet in these fields there were more Trinidad and Tobago students in universities abroad. Stern limits to the amount of recurrent funds available to the College drastically restricted the development of additional facilities and higher education overseas continued to be the more important means of meeting high level professional needs of Trinidad and Tobago. Moreover, the shortage of qualified staff, the cost of imported personnel, equipment, libraries, and so forth, tended to limit the scope of higher education and

⁶⁹ Trinidad and Tobago, Department of Education, Administrative Reports of the Director of Education 1948 and 1953, Port-of-Spain, Government Printing Office, various pages.

Table I.- Trinidad and Tobago Students Registered at the University College of the West Indies and at Universities in Canada, United States and United Kingdom 1956-57

Discipline	UCWI	Canada	US	UK
Arts & Social Science	44	130	6	57
Natural Science	32	209	45	18
Agric. & Forestry	a	24	5	1
Architecture	a	4	3	4
Dentistry	a	0	4	10
Education	0	3	18	7
Engineering	a	25	20	47
Law	a	1	1	40
Library Science	a	0	0	1
Medicine	22	40	5	120
Veterinary Med.	a	5	0	7
Unclassified	0	44	77	115
TOTAL	98	485	184	430

Trinidad and Tobago, Department of Education,
Triennial Survey 1955-1957, Annual Summary for 1957,
 Port-of-Spain, Government Printery, 1963, p. 63.

a Not offered.

raised the cost of education per student.

The University College was to do something more for Trinidad and Tobago than generations of individual students scattered in universities abroad could ever achieve. It seems that by its mere presence the College lifted horizons for a large segment of the population which formerly regarded higher education as beyond their reach. The establishment of this College seemed to be directly linked with the sudden emergence of a growing population of Trinidad and Tobago students at foreign universities. If Trinidad and Tobago students who graduated abroad were to return home, the colony would have had sufficient trained personnel to meet its needs but the failure of large numbers to return was creating a shortage of graduates. This was a great economic cost to the society in the permanent loss of highly trained manpower on whom large sums of money had been spent by way of primary and secondary education. This exodus contributed to the disproportion between the government's financial contributions to the running of the University College and the number of Trinidad and Tobago students at the College. To this government, it might have seemed preferable on economic grounds to award scholarships for its students to proceed to universities abroad principally because fees represented only a small part of the cost of higher education which was heavily subsidized in

other countries.

6. Retrospect and Prospect

Education was largely the basis of the future of Trinidad and Tobago and, with unprecedented plans for further political, economic and social development, the government intended to continue its support of the University College. The objective of political development⁷⁰ was immediate self government in internal affairs, a bicameral legislature, independence within the West Indies Federation and, if this was unattainable, independence outside the federation. The programme for economic and social development⁷¹ included adoption of the international standards for all categories of workers, provision of more and better houses, schools and social services, reorganization of the economy to make the fullest use of all the resources both physical and human, reorganization of the education system to meet the political, economic and social needs of the country, increase the number of exhibitions to secondary schools, provision of free secondary education for all children capable of benefitting from it, expansion and

⁷⁰ Eric Williams, Inward Hunger, the Education of a Prime Minister, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1969, p. 144.

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 145.

improvement of facilities for training teachers, improvement of health services, promotion of an economic programme concentrated on agriculture and industrial development, maximum utilization of arable land, expansion of credit, greater local production of food, encouragement of research for new sources of oil, encouragement of petrochemicals and food processing industries, incentive to industrial production and protection for local products, expansion of forest and fishing industries, and the necessary infrastructure, roads and transport. Such plans called for increased facilities for higher education to train the needed manpower and it could be expected that Trinidad and Tobago would bring to bear upon the University College of the West Indies the necessity for expansion and relevance to its needs.

Higher liberal education for Trinidad and Tobago arose out of the desire of the British government to transfer political power from colonial administrators to native leaders and to raise living standards by developing the agricultural and industrial facilities sufficient to assure the colony an income when it achieved independence. In other words, decolonization was thought of as having application to universities which by training specialists, carrying out research and providing extramural studies would hasten social, economic and political progress of the

dependent territories. Higher education, therefore, was to change society quickly.

In the hope of persuading Trinidad and Tobago and the British West Indies to remain in the Commonwealth after independence, Britain sought to export her values and institutions. All who exercised power or gave orders in the colonies had British academic achievements and for the people of Trinidad and Tobago to join the ranks of the ruling classes under the colonial regime and to prepare themselves for the time when full power would be passed to them, higher education had to be basically of the British type. And so, the University College of the West Indies was established along the lines of a British civic university. It had been designed as a self governing corporation affiliated with the University of London. Its entry requirements, curricula and degrees were identical to those of London although minor modifications to meet local needs were allowed and research in local problems stressed. As for its social function, the prime purpose of the College was to nurture an elite.

Initially there was little awareness of misadaptation. On the one hand, higher education by training the needed personnel, investigating the problems of the region, stimulating general progress and encouraging the development of leaders, had contributed to the social, economic and

political development of Trinidad and Tobago and provided an important means of social mobility. On the other hand, the superiority of the British way of life, British education and indeed of all things British permeated every aspect of life in Trinidad and Tobago with the result that the natural ambition of the people was to have no cheapened version of higher education, no low standards and no substitutes. They wanted a university education identical to that given in London and the expatriate staff had no other model to offer.

In the decade following the war, however, the needs of Trinidad and Tobago had increased sharply. The extent of social and economic change and the pace of constitutional development called for a supply of graduates far above what the College was providing and in fields not yet available at the College. To do justice to the growing demands of its community, the College had to look ahead to a period of expansion and the supporting territories had to lift their financial restrictions on its development. Moreover, if Trinidad and Tobago hoped to meet its needs for qualified personnel, it had to adopt more positive measures to encourage students to go to the University College and attract those who graduate abroad to return home.

In the meantime, these higher educational problems were producing some doubt and questioning about the College

and its policies and, as will be seen in the next chapter, would lead to a critical study of the present and future policy of the College, its limitations and needs.

Furthermore, it could be expected that Trinidad and Tobago would bring to bear upon the College a pressure for relevance to its intellectual and professional needs and that the College as part of its service to the community would readily assume the responsibility for meeting these needs.

CHAPTER IV

ADAPTING HIGHER EDUCATION TO A NEWLY INDEPENDENT COUNTRY 1957-1968

The University College was consciously created as an indispensable contribution to the process of decolonization but as Trinidad and Tobago and the British West Indian colonies achieved political independence the need for adaptation and diversification of higher education became necessary. In tracing the course of higher education from 1957 to 1968 it is possible to find in the various policies adopted by the University College the steps which were taken to meet the needs of the community during the West Indies Federation. It is also possible to see how higher education was adapted and expanded to face the growing needs challenging the newly independent Trinidad and Tobago.

1. Challenge of Independence: The Cato Report 1958

By 1957 Trinidad and Tobago was actively engaged in unprecedented plans for further political, economic and social development. Its political objective was immediate self government, a bicameral legislature and independence within or without the federation. Its first five-year

plan¹ for economic and social development intended to expand the infrastructure by extending electricity, communications and water supply, provide more and better homes, social and medical services for the population, develop the agriculture and fishing industries, expand the manufacturing sector, increase the number of primary and secondary schools and introduce free secondary education.

Such plans called for increased facilities for higher education and it was clear that for higher education to meet the needs of its community, it had to expand in numbers. The University College had been established to cater to four to five hundred students. By 1957, it had exceeded its upper limit². Moreover, had more money been available for qualified applicants to proceed to the College the expansion would have been greater. The goal of five hundred students was no longer satisfactory for there were nearly eleven hundred Trinidad and Tobago students in universities abroad and the demand³ for trained men and women was rising more swiftly than the supply.

1 Eric Williams, History of the People of Trinidad and Tobago, London, Andre Deutsch, 1962, p. 244-247.

2 H. W. Springer, "The Historical Development, Hopes and Aims of the University College of the West Indies", in Journal of Negro Education, Vol. 31, No. 1, Winter 1962, p. 8.

3 University College of the West Indies, Principal's Report 1958-59, Mona, Jamaica, U.C.W.I., 1959, p. 2.

The needs of the region were not only for more graduates but also for a greater variety of skills. Since 1953, the College had embarked on comparatively little provision for new developments although its student population had doubled. In 1957, with the approach of federation, the College looked ahead to a period of development that would do justice to the increasing demands of society, and once again, outlined proposals⁴ to expand certain existing programmes and introduce new developments such as the establishment of departments of philosophy, government, law, geography and geology, and faculties of agriculture and engineering. The Standing Federation Committee, which was appointed to prepare for the West Indies federation, considered these developments important and urgent but was unable to provide financial support because there was an inflexible limit to federal funds until 1963.

Once again the scope for development and expansion of higher education was small. Of crucial importance for the future of the area was a supply of agriculturists

4 "Report of the Second Quinquennial Advisory Committee, 1957", in West Indies, Standing Federation Committee, Report of the Committee Appointed to Review the Policy of the University College of the West Indies, December 1957 - January 1958, by A. S. Cato, Chairman, Barbados, Advocate Printers, 1958, p. 25-27.

trained in tropical agriculture but the contributing territories postponed their decision for a faculty of agriculture at the College mainly because of the heavy financial cost involved and the presence in Trinidad of the world renowned Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture. The need for a faculty of engineering at the College was adequately described by the Petter Committee⁵ whose conclusion was that if the next few years alone were considered the region could provide the small number of engineers required by appointing expatriates and awarding scholarships for study abroad but, if present plans to industrialize and mechanize the industries continued, it was unsatisfactory to rely on other countries to train engineers because the world demand was great and rising rapidly. In modern terms the structure of the College was incomplete and the Committee recommended that the College "mirror the world and include within its range all the major disciplines among which engineering must now be counted".⁶ Nevertheless, the contributing territories took the risk of relying on training elsewhere and turned down the proposal for establishing a faculty of engineering mainly because of the heavy initial and recurrent cost.

5 Great Britain, Colonial Office, Report of the Mission on Higher Technical Education in the British Caribbean, 1957, Colonial No. 336, by G. S. V. Petter, Chairman, London, H.M.S.O., 1957, vi-30 p.

6 Ibid., p. 18.

Development is the child of knowledge and Trinidad and Tobago looked to the College for trained people to man its civil service, to take up posts of responsibility in commerce and industry and to staff the professions. In order to satisfy the needs of the region, the College needed more money for capital and recurrent expenditure which the supporting territories would have to provide if their development were not to be retarded.

In its effort to pave the way for the federation, the Standing Federation Committee undertook to examine various problem areas among which was higher education. In the short space of ten years, the College had established faculties of medicine, arts and science and a department of extramural studies with centers in the various islands. At the same time, political, economic and social changes had been proceeding rapidly in Trinidad and Tobago and in the British West Indies and there was no doubt that further developments would be taking place in the years ahead. It was necessary, therefore, to consider whether any changes in the policy of higher education should be brought about to ensure that the growth of higher education matched the growth of the society. Moreover, the increasing number of students seeking higher education overseas produced some doubt about the policy of the University College, and the Standing Federation

Committee appointed a committee⁷ under the chairmanship of Dr. A. S. Cato to review the policy of the College with special reference to its residential character, the nature and scope of teaching, the appointment and promotion of West Indians on the staff and the relationship with the University of London. Although politically appointed, the Cato Committee made useful recommendations without interfering with academic matters.

