

Imported Fruit, Plants, &c.—The Fruit Inspectors report that the bulk of the fruit, plants, &c., imported during the year arrived in good condition. A very satisfactory feature lies in the fact that a continued improvement in the quality and packing of island fruit is noticeable. Consignments were free of fruit-fly maggot, no condemnations having to be made on this account. This is no doubt due to the method now adopted of holding the fruit for several days prior to shipment, and to careful inspection prior to packing for export. The following table shows the quantities of fruit, plants, &c., which arrived at the different ports of entry during the year (1922-23):—

Port of Entry.	Fruit.				Plants, Vegetables, &c.				G. and Total.
	Total.	Destroyed.	Fumigated.	Reshipped.	Total.	Destroyed.	Fumigated.	Reshipped.	
Auckland ..	389,019	56	144	270	21,662	93	..	18	410,681
Wellington ..	188,856	203	361	..	34,127	22	..	..	222,983
Christchurch ..	49,582	30	150	..	5,663	39	..	1	55,245
Dunedin ..	29,790	..	..	..	3,357	7	..	..	33,147
Bluff ..	6,015	..	..	..	2,299	3	..	..	8,314

Hops.—The hop crop was a fair average one. According to the Customs returns, 1,959 cwt. of hops, valued at £17,797, was exported during the year.

Viticulture and Winemaking.—The past season has been a satisfactory one to growers of grapes, both outdoor and under glass, and good prices have been obtained for well-grown fruit. It is anticipated that the crop of wine grapes will slightly exceed that of last year, when a good return was experienced. The yield of wine in the Dominion is estimated at 85,000 gallons. At a reasonable estimate of 8s. per gallon this represents a value of £34,000.

Cider-making.—A number of inquiries have been received during the year for information and advice on cider-making, and such assistance has been afforded. As a means of profitably utilizing the large quantities of suitable apples available, a small company has established a cider-making plant in the Nelson District, and there is no reason why the venture, if properly managed, should not prove successful.

Beekeeping Industry.—Generally speaking, the past season has not been a favourable one for the beekeeper, the inclement weather experienced in most of the districts interfering to a great extent with the secretion of nectar. It is satisfactory to be able to report, however, that the beekeeping industry is still forging steadily ahead, and future prospects appear bright. The demand for information and advice on the many phases connected with bee-culture is increasing each year, and the Apiary Instructors have been kept fully occupied attending to these matters as well as carrying out inspection duties. As mentioned, however, in previous reports, the districts allotted to the Instructors are much too large to admit of anything like a systematic inspection being carried out, even with the aid of honorary Inspectors, who are doing useful work, and whose assistance is greatly appreciated.

A series of experiments is being carried out for the purpose of ascertaining some satisfactory method of dealing with moisture in honey. With the object of ascertaining to what extent the disease *Nosema apis* is prevalent in the Dominion, bees have been collected by the Instructors from different localities and forwarded to the Biological Laboratory for examination.

Export of honey: The quantity of honey graded for export at the various grading-stores during the year is as follows: Auckland, 5,485 cases; Wanganui, 350 cases; Wellington, 759 cases; Lyttelton, 1,177 cases; Timaru, 632 cases; Dunedin, 1,198 cases; Bluff, 570 cases: a total of 10,111 cases for the Dominion. This represents an increase of 1,396 cases as compared with the previous year's figures. According to Customs statistics, the quantity of honey actually exported during the year was 10,605 cwt., of a total value of £43,032.

Registration: The total number of registered apiaries stands at present at 8,007, representing a total of 111,100 hives.

CHEMISTRY SECTION.

The Chemistry Section, under the control and direction of Mr. B. C. Aston, F.I.C., F.N.Z.Inst., has carried out a large volume of good work during the year.

The number of samples dealt with in this Laboratory during the year shows a great increase, 1,823 having been received, as against 885 in the previous year. The increase is due to the number of butter-samples and wheat for milling tests which have been received. The staff, however, has energetically met all demands made upon it.

Soils.—A number of samples for lime-requirement determination have been received from the agricultural-instruction officers. This testing is done free of charge when the samples are properly authenticated, but when a full soil-analysis for any purpose is required it has been found necessary to make a charge of £5 5s. per sample, as the analysis of soils is a very lengthy and costly work.

Lime and Limestone.—Assistance has been given to farmers who in combination desire to establish or to see established new lime-works in districts not suitably supplied at present. The Lime Committee, through Mr. F. W. Furkert, Engineer-in-Chief, Public Works Department, has prepared a full report on the lime-supplies for the Waikēkei (Whangarei) district, which has been communicated to those interested.

A number of high-grade samples of limestone have been received from Kamo, giving 81 to 85 per cent. of carbonate of lime on analysis, which is a high percentage for the North Auckland District. From Hokianga also some good samples of soft easily ground limestone were received, analysing 79 to 81 per cent. of carbonate of lime. Several samples of excellent soft limestone have been sent in from