

## WORK FOR THE COMING MONTH.

### THE ORCHARD.

THE fruitgrowing industry has no doubt been one of our primary industries most adversely affected by the war, although this did not occur altogether in the manner at first anticipated. The peculiar position of the industry at the beginning of hostilities could not fail to have a prejudicial effect. Large areas of fruit-trees had been planted annually, new areas were coming into bearing, and crops were increasing in proportion year by year. This, taken in conjunction with the early cessation of export owing to the lack of shipping, suggested a real danger of the overproduction point being reached well before the position again reached normal. Fortunately, however, nothing of a very disastrous nature in this direction has yet eventuated. Moderate crops on the one hand, and considerably improved marketing methods and the extension of cool-storage accommodation on the other, assisted very materially in saving the situation. Naturally, however, the war conditions did affect orchard-extension. Planting continued briskly for a season or two, but in the circumstances this could not be expected to continue, and as a natural consequence orchard-extension has for some time practically ceased. This fact, as may be readily appreciated, has had a very disastrous effect on the business of many New Zealand nurserymen who had their nurseries stocked with trees in anticipation of further orchard development. The fruit-tree-raising industry has, indeed, suffered to a decidedly greater extent than that of fruitgrowing.

However, the great war is now successfully concluded, and the fruitgrower is beginning to breathe more freely and to look with less misgivings upon the industry he is engaged in. The question of export is being taken up in many quarters as an immediate possibility. Oversea buyers are already making inquiries and announcing their willingness to trade, and all that remains is the assurance of shipping-space to allow of a reopening of our export trade being made this season.

Advice and reminders in orchard work for the coming month are given as usual in the district notes which follow. Owing to staff changes in progress the Canterbury notes are temporarily omitted.

—*J. A. Campbell, Assistant Director of the Horticulture Division.*

#### AUCKLAND.

With the advent of February, bringing with it the full rush of the fruit season, the grower will find every moment fully occupied in attending to the proper picking, grading, packing, and marketing of his produce. The working methods adopted on quite a number of commercial orchards at the busy season are not conducive to the best results being obtained, and this is undoubtedly responsible for the loss of much valuable time. The adoption of a plan of methodical working is recommended, more especially when a large bulk of fruit is to be marketed—a certain fixed plan of picking and bringing to the sheds, handling, grading, and finally packing and stencilling. Assign to each hand employed at this work his or her certain duties, so that uniformity may be obtained.