

**Gooseberries:** The variety of gooseberry favoured by Mr. Nichols is Farmer's Glory, a heavy cropper with a large berry, and by far the most popular variety in the Wairarapa. The crop averages 6 tons to the acre from mature bushes which are planted 7ft. x 7ft. apart (890 to the acre). The average life of a gooseberry plantation under good cultural conditions is considered to be 12 years.

**Black Currants:** Lee's Prolific and American Champion are the main varieties of black currants grown; they are planted 6ft. x 6ft. apart (1210 bushes to an acre). Under favourable seasonal conditions well over 2 tons of fruit are produced per acre. Like the gooseberry, properly-managed currants will produce heavy crops for 12 years or longer in suitable soils.

**Raspberries:** Lloyd George and Fillbasket are the varieties of raspberries grown by Mr. Nichols. Lloyd George ripens early (about mid-December) and is in good demand for the Christmas trade, while Fillbasket begins to ripen at the end of December or early in January. Harvesting lasts from six to eight weeks, and one and a-half to two and a-quarter tons of fruit per acre is usually produced.

**Loganberries:** One and a-half acres of loganberries are grown. The canes are supported on double wires which are fastened to well-made reinforced concrete posts, grooved on the top to carry the irrigation pipes. Irrigation, when necessary, is done by the Pope system in which the nozzles or nipples placed 18ft. apart on the pipes throw a cone of spray 18ft. in diameter. Plants are spaced 12ft. apart in rows 6ft. apart. The average crop ranges from 3 to 4 tons an acre.

**Boysenberries:** Half an acre of boysenberries are grown, trained and irrigated on the same system as the loganberries. Plants are 12ft. apart in rows 6ft. apart. The large, dark-red berry, very luscious when ripe, is in great demand. Up to 4 tons per acre are produced.

### Cultivation

Mr. Nichols believes in thorough cultivation, and has ample motor implements to carry out this work, including two rotary hoes, which are in constant use during spring and early summer for shallow cultivation between the rows, and two 6 h.p. tractors for ploughing and tine cultivation. Cultivation around the bushes is done by hand, great care being taken to avoid damaging the shallow feeding roots.

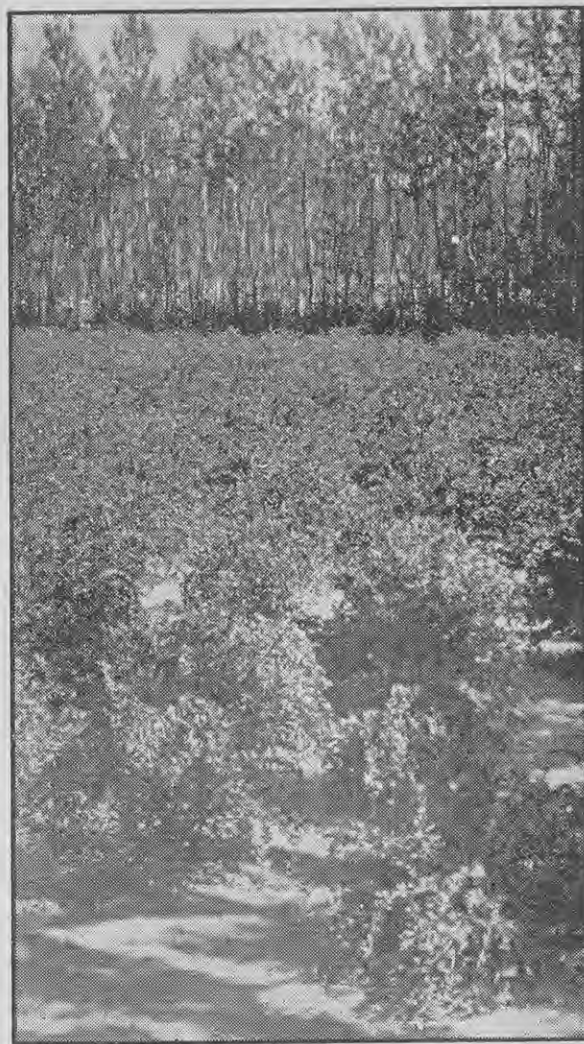
### Spraying

For regular control of diseases and pests, a Bean pump with a 60-gallon barrel mounted on a carriage is drawn along the headlands by tractor. Long hoses which will reach half the length of the rows of plants are used; when half of the block has been sprayed the pump is moved to the other end of the rows to spray the second half. The spray outfit is too large to go up and down the rows, and considerable time could be saved by one which could be drawn between the rows.

### Labour

Five young men are employed regularly on the garden. Immediately after harvesting is completed all shelter belts are trimmed up. Fruiting canes of raspberries, loganberries, and boysenberries are removed and burnt and new canes of loganberries and boysenberries tied up to the wires to clear the ground ready for cultivation. As soon as leaves have fallen from currant and gooseberry plants pruning is begun, for which several extra hands (women) are employed.

Three large sheds, two 20ft. by 40ft. and one 30ft. by 60ft., enable all implements and equipment on the farm to be kept under cover. The larger shed has a workshop at one end, and the rest of the space is used for storing fruit containers and for packing the fruit. Adequate shed accommodation contributes considerably to efficiency



Farmer's Glory, averaging 6 tons of large berries to the acre, is the variety of gooseberry grown. Bushes are spaced 890 to the acre and bear well for 12 years.

in management. Mr. Nichols's home is not on the farm property, but is handy enough not to prejudice efficient control of farm operations.

### Harvesting

Harvesting, which begins with the gooseberries about the middle of November, is continuous until the last of the currants and raspberries are picked about the end of February or early March. Twenty-five to 30 pickers are engaged. Because of the shortage of local casual workers, some of the pickers are transported from centres as distant as Masterton, 15 miles to the north, and Martinborough and Featherston in the south.

The whole of Mr. Nichols's land is planted in small fruits. The place is well kept and appears to run with smoothness and precision, which speak highly of the owner's skill and organising ability.

All photographs by Hope, Cross, and Richardson.