In its investigation of the need for the College to expand in numbers, the Committee examined the policy of the College and of the territorial governments with regard to financial provisions for students. Since the proper function of the College was to provide higher education, it was requested to cease using its funds for maintenance of students and for their travelling between the islands and the College and to award instead exhibitions and bursaries. The territorial governments were asked to increase their aid to students and to cease awarding scholarships to universities abroad in studies available at the College. The Committee concluded that obtaining admission to the College should automatically assure a student the necessary means to

⁷ West Indies, Standing Federation Committee, Report of the Committee Appointed to Review the Policy of the University College of the West Indies, December 1957 - January 1958, by A. S. Cato, Chairman, Barbados, Advocate Printers, 1958, 159 p. Hereafter cited as Cato Report 1958.

pursue the course of studies.

To a large extent, the expansion of the College was restricted by its residential policy. Before obtaining a degree every student was required to live in residence for three years. This policy was natural and justifiable in the first years especially since there was a lack of sufficient and adequate off campus lodgings but was neither desirable nor practicable in the years ahead. With increasing numbers, the College could not afford sufficient residence at the sacrifice of increased physical and academic facilities and, in view of the growing amount of suitable lodgings in proximity to the College, the Committee recommended that the residential policy be relaxed with only one year of residence compulsory. Only in this way could the College increase its numbers without unnecessarily increasing its expenses.

In addition to the scholars that the governments were maintaining in foreign universities, there was an increasing number of students going abroad for higher education. In its examination of this trend, the Committee concluded that some students were going abroad for courses not yet available at the College while others, lacking the finance to pursue full time study at the College, went abroad mainly because of the opportunity to work and study. At no time did it postulate that admission requirements to the College were more exacting than for some universities in the

United Kingdom and for American and Canadian universities. Such an oversight could be attributed to its preoccupation with high standards and its acceptance of the British policy that higher education was to train an elite. The Committee did not consider it within its power to advise on admission requirements and left it entirely with the College to decide on the students that were suited for higher education.

Deeply concerned about and disappointed with the financial restriction on the growth of the College, the Committee urged that funds be made available to the College if its progress was not to be seriously hindered, its growth and intellectual vitality gravely impeded and its power to serve the needs of the area severely restricted. The Committee emphasized that the growth of the College was vital to the development of the society and to restrict this natural growth in the present phase of the history of the West Indies would be a profound mistake.

For the College to increase and sustain its intellectual vitality and serve the Caribbean community in a way and to an extent which was expected of it, the Committee recommended an expansion of existing programmes and the incorporation of more vocational training. Expansion in the faculty of arts was to include the establishment of chairs in classics, Spanish, philosophy and geography, and in the faculty of science, chairs of

mathematics, physics and geology. A new faculty of social sciences was to consist of the department of economics which was housed in the faculty of arts and the new departments of government and sociology. Vocational training was to involve agriculture and engineering. The Committee urged the University College to accept the generous offer⁸ of the governing body of the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture to transfer to the University College the whole of the Imperial College for the University College to develop as its faculty of agriculture and as early as possible introduce studies in agriculture to train specialists and general agriculturists. In the light of rapid industrialization taking place in the region, the Committee recommended that the University College initiate courses in mechanical, chemical, electrical and civil engineering as soon as possible.

To impress upon students that knowledge cannot be divided into rigidly confined compartments but that each branch of learning is dependent on and ramifies into all other branches, the Committee recommended that the College arrange short courses of general interest. Such courses

⁸ Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture, Report of the Governing Body and the Principal's Report for 1957-58, St. Augustine, Trinidad, I.C.T.A., 1959, p. 8.

would not lead to an examination but would be designed to stimulate interest in the wider issues of human knowledge.

Although the needs of the region were for more graduates with a broad education to fill vacant positions in the civil service and to teach in the schools, the Committee seemed determined to emphasize the honours programme in which students specialized. It recommended as desirable that the faculty of arts introduce studies for the honours degree in Spanish, and the faculty of science, for the honours degree in the various subjects of the natural sciences. In addition, arrangements were to be made for the faculty of social sciences to offer the honours programme in economics and, in due course, in political science and sociology. To raise the image of agriculture and allow it to enjoy the prestige of the professions of medicine and law, the faculty of agriculture, in addition to training general agriculturists who would do one year at the University College in Jamaica and two years at the Imperial College in Trinidad, was to train specialists and research officers who would pursue a degree in pure science followed by two years postgraduate training in agriculture. The Committee acknowledged that students taking a degree in science would be reluctant to pursue this course in agriculture mainly because the possession of a science degree would expose them to the temptation to enter attractive well-paid employment

in industry but it was certain that the relatively small numbers required to fill specialist and research positions in agriculture would be forthcoming.

Throughout its report the Committee compared the progress of the University College with that of British universities and on every occasion the College emerged as an institution that had achieved high academic standards. This was not surprising since the College was in special relationship with the University of London and its teaching was for degrees equal in quality with those of the internal students of the University of London. The Committee was satisfied that the College fulfilled the conditions for full university status and recommended that in the light of the changed situation that would be created by the coming of the federal government the College should take steps to obtain in the near future full university status by means of a royal charter. Although confident that university status would bring with it no relaxation in the academic standards which the College had maintained, the Committee considered it imperative that the College adopt all possible means of guarding itself against loss of confidence. To ensure beyond any doubt that the standards of the examinations and the degrees of the university were equivalent to those of universities in the United Kingdom, it advised the College to maintain the British system of using external examiners.

At the University College academic appointments were made on the basis of the best qualified person available and only after consultation with the Inter-University Council for Higher Education Overseas. As a result, expatriates had always outnumbered West Indians on the academic staff. The most valuable service that the expatriate staff performed was to establish high standards in the teaching and research of the subjects in which they were experts. The relation between the teacher and the student, however, is never merely intellectual and there were many who considered that being West Indian should be viewed as a qualification for a position on the academic staff. Although the Committee agreed that West Indians could evoke in students a lively interest in the history and tradition of the region, it considered that the academic name and standing of the College were paramount. At a time when the College was building up its reputation in the world, it was advised to shun any policy that might reduce its attractiveness to outstanding scholars from abroad and continue its policy of appointing to its staff West Indians who were equal in qualifications and merit to the best non-West Indian candidates. At the same time, however, the Committee suggested that vacant positions be advertised in the United States, Canada and Britain to ensure that West Indians studying in these countries had every opportunity

to submit applications.

The Cato Committee produced a most comprehensive and thorough report. It can be said that in general the College came well out of the review. There was no fundamental criticism of its policy or of its performance though there were numerous recommendations on special points. The report did much to improve the position of the College in public esteem and to make known to West Indians that they had their own center of higher education which could stand comparison with institutions overseas.

2. Expansion and Decentralization in Higher Education 1958-1961

The claims of economy had so far impeded the expansion of higher education but the realization that political, economic and social development depended on the creation and maintenance of an adequate supply of highly skilled manpower brought about an increased investment in higher education. The West Indies Federation⁹, which came into being in 1958, assumed financial responsibility for providing higher education in the area and agreed to

⁹ Great Britain, Laws, Statutes, etc., The British Caribbean Federation Act of 1956, 4 & 5 Elizabeth 2, ch. 63, 5 p.

provide funds¹⁰ to implement the recommendations of the Cato Committee. Moreover, the government of Trinidad and Tobago¹¹, as a matter of policy, began making additional yearly grants for qualified students to pursue studies at the University College. Finally the College emerged from a period of difficulty and frustration and looked forward with confidence to a period of swift increase in numbers and in its range of teaching and research.

Given the multiplicity of claims on the resources of developing countries like Trinidad and Tobago, the College made every effort to tailor higher education to the needs of its community. By departing from its principle¹² of one hundred per cent residence and admitting students who lived off campus, it increased its enrolment. Within the short space of three years, it established chairs of classics and Spanish in the faculty of arts, a department of geology and chairs of mathematics and physics in the faculty of science and introduced the honours programme in Spanish and the

10 West Indies, House of Representatives, "Parliamentary Debates, November 16, 1960", in Debates in the House of Representatives 1960, col. 2499.

11 University College of the West Indies, Principal's Report 1958-59, p. 1.

12 Ibid., p. 5.

various natural sciences, and background courses¹³. Moreover, by 1961, the faculties of social sciences, agriculture and engineering were on their way and a petition was made for a royal charter. The establishment of departments of geography and philosophy, however, was deferred.

Faculty of Social Sciences

With Federation, Trinidad and Tobago was engrossed in rapid fundamental changes that called for trained personnel. Social and economic changes were creating a demand for people with a knowledge of social and economic theories and their relation to the local environment. Not only was the colony advancing rapidly on the road to full internal self government when Britain would transfer to her areas of effective power but also the West Indies Federation, of which Trinidad and Tobago was a member, was expected to achieve dominion status in five years. Political advancement demanded a body of men and women learned in economics and government to provide leadership and staff the new departments because one of the fundamental rights of a self governing people was to control their public service. The

13 Ibid., p. 4.

faculty of social sciences¹⁴, which was established in 1959, assumed the responsibility of meeting these intellectual and professional needs and concentrated on providing the basic social sciences upon which varying degrees of specialization could be built because secondary school students had not studied any basic social science and had scant knowledge of the subject.

The social sciences were no newcomer to the local scene. Since 1948 the Institute of Social and Economic Research had undertaken studies on the economic, historical and sociological aspects of the area with a view to introducing the social sciences in the undergraduate curriculum. With the publication of a number of important studies on the economic and social life of the Caribbean region, it was possible to introduce the undergraduate programme in social sciences and, at the same time, integrate the Institute with the faculty of social sciences¹⁵.

14 University College of the West Indies, Principal's Report 1960-61, Mona, Jamaica, U.C.W.I., 1961, p. 16.

15 University College of the West Indies, "General Introduction", in Calendar 1960-61, Mona, Jamaica, U.C.W.I., 1960, p. 18.

Faculty of Agriculture in Trinidad

Trinidad and Tobago had not achieved self sufficiency of important food products. Its major industry was geared towards the production of agricultural commodities for export while the improvement in the standard of living was giving rise to a demand for high priced foods which were merely met by importation. It was obvious that a major step forward in the economy, in the standard of living and in political advancement could be brought about by concentrating on the production of local foods for local sale. Although government policy was oriented in this direction, there were many problems that required study by experts. Not only had new varieties of plants to be tested under local conditions and their agronomy and management studied in detail but also the marketing and processing aspects had to be examined. This increasing emphasis on agriculture called for a supply of agriculturists far above what Trinidad and Tobago was receiving from the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture. The small input of agriculturists resulted from the negative public attitude towards agriculture and the hesitancy of students to pursue a course that culminated in a diploma instead of a degree.

That Trinidad and Tobago students had wanted this change for a long time was demonstrated by the fact that the

number of them going abroad to get a degree in agriculture was several times as large as the number going to the Imperial College to study for the diploma¹⁶. This was a ridiculous state of affairs, since the Imperial College offered a course which was as good as students could get anywhere and which was infinitely superior in terms of relevance to West Indian agriculture. In October 1960 when the Imperial College formally handed over its assets to the University College as its faculty of agriculture, students had the opportunity to pursue degree studies.

The new faculty of agriculture¹⁷ was West Indian in nature and designed primarily to meet local needs, while its research objectives and extension work were fully oriented towards the needs of the region. Nationals of Trinidad and Tobago had no need to go to temperate countries to gain degree qualifications as agriculturists, now that the opportunity to study with familiar crops and climatic conditions with which their lives' work would be associated was available in Trinidad. In the first few years, however,

16 Sir Arthur Lewis, Address: Merger of the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture with the University College of the West Indies, Queen's Hall, Port-of-Spain, October 12, 1960, St. Augustine, University of the West Indies Archives, p. 3.

