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are strongly bound by tradition. By tradition agriculture is to these people a way of life and not a business enterprise. This, coupled with communal land tenure, controls many attempts at individual enterprise and also the efforts of the agricultural extension service.

The second consideration is that the traditional systems of agriculture, to which the peasant farmer still clings, were evolved to meet the demands of a subsistence economy with plenty of land and relatively few people. No appreciable surplus was required: only enough food to feed those cultivating it.

For such conditions these systems were sound if not always efficient, and they met the demand made on them without soil degradation or loss of land. Since the beginning of this century, however, the subsistence economy has largely been displaced by a cash economy; and, as a result of the *Pax Britannica* and the development of medical services, the population has increased steadily and significantly year by year.

This has placed an increasing strain on the traditional systems, since surplus production is now required for cash and more people are competing for the available land. The repercussions of this have been appreciated but they did not become severe until the tremendous rise in produce prices at the end of the Second World War caused a revolution in the attitude of the peasant farmer to consumer goods. Luxuries such as shoes, bicycles and even wireless sets all became possibilities. The incentive for increased production had arrived and became a driving force. Unfortunately, increased production under the traditional systems meant increased acreage, not increased yield.

Increased acreage for a larger population meant shorter resting periods for the land and longer periods of cultivation. In other words, the very basis of the traditional system, the long bush fallow, is being rapidly undermined and the next step could be disaster. The tropical climate and communal land ownership aggravate the difficulty.

DELAYING FACTORS

The technical development of the farmer has not kept pace with his outlook, and it is natural to ask why more has not been done to increase his technical ability. The pressure of tradition and communal life are delaying factors, but the basic reasons are that during the twenties and thirties there was no money and in the forties there were no men. It was only in the fifties that men and money were available to enable sound research and extension organizations to be established. It is doubtful whether these services, however sound, can ever be adequate. The farmer contact in many areas is still less than one officer to 22,000 farmers, while in England a contact of one to every 500 to 1,000 farmers is considered the minimum. The importance of surmounting the problem of improving the technical ability of the peasant will be confirmed by a glance at the sample census taken in 1950 where the total population is given as 23,250,000. Of this total, six million were adult males, 5,250,000 wholly or partly engaged in agriculture. While

these figures are probably not accurate, the picture presented is.

Against this background let us take a brief look at the agriculture in the three regions of the Federation.

Western Region

With a population of 6,144,000, this is numerically the smallest region. It is, however, relatively wealthy, its main source of revenue being cocoa, of which it exports about 100,000 tons per annum. This crop was introduced many years ago, but was not developed on any scale until early in the century; production in 1914 was 4,100 tons. It is now the mainstay of the regional economy, although there is a considerable trade in kola nuts with the Northern Region and there has been development of rubber and timber resources in recent years. The climate varies from the wet tropics, where grain crops are difficult to ripen successfully, to the important maize producing areas of the savannah zones. The normal procedure is to slash the bush in the short dry season, allow it to dry and then burn it. The stumps are normally removed and are allowed to regenerate when the cropping cycle is finished. The cropping cycle lasts from three to five years according to the district. The period of high fertility is occupied by yams grown in heaps of top soil drawn together with a primitive hand hoe. In the same heap are planted cotton, maize and one or two vegetables of the roselle type. The cycle finishes with cassava, at which stage the bush is allowed to regenerate so that, when the cassava is removed, the soil already has some protection from the sun and rain. The system is a rotation of crops on bush fallow with little or no added fertility. The yields are not high—yams two to seven tons an acre and maize 1,200lb. an acre.

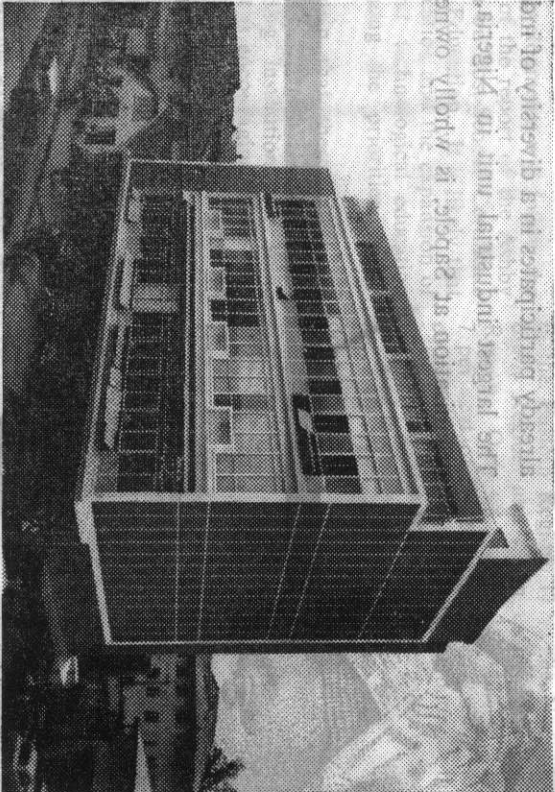
In the forties and early fifties the economy of the region was threatened by a disease of cocoa known as swollen shoot, and the problem was tackled with great vigour; the result is that the industry is now learning how to live with the disease. At the same time a soil survey was made to find areas of soil suitable for cocoa, and considerable areas of new planting have been established. New varieties with yields of four to five times those of existing varieties are being tested, and black pod disease, which can account for loss of more than 30 per cent of the crop in a favourable year, is being tackled successfully by spraying. Little progress has been made, however, with improving the farmers' techniques with annual crops and general land use, a problem urgent in all three regions.

Eastern Region

Although smaller in area than the Western Region, the population of 7,228,000 is larger and many areas are heavily overpopulated with densities of 400 to 600 to the square mile dependent on agriculture. This has led to very serious erosion in the southern parts of the region, and the solution of the pro-

ble planting season. The potential yield of this crop has zation takes place.

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