

REV. FR. L. J. GRAF, C.S.SP., B.A.

THIS number of the Journal of the Trinidad Field Naturalists' Club is dedicated to Fr. Graf as a tribute to his work in scientific education in the colony and his unswerving loyalty to the club and its aims.

Fr. Graf was born in Germany in 1883 and 10 years later went to Ireland where he completed his schooling and joined the Holy Ghost Fathers. He arrived in Trinidad in 1905 equipped with a B.A. in the Classics and began his teaching career at St. Mary's College in this branch of learning. However, botany and zoology soon attracted him and by personal effort he became so well versed in them that he took over the teaching of these subjects in the Higher Certificate class.

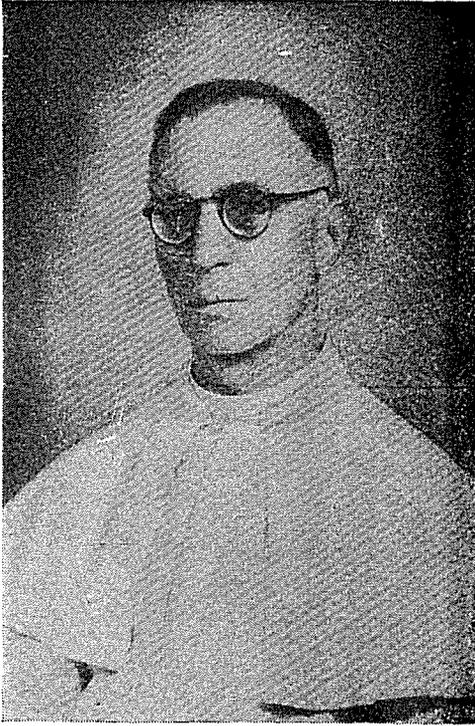
The Trinidad Field Naturalists' Club had lapsed into a state of dormancy two years after Fr. Graf's arrival in Trinidad, but upon its revival in 1924 he was among the first to join. The minutes of the meeting of 3rd October 1924 record that "on the motion of the Chairman, seconded by Mr. Broadway, the Reverend Father Graf was elected a Resident Member". He can thus claim the longest period of continuous membership of all present members.

It is pleasant to find that Broadway was associated with Fr. Graf's election to membership in the club, for Fr. Graf has said that all he knows about the flora of the island was learnt from Broadway. Fr. Graf in turn, for many years now both in his classes and on excursions of the club, has been imparting his knowledge to others.

But this is not the extent of Fr. Graf's contribution to the life of the club. In the years following 1924 he was a frequent lecturer and continually exhibited interesting specimens at meetings. In 1931 he gave a series of special lectures in botany and zoology for the younger members of the club. He became a vice-president and finally president in 1940 in which post he continued until the end of 1945. He has served on the Committee of Management from 1930 to the present time.

As a mark of appreciation of his services to the club and to scientific education he was elected an Honorary Member in 1955.

Fr. Graf's many and onerous duties as a priest and a member of the teaching staff of St. Mary's College have prevented him from undertaking any research. His contribution to science was and is being made as a teacher—a disseminator rather than a discoverer. His success may be gauged by the many scholarship winners in science which St. Mary's has produced. His energy, both intellectual and physical, is astonishing. On only two occasions has he been confined to bed with illness and only two years ago, on 27th March 1955, did he reluctantly admit that the previous day's excursion was probably his last to the summit of El Tucuche. Although we will miss him on future trips to Tucuche, we hope that on the less strenuous excursions we will have the benefit of his wide botanical knowledge for several more years to come.



FR. GRAF.