17 P. Mahadevan, "The University's Faculty of Agriculture", in Caribbean Quarterly, Vol. 11, Nos. 1&2, March-June 1965, p. 36.

the faculty was faced with the problem¹⁸ that inadequate numbers of students elected to apply for admission and the output of agriculturists was limited. Not even a degree in agriculture could offset the negative public attitude towards agriculture. Moreover, the absence of agriculture in the primary and secondary schools did little to increase its image as an academic subject. The development of the country and its agricultural output, therefore, depended to a great extent in fostering healthy attitudes in secondary school students.

Faculty of Engineering in Trinidad

A country can grow and expand only as fast as its education system can supply it with trained personnel. For successful industrialization, accelerated development of manufacturing industries and mechanization of agriculture, Trinidad and Tobago needed skilled craftsmen which the engineering faculty was to provide. The establishment of this faculty¹⁹ in 1961 was a significant step in the history of Trinidad and Tobago because it destroyed the tradition of importing all engineering skills and raised the dignity of

¹⁸ University of the West Indies, Vice-Chancellor's Report 1966-67, Mona, Jamaica, U.W.I., 1967, p. 11.

¹⁹ University College of the West Indies, Principal's Report 1961-62, Mona, Jamaica, U.C.W.I., 1962, p. 8.

technical education. The establishment of the engineering faculty alongside the faculty of agriculture marked the most fundamental change in the policy of the University College. It celebrated the introduction of a new subject at university level in Trinidad and transformed the highly centralized and almost completely residential College into a decentralized institution. This did not mean splitting the College, breaking it up or adopting a needlessly extravagant type of higher education. It was not division but multiplication²⁰, an economic and effective way of preserving the essential unity of the College while developing it as a regional institution. It was also obvious that the region's resources might be more wisely deployed if the costly professional faculties like medicine, engineering and agriculture were on different campuses. For example, Trinidad with its oil base provided challenging opportunities for engineering students to acquire practical experience.

The engineering faculty²¹ began by copying London degrees in civil, electrical, mechanical and chemical engineering. The engineer could now receive his training in his home environment and come to know materials and equipment

²⁰ University of the West Indies, Vice-Chancellor's Report 1964-65, Mona, Jamaica, U.W.I., 1965, p. i.

²¹ R. O. Robinson, "Bread and Butter Faculty", in Trinidad Guardian, February 2, 1963, p. 3.

on which to rely, the skills available and the ways in which these could be improved and developed. That nationals wanted this faculty could be judged from the number of them going abroad for engineering. For example, in 1957-58, there were ninety-two²² at foreign universities.

In its first few years, the faculty faced many problems. It could have taken in more students but, in 1961, it attracted only eight Trinidad and Tobago nationals as compared with fifty-nine in Britain, fifty-four in Canada and thirty-nine in the United States²³. Moreover, according to Dr. K. S. Julien²⁴, Dean of Engineering, first year students encountered considerable difficulty for they came from environments where engineering activity was at a minimum and, because of socioeconomic conditions, never had the opportunity of playing with machinery, tools and mechanical toys. Moreover, the engineering course was designed so that training on the job was essential, but in the British West Indies few industries afforded such opportunities. The College, therefore, relied heavily on the oil refineries of Trinidad.

22 Trinidad and Tobago, Education Department, Triennial Survey 1955-1957, Annual Summary for 1957, Port-of-Spain, Government Printery, 1963, p. 63.

23 Unesco, Trinidad and Tobago Educational Planning Mission, March - June 1964, (WS/.0764.115.ED), p. 105. Hereafter cited as Educational Planning Mission 1964.

24 K. S. Julien, "The Education of the Engineer in the West Indies", in Caribbean Quarterly, Vol. 12, No. 2, June 1966, p. 4.

3. Attainment of Cabinet Government and Demand
for College of Arts and Science in Trinidad
and Tobago 1959-1961

Political, economic and social advance demanded an educated populace, the creation of which entailed a vigorous programme of education at all levels of society. The University College was already engaged in preparing those who would be called upon to exercise leadership roles in the country, and it was the responsibility of the primary and secondary school system to create a mental environment which would provide the fullest participation of citizens in the decision taking process and in the conduct of their own affairs. With the attainment of cabinet government²⁵ in 1959, the government of Trinidad and Tobago appointed a committee under the chairmanship of J. Hamilton Maurice to undertake a thorough investigation of every branch of education in the colony. Its recommendations²⁶ called for the reorganization and decentralization of the machinery of educational administration, increase in the number of primary and secondary schools, establishment of nursery schools, and modern secondary schools that would provide a general

25 H. O. B. Wooding, "The Constitutional History of Trinidad and Tobago", in Caribbean Quarterly, Vol. 6, Nos. 2&3, May 1960, p. 158.

26 Trinidad and Tobago, Committee on General Education, Education Report, by J. H. Maurice, Chairman, St. Augustine, University of the West Indies Archives, 1959, x-115 p. (Typewritten).

education in academic and practical subjects, compulsory attendance from five to fifteen years, introduction of agriculture in secondary schools, free secondary education, improvement in teacher training, post-secondary schools to provide vocational, commercial, technical and agricultural education and a college of liberal arts and science.

After examining the contributions of the University College to the country, the Committee recommended that the government take immediate steps to establish its own college of liberal arts and science. The growing realization of the country's economic dependence upon the education of its population led to much questioning about the adequacy of existing arrangements for higher education. Trinidad and Tobago²⁷ was providing a relatively small number of students in relation to its financial contribution to the running of the College. In 1959, for example, it contributed \$1,248,000 and there were only one hundred of its students registered at the College. At the same time, the University College was not meeting the country's increasing demand for graduates for secondary school teaching and public administration because opportunities at the College had not kept pace with

27 Trinidad and Tobago, National Planning Commission, Draft Second Five-Year Plan 1964-1968, Port-of-Spain, Government Printery, 1963 p. 129. Hereafter cited as Second Five-Year Plan 1964-1968.

developments in education at the lower levels, where the number in secondary schools had trebled since 1955. This extension of educational opportunity at the secondary level and widening of the desire for higher education on the part of young people greatly increased the demand for places. In Trinidad and Tobago 203 students²⁸ received the Higher School Certificate in 1959 and were clearly eligible for university admission, but the University College could admit only two hundred first year students from the entire West Indies Federation. In 1959, therefore, almost twice as many Trinidad and Tobago students attending the University College were registered in universities in the United States of America²⁹ to say nothing of students going to Britain and Canada. Moreover, from year to year, some of the best students who failed to win an island scholarship left school and pursued no further studies because they lacked either the opportunity or the means to go to the University College.

To bring the advantages of higher education to the doors of its students, the Maurice Committee outlined a

28 Trinidad and Tobago, Working Party on the Establishment of Faculties of Arts and Sciences at St. Augustine, Report 1961, by W. G. Demas, Chairman, St. Augustine, University of the West Indies Archives, p. 9.

29 United States of America, Institute of International Education, Open Doors and Census Report 1959, New York, I.I.E., 1960, p. 44.

detailed proposal for establishing a college of liberal arts and science in September 1959. The college was to be co-educational and cater to full time and part time students who possessed the Higher School Certificate. At the start, provision was to be made for admitting thirty to forty day students who would read for external degrees from the University of London. Moreover, to encourage secondary school graduates to attend full time classes, the Committee recommended that the government pay them an allowance or provide scholarships. In the opinion of the Committee, the government would thus be providing an opportunity for higher education which hitherto had been sadly lacking and would be contributing one of its greatest blessings to the development of the country. The Committee envisaged that in time this college would be converted into an extension center of the University College of the West Indies and recommended that the government undertake immediate negotiations to bring this about. The government, however, was advised that it should not wait to complete such negotiations before establishing the college.

The Maurice Committee's recommendations resulted in three major changes in Trinidad and Tobago. With greater political responsibility and the movement towards independence, there was a fundamental change in the concept of education. The census figures for 1960 showed the limiting

result of the old system³⁰ of primary education for the masses and secondary and higher education for the elite. Only four per cent of the population had secured advanced secondary education and 0.7 per cent higher education. With such statistics the government recognized the need to open the secondary school to all children with ability regardless of their means and, in 1960, began providing free secondary education³¹. Moreover, a polytechnic institute³² was established in 1959 to offer a wide variety of subjects up to degree level and, in 1960, the University College decided to establish a branch³³ which would begin by catering to students who were pursuing external degrees of the University of London at this polytechnic. This momentous decision coincided with the final stages of negotiations between Trinidad and Tobago and the United States of America and perhaps influenced the government of Trinidad and Tobago to include a college of arts and science in its negotiations

30 G. W. Roberts and N. Abdulah, "Some Observations on the Educational Position of the British Caribbean", in Social and Economic Studies, Vol. 14, No. 1, March 1965, p. 145.

31 Williams, History of the People of Trinidad and Tobago, p. 245.

32 Educational Planning Mission 1964, p. 72.

33 Trinidad and Tobago, Cabinet Proposals on Education, Approved by the Legislative Council on 5th July 1960, St. Augustine, University of the West Indies Archives, p. 21.

for financial assistance towards major development projects.

Chaguaramas, the American base on Trinidad's northwest peninsula, was chosen as the capital of the West Indies Federation. Trinidad and Tobago found itself in a quandary. On the one hand, it was pledged to respect international obligations, in particular the 1941 agreement³⁴ whereby certain areas of the country were leased as armed forces bases to the United States of America, and on the other hand, it could not inflict on the Federation a capital site that it did not desire. After much deliberation, Trinidad and Tobago proposed that the United States should evacuate Chaguaramas and select a new site for its base. The United States was unwilling and the campaign began for the return of Chaguaramas. For four long years Trinidad and Tobago kept the issue alive through meetings with the British and American governments and through the press and radio. By 1960, the United States was ready to release Chaguaramas and, in return for the use of this port during the Second World War, agreed to provide financial assistance towards

³⁴ Trinidad and Tobago, Agreement Between the Governments of the United Kingdom and the United States of America (and Exchange of Notes), Concerning the Trinidad - United States Bases Lease, Council Paper No. 22 of 1941, Port-of-Spain, Government Printing Office, 1941, 46 p.

major development projects³⁵, one of which was a college of liberal arts and science. In the near future Trinidad and Tobago would have facilities to provide degree opportunities in arts and science and the great majority of young people who qualify for university would be able to afford it at home.

4. An Independent University for an Independent Federation 1962

While higher education expanded to meet the needs of the community, Trinidad and Tobago and the other members of the Federation were engaged in debate and wrangling on the powers and responsibilities of the federal government, its source of revenue, the representative principle and freedom of movement. This internal bickering³⁶ reached its climax at the 1959 conference which revealed the two diametrically opposed conceptions of federation. Trinidad and Tobago wanted a free and independent federal government playing an active role in the integration of the national economy, while Jamaica stood for a federation that was shorn

35 Trinidad and Tobago, Legislative Council, "Debates 16 December 1960", in Debates in the Legislative Council of Trinidad and Tobago 1960, cols. 750-9432.

36 Eric Williams, Inward Hunger, the Education of a Prime Minister, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1969, p. 181-188.

of all economic powers. Although the 1959 conference failed to come to any agreement, it revealed that if the Federation was to continue there had to be a compromise between the divergent views of Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago. If such compromise was impossible there would be no Federation. Jamaica would walk out if it failed to secure the safeguards it demanded, and Trinidad and Tobago made it clear that if Jamaica left it would not carry on in the Federation.

