

face—now, when peace and plenty abound to enable us to insure ourselves against adverse times in the distant, or, maybe, near, future. The facts that all the experiments made during the past quarter of a century have been fully verified by the official test made last season on the Government Experimental Farm at Ruakura prove the extraordinary capabilities of Waikato under proper and generous handling for all kinds of agriculture and manufactures based upon her specialty—the sugar-beet-root culture and beet-sugar manufacture.

WHO SHOULD BE INTERESTED.

This justifies our placing the position and proposals again before the Waikato farmers and residents, and advocating the Waikato Chamber of Commerce, the Agricultural and Pastoral Association, the Waikato Farmers' Auctioneering Association, and the dairy associations to co-operate and form a committee of members, practical men, appointed by themselves, to investigate the facts, with the object in view of starting the sugar-beet industry upon a commercial and financial foundation.

THE SUGAR-BEET ASSOCIATION

In 1906 a meeting of those interested in beet-root culture took place in Hamilton under the auspices of the Hamilton branch of the Farmers' Union on the 6th May, Captain Allen Bell in the chair, and an association was formed to institute further tests to satisfy those who required further proof of the capabilities of the district to produce sugar-beets in quantity and quality sufficient to warrant a resuscitation of the question of beet-root culture on a practical scale. After several meetings and careful inquiry into the past results and opinions expressed by those who had made tests of farming the root in Waikato, it was decided to accept Messrs. Langguth and Co. s (merchants of Auckland) offer to forward samples of Waikato soil to Germany and Austria for careful examination and analysis, and to obtain for the association seed sufficient for a 10-acre trial test. This was done. The soil from second-class average Waikato land was taken from a field that had not been ploughed or cultivated for upwards of twenty years, to represent many thousands of acres of similar lands in their present unimproved and neglected state. These samples of soils sent were analysed, and detail analysis received from Austria with the report that "soils of exactly similar formation were being cultivated in Germany and Austria, and with proper farming and management were very successful in producing sugar-beets." But our Waikato lands in their present state must be well limed in the autumn months, as much as 2 tons of lime to the acre being used, and then the manures recommended were superphosphates and basic slag.

THE STATE FARM TEST

Seed was received of the special kind suited to the class of Waikato soils sent, and this seed was distributed amongst members who applied for it; but it was considered best to have a public test made at the Ruakura Government Experimental Farm, which test, it was agreed, should settle the question. Application was accordingly made to the Department of Agriculture through Mr. Clifton, and, their consent having been obtained, three bags of the imported test seed from Austria were handed over to the Manager, Mr. Dibble. The results of the tests made are now to hand, and appear in the official report for 1907 of the New Zealand Department of Agriculture. The soils in which these beets grew, and which have returned results surpassing the most sanguine expectations, are exactly similar to the soil sent to Austria for analysis by the Waikato Root-growers' Association, and therefore the results obtained from the seed by the Manager of the Ruakura Government Farm are considered by the association to be all that they were called upon to prove, as the soil that produced 16 per cent. of sugar in a root weighing 5 lb. is similar to the soil which extends over a considerable area of the Waikato district, and does not represent the first-class land of the district, and shows what proper treatment of these soils will do.

THE BEET-SUGAR QUESTION

The beet-sugar question is overshadowing the cane-sugar question in every country in the western world. Even in countries and States where the cane-sugar can be grown in quantity and quality to manufacture sugar therefrom, it cannot succeed against beet-sugar where the sugar-beets can be cultivated successfully to contain 12 per cent. sugar in the root, and crops of from 10 tons to the acre (which is about the average of the Eastern States of America). The sugar-beet-root is driving the sugar-cane out of the market in the country or district that can produce the sugar-beet. In the Western States of America, in California, and also in Canada, 15- and 20-ton crops per acre are being produced, yielding 15 per cent. and upwards of sugar in the beets, but no beets weighing 3 lb. have proved to yield 12½ per cent. of sugar in America and Europe; Waikato, therefore, has established a record in producing sugar-beet-roots of 5 lb. weight, yielding 16 per cent. sugar, and we conscientiously believe it has never been equalled in any country or district outside of Waikato. The Manager of the Ruakura Government Experimental Farm (Mr. Dibble) informs us he has no difficulty in producing 15 tons, or even 20 tons, of sugar-beets to the acre, all under 5 lb., yielding by analysis upwards of 12 per cent. sugar. We claim to have discovered in Waikato a sugar-beet-root field for New Zealand richer and more permanent in national wealth than even the great Waihi Gold-mine and goldfields are in gold, and in this discovery we have established for the Dominion of New Zealand a base for agricultural supremacy in the Pacific, and for Waikato in particular—a position which can never be wrested from her by fair means of trade. All that now remains for Waikato is to make up her mind what she will do with it. We have now twenty years' additional official data to support our contentions in behalf of the sugar-beet-root industry for Waikato.