

Arataki Horticultural Station.

Work on this station has been considerably hampered for want of skilled labour, four of the young men having joined the Military Forces, two of them being valuable assistants.

The dry season experienced, following a phenomenally dry one the previous year, interfered to a great extent with general horticultural work. As a result of these conditions early apples, although of fine appearance, were very soft and practically worthless, going bad in a few days after picking. Owing to injury by severe frosts experienced the previous year a number of varieties of grapes did not bear fruit this season. Exceptionally heavy crops of fine fruit were, however, gathered from some of the vines that bore.

Several acres of maize were sown, and the crop proved very valuable for cattle-feed on account of the great scarcity of grass.

The exhibit sent from this station to the Hawke's Bay autumn show was the finest yet put up, and attracted a great deal of attention.

A number of improvements and extensions to buildings have been carried out during the year.

Tauranga Horticultural Station.

The retirement of the late Manager (Mr. Berridge), and the considerable delay that occurred before the new manager was finally appointed, interfered greatly with the carrying-out of experiments and the general working of this station. Good headway has, however, since been made, and several improvements are well in hand.

The fruit crop was a very light one, stone-fruits especially. The chief cause was no doubt the very dry seasons experienced in 1913 and 1914, when the trees carried exceptionally heavy crops.

Visitors have taken a great interest in the lucerne crop. Lucerne is a most valuable fodder plant for this light and porous land, as grasses become quite dried up before the summer is far advanced. Comparative tests with different varieties of sweet-potatoes are being carried out. A number of plants are being tried for green-manuring purposes.

Hops.

The quantity of hops exported during the year was 4,425 cwt., valued at £17,742. The following figures show the quantity and value of hops exported from the Dominion during the last four years:—

		Cwt.	Value. £
Year ended 31st March, 1913	...	2,340	20,698
" 1914	...	5,152	26,430
" 1915	...	3,216	20,786
" 1916	...	4,425	17,742

IMPORTED FRUIT.

The following figures show the quantities of fresh fruit and fruit-products imported into the Dominion during the year ended 31st March, the previous year's figures being also quoted for comparison:—

	1915-16.		1914-15.	
	Quantity.	Value.	Quantity.	Value.
		£		£
Fruit, fresh, dutiable	3,115,103 lb.	33,334	3,013,597 lb.	43,857
" " free	19,504,349 lb.	120,066	19,224,047 lb.	125,582
" bottled and preserved	178,297 doz.	39,301	175,886 doz.	35,192
" dried	13,227,036 lb.	200,102	11,694,696 lb.	167,287
Lemon and orange peel in brine ..	857,657 lb.	5,638	511,720 lb.	3,519
Fruit-pulp and partially preserved fruit	55,565 lb.	950	31,557 lb.	463
Totals	..	399,391	..	375,900

INSPECTION OF IMPORTED FRUIT, PLANTS, AND VEGETABLES.

The inspection of all fruit, plants, &c., imported into the Dominion has been carefully carried out by the Fruit Inspectors at the gazetted ports of entry in the Dominion—viz., Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, Dunedin, and Bluff.

The bulk of fruit shipments arrived in good order and condition. Several consignments of bananas opened up in an overheated condition, which caused considerable loss to the importers. A number of lines had to be fumigated at the various ports owing to being infected by scale, mealy bug, &c. It was also found necessary to condemn and destroy a few consignments of oranges owing to fruit-fly infection.

The following is a summary of all fruits, plants, &c., imported and inspected at the ports of entry in the Dominion during the year, the previous year's figures being also given for comparison:—