Such internal wrangling continued until early 1961 when representatives assembled in London to work out the details for an independent Federation. At this meeting³⁷ the Secretary of State proposed the primacy of the unit territory over the Federation with the exception of the freedom of movement. Trinidad and Tobago stood alone in its opposition to a Federation in which economic development was to remain in the hands of the territories while the federal government was to have exclusive power over freedom of movement between the territories. Nevertheless, this Federation with its limited revenues and powers was to achieve independence in April 1962.

37 Ibid., p. 190-193.

Creation of the University of the West Indies

Political independence would be a sham if the control of the country's intellectual life remained in foreign hands and College policies continued to be influenced by the Inter-University Council for Higher Education Overseas. The University College symbolized the desire for closer union among the peoples of the Caribbean, and this desire which had crystallized into the West Indies Federation imposed a greater responsibility on the system of higher education. To fulfill its role properly, it was necessary for the College to end its period of affiliation and become a fully independent university with the power to grant its own degrees and direct its own research. Since an independent institution would be better able to plan for the higher educational needs of an independent Federation, the petition for a royal charter was considered essential. In August 1961, the University College petitioned for a royal charter which was granted on April 2, 1962.

This charter³⁸ converted the College, teaching for degrees of the University of London, into a university awarding its own degrees. The granting of this charter signalled the completion of the apprenticeship period and

38 University of the West Indies, Royal Charter of Incorporation, 1962, Mona, Jamaica, U.W.I., 1962, 8 p.

acknowledged that excellent foundations had been laid over the past fourteen years when the College worked under a special relationship scheme with the University of London.

The new charter required only minor modifications to convert the University College into the independent University of the West Indies. It kept the conventional British model of an autonomous corporation with a two tier system of government, a predominantly lay council and a professorial senate. The nominees of the Chancellor replaced members of the Inter-University Council for Higher Education Overseas, and instead of the principal as chairman of the senate, there was now a vice-chancellor. The senate was composed of professors and a few non-professorial staff. Persons with the rank of professors still represented only a small proportion of the academic staff but the constitution did not adapt to the situation where junior academic staff predominated.

The University had control of its curriculum, admission, standards, degree structure and appointment of staff. For the time being, however, the curriculum³⁹, the matriculation requirements and degree structure were to remain essentially the same as those which existed under

³⁹ University College of the West Indies, Principal's Report 1961-62, p. 4.

the scheme of special relationship with the University of London. The system of external examiners⁴⁰ was expensive, but the authorities considered it a sound investment and the charter sanctioned its continuance.

The University could now have a larger body of postgraduate students and aimed at seventy-five per cent West Indian staff. Under the apprenticeship scheme, the University College was in a peculiar predicament. As an external college of London, it could register a student⁴¹ for a master's or a doctor's degree only if he already had a bachelor's degree of the University of London. If a graduate of Oxford or Manchester or Harvard presented himself he could not be admitted. The development of graduate studies was linked with the recruitment and training of West Indians who showed that they had the aptitude and ability to become university teachers and research workers.

Collapse of West Indies Federation
and Effects on Higher Education

By the time the College received university status the West Indies Federation had collapsed. In September 1961, the Jamaican government⁴², under pressure from its

40 Sir Arthur Lewis, "Statement at Press Conference, 25 April 1962", in Caribbean Quarterly, Vol. 8, No. 2, June 1962, p. 68.

41 Ibid.

42 Williams, Inward Hunger, p. 201.

opposition, had taken the question of federation to its people in a referendum, and by majority vote, Jamaica had decided to secede from the West Indies Federation. Speculation varied on the meaning of the Jamaican referendum to the development the University College. When the Jamaicans decided that they would no longer take part in the Federation, the first question asked was whether a West Indian University College could continue to be based in a foreign country. In the last few months of 1961 the uncertainty of any political cooperation between the other islands complicated the matter further and caused grave concern about the future of the College as a regional institution.

Even before the Jamaican vote, there had been a natural desire in Trinidad and Tobago for a branch of the College and the University College had agreed in 1960 to the principle of liberal arts colleges being established in the larger territories to provide teaching for general degrees in arts and science, and indeed, plans had been made to establish such a college in Trinidad. But the changed nature of the Federation brought the whole problem into sharp focus. Would territories with liberal arts colleges wish to continue to contribute to a university outside their shores, or would they prefer to pay for each student who went to the University College for courses not provided in

the local college? At its meeting in February 1962, the University College accepted two principles⁴³ as a working policy, first, not to duplicate facilities for the more costly professional faculties and second, to establish facilities for teaching towards general honours degrees in the territories other than Jamaica where the demand and need were shown to be satisfactory.

5. Independent Trinidad and Tobago and
Its Higher Educational Needs 1962

Immediately following the Jamaican referendum, there was an investigation to see what could be salvaged. The recommendation⁴⁴ was for Trinidad and Tobago to lead a federation in which it was to pay seventy-five per cent of the federal budget while its representation was limited to less than fifty per cent. Such a proposal was rejected outright by Trinidad and Tobago whose stand was a federation with Jamaica or no federation. As a result the West Indies Federation⁴⁵ was formally dissolved in April 1962 and Trinidad and Tobago focused its attention on the reform of

⁴³ University College of the West Indies, Principal's Report 1961-62, p. 10.

⁴⁴ Williams, Inward Hunger, p. 277-278.

⁴⁵ Great Britain, Laws, Statutes, etc., "The West Indies Act 1962", 10 & 11 Elizabeth 2, ch. 19, in Halsbury's Statutes of England, 2d. ed., Vol. 12, p. 207-215.

its constitution. From a cabinet government in 1959, it achieved full internal self government⁴⁶ with a bicameral legislature in December 1961 and independence⁴⁷ in August 1962. From a colony where the people were accustomed to carrying out decisions taken in Britain, they became the actual decision takers on internal matters and in particular economic affairs.

When Trinidad and Tobago became an independent country and assumed full control of its external and internal affairs, it was enjoying a period of rapid economic expansion which displayed all the symptoms usually associated with an economic boom. The economy⁴⁸ was growing at the rate of ten per cent per annum. Petroleum production almost doubled and it was largely because of oil that the country had a high standard of living. There were large investments in manufacturing plants and good world prices for agricultural exports. Moreover, the rapid development of substitutes for imported goods and the expansion of public investment contributed to buoyant economic conditions which resulted in considerable

46 Williams, History of the People of Trinidad and Tobago, p. 244.

47 Great Britain, Laws, Statutes, etc., "The Trinidad and Tobago Independence Act 1962", 10 & 11 Elizabeth 2, ch. 54, in Halsbury's Statutes of England, 2d. ed., Vol 12, p. 238-244.

48 Williams, History of the People of Trinidad and Tobago, p. 244-247.

development of the country. Over the period 1958 to 1962, roads had been improved, hospital accommodation increased, new schools and hotels constructed, electricity and water supply extended, airport facilities expanded, sanitation system modernized, free secondary education introduced, new markets organized, small farmers subsidized, fishing industry developed and a new income tax system introduced.

At the same time, however, Trinidad and Tobago⁴⁹ had inherited a peculiar economy and social services generated by centuries of colonialism. The economy was essentially in foreign hands, the capital coming from outside, the profits being repatriated outside. This was essentially true of the oil and sugar industries and the banks. The normal steps taken to encourage industrial development and attract foreign capital for investment tended to strengthen the foreign control of the economy, while the incentive offered to those industries, especially income tax remission and duty free imports of machinery and raw materials, tended to reduce the government's share. The economy was undiversified, with oil dominating the exports and the government revenues, and export agriculture, principally sugar dominating the agricultural scene. Trinidad and Tobago remained traditionally dependent upon imports, particularly food. There was the

49 Williams, Inward Hunger, p. 338-339.

traditional aversion to agriculture because of its association with slavery and indenture on the one hand, and on the other hand, the large expenditures which were necessarily associated with any properly conceived programme of land reform – access roads, housing, the utilities and credit. Trinidad and Tobago had also inherited inadequate social services in the form of poor housing, a deficient education system, and unemployment aggravated by the enormous increase in the population. With autonomy and political independence, however, the government was now able to initiate measures to stimulate economic and social development. Equipped with increasing legislative power, it could if it so desired intervene to encourage favourable tendencies, protect national interests and create conditions for the speedy growth of social and economic development.

Education was recognized as an indispensable tool for the full realization of the national potential for economic, social and cultural development. As an independent country more demands were to be placed on its native population. Nationals were needed to replace expatriates in the public service, industry and education since no nation worthy of the name could rely on the importation of its leaders. The progress of Trinidad and Tobago, therefore, depended upon the capacity of the University to produce men and women equipped to serve the country and undertake

objective enquiry into local problems. For the express purpose of getting larger and better educational results from the limited resources at its command, Trinidad and Tobago⁵⁰ supported a decentralized regional university in preference to the proliferation of small universities that might pose staff recruitment problems, lower admission standards, dispense perhaps unacceptable degrees and certificates, duplicate expensive facilities and compete for scarce resources. Together with the former members of the West Indies Federation, Trinidad and Tobago confirmed its belief in the advantages of an independent university serving the entire region when, at the Common Services Conference which was held to wind up the affairs of the Federation and discuss the University and matters affecting ancillary common services associated with the University, it agreed to continue financing the University of the West Indies as a regional institution⁵¹ for at least three triennia beyond 1963.

By 1962, the University had expanded its existing facilities in arts and science, increased its intake of

⁵⁰ Eric Williams, Address at Foundation Stone Laying Ceremony, J. F. K. College of Arts and Science, St. Augustine, Trinidad, January 31, 1966, St. Augustine, University of the West Indies Archives, p. 3.

⁵¹ University of the West Indies, Vice-Chancellor's Report 1962-63, Mona, Jamaica, U.W.I., 1963, p. 1-2.

medical students⁵² from thirty to fifty, established a faculty of social sciences and had become a federal university with the establishment of faculties of agriculture and engineering in Trinidad. These faculties assured that the St. Augustine Campus would be looked upon as a significant institution of higher education but that these beginnings would suffice to open up wide educational opportunities for Trinidad and Tobago youths was a false impression. Degree opportunities beyond these limited professional areas and encompassing the basic arts and sciences were also needed. Otherwise, nothing would have been gained by the great majority of youths who qualified for university but did not want to pursue agriculture or engineering.

It was widely recognized that independence could be betrayed or lost where there was no reserve of trained and responsible local people to man the public services, to advise the political leaders on the formulation of policy and to see that that policy is carried effectively into action. This called for the expansion of secondary education and the provision of higher education in the territory itself. The expansion of secondary education in Trinidad and Tobago had

⁵² Louis Grant, "Training for Medicine in the West Indies", in Caribbean Quarterly, Vol. 12, No. 1, March 1966, p. 13.

already been very rapid and the secondary schools were open to every child with ability. Higher education consisted of faculties of agriculture and engineering but every independent country needs to have a university in its midst. In addition to supplying the country with a steady stream of graduates, a university contributes to its community through the participation of its teachers in the life of the country and through research into local problems. To have in its midst a body of first class intellectuals could make a great deal of difference to the quality of the economic, political and social life of the community. These experts could provide on the spot consultation for government and private bodies and act as a stimulus to the intellectual life of the community. The presence of a university would also provide opportunities for higher education to students who could not afford to devote their full time to university studies. In 1963, therefore, Trinidad and Tobago⁵³ informed the University of its desire to introduce day and evening classes for the general degree programme in arts, natural and social sciences in a college of liberal arts and science.

