

In conclusion, it may be emphasized that the time is overdue when flax-growing should be placed on a scientific basis. Keen competition in the world's markets demands both an improvement in quality and in uniformity, and a reduction of labour costs, the latter being one of the largest items in the production of phormium fibre. Everything seems to indicate systematic cultivation and mechanical handling of flax as the chief remedy.

It is only to be expected that repeated cutting of heavy crops off uncultivated swamps would lead to deterioration both in quality and quantity—an expectation which appears to be fully borne out by the experience of millers. In addition, the swamp has the disadvantages of expensive cutting and carrying, and of mixed varieties. Cultivated flax would almost certainly be cut by mechanical means, and the same tractor used for cutting would be available for hauling.

The preliminary work on selection, breeding, and cultivation should be done before planting begins on an extensive scale. That it is really worth doing is shown by the fact that much has been done already by individual millers. Messrs. A. and L. Seifert, B. B. Wood, A. Wall, and G. Seifert may be mentioned especially. Valuable as work by individual concerns may be, there can be no doubt that combined work by all interested has everything in its favour. It is waste for several men each to spend time and money on the same problem; nor can one man, or a company, often afford to look far enough ahead in its programme of research. The industry in New Zealand is small; it must stand or fall as a unit. The pooling of experience already gained, and co-ordination in future research, appear to offer the most hopeful lines of advance.

CHECKING OF MILK AND CREAM TESTS AND CREAM-GRADING.

AN officer of the Dairy Division (Mr. G. R. B. Boswell) has been recently appointed to systematically undertake the checking of milk and cream tests among the dairy factories, and to assist in the work of co-ordinating cream-grading.

Check testing can be carried out for some days after the expiry of each testing-period, and will probably be applied primarily to dairy companies evidencing seasonal yields which are considered to be too high. Despite publicity respecting yields, some are undoubtedly higher than should be the case.

The Instructors in buttermaking have been giving much attention to keeping the cream-grading standards uniform as between the various factories. Part of the new officer's time will be utilized to assist in this work. It is very satisfactory to note that the great majority of dairy companies have co-operated splendidly in regard to cream-grading. Every possible attention has been given by Instructors to complaints respecting inaccurate grading. Some of these complaints have been justified, but the majority were probably founded only on rumour, and were of no consequence.

—*W. M. Singleton, Director of the Dairy Division.*