

VINEYARDS AND VINEHOUSES.

There has been a slight increase in the area planted in vineyards, the total now being approximately 460 acres. The past season has been a very favourable one for vines, both outdoor and under glass, and good prices have been realized for the fruit. In the vineyards the grape crop was above the average, the vines yielding heavily in most localities. Owing to the suitable weather conditions diseases were easily kept under control, and fruit ripened in splendid condition. It is estimated that the yield of wine will be 75,000 gallons, which, reckoned at the conservative estimate of 6s. per gallon, represents a value of £22,500.

The number of glasshouses in the Dominion is approximately 876. Very few have been erected during the year, owing to the greatly increased cost of labour and materials. The yield of grapes under glass was, generally speaking, very satisfactory, the total crop being estimated at 550,000 lb., which, at 1s. 6d. per pound, has a value of £41,750. A number of returned soldiers have taken up the cultivation of grapes, both outdoor and under glass, this class of work being well suited for partially disabled men.

In October last the position of Vine and Wine Instructor, rendered vacant by the retirement of Mr. S. F. Anderson, was filled by the appointment of Mr. J. C. Woodfin, who has had considerable experience in wine-producing countries on the Continent and also in New Zealand.

BEEKEEPING INDUSTRY.

The beekeeping industry in the Dominion is making steady progress. A good honey season has been experienced; weather conditions being favourable to the development of the clover pastures, the resulting honey crop was above the average. Although the prices for honey have fallen in common with other commodities on the Home market, it is considered that the prospects for the honey-producer still remain good. The demand for information and instruction in beekeeping still continues, and several new commercial apiaries have been established. The educational side of the work has received attention, and lectures and demonstrations have been given throughout the year by the Apiary Instructors in their respective districts. The attendances generally have been very satisfactory, and keen interest was manifested in the proceedings.

The inspection of apiaries has been carried out as systematically as is possible with the present staff. Further assistance is, however, required in order that this work may be dealt with in a more thorough manner. It was found necessary to take proceedings under the Apiaries Act against a considerable number of persons for failing to take proper steps for control of disease, and also for keeping bees in box-hives.

Export of Honey.—During the past year the following quantities of honey were graded for export: Auckland, 2,930 cases; Wellington, 1,253 cases; Lyttelton, 1,422 cases; Timaru, 561 cases; Dunedin, 667 cases; Bluff, 284 cases: total, 7,117 cases. The graders report a general improvement in the lines sent forward to the grading-stores. More care and attention are now being paid to packing and branding. Fermenting and liquid honey were again responsible for a number of lines being rejected. While the present style of cap used on the honey-tins has served its purpose for a number of years, there is ample reason to believe that it is not giving satisfaction on the English market. The cap is liable to be displaced in handling, and as a result the honey deteriorates and sets up fermentation. It would appear that a screw cap, similar to the American pattern as used on their bulk containers, is a more satisfactory method of sealing the honey for export. If this or a similar cap were introduced in the export of New Zealand honey, producers would be able to ship their supplies with much more confidence. According to figures supplied by the Customs Department 7,633 cwt. of honey, valued at £30,962, was exported during the year. The following figures show the quantity and value of honey exported from the Dominion during the last five years ended 31st March: 1917, 1,572 cwt., £3,554; 1918, 2,819 cwt., £7,991; 1919, 6,619 cwt., £32,018; 1920, 9,975 cwt., £34,141; 1921, 7,633 cwt., £30,962.

Certificates in Beekeeping.—The State apiary at Ruakura, under the management of Mr. A. B. Trythall, continues to attract a large number of persons seeking a knowledge of beekeeping. During the past year some forty cadets attended the course of instruction, of whom twenty-two passed the examination and obtained the Department's certificate of proficiency, fourteen of these being returned soldiers.

Queen-rearing Apiary, Tauranga.—The beekeeper in charge, Mr. S. C. Rhodes, reports that a remarkably short season was experienced at this apiary, following a rather hard winter for the bees. Anxiety over the food-supply was not allayed till the middle of November, and the storage of surplus honey virtually ceased early in January. Considerable increase in strength was made, however, there being at present 87 full colonies and 214 nuclei, or 301 colonies in all. Orders for queens were considerably less than those received during the 1919–20 season; this was no doubt largely due to the enforcement of quarantine restrictions on account of the outbreak of fireblight in the Auckland Province. In all, 107 queens were sold—13 select, 32 tested, and 62 untested. Various improvements have been effected in the lay-out of the apiary; "pollite" sheets have been placed under the hives; and a very popular observatory-hive made and stocked with bees.

Avonhead Farm Apiary.—This apiary consists of fifty-three colonies. The beekeeper, Mr. Hight, has been kept busy instructing the soldier students in a full course of beekeeping. Operations covering spring, summer, autumn, and winter management have been carried out in order to fully demonstrate the best methods of working an apiary on commercial lines. Altogether nine students have received training, but only three have taken advantage of the full course of instruction. Some of the learners, finding that the work was not suited to their health or that they were not adapted for beekeeping, attended for a short period only. A honey-house suitable for present requirements