

SEED-TESTING BY THE DEPARTMENT.

THE seed-testing operations of the Department having attained considerable dimensions, it was recently decided that a charge should be made to merchants for all seed-testing done on their behalf in the Biological Laboratory. This decision was promoted by the feeling displayed by many seed-merchants that a charge is quite justified, and desired by them. An efficient staff has been specially trained for the work, and the testing can now be done accurately and expeditiously.

Charges.—The charges, which came into force on the 1st April, are fixed as follows:—

For testing for purity only	1s. per sample.
For testing for germination only	1s. per sample.
For testing for purity and germination	2s. per sample.
Individual seeds for identification	Free.

Particulars required.—Merchants are requested to stipulate what test is desired in the case of all samples sent in by them—*i.e.*, (1) Whether for purity only, (2) whether for germination only, (3) whether for purity and germination. When full particulars are not given, the interpretation of the word "test" or "report on" will be that purity and germination of the sample are required by the sender.

Size of Samples.—For purity, 1 oz. of the smaller seeds, such as timothy or white clover; 2 oz. of the larger seeds, such as rye-grass or red clover. For germination, smaller samples than for purity are sufficient.

Mode of Reporting.—An interim report will be sent out as soon as an indication of the value of the sample has been ascertained. This will furnish the purity quantitatively, and will give the germination after a certain number of days. If anything harmful is noted in the sample, this will be mentioned on the interim report. It is thought that these interim reports will be of great value for merchants to decide rapidly whether any line on offer is of sufficiently good quality to purchase without having to wait the extra time for a complete test.

Final Report.—This will give the final germination-capacity and the details of the purity analysis. A new form is being printed for this final report which will give the common and botanical names of most impurities found in agricultural seeds, giving their relative frequency of occurrence in samples and whether harmful or otherwise.

Telegraphing Results.—Telegrams, where requested, will be sent at the expense of the firm desiring a report by wire.

Payment of Testing Charges.—Accounts will be furnished monthly by the Accountant of the Department. No fees are to be remitted to the Biological Laboratory, but are to be paid only in response to accounts furnished by the Accountant.

In a circular embodying the above information Mr. A. H. Cockayne, Biologist, remarks as follows:—

"I should like to take this opportunity of recording my appreciation of the efforts of New Zealand seed-merchants to raise the standard of quality of farm seeds sold in New Zealand. It is hoped that the charge necessary in order to place the departmental seed-testing work on a thoroughly businesslike basis will not prevent merchants from fully availing themselves of the facilities offered."

It is pleasing to note that communications since received by the Biologist from the leading seed firms in the Dominion unananimously approve of the new system and appreciation of this branch of the work of the Biological Laboratory.

Seed-testing will still be undertaken gratis for farmers.

France and Frozen Meat.—It is now officially confirmed that the proposed French legislation for the purchase of frozen meat from certain American firms has been dropped. The despatch, dated London, 23rd March, adds that nothing is known at the British embassy in Paris of any negotiations for the purchase of any frozen meat other than Australasian meat.