

SPECIAL HAY CROPS.

In the south the late hay crops consisting of oats and pea mixtures will be ready to cut during January. The proper stage for harvesting these crops is when the oats are in a tough, doughy stage, and the peas are filling the pods. The peas must not be allowed to overripen, otherwise much loss will result when the crop is harvested. As it is, a considerable proportion of peas will fall to the ground. These may be utilized by turning sheep on to the stubble. Another method of utilizing any peas which may have fallen is to run the disk cultivators over the stubble, and so allow the peas to germinate. A catch-crop very suitable for late autumn feeding will thus be obtained. The yields from the oats and pea mixtures have in the past been most satisfactory, and if saved in good condition the material makes a splendid hay or chaff for feeding in the winter along with turnips. Similar crops intended for ensilage will also be ready for operations in January.

—*Fields Division.*

THE ORCHARD.

FRUIT HARVEST.

THE season is now at hand when all energies will be devoted to the picking, grading, packing, and marketing of fruit. In order to give this portion of the work all the attention it requires, together with the spraying necessary for keeping in check the various pests and diseases, cultivation will have to be reduced to a minimum. If cultivation is carried out in a proper manner up to New Year very little will be needed during the next few months. However, if a cover-crop is contemplated a little preparation will be necessary before it is sown in February.

It should now be fairly easy to estimate the extent of the crops of both stone and pip fruits, and every endeavour made to secure a full supply of cases, if this has not already been done. During the busy season, when both stone and pip fruits are being dealt with, everything should be in readiness so as to handle the crops as expeditiously as possible.

PICKING AND PACKING.

If it is worth while to exercise care and skill in growing the fruit it is equally important to take pains at the harvest. Just when and how the fruit should be picked depends largely on the species or variety, and on the distance it has to be shipped. The closer and better the market, the riper the fruit should be when gathered. It would seem to be unnecessary to say that all fruits intended for a good market should be hand-picked, and yet it is a fact that such fruit is often shaken from the trees. After fruit is picked it is very important that it should be kept cool and away from the sun. The correct time to pick can scarcely be described in words; experience in the orchard is the best teacher.

It is impossible to carry out the packing operations in a successful manner if a convenient packing-shed is not available. Packing in