The development of this college was intended to solve three basic problems of higher education in Trinidad

⁵³ University of the West Indies, Vice-Chancellor's Report 1962-63, p. 2.

and Tobago. First, there was need for fuller adaptation⁵⁴ of existing facilities to the local environment and for graduates with a broad education similar to the American liberal arts degree which combined the sciences, humanities and social sciences. Second, it was essential to increase the student input to match the country's financial contribution⁵⁵ which, in 1963, was thirty-eight per cent as compared with a student population of only twelve per cent. Third, economic, social and political advances had proceeded at a quicker pace than many would have believed possible and called for a supply of graduates far above what the University of the West Indies was providing. The government estimated that a total of three hundred of its students graduate annually from the University of the West Indies, American, British and Canadian universities, a number sufficient to meet its needs, but the shortage of graduates⁵⁶ arose from the fact that large numbers studying abroad did not return home after graduation.

54 Second Five-Year Plan 1964-1968, p. 129.

55 "Trinidad Not Making Full Use of U.W.I.", in Trinidad Guardian, Thursday, February 7, 1963, (News item), p. 2.

56 Second Five-Year Plan 1964-1968, p. 130.

6. Extension and Adaptation of Higher
Educational Opportunity 1963-1968

To prepare for the introduction of general degrees in Trinidad and Tobago and the other territories, the University set up an Appraisals Committee⁵⁷ to examine the need for changes in admission, courses, examinations and the general degree structure on the campuses. On its recommendations, admission requirements were lowered and the general degree was liberalized.

Modifying the Elitist System

Since the University served a region of uneven opportunities, the Appraisals Committee recommended that it jettison the elitist concept in higher education and open its doors to the greatest number of students. Such a policy was considered necessary in the light of the expansion of secondary education and the realization of the importance of higher education for development. In addition to students with advanced level qualifications, the Committee recommended that persons eighteen years and under with five subjects on the General Certificate of Education should be

⁵⁷ University of the West Indies, First Report of the Appraisals Committee of Council Submitted to the Council of the University for Consideration at its Meeting on 25th June 1963, St. Augustine, University of the West Indies Archives, 52 p. Hereafter cited as Appraisals Committee Report.

admitted. Students thus admitted would do a preliminary year in arts and science and instead of the normal three years their course would run four or more years. It was hoped that such a policy would encourage an increase in the number of applicants and reduce the current emigration of students fitted to enter a university but unable to secure admission to the University of the West Indies. For example, in 1962, the number of Trinidad and Tobago students⁵⁸ who passed the School Certificate ordinary level was 2,240 and were qualified under the new regulations to enter the University, as compared with 228 with Higher School Certificate who would have been the only ones qualified to enter under the old regulations.

During its apprenticeship period, the University of the West Indies had granted degrees of the University of London. The standard of these degrees had worldwide recognition but there was not sufficient flexibility in the type of degrees to enable emergent nations to develop their own forms of higher education. For example, in arts and science, students could read for a general degree in which they were obliged to do two or three subjects for three years and for an honours degree in which they studied one or

58 Second Five-Year Plan 1964-1968, p. 130.

two subjects for three years. Moreover, when the University was established, the fashion in England was for honours degrees and the desire among Trinidad and Tobago students to imitate the British pattern was irresistible with the result that over the period 1952 to 1962 there were forty-two honours graduates as compared with eighty-six general graduates^{59,60}. Since Trinidad and Tobago and the British West Indies needed few highly specialized experts and a broad stream of graduates to man the civil service and teach in the schools, it was expected that after attaining independent status the University would make adaptations to the needs of the community by broadening courses in the faculties of arts and science to diminish specialization and introduce material relevant to the regional culture. The Appraisals Committee, therefore, began a serious study of whether the existing degree structure suited the needs of the independent territories. After examining the secondary schools, it concluded that since the orientation of the programmes did not make students sufficiently aware of their unique culture and historical heritage and failed to create the perception that would inspire them to play a confident

⁵⁹ University College of the West Indies, Principal's Reports 1951-52 to 1961-62, Mona, Jamaica, U.C.W.I., various pages.

⁶⁰ University of the West Indies, Vice-Chancellor's Report 1962-63, p. 124-130.

role in Caribbean affairs, a broad pattern of modification in the structure of general degree courses was necessary.

The aim was to liberalize the undergraduate course and produce a degree more oriented to the special needs of the Caribbean than was the syllabus agreed with the University of London. Although examinations and courses for the general honours degree were to be the same on the campuses, the Committee recommended that in addition to following the pattern of London general degrees whereby students did three courses in the first year and two of these in the second and third years, compulsory courses in English, development of civilization, history of the Caribbean and Caribbean studies should be taken by all students, day and evening, on the campuses. This survey of the humanities and social sciences was essential for Trinidad and Tobago nationals, if the country were to obtain the cadre of graduates required for general service by a country taking its full place in the international community.

After careful study of the Appraisals Committee's report, the University decided to implement the recommendations. By admitting students with ordinary level certificates to a four year degree course in colleges of arts and science, the University abandoned the elitist policy that had determined its structure when it was

founded in 1946 and accepted the philosophy that higher education should be available to all qualified candidates who wanted it. With this change in social function, the University experienced a major expansion in facilities and enrolment. Moreover, to increase the proportion of students taking general as opposed to special honours degrees the University⁶¹ confined the colleges of arts and science to the general honours programme. At the same time, all students in this programme were to acquire a rudimentary knowledge of their society by pursuing survey courses and Caribbean studies. The introduction of Caribbean studies was a liberation from the narrow concept of a university whose main function was to pursue European studies and disseminate European knowledge. By transcending this narrow concept and becoming more fully a part of its environment, the University of the West Indies became not merely more West Indian but more fully a university.

College of Arts and Science in Trinidad

In 1963, with the establishment of the non-residential College of Arts and Science next to the faculties of agriculture and engineering, the University projected itself visibly into Trinidad and Tobago bringing

61 Ibid., p. 5.

within easy reach opportunities for higher education to larger numbers. Like the other two faculties, the new College⁶² came under the full control of the University of the West Indies. Its teaching programme included day and evening classes and covered subjects in arts, social and natural sciences. Students read for the new general degree which was designed not only to make them more proficient in their field of study but also to give them an understanding of the Caribbean and its relationship with the rest of the world. The decision to increase the opportunity for higher education by admitting non-residential students and by providing day and evening courses marked a radical change in the University's policy, which previously insisted on a period of three years as a prerequisite for a degree.

The John F. Kennedy College of Arts and Science, as the College of Arts and Science became known in 1965, changed the outlook on higher educational opportunity, which not long before was regarded as the prerogative of the chosen few. By providing day and evening classes the College was tapping a much larger reservoir of talent for its future leaders in politics, public administration, industry, commerce and education. For example, in 1962, the year before teaching

62 Ibid.

began at this College, Trinidad and Tobago students⁶³ in arts and natural science numbered 114 but, in 1963, this increased to 442. Not only did this College increase the openings for higher education to meet the growing needs of the community but also the government⁶⁴, in recognition of the importance of higher education to the future of the country, waived tuition and examination fees for nationals studying at the College, thereby assuring every qualified citizen higher education in familiar surroundings where his education would be relevant to his life's work. Moreover, the government⁶⁵ hoped that this College would be the home of far reaching improvements in a curriculum more oriented to the special needs of the country than was the curriculum under the scheme of special relationship with the University of London and that the graduates of this College would be better equipped than previous graduates to serve in a wide range of fields, especially in education, government, administration, commerce and industry.

63 University of the West Indies, Vice-Chancellor's Report 1963-64, Mona, Jamaica, U.W.I., 1964, p. 156.

64 Second Five-Year Plan 1964-1968, p. 130.

65 Williams, Address at Foundation Stone Laying Ceremony, p. 3.

Faculty of General Degree Studies

One year after the establishment of the John F. Kennedy College, a faculty of general degree studies⁶⁶ was introduced to oversee the conduct of survey courses and Caribbean studies, give them academic respectability and status and promote the development of general studies throughout the University. At first, these general courses were only required of undergraduates in the general honours degree programme in arts and science, but gradually they were extended to all undergraduates. Such knowledge of the roots of their own heritage is not simply of antiquarian interest for a teacher who does not understand or respect the customs and habits of his students cannot reach their minds, an administrator unfamiliar with the customs of the people in his charge cannot earn their confidence, and a doctor and an engineer who are out of touch with the society they serve cannot serve that society well.

Prospect for Studies in Law

With the exception of the general degree programme in colleges of liberal arts and science, the contributing territories felt unable to provide funds for any new developments, such as dentistry, law, philosophy and

⁶⁶ University of the West Indies, Calendar 1966-67, Mona, Jamaica, U.W.I., 1966, p. 253.

geography. Since its establishment, the need for law had been raised with the University from time to time but it was not until 1957 that it proposed the establishment of a department of law⁶⁷. Unfortunately, the contributing territories were financially unable to implement this proposal, and the Cato Committee⁶⁸ recommended that it must await the satisfaction of more urgent needs.

With political independence and the setting up of national courts of appeal, the question of legal education became urgent. As part of its service to the Caribbean and in light of its responsibility for satisfying the intellectual and professional needs of its community, the University, in 1963, again costed a faculty of law⁶⁹ among its possible new projects for the triennium 1963-66. That there was a demand for this field could be judged from the numbers⁷⁰ going abroad. In 1956-57, there were forty Trinidad and Tobago students reading law in Britain and, by 1960-61, this had increased to sixty-seven. The contributing

67 Appraisals Committee Report, p. 31.

68 Cato Report 1958, p. 70.

69 Appraisals Committee Report, p. 31.

70 Educational Planning Mission 1964, p. 105.

territories, once more, felt unable to provide funds and the University, in view of the uncertainties regarding future needs for and practice by graduates of this faculty, was unable to recommend a high priority for its establishment⁷¹.

The Appraisals Committee, on the other hand, considered that the University should continue to play its role in arriving at a satisfactory decision on legal education and, as a first step, recommended the appointment of a committee to investigate the need for lawyers in the area. Consequently, on July 26, 1963, the University appointed a committee⁷² to study the possibility of introducing studies in law.

After making a thorough investigation of the need for lawyers in Trinidad and Tobago and the British West Indies, the Committee on legal education recommended the establishment of a faculty of law that would offer a five year course consisting of undergraduate and postgraduate study. For the first three years, the student was to read for the degree of bachelor of law, while the fourth and fifth years were to be devoted to practical training. At the

71 Appraisals Committee Report, p. 31.

72 University of the West Indies, Report of Committee on Legal Education, by Hugh Wooding, Chairman, Mona, Jamaica, U.W.I., 1965, 28 p.

end of the fifth year, he was to pass an examination to test his proficiency in law, and if successful, receive a practicing certificate which would entitle him to practice law in any of the territories.

No definite decision was reached with regard to the location because the Committee favoured equally Jamaica and Trinidad, and Barbados claimed that since the University was regional the professional schools should be equally distributed on the campuses. And so, if the University accepts the recommendations of the Committee and the contributing territories agree to provide the money, Trinidad and Tobago nationals would be able to pursue law at the University in the near future. In the meantime, higher education concentrated on the development of already existing facilities, and expansion and adaptation were directly related to the growth of the supporting countries and their increasing needs.

