

## SUBTERRANEAN CLOVER IN AUSTRALIA.

MR. J. W. DEEM, Instructor in Agriculture, who recently visited Australia, contributes the following notes on this subject:—

Subterranean clover is growing on extensive areas in South Australia, and is fairly well established in many parts of Victoria. None was observed by me in either New South Wales or Queensland. Various agricultural authorities spoken to in the latter States considered that it would not thrive, but this is difficult to understand seeing that white clover does exceptionally well in many localities, especially in the paspalum area on the north coast of New South Wales. However, I understand that considerable sowings are to be made this year, and the results will be interesting to watch. The Mount Barker district, in South Australia, has the credit of introducing subterranean clover into Australia, and certainly it is now the home of this plant in the Commonwealth. The district is thirty to forty miles from the sea, several hundred feet above sea-level, and has a rainfall of 30 in.

There is no doubt that subterranean clover has made a wonderful difference to the carrying-capacity of the land where it has been established, especially where top-dressing has been carried out. Its response to phosphates has been wonderful, and if top-dressing is at all systematic it quickly covers the whole surface. For a long time very little actual sowing of seed was done, farmers depending on the spread of the clover by means of stock, but now that seed is cheaper large areas are sown, seeding being at the rate of from 4 lb. to 8 lb. per acre, generally with a bushel of oats, on cultivated land; on pasture land the seed is broadcast at the rate of 1 lb. to 2 lb. per acre. Very little attempt appears to have been made to sow subterranean clover in conjunction with other clovers and grasses. However, a few farmers are now adopting this practice, and the results promise to be good. At the same time there is some danger that the subterranean clover will oust most other pasture constituents. Sowing is done in either spring or autumn, the latter for preference.

The harvesting of seed has been a difficult process in the past, but with the heavier crops obtained by the use of fertilizers the work has become much simpler. The general practice at present is to cut with a mowing-machine with a pea-tumbler attached. A yield of 300 lb. of seed per acre is considered a good crop, but up to 400 lb. has been obtained. I understand that Messrs. Howard Bros., the chief seed people of Mount Barker, have paid up to £8 per acre for the right to harvest clover-seed. Last year they saved 60 tons, and the price on the farm at the time of my visit was about 2s. 6d. per pound. For threshing, the ordinary clover-huller is used, after which the seed is put through a winnower with some proprietary attachments, the nature of which the owners do not care to disclose. I understand that at the last Melbourne Royal Show there was a cleaner shown which makes a perfect job of the work.

I was informed by farmers that in summer, when the pastures dry up, sheep will fatten on subterranean-clover seed left on the ground.