Very few new plantings have been made during the last two or three years in any of the counties in southern California. In fact, a considerable acreage of mature trees has been pulled out. This is due in part to the fact that the available water supply can be used more profitably for other crops such as oranges, and in part to rather low average yields of peaches. In these southern counties, except in foothill sections, the winters are frequently too warm to break the rest. Blooming, and the beginning of growth following such winters are greatly delayed, and only small crops are set.

The growing of a limited acreage of freestone peaches for the fresh fruit market of Los Angeles and other nearby cities may be profitable in sections where there is not a great tendency for delayed foliation to be troublesome. The J. H. Hale has been planted to some extent for this purpose.

CHOOSING A LOCATION FOR PEACHES

A factor to be considered in choosing a site is that of initial or developmental costs. The land may produce good peaches but if the costs are excessive the returns may never pay a fair rate of interest on the money invested. In choosing a location for a peach orchard the more important factors to be considered are: (1) climate; (2) water supply; and (3) soil.

Climate Most Favorable to Peaches.—Most of the best California peach orchards are grown below an elevation of 1500 feet. The larger peach districts in the state are found in the Sacramento and San Joaquin valleys at an elevation up to 300 feet. The peach tree and fruit withstand satisfactorily rather high summer temperatures. There are a few orchards in the foothill districts, but the elevation of the profitable ones rarely exceeds 2000 feet.

In California the only loss from freezing in peach orchards is near blooming time or later. In a few sections the winters are frequently too warm to break the rest. In the spring after such a winter, blooming, and the beginning of growth may be greatly delayed, and the crop set may be very small. Coast sections having heavy fogs and cool damp atmosphere are not well suited to peach growing. Such climatic conditions favor the development of brown rot, and other fungus diseases; tend to lessen the color of the fruit; and possibly tend to increase the acidity.

Water Supply.—The mean annual rainfall in leading California peach districts varies from about 10 to 30 inches per year. For profitable production, however, it is recommended that peaches be planted