

I shall also give occasional lectures at Indiana, North-Western and other United States universities. I shall not return to Ghana until the end of January. During July I shall work in the Archives of the Augustinian Order and the S. Congregatio de Propaganda Fide in Rome, concerning missionary activity on the eastern African coast during the seventeenth century.

G.S.P. Freeman-Grenville.

RESEARCH ON YAMS

This Department has recently initiated an extensive programme of research on yams (*Dioscorea* spp). The programme is devoted primarily to a study of biochemical problems associated with the deterioration of yams during storage. This involves major economic problems in many West African countries, as the total storage losses throughout the yam zone of West Africa have been estimated at almost a million tons per year.

Other aspects of the use of the yams as food crops are also receiving attention, however, especially the processing involved in their preparation as food. These investigations may be of relevance in connection with the possibility of developing industries to manufacture edible yam products within Ghana. At present, however, these studies are confined to the traditional West African processing methods.

The yams, like many other crops used primarily for local food, were much neglected by research workers during the Colonial Era, and a large, and, it is hoped, fruitful field for research lies open. The yams are of particular interest in the West African matrix, as they are among the very few major food crops indigenous to the area, and it appears likely that their cultivation originated in Ghana or in neighbouring parts of Africa. The writer has already spent some years on work with the yams in other parts of Africa, which experience should be of service in the current research programme.

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