

LUCERNE-GROWING IN THE "SEVENTIES."

Mr. A. Macpherson, Fields Instructor, Christchurch, writes:—

It may be of interest to many to know that the New Zealand and Australian Land Company, who were the pioneers of many of the improved methods of farming and did so much for the advancement of agricultural and pastoral pursuits in New Zealand, grew lucerne over forty years ago on their big Levels Estate, in South Canterbury (since subdivided for closer settlement), also on their Clydevale Estate in Otago. The following is from Mr. R. Irving, farmer, of Albury, who at that time was overseer on the Levels Estate:—

In 1875 we had over 100 acres in lucerne on the Levels Estate. It was sown in rows 15 in. apart and seeded at the rate of 15 lb. per acre, which we found to be plenty of seed. Attention was paid after each cutting to give intercultivation. This was done by taking the mould-board off the single-furrow plough, leaving only the share on it, and running this between the rows. Afterwards we used to tine-harrow it. It was a great success, and we usually cut a crop from three to four times during the season. As a hay crop it was unrivalled; all farm animals were fond of it. It was stocked with sheep some two or three years after it was sown, but it never did well after that.

THE GRASS - PEA.

A. McTAGGART, M.S.A., Agriculturist.

THE valuable type of legume called the grass-pea has been grown, particularly for fodder purposes, fairly extensively in parts of Ontario, and local experience gained since its recent introduction to New Zealand (upon the recommendation of the writer) bears out the good name the plant has in Canada.

The grain of the grass-pea is dark yellow in colour, angular in shape, and small. The plant is a fine-leaved edition of the field-pea, though more decumbent, and to some extent it resembles the vetch-plant. It requires a fair amount of warmth, not too much moisture, and a fairly good soil.

The crop may be grown either alone or with oats, rye, or barley for soiling (green-feed producing) purposes. It is highly palatable to stock, is easily grown, makes an excellent cover-crop in orchards, makes good hay, is a fair yielder of grain valuable for feeding (crushed) to various classes of farm animals, and is an excellent soil-renovating crop.