

REGISTRATION AND INSPECTION OF NURSERIES.

A total of 534 nurseries were registered during the year and certificates of registration issued, the registration fees amounting to £534.

In the case of nursery stock, it is most important that it should be well grown and clean and free from disease. In this regard reports to hand indicate that a high standard is being maintained by the majority of nurserymen.

With the view of inculcating the importance of maintaining an up-to-date system of nursery-management generally, a closer inspection was made during the year by the field officers attached to the Division of all nurseries in their respective districts. This has resulted in an improvement being effected in those nurseries where a certain amount of slackness in disease-control, &c., was noticeable.

ORCHARD REGISTRATION AND ORCHARD-TAX.

The usual work connected with the registration of orchards and collection of orchard-tax has been attended to.

As is usual with orchard properties, a considerable number of changes of ownership took place during the year.

Registered orchards in the Dominion now stand at 4,653, made up of 2,481 taxable orchards and 2,172 non-taxable.

Orchard-tax payable for the year amounted to approximately £2,114, inclusive of penalty for late payment. This shows a slight decrease as compared with the previous year's figures, and is due to a reduction in area through the cutting-out of neglected or otherwise unprofitable trees.

The usual allocation of the tax collected, less cost of collection, was made to the New Zealand Fruitgrowers' Federation, Ltd., and the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research.

The collection of fireblight-tax, which operated in three of the commercial fruitgrowing districts, was also dealt with.

THE BEEKEEPING INDUSTRY.

Beekeepers were unfortunate in experiencing another poor season. It was hoped that there would be a continuation of the conditions which existed in 1937-38, when the honey crop was the best for several seasons past. This, however, was not to be, the unfavourable weather experienced during the past season resulting in very poor crops being obtained in all the commercial beekeeping areas with the exception of Hawke's Bay and Canterbury, where the returns were slightly above the average.

As is usual in a poor season, the quality of the honey was below the usual standard, white honey being in very short supply.

The bringing into force of regulations bearing on orderly marketing and stabilization of prices has been well received by beekeepers throughout the Dominion, the majority of whom appear to be satisfied with the system of marketing through the Internal Marketing Division.

As a result of the placing of the industry on a sounder basis considerable extensions are being made to existing apiaries, and numerous inquiries have been received during the year from persons desirous of taking up beekeeping as a means of livelihood.

The affording of advice and information on up-to-date beekeeping methods and control of disease has been a feature of the work of the Apiary Instructors in their respective districts. Reports to hand indicate that the bulk of the apiaries are run on up-to-date lines, and satisfactory steps are being taken in the control of foul-brood disease.

The quantity of honey graded for export at the different grading-stores amounted to a total of some 10,350 cases (120 lb. each). This was more than double the quantity of the previous year (1937), and was due to the fact that the 1938 season was a particularly good one.

In October last arrangements were made for all honey for export to be graded at a central grading-store at Auckland.

The quantities and value of honey exported from the Dominion during the last five years ended 31st March are as follows:—

				Cwt.	Value. £
1935	..	..	..	5,427	17,844
1936	..	..	..	10,446	34,258
1937	..	..	..	7,774	24,658
1938	..	..	..	3,804	12,658
1939	..	..	..	14,298	42,605 (good season 1938).

REGISTRATION OF APIARIES.

The registration of all apiaries in the Dominion, which came into force in October, 1937, has enabled a purge to be made of the old registration cards, which has revealed that a considerable percentage of previous registrations do not now exist.

This has been brought about by the fact that a large number of persons who owned only a few hives had, for various reasons, discontinued keeping bees, and in other cases hives had been destroyed on account of disease or neglect.

The total number of beekeepers now registered is 4,751, representing a total of some 113,465 colonies of bees.