

purposes of examination as to disease, &c., on arrival here. This matter is receiving the attention of officers of the Division and the Biological Laboratory, and the results will be reported on in due course. It is also intended to arrange a conference at an early date between representatives of the Nurserymen's Association, Institute of Horticulture, private and commercial importers of bulbs, and the Department to fully consider the question of bulb-importations and the treatment of those found to be infected.

HOP-CULTURE.

The cultivation of hops is carried out on a commercial basis in the Nelson and Motueka districts, where the climatic and other conditions are well suited. Reports to hand indicate that the past season's crop was a good average one. In well-manured and cultivated gardens heavy returns were secured. Owing to only a limited quantity of colonial-grown hops being required on the Home market at the present time, some difficulty has been experienced in satisfactorily disposing of the crop, the demand locally absorbing only a small proportion. As a result several growers have converted their gardens to other uses.

The quantities and values of hops exported during the last five years ended 31st March are as follows: 1922, 2,056 cwt., £18,054; 1923, 2,243 cwt., £21,153; 1924, 3,883 cwt., £27,615; 1925, 4,469 cwt., £31,112; 1926, 3,608 cwt., £21,780.

TOBACCO-CULTURE.

Considerable interest is still being evinced in the cultivation of tobacco as a commercial proposition, and a steady increase is noticeable in the area planted in this crop. It has been amply demonstrated that leaf of high-grade quality for pipe-smoking can be produced in certain localities in the Dominion, notably Nelson, Hawke's Bay, and Auckland. It is estimated there are now some 400 acres under cultivation, the crop being grown under contract to tobacco-manufacturers. The continued improvement that has taken place in the manufacture of locally grown tobacco has led to a considerable demand for the New Zealand product.

VITICULTURE AND WINE-MAKING.

The planting of vineyards, both in table and wine grapes, is steadily increasing. The past season was not favourable to the development of certain varieties of outdoor-grown table grapes, owing to the unsuitable weather conditions prevailing during the setting-period. The prices realized on the markets were, however, satisfactory to growers, especially in regard to the Albany Surprise variety.

The crop of wine-grapes equalled that of the previous year. In some localities where the weather was hardly warm enough during the ripening-period the sugar content of the grape-juice was low. Generally speaking, the vines were free of disease; this was particularly noticeable in the Hawke's Bay District, which experienced a particularly dry season. The quantity of grape-wine produced in the Dominion was approximately the same as last year—viz., 85,000 gallons, valued at £34,000.

The co-operative vine-testing plots established in 1922 at Nelson and Te Mata are making satisfactory progress. In connection with the Nelson plot, the results obtained so far indicate the possibility of ripening grapes successfully outdoors in that district.

Grape-growing under glass is gradually extending. The high prices ruling for glass and other materials during the past few years practically prohibited the erection of glasshouses. A gradual reduction in prices has, however, enabled development to take place, and several new vineries have recently been built. There is a good demand for hothouse-grown grapes, and the returns to growers have been satisfactory.

CIDERMaking.

This industry is gradually extending throughout the Dominion, considerable quantities being now manufactured in the Nelson, Auckland, and Gisborne districts. As is common in connection with the commencement of a new industry, a few unsuccessful makers are falling out, but others are taking their place, and it is hoped that cidermaking will become a profitable side line with many orchardists. The experience gained since the industry commenced has given cidermakers a better knowledge of the public requirements, and has enabled them to adopt methods suitable to local conditions. It is estimated some 50,000 gallons of cider were produced during the year, valued at approximately £12,500.

The manufacture of unfermented apple-juice is also receiving attention. A satisfactory article has been placed on the market, but it is yet too early to judge whether it will prove a commercial success or not.

THE BEEKEEPING INDUSTRY.

In line with other primary industries, beekeeping is making steady progress both in the North and South Islands. The past season was not generally favourable to the production of a good honey-flow. With the exception of the Waikato, Taranaki, Marlborough, and Nelson districts, where average returns were secured, the honey crop was below normal. On the west coast of the South Island, owing to continuous wet weather, the crop was the lightest recorded for a number of years.

The displays of New Zealand honey made at the Wembley Exhibition have been the means of attracting attention to the Dominion as a honey-producing country, and as a result a number of people from the United Kingdom have been making inquiries in New Zealand with a view to ascertaining the possibilities as to beekeeping in this country.

The work of inspecting colonies for foul-brood and other diseases has been well maintained in most districts, and reports to hand indicate that satisfactory progress has been made in the control of disease. It was found necessary, nevertheless, to take proceedings against a number of beekeepers for breaches of the Apiaries Act. The further employment of beekeepers as part-time Inspectors has proved sufficiently satisfactory to again warrant a continuation of the scheme. Apart from the main