7. Higher Education and National Development to 1968

National equality and independence achieved, the problems of social and economic equality received a great deal of attention. The economy⁷³ of Trinidad and Tobago was dependent on petroleum which contributed about eighty-five per cent of exports, forty-five per cent of imports and thirty-five per cent of government revenues. Manufacturing industries were expanding, but in light of the limitation of the domestic market there was need to find markets for the manufactured goods. The failure of local enterprise and local finance to participate sufficiently in this rapid industrial development was reflected in the absence of a local capital market and the deficiency of managerial skills. Agriculture⁷⁴ was on the decline both in terms of the number of persons engaged and in total production while the growth of other occupations such as industry, commerce and the services was appreciable. Such growth was not sufficient to account for this abandonment of agriculture, but as long as agricultural pursuits continued to be held in low public esteem, they would continue to be abandoned. This attitude was one of the major obstacles in

73 Second Five-Year Plan 1964-1968, p. 4-5.

74 Educational Planning Mission 1964, p. 74.

the application of human resources to the development of agriculture in Trinidad and Tobago. The pressure of the population⁷⁵ increasing at three per cent per annum was creating a rapidly growing labour force, a high level of unemployment, and a need to expand social services, especially schools, homes, health services and water, while the increase in the young population fifteen years and under imposed a heavy burden on educational facilities.

The country's strategy in its Second Five-Year Plan⁷⁶ was to transform the structure of the economy by reducing its dependence on petroleum and stimulating other sectors, such as agriculture and manufacturing, to grow faster than they had so far done, developing food and livestock products and food processing, increasing exports of manufactured goods, providing more skills in the economy, expanding water, electricity, communications and the basic social facilities. Priority was to be given to diversifying production and the aim was greater use of local resources and local substitutes for the food and manufactures imported. In connection with the use of local resources, priority was to be given to qualified local persons in employment especially at the higher levels, and Trinidad and Tobago

75 Trinidad and Tobago, Central Statistical Office, Trinidad and Tobago Today, No. 1, May 1966, Port-of-Spain, Government Printing Office, 1966, p. 4.

76 Second Five-Year Plan 1964-1968, viii-340 p.

depended on higher education to provide the locally trained personnel. The government projected that by 1968 it would need three hundred graduates per year from the John F. Kennedy College to fill vacancies in government and education, twenty graduates per year in agriculture to meet its needs for secondary school teachers and to achieve its production goals, and thirty engineers per year to satisfy its demands for industrial arts teachers in the secondary schools and to meet the demand of industrialization.

Over the period 1964-1968, economic development was to concentrate on the advancement of the potential of the country and its population. The government recognized that the development of human resources could not be divorced from the fullest possible utilization of the economic resources. The role of education in economic and social development was recognized. Education would enlarge the capacity for and receptivity to new ideas which were essential to economic growth, and as one of the most important instruments of social change could not be divorced from wider considerations of social policy. As a result, the education system was to provide the training needed to cope with the responsibilities of independence.

In its general education policy, Trinidad and Tobago intended to give priority to the expansion, diversification and qualitative improvement of free secondary education. To

achieve this aim, it intended to construct 8,100 additional free places in secondary schools, reorganize twenty-seven primary schools that would offer three years of secondary education of a practical or vocational nature, stimulate the diversification of the curricula in the secondary schools, construct nine vocational schools, and stimulate agricultural education by introducing agriculture in the primary and secondary school curriculum. This tremendous expansion of educational facilities, especially at the secondary school level, would create an increasing demand for secondary school teachers, and it was estimated that approximately sixty-four university graduates per year would be required for the period 1964 to 1968. The government was confident that with the large number of nationals pursuing arts and science in Jamaica, Britain, Canada and the United States, and the establishment of the John F. Kennedy College in Trinidad, it should not be difficult to meet its needs.

Need for More Science Graduates

Any programme which seeks to place emphasis on technical and scientific developments also requires secondary school teachers qualified in science and technology. In Trinidad and Tobago education was a hindrance rather than a help to economic development. There was a surfeit of persons

trained in literary studies side by side with an acute shortage of persons trained in scientific fields mainly because secondary education, which was established long before the modern technological revolution occurred, was predominantly academic and retained the characteristics of the outmoded English grammar school. Over the period 1952-1962, Trinidad and Tobago had received a total of eighty-two graduates in arts as compared with forty-six in science from the University^{77,78}. The intakes into the faculties of medicine, arts and social sciences continued to be up to the numbers for which provisions had been made but the intake⁷⁹ to the faculties of natural science, agriculture and engineering was still below capacity. The John F. Kennedy College opened in 1963 with an enrolment of 442 students predominantly on the arts side⁸⁰. This trend emphasized the danger of a recurrent cycle by which the University was unable to draw sufficiently upon the output of secondary schools and to supply any increased demand for science teachers.

77 University College of the West Indies, Principal's Reports 1951-52 to 1961-62, various pages.

78 University of the West Indies, Vice-Chancellor's Report 1962-63, p. 124-130.

79 Ibid., p. 11.

80 Educational Planning Mission 1964, p. 68.

For the University, this meant that attention had to be directed to an increase in the output of science graduates because there was no immediate shortage⁸¹ of arts graduates for the secondary schools except for those in modern languages. As an emergency measure, the University had established a preliminary science course⁸² at considerable expense for secondary school graduates before admitting them to regular courses but the number of students admitted under this arrangement was necessarily limited. Since careful planning was important for the education system to produce the kinds of graduates the country needed for development, the government⁸³ intended to improve science facilities in the secondary schools and organize the Polytechnic Institute, which, with the establishment of the John F. Kennedy College, was in a somewhat anomalous position, into a full time day school for four hundred sixth form students. In this way, the preliminary science course would become unnecessary and the John F. Kennedy College would be free to use its limited resources for its undergraduate body.

81 University of the West Indies, Vice-Chancellor's Report 1964-65, Mona, Jamaica, U.W.I., 1965, p. ix.

82 University College of the West Indies, Calendar 1960-61, p. 96.

83 Educational Planning Mission 1964, p. 82.

Introduction of Studies in Geography

The view that it was generally cheaper to provide effective teaching in the arts than in the science subjects had to be modified in respect of geography. In 1957 and again in 1963, the University⁸⁴ proposed to establish a department of geography but the contributing territories felt unable to provide the funds, and in the light of the expense involved in relation to the student intake, the University did not give it high priority. On a purely quantitative basis, however, there seemed to be a case for the inclusion of geography in the University programme. Geography was a well established school subject in Trinidad and Tobago, and in the 1962 Cambridge Higher School Certificate Examination, for example, fifty-five students⁸⁵ were successful in geography. Here was a supply of potential university students and yet there was no department of geography at the University of the West Indies. As a result Trinidad and Tobago continued to solve its shortage of geography teachers in the secondary schools by importing expatriate teachers of a subject that was of such value in creating an appropriate outlook.

84 Ibid., p. 68.

85 Ibid.

The importance of geography to the needs of the region was well recognized that it only remained for the University to include it in its curriculum. Geographical factors play an important part in the history of a country and in the relationship between the inhabitants and their physical environment, while the geographical influences of relief, soils and climate on agricultural production and the distribution of population require scientific study. Besides, the value of geography to social sciences is very great, it contributes to the development of a new cultural heritage. Finally, the part played by geographers in planning, in association with geologists, hydrologists, and others, the efficient use of the earth's resources, is well known. There could be no doubt that trained geographers would have much to contribute to mineral research and especially to the writing of textbooks for schools and undergraduate study. Since there was no adequate textbook on the geography of Trinidad and Tobago, the approach to this subject was unrelated to the local scene and such concepts as soil erosion, rainfall, flooding, seasons and ecology were not presented in a local context. Finally, in 1965, the University⁸⁶ established a department of geography in

⁸⁶ University of the West Indies, Vice-Chancellor's Report 1966-67, Mona, Jamaica, U.W.I., 1967, p. 140.

Jamaica.

Extension of Teacher Training

Not only was Trinidad and Tobago short of graduate teachers for secondary schools but its supply of trained secondary school teachers was critical. In 1962, less than fifty per cent were trained⁸⁷. In view of the urgent need for graduate teachers, the number of Trinidad and Tobago graduates from the department of education of the University of the West Indies was disappointingly small, especially since the government made financial provisions for students pursuing the diploma course. Over the period 1952 to 1962, Trinidad and Tobago had received thirty-eight trained secondary school teachers⁸⁸. University graduates in Trinidad and Tobago apparently hesitated to pursue professional studies in education because they received no additional pay⁸⁹ for such qualification. Nevertheless, the value of professional training of teachers for secondary schools was unquestionable and the University, in 1963, converted its departments of education and extramural

87 Educational Planning Mission 1964, p. 64-65.

88 University College of the West Indies, Principal's Reports 1951-52 to 1961-62, various pages.

89 Trinidad and Tobago, Parliamentary Librarian, Personal Correspondence with the author, letter dated 20 October 1971, p. 1.

studies into a faculty, at the same time, expanding its programmes⁹⁰. In addition to the diploma in education, university graduates who wished to continue their professional training had the opportunity to pursue a higher diploma and a master of education degree. Moreover, with the introduction of a certificate and a bachelor of education degree, especially designed to train non-university graduate teachers, the faculty entered the field of primary teacher training. Along with providing more opportunity for advanced training, such a move was intended to raise the image and dignity of the primary school teacher in the estimation of the population.

Adaptation of Agricultural Education

In view of the recognized importance of agriculture to the economy of Trinidad and Tobago and the production goals set forth in the Second Five-Year Plan, the necessity of an intensified programme of agricultural education⁹¹ at all levels was imperative. To meet its increased need for agriculturists the government relied on the faculty of agriculture. Since increased production was largely

⁹⁰ University of the West Indies, Vice-Chancellor's Report 1962-63, p. 12.

⁹¹ Second Five-Year Plan 1964-1968, p. 135.

dependent on the improvement of the knowledge and skill of the individual farmer, the government intended to improve the technical knowledge of farmers by using modern techniques of communication and short courses organized by the faculty of agriculture. Moreover, by providing facilities for agricultural education in primary and secondary schools, and emphasizing agriculture as a legitimate branch of education, the government hoped to erase the prevalent negative attitude towards agricultural pursuits and elevate this occupation in public estimation. But money for capital expenditure⁹² at these levels was not provided, and, as shown in Table II, the number enrolled in the faculty of agriculture as well as the number of graduates continued to be small. To relieve the situation the faculty changed its policy⁹³ on student admission and for an experimental period admitted to its undergraduate programme students with a minimum qualification of General Certificate of Education ordinary level. In the light of the subsequent performance of these students, it was decided, in 1967, to restore the original level of entry to the General Certificate of Education advanced level⁹⁴.

92 Educational Planning Mission 1964, p. 76.

93 University of the West Indies, Vice-Chancellor's Report 1966-67, p. 8.

94 Ibid.

Table II.- Trinidad and Tobago Students/Graduates in
Agriculture at the University of the West Indies
1960-1968

Year	Registered	Graduated
1960-61	1	a
1961-62	7	a
1962-63	23	1
1963-64	33	3
1964-65	31	9
1965-66	31	9
1966-67	29	3
1967-68	37	3

University College of the West Indies,
Principal's Reports 1960-61 and 1961-62, Mona, Jamaica,
U.C.W.I., various pages.

University of the West Indies, Vice-Chancellor's
Reports 1962-63 to 1967-68, Mona, Jamaica, U.W.I., various
pages.

a Not offered.

