

While it has been amply demonstrated that high-grade leaf can be produced in the Dominion, it should again be stressed that only a limited amount can yet be absorbed locally, and the ultimate success of the industry largely depends on a satisfactory overseas market being found for the surplus not needed for New Zealand requirements. Such a market cannot yet be regarded as being assured. Regulations under the Products Export Act, 1908, relating to the grading and export of New Zealand tobacco were gazetted in September last.

HOP-CULTURE.

There has been a considerable decrease in the area devoted to hop-growing during recent years. In view of the unstable market and the low prices ruling for hops, growers in the Nelson and Motueka districts are gradually going over to the cultivation of tobacco. Dry weather conditions resulted in the crop being on the light side. The quantity and value of hops exported from the Dominion during the year 1931 was 1,943 cwt., valued at £9,108.

NEW ZEALAND INSTITUTE OF HORTICULTURE.

The Institute of Horticulture established in 1923 continues to carry out valuable work in connection with the various branches of horticulture within the Dominion. Horticultural education forms one of the main objects of the activities of the Institute, which has full authority under the New Zealand Institute of Horticulture Act, 1927, to grant diplomas in horticulture to those qualified and passing examinations during the course of a special training.

The third Loder Cup competition for the best collection of New Zealand native plants took place in Christchurch in January last, and was won by Messrs. Henry Bennett and Sons, of North-east Valley, Dunedin, who were also the winners in the previous year.

ORCHARD REGISTRATION AND ORCHARD-TAX.

Registered orchards in the Dominion total 6,264, of which 2,954 are taxable and 3,310 non-taxable. Some £1,587 was collected in orchard-tax, and this amount, less cost of collection, was handed over on behalf of the growers to the New Zealand Fruitgrowers' Federation to be utilized in furthering the interests of the fruitgrowing industry generally.

The fireblight tax operated in six commercial fruitgrowing districts during the year. This tax was also collected by the Department, and the proceeds, less cost of collection, paid to the respective fireblight committees to be expended for purposes duly approved in connection with the control of fireblight disease.

REGISTRATION AND INSPECTION OF NURSERIES.

During the year 659 nurseries were registered and duly inspected by the officers attached to the Division in the various districts; £659 was collected in registration fees. Nurseries generally are kept in good condition, and the stocks are well up to standard and clean and free from disease.

IMPORTED FRUIT, PLANTS, ETC.

The Inspectors at the different ports of entry report an increase in the quantity of fruit imported as compared with last year's figures, increased consignments arriving from Australia and the Pacific islands. Larger shipments of bananas were received from Norfolk Island, due no doubt to the regular steamer service now operating.

THE BEEKEEPING INDUSTRY.

The past season may be regarded as a disappointing one for the majority of beekeepers throughout the Dominion. Boisterous weather during the spring, followed later by extremely dry and unsettled conditions, resulted in very poor returns in most commercial areas, with the exception of the Waikato, Taranaki, and Wellington - West Coast districts, where medium crops were secured.

Although the honey market both locally and overseas is at the present time in a somewhat unsettled condition, the industry is continuing to attract persons with moderate capital who are desirous of making a partial or complete living by honey-production, and a considerable demand exists for suitable apiary sites.

The inspection of apiaries for disease and advisory services generally have been fairly satisfactorily maintained, and useful assistance has been rendered in the main commercial districts by a few experienced beekeepers who offered their services as honorary apiary inspectors at no expense to the Department.

Work of an experimental nature has been carried out in connection with the sterilizing of foul-brood combs and the forwarding of package bees from the North to the South Island. Final results are not yet available.

As the result of the poor season, only a small quantity of honey was submitted for export, the total number of cases passed at the various grading stores being 4,290. The quantity exported in 1931 was 1,958 cwt., valued at £7,845, a great falling-off compared with immediately preceding years.

It is considered that the great majority of beekeepers in the Dominion have complied with the regulations under the Apiaries Act, which provide that no person shall keep bees except in an apiary registered under the Act. The total number of apiaries registered is now 7,500, comprising 115,856 colonies of bees.

STAFF.

Thanks are due to all officers attached to the Division for their loyal co-operation and assistance during the year.