

interested farmers who go round at judging-time are enabled to follow the respective crops from year to year and mark their progress and treatment. Lucerne-judging days are very popular. In going round year after year it is noticeable that most of the competitors are extending their areas. Drilling from 15 lb. to 18 lb. of Marlborough seed, with from 2 cwt. to 3 cwt. of a phosphatic manure—super or basic slag for preference—continues to give the best results, the land having been previously limed at from 8 cwt. to 20 cwt. per acre.

* GENERAL.

At the Hawera Winter Show exhibits from the first, second, and third crops of most of the competitions were staged. These exhibits carried cards setting out full particulars of the variety, date sown, manure used, and general cultural methods. It made a very fine and instructive display.

THE RELATION OF BIRDS TO AGRICULTURE IN NEW ZEALAND.

V. THE KINGFISHER, THE CUCKOOS, AND THE PARROTS.

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THROUGHOUT this series of articles it has been the aim of the writers to state facts and nothing but facts. The agriculturist is often forced to realize the damage inflicted on his interests by birds, and it is only natural that this should be uppermost in his mind when he thinks of birds. It is the more natural since the good services of birds are among the silent processes of nature, which do not become obvious until naturalistic studies are bent upon them. The enthusiastic bird-lover, on the other hand, is not often concerned directly with agricultural interests; he may be carried away entirely by his strong perception of the good birds do, and, as a result, the cause of the birds themselves is his first object. Shelford goes so far as to state that "When one comes to love an animal or a group of animals he is in no position to draw scientific conclusions regarding it"; but to the present writers this seems an extreme view. The aim of these articles is to present the exact scientific standpoint, and to preserve a just balance between the prejudices of the farmer and the enthusiastic eulogium of the bird-lover. That they have been at least partially successful in this endeavour is indicated by accusations now levelled against them with considerable frequency of, on the one hand, making out too good a case for the birds, and, on the other, of making it not good enough. In no case is this balance more necessary than in that of the kingfisher—the next bird on the list.

THE KINGFISHER (SAUROPATIS SANCTUS VIG. AND HORS.).

There is probably no need to describe to New Zealand readers either the form of the kingfisher, with its long sharply-pointed beak,