

BEEKEEPING

Statistics show a small increase in the average number of apiaries and hives kept by beekeepers. There are 6,798 beekeepers in New Zealand owning 10,457 apiaries containing 140,703 colonies. The distribution in the various apiary districts follows :—

Apiary District.	Number of Beekeepers.	Number of Apiaries.	Number of Colonies.
Auckland	1,608	1,913	16,648
Hamilton	835	1,575	34,516
Hastings	887	1,356	15,383
Palmerston North	1,234	1,985	23,750
Nelson	494	614	7,040
Christchurch	867	1,665	23,379
Invercargill	873	1,349	19,987
Dominion totals	6,798	10,457	140,703

Climatic Conditions and Production.—Conditions generally in most parts of New Zealand were unfavourable to beekeeping during the spring months and some difficulty was experienced in maintaining colony strength sufficient to take full advantage of improved conditions and nectar-supplies available in January. The honey season was four to five weeks later than usual.

The estimated production of honey harvested during the past year from commercial apiaries is 3,400 tons.

Research Work.—Research work on beekeeping problems has been carried out in conjunction with the Animal Research Station of this Department at Wallaceville, and with the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research. This has included diagnostic work on bees submitted for examination, experiments with pollen substitutes, honey-poisoning, and identification and control of a bee-disease called *Nosema apis*.

Part-time Apiary Inspection.—Seventy-one competent beekeepers were employed during the season as part-time Apiary Inspectors to assist the permanent Instructors in the detection and control of bee-diseases. Working under this seasonal plan, 2,016 apiaries containing 16,332 hives were inspected, in addition to the work done by the Apiary Instructors, during the year.

Expansion of Beekeeping in New Zealand.—A survey on a county basis completed during the year shows that there is scope for the expansion of apiary holdings to the extent of at least 17,000 hives in good beekeeping areas. Production could also be increased if more intensive and up-to-date methods in apiary management practices were adopted.

Expansion beyond the above limits will only be possible as new country is cultivated and more permanent pastures are established.

The rehabilitation of ex-servicemen in the beekeeping industry has resulted in 15 men being assisted in the establishment of apiaries in various parts of the Dominion, and constant advisory service is maintained by the Apiary Instructors in helping these newcomers to the industry to become efficient beekeepers.