deterrent to the subjective influence on people assessing food. Indeed, they are prepared to compare mathematically incomparable quantities, and provided that they are young and unbiased can, apparently, consistently measure viscosity in terms of elasticity.

But whereas Dr. Scott-Blair tried to explain to a slightly mystified audience of chemists at the Nutrition Panel meeting how to measure in mathematical quantities senses, about which Prof. Hartridge as a physiologist and Dr. Davis as a psychologist had spoken, Mr. R. R. Plowman, an expert and experienced tea-taster, showed how the senses of smell, taste, sight, touch and temperature can, in actual practice, all elegantly be combined.

Evidence which has been accumulating in the literature and much of which was summarized at this meeting of the Nutrition Panel now suggests that the special senses of taste and the rest offer, if used with proper precaution, a fruitful and new method for nutritional research. Richter quotes at least two interesting experiments with human subjects. The first concerns a 3½-year-old boy with undiagnosed destruction of the adrenal cortex. This child kept himself alive for more than two years by eating handfuls of salt. When he was taken under control and fed a 'proper' hospital diet he died. The second experiment is of more general application. A graph was made of the percentage of children between the ages of 5 and 14 years who liked a test sample of cod-liver oil. In general, the frequency decreased as the age increased and as the known physiological needs diminished. The precautions to be exercised when trying to carry out experiments of this nature are many and obvious. Habituation, learnt custom, suggestion, whether visual or of any other kind, are a few. Certain tastes may be exceptional to the rule, if rule it is, that animals, if given the opportunity, will choose the nutrients they need. For example, the nutritionist hitherto has been non-plussed by onions, garlic and perhaps sweetness. Furthermore, people eat food, not nutrients. Nevertheless, it has often been a safe rule when studying industrial nutrition to start from the traditional dietary pattern and try to improve on that, rather than impose a theoretical regime.

The science of nutrition has progressed a long way. It certainly has still a long way to go. Perhaps this meeting of the Nutrition Panel, where nutritionists, chemists, physiologists, psychologists and those forgotten folk who taste and choose and cannot explain, all met to talk together and partially to comprehend each other, may have served in some small way to send it off on a new, fruitful journey.

THE IMPERIAL COLLEGE OF TROPICAL AGRICULTURE IN WAR-TIME

By PROF. C. W. WARDLAW
University of Manchester

ONCE established, the continuity of British institutions tends to be maintained no matter what the impact of external circumstances may be. In the gloomiest periods of the years 1940-42 it was a feature of life in Britain that bodies concerned with matters of cultural interest were not merely kept in

being but in some instances even acquired a new vitality. The publication of the report of the Governing Body of the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture, Trinidad, for the year 1943, serves to remind us of yet another instance of this continuity of the national effort in the arts of peace, this time in spheres remote from the European conflict—a continuity all the more remarkable in view of the difficulties that lie in the way.

Readers may perhaps recall that the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture was founded to provide higher instruction in tropical agriculture and in the cultivation and preparation for market of tropical produce of every kind. Practically all members of the Colonial Agricultural Service pass through the College as a first stage, or otherwise have associations with it; thus the bonds that unite past students confer an almost unique unity and coherence to the collective personnel of this Service.

That an effort to maintain the College and its work should be made is not surprising. The developments and improvements that must be effected in agriculture in practically every corner of the Colonial Empire, both as immediate and long-range post-war aims, demand that preparations be put in hand now; and, as we have seen, the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture is an integral part of the system.

What is remarkable is that it has been possible to keep the establishment actively in being, to continue the recruitment and training of students, to keep the long-term experimental programmes in operation, and to turn out a not inconsiderable body of research. This is a notable achievement; it is something in which we may take a legitimate pride. But it has not been without its rigours, both for staff and students. Most of the academic staff and their families, accustomed to home leave in a temperate climate every two years, have now been continuously in the tropics for six years. Even local travel, which helps to dispel the inescapable tropical *ennui*, has been seriously restricted. There have been periods of food restriction, and even scarcity, more rigorous than at home; and 'digging for victory' in the moist tropics—for that, too, has had to be done—is not quite the same pastime as in our own temperate clime.

Lack of transport provides the clue to the many difficulties. Thus Colonial Office scholars, going out to take the associateship course prior to being posted to different Colonies, have mostly arrived in small batches many months late. For example, the last of those due on October 1, 1942, arrived in the second week of April 1943! As in home universities, the defects of shortened courses have had to be borne. So, too, research work has been hampered by restrictions and delays in the arrival of apparatus and materials.

And so the tale of difficulties mounts up. The near view no doubt suggests a somewhat gloomy picture. But there is clearly another side to it. Agriculture is an art, and art is proverbially long. Nothing is more damaging to agricultural progress than restriction and discontinuity in the scientific research directed towards its improvement. In Trinidad, in spite of all set-backs (and they have been not a few), this essential continuity has been maintained. To those who have held the fort and advanced the tradition of science in its relation to agriculture, under the stress of war, a word of recognition is due.