Introduction.

Over one and a half million pounds of "dholl", a form of split pigeon-pea, are imported annually into Trinidad from India, this is valued at £10,683 sterling. It was suggested by Mr. Stockdale, Agricultural Adviser to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, that this large importation into Trinidad should be checked. Acting on this suggestion preliminary work was started in 1932-33 on the College Farm on the selection of a type, or types, of Cajanus indicus suitable for cultivation in Trinidad. It is the intention of the writer in this paper to review the available literature on this subject and to record the preliminary results of this selection work.

History of the crop.

According to Watt (15) Cajanus indicus has been cultivated in India for centuries and is one of the most important food crops. However, no Indian botanist has recorded finding the plant wild or even in the naturalized state, hence he concludes that it may have been introduced into India. The same writer citing early botanists mentions the plant growing wild in the region of the Upper Nile in Egypt and in the cultivated and wild state in the coastal regions of Angola, Portuguese West Africa. Krauss (4) quoting Sturtevant states it was found in Egyptian tombs of the twelfth dynasty (2200-2400 B.C.). Hence it is thought to be indigenous to these countries. Krauss (4) and Shaw (12) further state that the Pigeon-pea was probably introduced into the West Indies from Africa by the slave-traders.

Conditions favourable for the growth of Cajanus indicus.

The pigeon-pea is strictly a tropical or sub-tropical crop. It grows best at elevations ranging from 100 to 1,500 feet above sea level, and has been reported as growing satisfactorily as high as 6,560 feet (10). The plant is not sensitive to wind, and will grow on soils ranging from sand to heavy clay loams and stoney types provided they are well drained. The plant will thrive in regions of heavy rainfall even exceeding 100 inches per annum as long as there is sufficient drainage. The results of this investigation will be discussed.