

Increasing Production

Raising the Potato Yield

AN interesting lecture arranged by 3YA Primary Productions Committee was delivered at 3YA by Mr. C. P. Leitch, Fields Division, Department of Agriculture, on Thursday evening, August 29, on Seed Potato Certification.

"My little talk this evening is on seed potato certification," said Mr. Leitch. "The certification of seed potatoes, which was inaugurated by Mr. J. W. Hadfield, Agronomist to the Department of Agriculture, has now been in operation for two seasons, and from results obtained the scheme has been very successful.

"In recent years potatoes have become very badly mixed, so much so, that in some cases two varieties merged into one. In some instances it has been found that some varieties have been incorrectly named. Potatoes are also subject to a number of diseases, the more common diseases being Virus, Late Blight, Powdery Scab and Bel-worm.

"By far the most serious of these diseases is Virus. It is tuber-borne and is not detected in the seed, and for that reason it becomes most serious. A healthy looking line may, on planting, be a complete failure, due to the

presence of Virus. The only method, at present, of detecting it, is by an inspection of the growing crop, when the disease manifests itself in the foliage.

"The Government felt that the time had arrived to bring forward some scheme which would help check the gradual falling off in the yields of potatoes, caused mainly by Virus disease; therefore certification was brought in with the object of checking the distribution of Virus diseased potatoes, also badly mixed lines.

"The method adopted for carrying out the scheme is to collect 150 tubers from the farmers. These are grown at Ashburton Experimental Farm under trial, proper experimental methods being adopted. That is, the lines are grown in such a way, that they can all be compared, a uniform piece of ground being selected for the trial. All lines have the same quantity of manure applied. In fact, great care is taken that all lines receive the same treatment. The evidence obtained from these trials showed that some lines were very good indeed, while others were absolutely worthless.

"It is on this evidence that certification is based, lines which come below the average in yield being rejected as unsuitable for seed purposes. On last year's results, in cases where a high percentage of disease was recorded in the field inspections, a correspondingly decreased yield was recorded at digging.

"Growers wishing to enter their crops for certification will on application receive application forms, and on receipt of these, an officer calls and collects a representative sample of 150 tubers. These sample lines will be grown and inspected. The first inspection will take place when plants are 4in. to 6in. above the ground, and the second inspection is made at flowering. In both inspections, counts are taken for impurities and the amount of disease present, or in other words the percentage of disease present. All those lines passing the standards set at the experimental farm will be subjected to three further inspections, on the farm, under field conditions.

"Three inspections are made on the farm: (1) at flowering time; (2) at maturity; (3) when tubers are graded and ready for sale.

"After the second inspection, the growers of all those crops which have passed the necessary standard will be issued with a provisional certificate, which, while not being final, will enable growers to make sales in the interim, if required.

"The final inspection is undertaken on receipt of notice from the grower that his potatoes are graded and ready for sale. If the line passes the standard set for the final inspection, the grower will be supplied with sufficient certification tags to attach one to each bag sold.

"On receiving these tags the grower will be asked to fill in a "Return of Sales" sheet, which is kept, in order that each line sold can be traced, and the resultant crop inspected if necessary.

"The benefits derived from the scheme are that the grower will know just how good or how bad his line is. If it passes the standard set, and he can maintain and improve that standard, the line becomes more valuable. On the other hand, if from the results obtained at the Ashburton trials, his line proves poor in cropping power, it is an indication to the grower that a change of seed is needed in order to get full returns for time and labour expended.

The purchaser can buy seed with more confidence, knowing that the lines which pass all inspections will produce a profitable crop.

The scheme has the effect of facilitating the distribution of seed of a good standard, while it does not interfere with the sale of less valuable lines, under the ordinary marketing conditions. Considerable improvement has already been noted in the lines submitted in the markets, and while the scheme is not wholly responsible for this, still it is claimed that it should gradually place the growing and marketing of seed potatoes on a more solid basis, giving greater satisfaction to all concerned."

The Long Arm of the S.O.S.

"RADIO NEWS," in an article on the uses of the "S.O.S.," gives some very interesting instances of the practical value of this signal in everyday life.

1. A fisherman in a drifter, not carrying a wireless set, about thirty miles off Wick, was wanted to go to his wife. Would any drifter in the neighbourhood give the message? The man was told and returned home.

2. A message was broadcast in German asking for a man who was touring between Hamburg and Frankfurt in a two-seater Phantom Rolls-Royce and saying that his father was ill and required him home at once. The man was found.

3. A man who was believed to be a tramp and whose wife was in a poor-law institution was traced through his fellow workmen and returned to his wife. His job was kept open for him. This case was recently in the papers.

4. A nursing mother was urgently required for a baby on the South Coast. An offer was made over the telephone and accepted within ten minutes.

5. A man taking his holiday yachting on the Broads was wanted to go to his father in Manchester. The "S.O.S." was heard by another yacht who remembered passing his yacht, the name of which was mentioned in the "S.O.S." before. They returned round and went in search of the other yacht and delivered the message.

Radio and a Murderer

ALTHOUGH America claims to have been the first to employ radio in the apprehension of criminals, it seems that England has now established a prior claim. The most sensational criminal case of 1910 was the wife murder committed by Dr. Crippen in London. Crippen was a third-rate physician whose nationality was doubtful. The crime was the outcome of a sordid domestic triangle. After killing his wife and safely disposing of the body, the murderer convinced the neighbours that his wife had gone abroad. He seems to have been afraid of detection, and had not his panic resulted in flight it is doubtful whether Crippen would have been apprehended at all.

The police learned that Crippen had disguised his mistress as a boy and had disappeared, but they could not locate them. The pair had, in fact, gone to Holland, whence, under an assumed name, they had sailed for Quebec on the s.s. Montrose.

The captain suspected the sex of Crippen's companion, and as the Montrose was equipped with the newly-discovered wireless he communicated with Scotland Yard. Thus while these lovers thought themselves to be safe they were being carried towards justice.

The prisoners were returned to England, where they were tried. Crippen was hanged and his companion in crime received a term of imprisonment. Thus in its first man hunt radio had been triumphant.

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Keeping in Touch

ELEVEN stations have been installed in New York and Los Angeles for the sole purpose of keeping in touch with air pilots and to keep them informed of any news of which they might have need. These stations are privately owned by the various airplane manufacturers, and if the innovation proves successful it is their intention to introduce similar stations all over America.