

his less skilled assistance must needs be trading in an article the value of which he is not able correctly to assess.

As indicated, general seed-testing by the Department was inaugurated in 1909. Before that period a great deal of seed-testing work of a more or less experimental nature had been carried out, and many preliminary expedients were adopted before the Department announced that a seed-testing station had been established. Seeds were tested free, the test including a statement of the average germination capacity and the percentage and kinds of extraneous seeds. In 1916, however, in order to place the system on a businesslike basis, fees were fixed for merchants' samples, the amounts being 1s. per sample for germination tests, 2s. for germination and purity, and for seed-mixtures 1s. for each constituent of the mixture. Testing is still carried out free of charge for farmers.

During the year of inception 180 samples were tested. The following table indicates the growth of the work from its inception to the present time:—

Year ended March,	Samples.	Year ended March,	Samples.
1910 .. ..	180	1915 .. ..	2,646
1911 .. ..	400	1916 .. ..	3,200
1912 .. ..	400	1917 .. ..	2,700
1913 .. ..	650	1918 .. ..	3,859
1914 .. ..	1,863		

For the eleven months ended February, 1919, 4,417 samples have been tested, thus making an aggregate of 20,315 samples dealt with since the establishment of the system.

It is gratifying to note that by far the greatest proportion of the samples are sent in by seed-merchants, the farmer as a general rule accepting the statement of his seedsman that the seed is reliable and of good value. The farmer, after his crop has failed to establish, sometimes sends in samples for test—perhaps with the hope that he may be able to claim compensation from his seedsman if the test proves that the seed was of low vitality. There should be no need, however, for the farmer to have to bother getting his seeds tested. Too long a time must elapse between his procuring the samples and his receipt of the result of the test. If the test is unsatisfactory he must procure fresh samples and again wait for results. Testing

for farmers is practically useless as far as their actual sowings are concerned. What the farmer requires is to have the germination supplied



PREPARING A GERMINATING-TRAY.