

THE BEEKEEPING INDUSTRY.

The past honey season varied considerably throughout the Dominion. In the early spring the weather conditions were very unfavourable, and beekeepers experienced a trying time in keeping colonies up to normal strength. The situation was satisfactorily handled by the more experienced commercial men, but a number of less experience sustained considerable losses. The advent, however, of better weather later in the season resulted in a good honey flow in most localities. In the Auckland and Waikato districts the crops were lighter than usual. Good average returns were secured in Taranaki, Hawke's Bay, Marlborough, and West Coast. The crops in the Canterbury, Otago, and Southland districts were above the average. The average quality of this season's honey crop is excellent. There is every indication that the industry continues to expand, several new commercial apiaries having been established during the year, and considerable extensions made to existing ones.

The demand for information and advice from persons intending to take up beekeeping as a means of livelihood, and others already engaged in the business, is also increasing. Inspectional and instructional work has been well maintained during the year. Public lectures and practical demonstrations were given by the Apiary Instructors in different localities in their respective districts and were well patronized.

Good work has again been carried out by the part-time Apiary Inspectors in assisting with the inspection of apiaries for disease. In addition to the districts covered last year, a start was made in the North Auckland, Taranaki, and South Canterbury districts. This system of inspection enables concentrated action to be taken in cleaning up districts of disease and box hives. Proceedings were taken during the year against a number of persons for breaches of the Apiaries Act, 1908.

The grading of all honey for export has been attended to at the various grading-ports during the past season by the Apiary Instructor at Hamilton (Mr. T. S. Winter). The bulk of the honey graded for export is of prime-grade quality, and the packing and branding of the packages well up to the requirements of the regulations. The total quantity of honey exported during the year was 10,590 cwt., valued at £34,695. Figures showing quantities and values of honey exported from the Dominion during the last five years are as follows: 1923, 10,605 cwt., £43,032; 1924, 9,157 cwt., £26,910; 1925, 10,836 cwt., £30,549; 1926, 15,770 cwt., £51,733; 1927, 10,590 cwt., £34,695.

Under the Honey-export Control Act, 1924, all honey for export to the United Kingdom, the Irish Free State, and the Continent of Europe comes under the jurisdiction of the New Zealand Honey Control Board. There is every indication that the Board has the confidence of the bulk of commercial beekeepers in the Dominion.

REGISTRATION OF APIARIES.

The triennial registration of all apiaries from one hive upwards, which was to have taken place in June, 1926, was held up pending an amendment to the Apiaries Act, 1908, which was not dealt with by last session of Parliament. This will no doubt receive attention during the coming year, and a date be fixed for apiary registration. The total number of registered apiaries now stands at approximately 7,500, representing some 100,000 colonies of bees.

STAFF.

Thanks is due to all members of the staff of the Division for their loyal co-operation during a strenuous year's work. It is with deep regret that I have to record the death of Mr. G. H. Sargeant, Apiary Instructor, Christchurch, which took place in January last. The deceased was a very capable and energetic officer, and a great loss has been sustained both by the Department and beekeepers generally.