

objection to the factory having a large block of ground is that beets cannot be grown continuously on the same land, and the company would find itself in the position of having to carry out diversified farming with its many pitfalls.

THE GROWING OF SUGAR-BEET.

For all practical purposes the growing of sugar-beets can be considered to be almost identical with that of mangolds, excepting that the rows can be closer, and must on no account be ridged, as is sometimes the case with mangolds. Owing largely to the fact that unless really properly attended to a mangold crop is generally a failure, mangold-growing has never become popular in New Zealand, less than 10,000 acres being grown throughout the Dominion. The main mangold-growing districts are Canterbury and North Otago, where about 40 per cent. of the total crop is grown. As Canterbury also produces over half the total of potatoes—a crop requiring somewhat similar attention to the sugar-beet—these facts again emphasize the point that sugar-beet-growing is more likely to become established in Canterbury than in any other part of New Zealand.

The sugar-beet, apart from thinning and weeding, must be inter-tilled. This, combined with the necessity for deep cultivation prior to sowing and the deep-rooting nature of the crop, makes it suitable for districts where the rainfall is comparatively low, as in Canterbury. At Maffra one of the main reasons brought forward to explain the rather poor response that has been secured for the production of beets is that the climate is too dry, and that this will not be remedied until irrigation becomes general. Now, the rainfall at Maffra is not high, the maximum yearly average for ten years being 21 in., which is not so very different from the Lincoln figures in Canterbury. The point as to whether Canterbury is rather too dry has been discussed with many of those interested, but my opinion is that the advantages of a comparatively dry climate outweigh the disadvantages of small yields in seasons of low precipitation. I am inclined to think that even at Maffra, apart from certain seasons when the rainfall was considerably less than 20 in., the dryness of the climate, enabling the crop to be easily intercultivated, lifted, and carted from the fields, has been of distinct advantage.

In the growing of sugar-beet hand-labour could easily become excessive, and proper machinery for drilling, intercultivating, and lifting the roots is essential.

COST OF PRODUCING SUGAR-BEET.

It is difficult to estimate the exact cost of growing beets in New Zealand, as all experimental work in this connection has been conducted on areas too limited to supply satisfactory figures. Nevertheless, from the Victorian experience, coupled with the knowledge of the cost of growing such a crop as mangolds, a very fair idea can be formed. The following statement rather over- than under-estimates so far as present prices are concerned. It has to be remembered, however, that it is held in certain quarters that except in some instances farm labour in New Zealand has not yet kept march with the falling value of money, and that further increases can be expected: Rent or