

satisfactory. The lucerne was practically free of weeds, and the vigour of the stand was apparent on inspection. The accompanying photo was taken just previous to cutting.

As yet no root fungus has appeared in the crop, though it is found in the district. It is hoped that the vigour maintained by good treatment will enable the lucerne to become resistant to invasion.

#### COMMENT.

A lucerne crop should never be considered hopeless so far as weeds are concerned. This is especially the case in the early stages of its establishment. The wet, cool summers of the last two seasons made the eradication of weeds extremely difficult. Normal summer weather would have made the task easier. Despite the unfavourable weather, however, the weeds were conquered in Mr. Dougherty's case. Liming, of course, is necessary. Top-dressing with phosphates consisting mainly of superphosphate may also be regarded as essential. This, added to the cutting, assists materially in the control of weeds.

After experience with both methods, I am of opinion that lucerne sown after a clean permanent pasture is better in many cases than resorting to preliminary cropping. The grass-sod should be broken in early winter by skim-ploughing, and the area reploughed deeply in the spring following. It should then be worked down, limed, and sown about November. Comparing broadcasting with drilling, I would advise on the lighter soils, such as those of Waikato, Bay of Plenty, and elsewhere in the province, sowing broadcast. Drilling half the seed one way and crossing the area at right angles with the remainder is to be recommended.

The importance of regularly top-dressing and cultivating after cutting, for the maintenance of a vigorous stand free of weeds, cannot be over-emphasized.

In the south Auckland district dairy-farmers particularly can use profitably a small area—up to 10 or 15 acres—of lucerne. It reduces the area that need be devoted to special crops. Cutting permanent pasture regularly for hay is not recommended, because the growth produced when the field is shut up does injury to the better grasses. It must not be forgotten also that lucerne is the highest-grade crop that can be produced from the nutrition point of view; moreover, it leaves the soil in an improved condition after the stand is broken up.

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*Inspection of Farm Engines.*—The Board of Agriculture has in the past endeavoured to obtain exemption from inspection for farm engines and motors of less than 6 horse-power, as it is recognized that practically nothing is achieved by such inspection. An amendment to the Inspection of Machinery Act was introduced into the House last session, and was referred to the Labour Bills Committee for consideration, but went no further. At its last meeting the Board decided to take up the matter again in due course.

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*Registration of Apiaries.*—The total number of registered apiaries at the close of the last official year was 8,007, representing a total of 111,100 hives.