INTRODUCTION

Coconut growers in many parts of the world, including the West Indies, harvest their nuts after they have dropped and thus save the cost and labour of picking. For different reasons, the frequency with which dropped nuts are collected varies and nuts sometimes lie on the ground for a considerable time before being collected. This project was intended to determine whether or not such treatment had any effect on the weight of whole nut and weight of wet kernel, as well as the moisture and oil contents of the meat. The importance of such an investigation is readily seen; changes in weight of nut and water content of the meat are of interest to the grower and drier, in that they affect transportation and drying costs. Changes in oil content will interest the processor.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Simpson (1941), found that if measured over a long period of time there was no appreciable difference in yield of nuts, whether they were harvested monthly or allowed to fall naturally from the trees.

John (1948), found that fully mature twelve-month old nuts yielded the maximum quantity of copra; the copra content of nine-month old nuts was 33% less. Storage caused a loss of copra due to the effects of germination.

Cooke (1932) and Simpson (loc. cit), also gave germination as the reason for lower copra yields from nuts falling naturally. However, Cooke (1931), showed that for maximum copra yields, harvested nuts should be allowed to develop an haustorium or 'apple' one inch in diameter. This worker also showed that an oil gradient existed in the copra, oil content being lowest on the inside. During germination, or if attacked by moulds, the inner portion was sloughed off and the copra which remained was richer in oil although the quality deteriorated.