

The dry season experienced, although retarding growth somewhat, was conducive to a well-ripened crop which was comparatively free from disease, the bulk being of good quality, for which satisfactory prices should be realized.

It is anticipated that an experimental shipment of this season's tobacco-leaf will shortly be made to the United Kingdom from the Nelson District. The tobacco will be graded and packed in accordance with the requirements of the tobacco-export regulations.

At the Pongakawa Settlement in the Bay of Plenty District, where some forty families have now been settled under the small-farm-scheme, 40 acres were grown in tobacco as against 100 acres in the previous year. A good yellow flue-cured leaf was produced at this settlement.

The experimental plot established in the vicinity of Auckland yielded a further quantity of tobacco-seed. Considerable inquiry has been received during the year for advice relative to tobacco-growing and curing.

HOP-CULTURE.

Renewed interest has taken place in the growing of hops, the greatly improved market conditions resulting in a considerable increase in the area planted. The season's production was the largest for a number of years, the hops being of good quality, and the ultimate return to the grower should be quite satisfactory.

The quantities in hundredweights and values of hops exported from the Dominion during the last five years ended 31st March are as follows: 1931, 1,943, £9,108; 1932, 640, £2,597; 1933, 3,192, £13,793; 1934, 3,872, £17,734; 1935, 3,627, £26,522.

TUNG OIL.

Considerable activity still continues in regard to tung oil, and planting-out operations in the North Auckland District have been fairly extensive during the year. The total area now planted in tung-oil trees is estimated at some 3,500 acres. In some localities where suitable conditions exist, and where adequate shelter has been provided, the trees are doing satisfactorily, some having reached the nut-bearing stage. The development during the next few years should prove very interesting.

NEW ZEALAND INSTITUTE OF HORTICULTURE.

The New Zealand Institute of Horticulture continues to take a keen interest in matters connected with horticulture generally within the Dominion, and from an educational point of view its operations are destined to be of considerable benefit both to the horticulturist and the fruitgrower. Under the new conditions drawn up by the committee appointed for the purpose relative to the Loder Cup annual competition, it is of interest to note that the cup for 1934 was awarded to His Excellency Lord Bledisloe (late Governor-General) in recognition of his strong advocacy of the protection of the Dominion's native forests and the practical encouragement he has given to the growing of native trees and plants during his term of office in New Zealand.

REGISTRATION AND INSPECTION OF NURSERIES.

The inspection of all nurseries raising stock for sale was carried out in the respective districts. Reports to hand indicate that the bulk of the areas are in good order and the trees and plants clean and free from disease. A considerable improvement is noticeable in the demand for nursery stock, especially shelter and forest trees. Some 652 nurseries were registered during the year, and £652 collected in registration fees.

ORCHARD REGISTRATION AND ORCHARD-TAX.

The number of registered orchards in the Dominion now totals 6,497, comprising 2,850 taxable and 3,647 non-taxable; and tax demands amounting to a total approximating £2,350, inclusive of penalty, have been issued for the year. By a recent amendment to the Orchard-tax Act, 1927, the orchard-tax has been increased from 1s. to 2s. per acre. A portion of the tax collected will be paid (less cost of collection) to the N.Z. Fruitgrowers' Federation, Ltd., for furthering the interests of the fruitgrowers, and the balance applied to the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research to assist in scientific research relative to matters connected with the fruitgrowing industry. Constant changes in ownership of orchards and the non-notification in a great many instances of alterations in areas, combined with the financial situation, render the work of tax-collection a somewhat difficult one. The collection of fireblight tax in three commercial fruitgrowing districts has also been attended to.

THE BEEKEEPING INDUSTRY.

The 1934-35 season varied very considerably throughout the principal honey-producing districts in the Dominion. The conditions in the spring were very favourable to a good honey-flow, seasonable rains in most localities producing an excellent growth of clover, which gave every indication of the honey crop being well above the average.

A long dry summer, however, seriously interfered with the pastures, with the result that only light to average crops were secured in the main commercial districts, with the exception of Taranaki and South Canterbury, where the returns were above the average. Taken as a whole, the honey crop for the Dominion is below the average.

There has been very little improvement during the year in the local marketing of honey. While the operations of the newly-established co-operative company—New Zealand Honey, Ltd.—have had a steadying effect on the price of bulk honey, its efforts are largely nullified by the action of a number of beekeepers who are selling at prices which leave little or no margin of profit to the producer.