

## THE GRASS-SEED INDUSTRY IN SOUTHLAND.

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THE New Zealand grass- and clover-seed industry is centred mainly in the South Island, wherein it is divided into several groups, the two largest being Canterbury and Southland, where this line of production takes an important place in farming practice. Southland is mainly a grass-seed producing centre, only a comparatively small quantity of clover-seed being saved. The rye-grasses (perennial and Italian), Chewings fescue, and crested dogtail are the species produced in greatest quantity, while brown-top, Lotus major, and wild white clover are saved in appreciable amounts.

The history of the grass-seed industry in Southland goes back to the early "nineties," when considerable quantities of rye-grass seed passed through the stores. At the present time what was then regarded as a side-line has developed into an organized industry, with extensive machining plants at Gore and Invercargill. Approximately 30 per cent. of the New Zealand acreage under seed crops belongs to Southland, and the province produces 30 to 35 per cent. (approximately 4,500 tons) of the total New Zealand output.

### RYE-GRASSES.

In the 1926-27 season in Southland 42,082 acres were under rye-grass for seed, the production being 3,028 tons, or nearly 40 per cent. of the Dominion total. Perennial rye-grass is a most important species in Southland, and under the better pasture-management of to-day much of the richer land of the province is carrying first-class swards of it which are improving with the increase in fertility following on top-dressing.

In the past the local demand for seed has been extensive, but with the increasing permanency of pastures this local requirement has diminished, and more seed has been available for distribution to the North Island and for export. It is upon the export demand that the industry depends for its development, and growers may rest assured that this demand is dependent to a large extent on the quality of the product. The principal overseas buyers are Australia, Great Britain, and the United States of America.

### CHEWINGS FESCUE.

The production of Chewings fescue is almost wholly confined to Southland, where in the 1926-27 season 9,108 acres produced more than 940 tons of seed. Chewings fescue was introduced into Southland in the late "seventies," and was grown by a Mr. Tarlton near Invercargill. The seed saved was taken by him and sown on a farm at Mossburn, which district, together with the Waimea Plains, has become the centre of the production area. The Mossburn property was later purchased by the late Mr. George Chewings, who was responsible for the initial commercializing of the seed.

The New Zealand requirement for this seed is now small, and practically the whole of the output is available for export. In 1926