Despite the small numbers in agriculture, it was imperative that Trinidad and Tobago continue its support of the faculty if it meant to realize the production goals of its Second Five-Year Plan. Many of the basic problems⁹⁵ facing agriculture could not be solved without further thorough and scientific research in such fields as plant and animal disease control, selection of improved varieties, irrigation and soil conservation, land-use surveys, mechanization, new crop introduction, processing of farm products, industrialization and food technology, agricultural marketing, cooperatives, agricultural economics and methods of agricultural extension. The peculiar and sometimes unique conditions of Trinidad and Tobago agriculture made it necessary to develop and maintain a high standard of applied agricultural research at the faculty of agriculture.

Much more is known about tropical agriculture than is put into practice by farmers and it is the ability to extend what is already known which is likely to bring about greatest advance in agricultural productivity. Since it was not only the future farmer who required agricultural training but it was also just as important to impart knowledge to the practising farmer, the faculty of

95 Educational Planning Mission 1964, p. 26.

agriculture, in 1966, introduced a one year diploma course in agricultural extension⁹⁶. In this aspect the University of the West Indies broke with tradition and began to follow the North American trend. British universities never thought it fit to teach agricultural extension but Canadian and American universities recognized its importance and even offered postgraduate degrees and diplomas.

Introduction of Management Studies

Another American innovation at the University of the West Indies was the establishment of courses in management studies. Industrial development in Trinidad and Tobago was increasing rapidly and nationals with business training were required to fill key positions. To a large extent the development of a country was dependent on the calibre of those who were charged with its guidance. Like many other developing countries, Trinidad and Tobago had so far relied heavily on foreign capital investment to develop its resources and finance its industrial development, and this capital had naturally always been accompanied by expatriate management and technical staff. Before Trinidad and Tobago could demand that foreign enterprises adapt their image to its nationalistic atmosphere, it needed an adequate supply

⁹⁶ University of the West Indies, Vice-Chancellor's Report 1966-67, p. 14.

of indigenous personnel qualified for high executive posts. The teaching of business management was perhaps the only way to create quickly and at a reasonable cost the immediate body of administrators which the country needed for quick industrialization. Although the University had as its model a British university, it came to realize that training in business management was too important to be ignored, and in 1965, introduced a postgraduate diploma programme in business management⁹⁷ on the St. Augustine Campus.

Expansion and Adaptation of Medical Training

A country's economic and social development, to a large extent, depends on the health of its population. In Trinidad and Tobago the improvement and extension of health services were an integral part of the government's plans for social development but the population, increasing at the rate of three per cent per annum, was in constant competition with attempts to provide sufficient and adequate health services, while the restricted annual intake of medical students at the University of the West Indies and the smallness of the input of doctors to the country were responsible for the acute shortage of doctors. The University began with an annual intake of thirty medical students from

97 G. R. John, "Studies in Business Management", in Trinidad Guardian, October 30, 1967, p. 8.

the entire region and, by 1957, the number was increased to fifty. Over the period 1952 to 1964, Trinidad and Tobago received only twenty-three doctors^{98,99} from the University of the West Indies.

To bring about a better proportion of doctors per population, the University, in 1963, undertook a review¹⁰⁰ of the needs of the region. It concluded that a yearly replacement of eighty University of the West Indies doctors and ten other doctors from 1969 onwards would be required to provide adequate health services to the population. Accordingly, in 1964, the annual intake of medical students was increased to ninety. A corresponding demand for clinical training resulted in 1967 in the introduction of the Eastern Caribbean Scheme¹⁰¹ which provided for clinical students after their first and second years at the teaching hospital to spend the third year at one of three hospitals: the University Teaching Hospital in Jamaica, Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Barbados and Port-of-Spain General Hospital in

98 University College of the West Indies, Principal's Reports 1951-52 to 1961-62, various pages.

99 University of the West Indies, Vice-Chancellor's Reports 1962-63 and 1963-64, various pages.

100 Appraisals Committee Report, p. 31.

101 University of the West Indies, Vice-Chancellor's Report 1966-67, p. 1-2.

Trinidad. This scheme would be a great success as it would enable an increase in the number of medical students that could be trained at any time and raise the standard of medicine in Trinidad and Tobago because clinical teaching in a hospital tends to improve medical thinking and eventually the treatment of patients and the training of nurses.

The improvement of health services was not only dependent on a quantitative increase in medical training but also on a qualitative development of the curriculum. During its apprenticeship period, the University had followed the curriculum and examination of the University of London, but after becoming an independent university it was expected that the courses and examinations would be formulated to meet the needs of the region rather than those of England since environmental needs were somewhat different. Such changes could be an asset to the training of students and a benefit to the population. After serious study the curriculum¹⁰² was revised in 1967. Although the full details remained to be decided, the result was expected to be somewhat different from the medical course of the University of London and was principally in the arrangement of the curriculum with special emphasis on certain aspects

¹⁰² University of the West Indies, Calendar 1966-67, p. 258.

of teaching. The changes were such as to adapt the training in medicine to the special needs of the Caribbean and incorporate some of the newer trends in medical education that were being adopted in other countries.

This revised curriculum had to be approved by the British General Medical Council which is by law the council governing the professional training, standards, registration and conduct of doctors. This is the only body¹⁰³ to which the University needed to cater and this was necessary because of the need to have reciprocity with British Commonwealth universities and licensing authorities for the practice of medicine. After analyzing the quality of medical training and inspecting the teaching hospitals of the University, the British General Medical Council¹⁰⁴ concluded that the medical school of the University of the West Indies compared well with most medical schools in the United Kingdom, provided a good medical training for its students and demanded high standards. The Council's recognition of the medical degrees of the University of the West Indies as entitling the holders to admission to the

103 Grant, op. cit., p. 13.

104 University of the West Indies, "Recognition of M.B., B.S. (U.W.I.) by General Council of Great Britain", in University Newsletter (Internal), No. 14, October 1969, p. 4.

Medical Register coincided in 1968 with the award of the first medical degrees of the University of the West Indies.

8. Retrospect and Prospect

A sensitivity to the needs of the community was giving new shape, form and purpose to higher education. In Trinidad and Tobago where the drive and decision for change came from within and where radical political, economic and social development occupied a central position in national planning, there was a growing realization of the country's dependence upon the education of its population. Without a highly educated population, continued growth on the scale envisioned was unlikely. Moreover, for the country to hold its own and meet competitive pressures in a modern world, the expansion of higher education was essential. In close touch with its rapidly growing community, the University undertook considerable planning based in part on the needs of the society as defined by the government of Trinidad and Tobago in its development plans and, without in any way jeopardizing its academic standards and reputation, it expanded and adapted its facilities.

While in special relationship with the University of London, the University College transformed itself from a unitary institution with all its teaching and research concentrated in one place into a decentralized institution.

It also abandoned its residential qualification by admitting students who lived off campus and introduced more technical and vocational courses by establishing faculties of agriculture and engineering. With the attainment of independent status and with the power to grant degrees came more radical changes in its policy. Besides shifting its social philosophy from elitist to liberal, the University lowered admission qualifications, extended the length of the undergraduate programme in arts and science to four years, established colleges of liberal arts and science, introduced striking changes in the curriculum, liberalized the undergraduate degrees and instituted evening programmes. There was no doubt that such growth would continue because the University was part of a community in which new dynamism has been generated by political, economic and social changes. As a result of these changes, the rate of increase in admissions and in the numbers graduating went up sharply. For example, Trinidad and Tobago students^{105,106} entering the University jumped from twenty-seven in 1959-60 to 232 in 1966-67 and the number of graduates from twenty-three to 173.

¹⁰⁵ University College of the West Indies, Principal's Report 1959-60, Mona, Jamaica, U.C.W.I., 1960, p. 87;98.

¹⁰⁶ University of the West Indies, Vice-Chancellor's Report 1966-67, p. 210;224.

Even so the University was not giving to the Trinidad and Tobago community all the trained people it needed for its political, economic and social development because the number of nationals enrolled was still small. Trinidad and Tobago viewed the University as a supplier of fundamental skills which would satisfy a variety of needs and projected that by 1968 it would require a total of 350 graduates per year, three hundred in arts, natural and social sciences, twenty in agriculture and thirty in engineering. The demands on the University were not commensurate with its output of graduates and, in 1968, Trinidad and Tobago¹⁰⁷ received a total of 113 graduates in arts, natural and social sciences, eight in agriculture and twenty-one in engineering. Moreover, to provide adequate health services the University was expected to produce eighty doctors per year but, in 1968, it graduated sixty-eight doctors, twelve of whom were from Trinidad and Tobago, thereby giving the country a ratio of one doctor to 2,320 persons, far short of the ideal for a developing country of one doctor to one thousand persons¹⁰⁸. Despite the paucity of graduates, the University was considered central to the development of

107 University of the West Indies, Registrar, Personal Correspondence with the author, letter dated August 4, 1971, p. 1.

108 United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, World Economic Survey, 1969-1970, New York, U.N., 1971, p. 42.

Trinidad and Tobago in producing skills in agriculture, engineering, arts, natural and social sciences, medicine and education and in creating new attitudes and values in the society, and the government, as a matter of deliberate policy, continued the training of nationals in the various fields of higher education to meet the needs for qualified personnel to manage and administer the country.

Although higher education had been available in the region since 1948 and in Trinidad and Tobago since 1922, every year an increasing number of students continued to go to universities abroad. As shown in Table III, the number of Trinidad and Tobago students registered at the University of the West Indies from 1960 to 1968 was far less than the numbers registered in American and Canadian universities. Some went abroad because they wanted to see something of the world, others did so because the course of study they wished to pursue was not offered at the University. This was true of those studying law, dentistry, architecture, library science and forestry. Unfortunately quite a few went abroad because for three hundred years they had been trained to regard any home grown product as inferior to a similar but foreign produced article. To guard against this very problem, the University, in spite of its independence, had retained external examiners as watchdogs of its academic standards but the effects of colonialism cut deep and a

Table III.- Trinidad and Tobago Students Registered at the University of the West Indies and at American and Canadian Universities 1960-1968

Year	West Indies	U.S.A.	Canada
1960-61	126	253	634
1961-62	144	317	673
1962-63	210	395	619
1963-64	352	480	709
1964-65	474	594	648
1965-66	581	572	585
1966-67	812	704	623
1967-68	1090	736	681

University College of the West Indies,
Principal's Reports 1960-61 and 1961-62, Mona, Jamaica,
U.C.W.I., various pages.

University of the West Indies, Vice-Chancellor's
Reports 1962-63 to 1967-68, Mona, Jamaica, U.W.I., various
pages.

United States of America, Institute of
International Education, Open Doors and Census Reports
1960-1968, New York, I.I.E., various pages.

Canada, Dominion Bureau of Statistics, Education
Division, Figures Supplied, September 3, 1970, (personal
correspondence).

degree from a foreign university was still considered vastly superior. It seems, however, that the majority of students were going abroad mainly because of the opportunity to work and study. Upon graduation, Trinidad and Tobago nationals were left to their own devices to find employment at home with the result that only a few returned. This was not due to a deficiency of national spirit on the part of graduates but to a lack of positive response on the part of government and private enterprise.

Not only was the University developing to meet the needs of its community, it was also helping the countries that supported it to further their economic, political and social development. And so, Trinidad and Tobago¹⁰⁹ had one of the highest levels of living among the developing countries and was in a favourable economic position. Exports were increasing and imports falling so that the balance of trade and the balance of payment were improving. To a large extent, the country's progress resulted from the existence and use of its petroleum industry, the growth and diversification of the agriculture and manufacturing sectors and the high level of education. Along with greater political

109 Trinidad and Tobago, National Planning Commission, "Recent Economic and Social Developments in Trinidad and Tobago 1962-1968", in Third Five-Year Plan 1969-1973 as Approved by Parliament, Port-of-Spain, Government Printing Office, 1970, p. 399-453.

responsibility and as part of the process of being brought into closer relationship with the needs of the economy, the education system experienced its most fundamental change. The old philosophy of primary education for the masses and secondary and higher education for the elite was thrown overboard with the result that the second and third levels of education were open to all persons with ability regardless of their means. Moreover, the significant decline in the high birthrate of previous decades and the substantial decrease in population growth rate from three per cent in 1964 to one per cent in 1968 augured well for the future growth of the country.

