

ANNOUNCEMENT OF INTEREST TO HORTICULTURISTS

THREE YEARS AGO Dr. William H. Cowgill undertook to organize the horticulturists of Central America and adjacent areas as a regional group of the American Society for Horticultural Science, the leading North American association of its kind. A meeting was held at Escuela Agrícola Panamericana. This meeting was attended by twenty-four horticulturists who elected Dr. Jaime Guiscafré-Arrillaga Chairman, Dr. Pierre Sylvain Vice-Chairman, and Dr. William H. Cowgill Secretary-Treasurer. It was voted to apply to the American Society for Horticultural Science for recognition as a Regional Group (the Society is divided into such groups, which hold regional meetings) and it was agreed that a meeting would be held annually, if possible.

Two years passed, however, before it was feasible for the group to come together again. This time, October 1953, the meeting was held at Centro Nacional de Agronomía, in Santa Tecla, El Salvador. Coffee culture was the principal topic of discussion, hence it was natural that there should be a large and interested attendance. Three days were spent in hearing papers and conducting discussions, and in visiting points of horticultural interest. It was announced at this meeting that the Caribbean Region (a group name adopted in conformity with the nomenclature of other regional groups) had been recognized by the parent Society. Roberto Quiñonez, Minister of Agriculture of the Republic of El Salvador, was elected Chairman; Félix Choussy of San Salvador Vice-Chairman, and Wilson Popenoe of Honduras Secretary-Treasurer, all to hold office until the next meeting, again in accordance with standard practice of the parent Society.

It was planned to meet at Escuela Agrícola Panamericana in November 1954, but conflicting engagements of members of the group have made it necessary to postpone the gathering until early spring 1955. It has been obvious from the start that the expense of air travel would have to

be taken into account, and would make it difficult to bring together at any one place members from such distant areas as Colombia, Puerto Rico, Mexico, and Central America.

The Secretary-Treasurer of the Caribbean Group attended the meetings of the parent Society at Gainesville, Florida, in September of the present year. The objectives of the Caribbean group were presented before the Executive Committee at that time and much encouragement was received. It is felt that occasional meetings will do much to stimulate horticultural interest in tropical America, and provide an opportunity for the presentation of technical papers such as those which were read at the Santa Tecla meetings, several of which have been published.

The field of action is ample, and workers are increasing year by year. Experience to date indicates that the following are some of the major lines which are likely to receive attention at meetings of the group: the improvement of coffee culture, through such activities as breeding of superior strains, planting without shade, pruning, and control of pests and diseases; better techniques for propagating vegetatively numerous horticultural crops, especially fruits; more accurate knowledge of fruit varieties, through application of the simple principles of systematic pomology to classification and description; improvement of vegetable cultivation, through introduction of new varieties, plant breeding, and increased knowledge of climatic requirements; as well as the propagation and dissemination of new or superior ornamental plants.

The geographic limits of the Caribbean Group have not been closely defined. Persons who are not members of the American Society for Horticultural Science, and who consider themselves qualified, should make application directly to the Secretary-Treasurer, Dr. Freeman S. Howlett, Ohio State Agricultural Experiment Station, Wooster, Ohio. When they have been accepted as members of the parent Society, they should communicate with the Secretary-Treasurer of the Caribbean Group at Escuela Agrícola Panamericana, Apartado 93, Tegucigalpa, Honduras. Contact among members of this group is maintained by means of an occasional news letter, which is sent without charge.

Wilson Popenoe.