

Cruciferae this disease has become such a serious menace that the Board considers some immediate steps should be taken to investigate it. If our principal industries—namely, sheep, mutton, lamb, wool, butter, and cheese—are not maintained at their present standard, which will be the case if our root-crops are injured by this disease to the extent that they are in many parts of the Old World, it will make an enormous difference in the production of the country, and the loss to the Dominion will be incalculable. As a result of our deliberations in the matter the Board have sent you a recommendation that an officer of the Biological Section of the Department of Agriculture be specially set apart to investigate this disease, and to see whether it is possible to find out not only the means of checking its spread, but also to ascertain the mode whereby it is spread, whether by seed or otherwise, and, if the former, what remedy can be suggested in the way of submitting the seed to a process to destroy the germ of infection.

SOIL-SURVEY OF NEW ZEALAND.

The question of a soil-survey of the Dominion was brought before the Board by the Canterbury Philosophical Institute, before which body Mr. L. J. Wild, Lecturer in Chemistry at Lincoln College, had read a paper on the subject. The Board invited Mr. Wild to come to Wellington for the purpose of going into the matter, but unfortunately he was unable to get away when the Board's meeting was held. We had a report from Mr. Aston, Agricultural Chemist, setting out his views of a soil-survey, and later we discussed the question with both Mr. Pope and Mr. Aston. Mr. Aston mentioned that the collecting of soils for analysis in connection with a soil-survey was one requiring the utmost judgment, and which on account of its importance he invariably undertook himself. The opinion was expressed that the work of a soil-survey was one which should be undertaken by the Department of Agriculture, and that the Geological Survey Office could no doubt render great assistance in various ways. The Board accordingly decided to recommend you to have the work taken in hand by the Department of Agriculture and pushed on as quickly as possible. Our recommendation as to this is now in your hands.

THE FRUIT INDUSTRY.

This industry has also received our attention, and in the consideration of the subject the Board have had the advantage of the advice of Mr. Allport, one of our members, and a gentleman who is amongst the foremost fruitgrowers in the Dominion.

On the recommendation of the Board the horticultural stations at Tauranga, Waerenga, and Arataki were placed under the control of the Director of the Horticulture Division, Mr. Kirk, and at an interview we had with him we were glad to find that in taking the stations over he was determined to establish a proper system of record of the work to be undertaken at each station. In the past little attention has been paid to records at the State farms, and the advantage of much of the work already carried out in experimentation with fruit has thus been lost.

Considerable attention was also given to the matter of packing, &c., grading, inspection, handling, and shipping of fruit, and the best steps to take to bring about an improvement in the present system of handling fruit in transit was fully gone into, and representations in the matter were made to the shipping companies concerned.

The inspection of fruit for export was also fully considered, with a view to inspection being undertaken at the original place of shipment. Owing, however, to the scarcity of shipping-space on account of the war, together with the alteration of the route of the steamers which formerly called at a port in South America, there has been very little doing in the fruit-export business in the past two years.

The question of the establishment of experimental fruit-farms received much attention from the Board, and as a result of our consideration of the subject you were forwarded a recommendation that three additional farms of about 50 acres each be established in North Auckland, Central Otago, and Nelson districts.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE POULTRY INDUSTRY.

This question was considered, and amongst other matters connected with it we discussed with Mr. Galliehan, President of the New Zealand Poultry Association, and with Mr. Pope, Secretary of Agriculture, and Mr. Brown, Chief Poultry Instructor of the Department of Agriculture, the following points: Statistics relating to the number of poultry in the Dominion; the number of eggs at present produced, and the number that should be produced to satisfy local requirements and put an end to importations from abroad; the price charged for eggs by retailers, and the figure at which it pays poultrymen to produce eggs; the supply of table poultry; and the total value to the Dominion of the poultry industry.

The establishment of poultry-stations at each large centre was urged; also the granting of assistance to those engaged in the industry by means of instruction at the existing poultry-stations and at any others that might be established in future; and that egg-laying competitions, which are at present usually matters for private enterprise, should be conducted at the Government stations under the supervision of the Department's expert poultry officers. It was also urged that poultrymen be granted financial assistance where they were in need of it to help on their business, and that a commercial agent be appointed by the Government, who could organize the produce to the benefit of the producers and keep them clear of the exploiter. It was agreed that Mr. Galliehan should place the matter before the executive of the Poultry Association, and that they should at a later date interview the Board further in the matter, as we deem the poultry industry one well worthy of assistance.