

season give promise of an abundant crop.* The produce will be placed at the disposal of settlers for seed. They were shipped before being quite ripe in barrels with only a few perforations to allow of a free circulation of air, and came out as ordinary cargo, arriving in splendid condition. A return shipment of our early potatoes, packed in the same way, might be tried, to test the London market.

Turnips.—This crop is also reported to be considerably under expectations, and consequently the supply of prime mutton for shipment will be scarce during the spring months.

Fruit.—An expert was employed up to last January giving instruction in fruit culture, and for this purpose visited many districts, where he lectured, and explained the best modes of growing trees and dealing with blights. Inquiries are now being made in America, and if possible an expert will be engaged having a thorough knowledge of the culture, canning, and drying of fruits, and the best way of dealing with orchard-pests. In the meantime any questions on this subject are being attended to by the Acting-Biologist, Mr. Kirk.

Last session a Bill was introduced dealing with the codlin-moth and other pests, but time did not permit of its being considered by Parliament. During the recess the Bill has been widely distributed amongst those interested in fruit-culture, and has received but scant treatment at their hands. This, I consider, is much to be deplored, and the sooner the subject is faced the better.

Each year fruit-culture is receiving more attention, especially to the north of Auckland, where the growing of citrus fruits has now become almost the mainstay of the settlers.

WAIRENGA NURSERY.

The wattle-plantation continues to make decided progress, and a considerable quantity of bark, estimated at 16 tons, has been stripped this season. An analysis is now being made to ascertain its value for tanning purposes. The balance of the land is being gradually brought into cultivation.

WHANGAREI EXPERIMENTAL FARM.

This farm, which is under the control of the Whangarei County Council, but subsidised by the Government to the extent of £150 per annum, also continues to do good service. Mr. Hislop, the manager, is able to distribute large numbers of trees, principally for shelter, besides carrying on experiments with many sorts of fruit and other trees and plants. The agreement with the Council, as well as with the Whangarei High School Board, who have been receiving £200 per annum towards the wattle-plantation at Kioreroa, terminates on the 31st August next, and arrangements for the future conduct of the farm are now under consideration.

ARBOR DAY.

This day, which it is hoped will now be observed annually, was initiated by the Government proclaiming the 4th August last as Arbor Day, and a public holiday in all the Government offices. Although rather late before the arrangements were completed, yet by a wide distribution of circulars the hearty co-operation of School Committees and local bodies was secured, resulting in considerable enthusiasm being shown when the day arrived. I am unable to give any idea of the number of trees planted, but am informed that in most districts some were planted and in others a large number. In Wellington His Excellency the Governor and the Countess of Glasgow interested themselves in the movement by each planting a tree on the Esplanade.

The importance of tree-planting, I am sure, is recognised by almost every one who has the welfare of the colony at heart. Not only does the necessity for the judicious planting of trees for climatic purposes, and shelter for stock, force itself on our attention, but, at the present rate of destruction of the native timber, timber for all purposes will before many years be difficult to procure. Districts lately covered with bush are yearly becoming denuded and will shortly be almost treeless. In districts where there is no bush the value of the thinnings of plantations for firing alone will amply repay the small outlay required to plant belts of timber. It is therefore to be hoped that this matter will be taken up with enthusiasm by young and old, and trees both useful and ornamental planted in all available spaces.

SAND-BINDING GRASS (*Ammophila*).

This grass having been found well adapted for binding or stopping sand-drifts, several small lots have been sent to places where the sand is encroaching on to cultivated lands.

* The returns to hand, 31st July, show that very satisfactory crops have been obtained. The following table gives the number of growers, gross weight of seed, and gross weight of crop :—

Name.	No.	No. of Growers.	Weight of Seed.	Weight of Crop.	Remarks.
			Lb.	Lb.	
Magnum Bonum	1	34	535	10,708	A good crop all over the colony. The largest tests were made in the Waimate, Palmerston South, Lincoln, and Whangarei districts. Of the returns to hand, the first shows the best results.
Bruce	2	29	538	11,722	
Main Crop	3	33	538	8,886	
Imperator	4	34	524	9,480	
Sutton's Early Regent ..	5	8	132	2,311	
Sutton's Abundance ..	6	8	116	1,130	