

'A History of West Indies Cricket'

Trinidad's future prospects gloomy

BBETTER and better cricketers from Barbados and Guyana, and also the Leeward and Windward Islands, coupled with a decline in cricketing talent from Trinidad and Jamaica? Is this the pattern for the foreseeable future?

Yes, most probably.

These are the considered opinions of a galaxy of cricketing "greats" whose views are set forth, along with many other fascinating facts about West Indian cricket, in a new book. It is called "Cricket in the Sun" and is sub-titled "A History of West Indies Cricket."

The authors are West Indies Test captain Gary Sobers and J. S. Barker, the distinguished cricket writer who is also chief of the London Bureau of "The Advocate"/"Trinidad Guardian"/"Guyana Graphic"/"Voice of St. Lucia"/"Antigua Star." Their book, packed with statistics and informed articles as well as 60 pictures, is published by Arthur Barker at 25/- (\$8.00).

J. S. Barker contributes a detailed history of West Indies cricket, touching upon the "greats" of the past and their achievements, on the formation of the various clubs in the individual territories, and telling of the dramatic moments in the game. He also contributes what is undoubtedly the best account of the classic Test at Brisbane in 1960 and has compiled a sort of "Who's Who" of West Indies Test players past and present.

There is a section by the BBC's Ross Salmon, running to 49 pages, dealing with records and statistics on West Indies cricket and a number of big names in the game have dealt with current cricketing trends in the area.

Tragic Death

It is at this point that the interesting predictions appear.

The late Sir Frank Worrell, in what is undoubtedly his last piece of writing before his tragic death, deals with cricket in Jamaica and has some hard things to say.

He accuses Jamaicans of "absurd sensitivity towards criticism of their cricket and cricketers," charges the island's cricket writers with heaping super-superlatives on mediocre players in mere club matches to such an extent that they get their abilities out of proportion.

He complains bitterly that Jamaican cricket has suffered because of lack of practice by players and their disinclination to hold "post mortems" on games, a worthwhile exercise in his opinion since it "teaches the leaders as much as their men."

"Few Jamaicans can bear even the mildest exposure of their weaknesses," Sir Frank writes. "Even fewer seem willing to make themselves unpopular by drawing attention to the shortcomings of their fellow countrymen—even when they are willing to concede they exist. Instead they dwell on the failure of the non-Jamaicans."

And there are hard words too for the organisers of cricket in Jamaica.

"Both administration and organisation leave much to be desired," he says. "Until the Jamaica Cricket Board acknowledges its responsibilities and organises a system which will embrace the primary schools and the country parishes an awful lot of talent will continue to go down the drain."

On a note of hope, though not for the immediate future, he concludes: "There is nothing so seriously wrong with Jamaica cricket or the potential of Jamaican cricketers that can't be cured by energetic organisation and a new sense of administrative purpose."

Trinidadian cricket is dealt with by Senator J. B. Stollmeyer, another former West Indies Test Captain, and he bemoans the lack of proper facilities for cricket in the island, remarking on the way that "as a training ground for cricketers, the Queen's Park Savannah has served its pur-

pose in the past, but it appears to have outlived its usefulness."

His forecast for the immediate future is gloomy.

"Trinidad's cricket has been in the doldrums for some years now," he writes. "The promising young players are there to be seen, but as yet they have not bridged the gap between the club and the first-class game."

"The major secondary schools and colleges will, for some time to come, provide the main nursery of Trinidad's future players, but until clubs are able to provide their members with better facilities for playing and practising the game, then the interest of the school leaver will wane and he will be lost to the game for all time. This is happening now and could happen more and more in the future."

Full Control

He looks forward to the day when the Trinidad Cricket Council takes over responsibility for international cricket in the same way that they now have full control over internal cricket.

Test cricketer Basil Butcher, writing of cricket in his native Guyana, traces the history of the game in the country, pointing out that initially there were English, Portuguese, Negro, Chinese and Indian clubs, all of them racially exclusive.

He commends the Georgetown Cricket Club who, until the turn of the century, were



SIR FRANK WORRELL
By Colin Richards

the main driving force behind intercolonial cricket, sponsoring the first-ever match against Barbados in 1865, the first overseas tour—to the United States and Canada—in 1886 and the first tour of England in 1900.

His confidence in the future of Guyana's cricketers is echoed by Gary Sobers in his section on cricket in Barbados.

"In recent years only Guyana has reached the standards set by Barbados," Sobers writes—and adds that they have been helped to do so by the skilled coaching of Barbadian Clyde Walcott.

He traces the history of Barbadian cricket, from the formation of a very exclusive white club—which led to the formation of another club by disgruntled white cricketers unable to gain admittance to the first club.

Then came an exclusively coloured club—and the formation of a second one by those who could not become members of the first. All four have played their parts in turning out top-line Barbadian cricketers.

His only real criticism of West Indies cricket is that "too much coaching is based on principles inherited second-hand from English experience, or directly from English coaches." Basil Butcher, incidentally, thinks that "guidance" is a better method than actual coaching.

I suppose that it was only natural that a Barbadian patriot should expect that the Independence Special match between Barbados and the Rest of the World would result in a win for the home side. Sobers is tempted into a prediction of the result—which has a sadly empty ring about it now.

J. S. Barker—whose chapter on the beginnings of West Indies cricket provides a sparkling and fresh look at the game—writes of the Leeward and Windward Islands' cricket.

St. Lucia's game of "woolay-labas" is mentioned, along with the fact that at the turn of the century the small islands had some top-line players, and may soon have a new batch.

One of the factors currently facing them is the "lack of genuinely top-class opposition."



GARY SOBERS



J. S. BARKER



JEFF STOLLMAYER



BASIL BUTCHER