Yet, problems of underdevelopment plagued the country. Even with a large emigration and a substantial rate of growth, the percentage of the unemployed increased steadily owing to inappropriate technology, an education system that produced the wrong types of skills, a peculiar economic structure that attracted people away from agriculture, and a historic dependence on metropolitan countries for everything. The economy was oriented towards exports and in the case of agriculture was also dependent on protective shelter in metropolitan countries. Of tremendous concern to Trinidad and Tobago was the decline in the petroleum industry, the income from which was needed to sustain the high standard of living. Although there were

sufficient resources of land and labour the economy could supply only a small proportion of its food requirements because the lack of agriculture graduates to carryout extension services hampered the growth of the domestic food and livestock sector.

At the same time, although the manufacturing sector was expanding, it created a relatively small number of jobs and used little local raw materials. The country's failure to develop indigenous technology to utilize local raw materials and create local styles and designs stemmed from a manufacturing sector dominated by foreign subsidiaries which looked to foreign head offices and governments rather than to the local government for direction and guidance. Their decision was geared to fulfilling the objectives of metropolitan firms with the result that they were somewhat insensitive to local and national goals. Moreover, in spite of incentives from the government, local entrepreneurs and managers failed to emerge mainly because of the dependence on foreign firms for investment and expertise and the refusal to upgrade the level of managers and supervisors through training and to recruit personnel in accounting, management, marketing and industrial relations.

The favourable aspects of the decline in the growth of the population were offset by the emigration of skilled and highly qualified persons, and the country had to import

skilled manpower to fill vacant jobs. It was a risk of potentially greater loss to train more professional workers but at the same time, the country needed more workers of this type for development.

Whether it was a question of economic diversification, greater national economic independence or full employment, the key ingredients for development were education and training. For this reason, investment in human resources was the basic philosophy of the government and education of the right type and amount occupied a central position in the development strategy of the country. With respect to higher education it must be assumed that the University of the West Indies was providing education and training of the right type or it would be pointless for the government to continue financing it. But like many of the developing countries, Trinidad and Tobago had an insufficient number of people with the training of the right type required for development.

At the University of the West Indies there was an unhealthy over-concentration on arts and social sciences as compared with agriculture, engineering and natural science. In 1967-68, for example, there were 537 Trinidad and Tobago day students doing courses in arts and social sciences as against 449 doing courses in agriculture, engineering and

natural science¹¹⁰. In other words, the number of nationals studying science and technology was less than fifty per cent of the total number of day students. Moreover, enrolment in arts and social sciences was increasing faster than in science and technology, and if evening students were included, the bias against science and technology would be even greater. The faculty of agriculture¹¹¹ was greatly concerned at the number of vacant places not being taken up by entrants to the University. In the light of the development needs of the country, the numbers studying science subjects as compared with those doing courses in arts and social sciences had to undergo a considerable increase but this situation could only be rectified through the availability of more physical facilities in scientific and technical subjects and teachers in the sciences at the secondary school level.

Trinidad and Tobago was a rapidly changing society in which a deep feeling of national consciousness and a strong urge for economic and social improvement were clearly in evidence. All this was having and would continue to have far-reaching effects on education which was recognized as an

¹¹⁰ University of the West Indies, Registrar, Personal Correspondence with the author, letter dated 4 August 1971, p. 1.

¹¹¹ University of the West Indies, Vice-Chancellor's Report 1966-67, p. 11.

indispensable tool for the full realization of the national potential. For education, and in particular higher education, to be of any use in this developing country with limited physical and human resources, it must produce people in the right numbers and with the right skills to push the society forward. Trinidad and Tobago approached the problem of getting larger and better educational results from its limited resources through the use of systematic planning. The University of the West Indies did not isolate itself from the problems of this emerging nation but kept in close touch with its needs. The development of its facilities were closely related to the high level manpower needs of Trinidad and Tobago and there is no doubt that they would continue to expand and adjust to meet the immediate needs of the country.

Once formed, higher education could not remain a replica of its British model but in the nature of things had to take root in its environment and develop local characteristics. Education is a powerful agency of rapid change and by responding sensitively to the immediate social pressures, the University adjusted to its society and helped it to shape its social, economic and political development. There is every reason to believe that the University would continue to change as the society changes.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This study of the development of higher education in Trinidad and Tobago from 1498 to 1968 maintains that social, economic and political factors contributed to the slow evolution and gradual adaptation of higher education to the intellectual and professional needs of the society.

Prior to the Second World War, the country had nothing to show in the form of higher education in areas other than agriculture except a few scholarships for study at British universities. Progress depended upon the handful of Europeans but they looked to Europe for intellectual nourishment and sent their children home for education with the result that when a middle class emerged this tradition became highly esteemed and eagerly imitated. It was in their best interest to maintain the status quo and there arose no movement for a local institution of higher education. The belief in the superiority of all things British led to the conviction that British higher education was the best. Moreover, with a secondary education that was restricted to an elite and based on the ability to pay fees, Trinidad and Tobago had few graduates clamouring for higher education, while with an economy that was confined to the production of raw materials for export and a system of government and commerce in which administrative positions were filled by

men sent out from Britain, it could meet its needs for high level manpower by awarding scholarships or importing expatriates.

In contrast, agricultural and economic problems led to the realization of the importance of scientific agriculture and gave rise to a demand for a college of tropical agriculture. As a Crown Colony, Trinidad and Tobago was unable to undertake measures for self improvement without Britain's consent but the economic advantages of higher education in tropical agriculture and the need for such an institution in the British Empire persuaded Britain to establish the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture to carryout research and train diploma and postgraduate students. Unfortunately, the College failed to attract sufficient secondary school graduates. On the one hand, social and economic conditions among the agricultural population were far from attractive while on the other, agriculture, with its association with slavery and indenture, was considered dirty and degrading. A career in agriculture did not promise the prestige and affluence of medicine and law and students preferred to follow the tradition of going abroad.

After the War higher education was recognized as indispensable for development. The effects of the War, the pressures of international powers, and the Trinidad and

Tobago labour disturbances, which resulted from frustration with a Crown Colony government and a society in which the majority of people were restricted to the bottom of the social and economic ladder, combined to induce Britain to develop the colonies. To help Trinidad and Tobago achieve independence, develop its natural resources and improve its social conditions, she established higher education.

Trinidad and Tobago wanted a replica of a British university at its best and the University College of the West Indies was established along the lines of a British civic university. At first there was no problem of adaptation for by carrying out research, providing extramural studies and producing graduates, the College was encouraging the development of the colony. But as the pace of social, economic and political development quickened, there was need for a supply of graduates far above the input to the colony and in fields not yet available while the increasing number of students going abroad for higher education produced some questioning about the policy of the College.

When society changes so also must its education. As Trinidad and Tobago advanced socially, economically and politically, tremendous pressures were exerted on the University to expand and adapt to its needs. By responding sensitively, the University not only furthered its

development but also helped its society to move forward. It can be expected that such changes would continue.

This thesis gives but one interpretation of the forces and events that have influenced the development of higher education in Trinidad and Tobago. Since primary documents on this subject are somewhat limited, it is hoped that this study might serve as a beginning to further research on higher education in Trinidad and Tobago. When the archives of the country are properly organized, other primary documents might come to light and lead another researcher to different conclusions on how higher education developed in Trinidad and Tobago.

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APPENDIX 1

ABSTRACT OF

Development of Higher Education¹ in Trinidad and Tobago 1498-1968

This study views educational history as social history and attempts to place the higher educational development of Trinidad and Tobago in the context of the social, economic and political forces that shaped this society from its origins to 1968. The object was to determine what factors contributed to the slow development and gradual adaptation of higher education to the intellectual and professional needs of Trinidad and Tobago.

In tracing the evolution of higher education in Trinidad and Tobago, first, consideration was given to the peoples who came, the society they formed and the foundations they laid of primary and secondary education. In addition, it was intended to show why higher education could not develop during the period from 1498 to 1870. The next step was an examination of the socio-economic background to the emergence of higher agricultural education before 1940. The urgent need to expand higher education for the social, economic and

¹ Ameer H. Ali, doctoral thesis presented to the School of Graduate Studies of the University of Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, March 1975, xxvi-315 p.

political development of Trinidad and Tobago during World War II was then discussed, and the effects the establishment of the University College had on Trinidad and Tobago society were appraised. Finally, detailed consideration was given to the manner whereby Trinidad and Tobago sought answers to the problems confronting this country during the years 1957 to 1968 and the manner in which higher education expanded and adapted to face the growing needs that challenged the newly independent Trinidad and Tobago.

In carrying out this investigation attempts were made to locate and critically examine all primary documents available. This proved very challenging because extensive research on the topic is lacking and the archives of the country are far from organized. Primary documents used extensively throughout the study included official records of governments, reports of commissions, organizations and committees, minutes of meetings, annual reports, letters, speeches, pamphlets, periodical articles and personal interviews. Some monographs also proved helpful. Perhaps some day when the archives of the country are properly organized other primary documents might come to light and lead another researcher to different conclusions on how higher education developed in Trinidad and Tobago.

In light of the sources presently available it was found that the following social, economic and political

factors played an important part in the slow development and gradual adaptation of higher education to the intellectual and professional needs of Trinidad and Tobago.

For many years Trinidad and Tobago had no institution of higher education. In a plantation colony development usually depended on the white population but here this group was divided along the lines of religion, nationality and language and was intellectually oriented towards Europe. Moreover, the British rulers, as could be expected, believed in the superiority of British culture and institutions and were satisfied in awarding scholarships for study at British universities. In time, this tradition became highly esteemed and eagerly imitated.

The economy of Trinidad and Tobago also was for a long time confined to the production of raw materials for export and the handful of high level personnel needed for the preliminary extraction of raw materials was more economically filled by British expatriates. Periodic depressions in the agricultural economy, however, brought about the realization of the importance of higher agricultural education and led to its establishment in Trinidad. As the economy shifted from the production of raw materials to a modern economy with increasing emphasis on industrialization, there was need for more sophisticated technological knowledge and, consequently, higher education in Trinidad and

Tobago had to expand and adapt to new circumstances. But were such economic factors as decisive as the political ones?

As long as Britain maintained Trinidad and Tobago as a colony of exploitation, she showed little interest in developing local higher education in areas other than agriculture, and as a Crown Colony Trinidad and Tobago could not undertake measures for improvement on its own initiative. When Britain decided on post-war decolonization, higher education in Trinidad and Tobago became indispensable, but it was established along the lines of a British state university. With the establishment of the West Indies Federation, however, higher education was forced to expand and adapt to the local environment. Further expansion and adaptation came about in response to the needs of the independent Trinidad and Tobago.

The above-mentioned political factors may have played the most decisive part in the belated development of higher education in Trinidad and Tobago. As long as Trinidad and Tobago remained a Crown Colony of exploitation higher education did not develop except for agriculture but as soon as self government was considered for the colony the situation began to change rapidly. With political independence, the country truly began to influence the expansion and adaptation of higher education to its intellectual and professional needs.