

Gorse hedges have been eradicated and old fencing removed so as to provide an uninterrupted stretch of land for plot work. It will thus be seen that the season's work has been exclusively of a preparatory nature, and it will probably be another year before it can be considered that the programme of experiments is fairly on the way.

The work of cultivation has been done under arrangement with an adjoining farmer, Mr. John Hunt, who has carried out all work entrusted to him in a very satisfactory manner. It was not possible, of course, to push forward the preparations to the extent desired owing to the dryness of the season, which rendered part of the land unploughable during the greater part of the summer.

When the area shall have reached to a stage which will permit of the greater part of the experimental work outlined to be undertaken it will be necessary to appoint a working overseer and to provide the necessary team and implements.

LEARNERS AT EXPERIMENTAL FARMS.

The demand for positions as learners on experimental farms still keeps up, with the result that many lads have to wait for some months before their time for appointment comes. Extra accommodation for six learners has been provided at Weraroa, and these positions are now full. With the exception of a few isolated cases, these boys are found to be good workers and show considerable interest in all duties they undertake. The system of training is undoubtedly an excellent one from the point of view of turning out young men practically skilled in farm-work. It is highly desirable, however, that one of the farms should be more completely staffed and equipped so as to provide for further education and training of young men after undergoing the fundamental apprenticeship to actual farm-work.

CO-OPERATIVE EXPERIMENTS, ETC.

Despite the fact that many of our experimenters have gone to the front, the co-operative-experiment movement has been well supported by the farming community. Since this movement was started in the Dominion several marked advances have been made in general-farming practice. Notably among these are—

The more general practice of providing a larger supply of food for stock during the winter months by the use of the plough.

The more general practice of providing summer feeds for dairy cows during the dry season.

A more extended knowledge of fertilizers and their uses among the farming community.

Greater inclination to experiment and depart from the beaten track, even by farmers not directly connected with co-operative experiments.

Fuller recognition as to the necessity of adequate cultivation, and also an inclination to place some belief in the benefits of rotation, and also of green-manuring on the lighter classes of soils.

An ever-growing belief in the value of lucerne as a forage crop, and in the fact that there are very few descriptions of soils which cannot by proper preparation be fitted to grow this invaluable feed.

An awakening to the necessity and to the benefits to be derived by a fuller use of the faculties of observation in connection with the daily work of the farm.

A better understanding of the value of lime.

North Island.

During the season 1,185 experimental plots were put in in the North Island. 139 new lucerne plots were sown down in districts extending from Wellington to the far North of Auckland. It is a very noticeable fact that the number of farmers applying for experiments of maize has greatly decreased during the past few years, whereas the applications received for lucerne have increased. A large number of farmers are now planting lucerne on their own account, and in visiting many farms it is very interesting to see small areas of lucerne of all ages, usually starting with the original co-operative experiment.

A considerable number of crops were grown for ensilage, many of which were used by Mr. W. Dibble, of the Division's field staff, for giving demonstrations in the making of stack ensilage. Ensilage demonstrations were given at Aorangi, Cheltenham, Apiti, Thames, Stratford, Ngaere, Ashhurst, Hawera, Mangere, Hastings, Clive, East Tamaki, West Tamaki, Papatoetoe, Maungatapere, Tokatoka, Otaki, and Moutoa. Lectures on ensilage subjects were given at Hastings, Cilve, Waipukurau, Puketapu, Waipawa, Raupo, Ruawai, Mititai, Te Kopuru, Hoanga, Manakau, Kohukohu, Waimanakau, Opononi, Herekino, Haitaia, and Tokatoka.

As regards school experimental work, special supervision has been given in connection with the Palmerston North plots and those of the New Plymouth High School. A few other schools have been supplied with seed, material, and advice.

Marion Plots.—The rotation scheme has been put in hand, and very satisfactory crops have been grown. The area subsoiled would appear likely to grow some big crops in the near future should the details of the scheme be properly carried out. The best clover crop has returned in