

## INTRODUCTION

### 1. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

It is a well known fact and has been stressed time and again that very little is known about atmospheric nitrogen fixation by legumes in the tropics. (Whyte et al., 1953; Norris, 1956, 1959; Masefield, 1958; Purseglove, 1962.) One basic aspect that has been neglected is the extent of nodulation among tropical Leguminosae. (Tutin, 1958; Allen and Allen, 1961.) Norris (1956) advanced the hypothesis that the legumes arose and flourished in the tropics and that the tropical legume is the ancestral one. He considers that the promiscuous cowpea type of Rhizobium that is associated with tropical legumes is the ancestral and typical organism and suggests that it is here that the norm of the symbiosis is to be found. Hence the need for more and vital data especially in the field of tropical legume bacteriology.

The aims of the project were to study and report on the nodulation of as many as possible of the legumes, both indigenous and introduced of Trinidad. Such a study, it is hoped, would contribute towards an understanding of the ecology of nodulation among the Leguminosae. Collection of nodular material for isolation of Rhizobium and new recordings for nodulation on many of the tropical genera have provided useful information for legume rhizobiologists.