

CO-OPERATIVE FRUIT-VARIETY TESTING.

LOWER MOUTERE TEST AREA.

W. C. HYDE, Orchard Instructor, Nelson.

THE variety test for fruit-trees dealt with in this report is being carried out in the orchard of Mr. Charles H. MacKay, of Lower Moutere, Nelson District. The orchard is on flat country about two miles from the sea, in the valley of the Moutere River. The valley runs north and south, and at this point is about one mile wide, with low clay hills on either side. The orchard is toward the eastern side of the valley, the soil being a yellow loam on deep clay.

Seven varieties of pear-trees, and twenty-nine varieties of apple-trees (three of each kind), were planted five years ago. During that period the cultivation has been good, the spraying fair, and the pruning attended to in season.

The following notes describe the trees on this experimental area as they stood at the end of last season.

PEARS.

Louise Bonne of Jersey.—These trees have made good growth of neat habit, spurring freely. They have cropped consistently, and came into bearing at an early age—a rather striking contrast to those on the Tasman experimental area, on which hills this variety gave poor results.

Marie Louise.—Have made strong growth with vigorous laterals, and are slow in coming into maturity; they have borne a small crop this season.

Winter Cole.—Now well over 9 ft. in height, and this season—a bad one for pears—have each carried on an average $\frac{3}{4}$ bushel of fruit of an excellent sample on the vigorous laterals.

Fertility.—In this locality have shown themselves to be strong, shapely growers, spurring freely, and cropping early and heavy.

Conference.—These are now about 6 ft. high, making shapely moderate growth, but have not yet borne any crop.

Doyenne du Comice.—While making good shapely growth and being now 8 ft. high, with the frame of the tree carrying light twiggy laterals; these have so far borne no crop.

Beurre de Capiaumont.—Have made poor growth without any crop so far.

GENERAL REMARKS.—The above-named trees are all clean, and have given little trouble in the way of disease, a slight infection of pear-mite on Doyenne du Comice being the only exception.

APPLES.

Dougherty.—These trees are some 6 ft. in height, of moderate vigour, with a well-furnished frame; showing some woolly aphid; have cropped well.

Granny Smith.—This highly recommended variety from New South Wales has made vigorous growth, carrying fair crops on laterals and spurs; is slightly affected with woolly aphid.