

## MAINTAINING THE FERTILITY OF ORCHARDS

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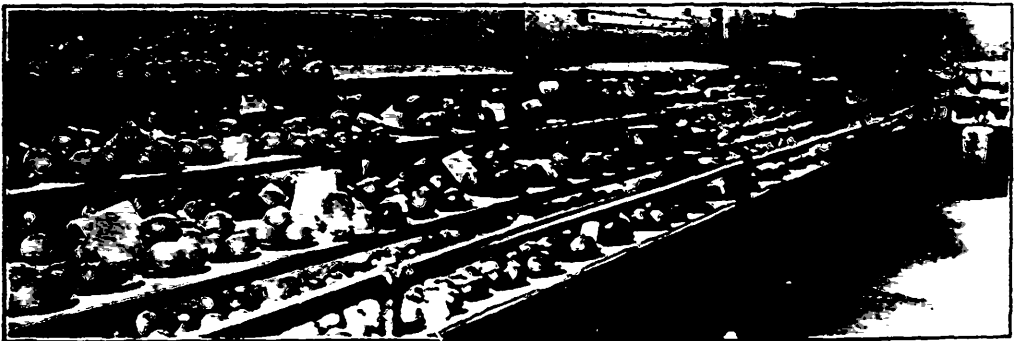
**N**O less an authority than Alex. McNeill, chief of the fruit division at Ottawa, is in favor of oats as a cover crop. He says they come on quickly in the fall in spite of dry weather or trampling by apple pickers, and the fact of their dying in the fall is an advantage rather than otherwise, as there is nothing to prevent the farmer going on with the disc in spring.

From personal experience I can see the advantage of the above. In spite of all we may lecture, the fact remains that the average fruit grower only gets his orchards about half plowed before seeding, when he has to stop and bend all his energies to getting the spring seeding done. By the time the rush is over the land is hard, and if not, so hard that it is impossible to plow, the land has lost a large amount of its valuable moisture. If the orchard were seeded with oats there is nothing to prevent giving the orchard a couple of strokes with the disc before seeding, and the straw will prevent any damage being done by the tramping of the horses.

The question: "How shall we maintain the fertility of our orchards?" will

be asked by all who heard Mr. Caston, of the Ontario Fruit Growers' Association, make the statement that a large number of the orchards, especially in the older sections of Ontario, are starving for lack of plant food, and that in many cases the deterioration of certain varieties is principally due to lack of food. A statement of this kind coming from such an influential fruit grower should cause us to pause and reflect on how we can economically provide this plant food for the trees.

Some say, use stable manure. That is all right as far as it goes, but is not a complete manure for orchards, having an insufficient amount of potash, and under our present system of growing leguminous cover crops, much more nitrogen than is necessary. But the chief argument against its use for the orchard is that no farmer has more stable manure he can apply with profit to his annual ordinary farm crops, and if he applies it to the orchard he must skimp some other part of his farm, which system, if followed for some time, will eventually run down the farm. Before we in Ontario run down our farms, we had better decide that



Portion of the Apple Exhibit at the Toronto Industrial Exhibition.

While disappointing in some respects, the display of apples at the recent Toronto Industrial Exhibition contained some of the best exhibits, some of which are here shown. The Bay of Quinte district advertised itself by capturing the first and second prize for the best collections of 40 varieties, the first premium going to Mr. H. Dempsey. The first prize for the best collection of varieties was taken by Mr. H. Marshall, of Hamilton. A revision of the prize list so that commercial varieties may be given prominence as desirable.