

BRIEF NOTES ON THE DOMINICA (REGIONAL) YOUTH CAMP

contributed by the Government of Dominica

Introduction

1. The Dominica Youth Camp was established in November, 1969 at Camp Londonderry, formerly an agricultural demonstration station. It covers an area of 34 acres which are partially cultivated, the main crops being citrus and bananas.

2. The Pioneer Group consisted of the Camp Director, eight Camp Counsellors, of whom four came from Jamaica and four from Trinidad and Tobago, and forty Dominican students. It was proposed to increase the staff to include a Deputy Director, a Finance Officer, a General Trade Instructor and a Cook.

Administration of the Camp

3. The Dominica (Regional) Youth Camp, as the name implies, is essentially a regional project sponsored by the Regional Development Agency whose secretariat is in Antigua. This camp is intended to serve the Windward Group of the Associated States, including Barbados. Each participating territory is required to share equally the initial capital expenditure (approximately \$150,000.00 annually) and to meet the cost of keeping every trainee sent to the Camp based on the allocated number at a rate of some \$357.00 per trainee per year. The ratio of students in a total of two hundred would be as follows:-

Dominica	-	60
St. Lucia	-	40
St. Vincent	-	30
Grenada	-	40
Barbados	-	30

4. The day-to-day running of the Camp is strictly under the administrative arrangements of the Camp Director, but all matters of policy and general finance are attended to by the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs, acting on behalf of the Regional Development Agency.

Aims and objectives

5. The main aim of the Youth Camp is to turn out graduates after an 18-24 month course of training in general agriculture

with a little knowledge of basic motor mechanics, construction and simple electricity. Trainees are admitted between the ages of fifteen and twenty years.

6. It is the ultimate aim that graduates from this Camp will be in a position to command such jobs as assistant estate managers, overseers, project supervisors or self-reliant farmers.

Other Criteria for Admission

7. The standard of education is not at the moment a limited factor in that a Fourth (IV) Standard dropout with a fair level of intelligence stands as good a chance as anyone else. Sound character is, however, insisted upon, the applicant must be jobless and must indicate through his application, background and interview that he has an aptitude and inclination to pursue agriculture.

Work Programme and Training

8. As would be expected, pioneering work cannot be readily time-tabled. In a sixteen-hour day trainees would normally spend about four and one-half hours in the classroom, seven hours on practical work, two hours' relaxation, the rest of the time being devoted to having meals and attending to personal chores. Academic work, i.e. lectures on agricultural and trade subjects, were started and carried on for a few weeks but had to be stopped because of the pressing need to concentrate on dormitory construction, construction of shelters for animals, stores and utility services and the cultivation of food, all of which must be given immediate priority.

Camp Organisation and Discipline

9. In an effort to standardise as many of the underlying principles of Youth Camps as possible, the Camp has been organised very much along the same lines as existing Camps in Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago, the general idea being to arrange the trainees into groups and sub-groups with each individual playing a vital part in the group as well as the Camp on the whole. Camp discipline is democratic and is administered by a Panel of Justice operating under the auspices of the Students' Council, which is the duly elected representative of the Student Body. The Students' Council operates under the close supervision and guidance of the Camp Director who naturally holds over-ruling powers.

10. Games and leisure time are organised for fullest benefit and daily devotions constitute an essential part of the day's curriculum, being conducted first thing in the morning and last thing at night.

11. Every student is allowed a weekly stipend of \$3.00 from which he is required to save $\frac{1}{3}$ (\$1.00).

General

12. The Camp now has a population of seventy including sixty-one trainees; thirty-seven from Dominica, seventeen from Grenada and seven from St. Vincent. It is anticipated that further recruitment before the end of the year will bring this total to two hundred. By that time it is anticipated that the Deputy Director and other personnel will have been engaged. The Finance Officer and General Trade Instructor were engaged earlier this year.

13. The Camp has a very bright future and much financial and further material assistance is expected to come from organisations, firms and individuals with a growing interest in its success.