

potato seed-bed of the world. From every European State, from North and South America, Africa, and Australasia, growers are sending for Scotch seed. Much in the same way in New Zealand do we send to the South Island when we require a change of seed in the North Island.

In my experience the benefit of a change of seed is marked. It should come from a colder climate and a distance away—not necessarily from the South Island—as seed from a high altitude or a late district makes a good change for the drier and earlier districts. When one has a good line in potatoes it should not be allowed to deteriorate. Select seed every year, and lift it for seed whilst the haulm is still green. Keep the tubers cool, as previously advised.

When catering for the early market it is not advisable to plant large seed; small tubers will produce the earlier crop. In late wet districts, or where the land does not come into a friable and nice working condition very early in the spring, it is advisable to box the seed. Sprouted seed may be planted later, and then be just as early as if it had been planted in the best condition a month before. There is thus a relief to the pressure of spring labour, and it is also a relief to the farmer's mind to know that he need not battle with sticky land.

Seed should not be boxed all winter, as the sprouts get too long—that is, for the main crop. It is better to put potatoes to sprout about two months before they are required for planting, and keep them in a cool place until then. If the sprouts get knocked off fresh ones will appear, but they are not as vigorous as the first ones. Under rough-and-ready methods of planting, and where the land is under an indolent method of tillage, it is best to put in unspouted potatoes.

It is always advisable to test the germination of seed-potatoes. Put a small quantity in a warm dark place to sprout two months before planting-time, in order to see if they all sprout well. Look carefully for tubers with sprouts almost as thin as cotton. Such tubers are affected with spindle-sprout disease, and wherever one is planted there will be reduced profits.

ROTATIONS AND YIELDS.

Where should the potato come in a rotation? Certainly, for preference, after a leguminous crop or a pasture in which clovers have formed part of the herbage. Potatoes are not hard on the soil—that is, they do not remove large quantities of its fertility. Many farmers in certain districts of England follow potatoes with autumn-sown wheat. Quite as good crops of grain have been grown following potatoes as from summer fallow. In Jersey an early-maturing spring wheat often follows the early potato crop, and it is not uncommon to see the Jersey mangold being sown immediately the crop of potatoes is off the land. A rotation I know of as having been successful was lucerne four years, potatoes in the fifth year, and the sixth year wheat. When lucerne-seed can be bought at 1s. 6d. per pound it is not a costly crop to grow so far as seeding is concerned, and where lucerne does well potatoes also do well. The heaviest crop of potatoes ever raised at Moumahaki Experimental Farm followed lucerne. Peas and vetches are good preparatory crops for potatoes. Crimson clover sown in early autumn and ploughed or dug in during the winter is also a good preparer.