

and experiments or demonstrations bearing upon local farming conditions. They form useful adjuncts to the general instruction services of the Division.

At the Biological Laboratory a large range of investigation and general work has been carried out, as will be gathered from the detailed information furnished in the divisional report. It is satisfactory to note that the number of commercial seed-samples submitted for analysis shows a large increase.

The farm economics section of the Division is making good progress, and a great mass of data is being gathered, from which information not only of statistical value but also of practical value to farmers is already becoming available.

THE HEMP INDUSTRY.

A moderate increase in fibre-production was recorded for the year, but, judging by an analysis of the grading returns, quality fell below that of the preceding twelve months. During the year an officer was detailed to carry out instructional work among the mills, and beneficial results may be expected from this service. The main phormium areas are reported as healthy. Financially this industry has been depressed owing to a fall in prices.

FRUITGROWING AND HORTICULTURE GENERALLY.

The fruit industry experienced a good year, and there seems every reason to believe that it is emerging satisfactorily from the somewhat depressed conditions existing previously. The export business proved a financial success, and practically no call was made upon the State guarantee. A satisfactory feature lay in the good marketing conditions obtained in South America, which indicate that with a continuance of efficient handling this outlet may remain a paying one for years to come. It is a matter for regret that the possibilities of the United States as a market for our fruit cannot be tested, owing to the prohibition of import imposed by the Government there. Tobacco-culture is making rapid progress and bids fair to become quite an important industry, provided a good enough and sufficiently stable market is found to exist when our production becomes greater than is needed for Dominion requirements. The instructional services of the Division functioned efficiently, and, as usual, were assisted by the hearty co-operation of fruitgrowers and others concerned. The Director of Horticulture, in his report appended, goes fully into details of the Division's activities.

GRAPE-GROWING.

Much of the grape crop produced is used for winemaking, but in the Auckland Province outdoor-grown table grapes are grown and marketed successfully. There seems no reason why table grapes of suitable varieties should not be grown in the North to a much greater extent than at present, so as to provide the consumers of the Dominion with fresh home-grown fruit in place of the imported variety.

BEEKEEPING.

This industry has maintained itself upon a good footing and continued to provide its quota of our export trade. It is satisfactory to note that the prices received for New Zealand honey in the United Kingdom are still on a high basis, comparing very favourably with those for honey imported from other countries. The maintenance of a high standard of quality, careful grading, and judicious advertising have no doubt been important factors in bringing this about.

THE STATE FARMS.

Ruakura.

This farm has experienced a good year, and it is gratifying to report that its position, from the financial standpoint, is steadily improving. For the year the total expenditure, excluding permanent salaries but including all expenditure upon the farm training college and other educational work, was £8,937, while the total receipts were £9,347. Permanent salaries, including instructional services, amounted to £3,582. The position is perhaps even better than these figures indicate, as during the year, as in the two preceding years, a greater proportion than hitherto of the annual expenditure has been in connection with improvements, particularly as regards pastures, fencing, and water-supply. Also, 12 acres of previously unimproved land were stumped, cropped, and laid down in grass. All the pastures on the farm are now in excellent condition.

A departure was made by holding the annual stock sale in August instead of in April. This proved a marked success, and the practice will be continued.