

mandarins from Australia contained a large percentage of small, undersized fruit, which should not have been shipped. Fruit from the Cook Islands was landed in good condition, with the exception of a few consignments of oranges which arrived in a wasty condition. Several lots of oranges, passion-fruit, and potatoes from Norfolk Island arrived in splendid condition, and were of first-rate quality.

It was found necessary to condemn and destroy a number of cases of citrus fruit from Australia and the Cook Islands on account of fruit-fly infection. A quantity of walnuts and almonds was condemned under the Pure Food and Drugs Act as being unfit for human consumption. Fumigation was found necessary in connection with several lines found on inspection to be infected with live scale and mealy bug.

Regulations were gazetted during the year governing the importation of potatoes into New Zealand. These are designed with the view of improving the position of the potato industry from the disease point of view, including the raising of clean seed.

HOP-CULTURE.

The hop crop was a good average one. Owing to the prolonged spell of dry weather during the summer months the majority of the hops when dried were light in weight, and consequently not so valuable. A number of gardens have been cleared to make way for tobacco-culture—an industry which is making rapid progress in the Nelson District.

The quantities and values of hops exported during the last five years ended 31st March, are as follows: 1924, 3,883 cwt., £27,615; 1925, 4,469 cwt., £31,112; 1926, 3,608 cwt., £21,780; 1927, 2,937 cwt., £15,203; 1928, 4,980 cwt., £29,539.

TOBACCO-CULTURE.

The cultivation of tobacco-leaf has been very profitable to the few at present engaged in this industry, practically the whole output being absorbed in the Dominion, and their success has led to a very considerable inquiry from all northern districts. Those interested have been supplied with suitable seed and directions for making tests of their land and climate for this crop. There are indications that a considerable area in many localities is suitable for this class of production. In many instances it is the poorer class of land that has otherwise very limited possibilities of becoming profitable. The services of the Department's Tobacco Instructor have been in considerable demand, and he has been kept busily engaged giving advice on the different phases of the industry in various localities. It is estimated there are now some 450 acres under tobacco in the Dominion.

Approximately 7 cwt. of tobacco-leaf was exported in July last from the Nelson District under the Government guarantee for the purpose of testing the London market. The prices realized were very encouraging, and a very useful report was obtained which will be of great assistance when the time arrives for making further shipments.

LEGISLATION.

The following Acts affecting the operations of the Division were passed during the last session of Parliament: Orchard-tax Act, 1927; Apiaries Act, 1927; Seeds Importation Act, 1927; Fungicides and Insecticides Act, 1927; New Zealand Institute of Horticulture Act, 1927; Introduction of Plants Act, 1927.

THE BEEKEEPING INDUSTRY.

The season of 1927–28, as regards production, was the best on record for many years past, all districts producing good crops. The opening months were extremely trying, boisterous winds and continuous wet weather preventing the bees from working the early nectar-secreting plants. This was followed by a prolonged spell of particularly fine weather. Taken altogether, the season has been a combination of the worst possible conditions and most suitable weather from the beekeepers' point of view.

In the North Auckland districts fair to good crops were harvested, despite the extremely dry weather experienced during the late summer months. Honey crops in all other beekeeping districts were well above the average, and, as is usual in a good season, the quality was of a high standard.

There is evidence on every hand of greater production and increased prosperity among the beekeepers. The 1927 Apiaries Act, adding, as it does, increased protection to the progressive apiarists, will no doubt encourage them to extend operations. A factor that is helping considerably to increase the production of honey is the growing practice among farmers to top-dress pastures. This is noticeable in certain districts of the North and South Islands, where its general effect in increased returns is already evident.

The activities of the Apiary Instructors have been well maintained, notwithstanding that their work was seriously handicapped by the prevalence of wet weather in the spring. Requests for lectures and demonstrations have been met in all districts, and the services of the officers have been given to judge the honey classes at the various shows held in their respective districts. A number of practical beekeepers were again engaged during the past season as part-time inspectors to assist with the inspection of apiaries for disease in portions of the Auckland, Wellington, Canterbury, Otago, and Southland districts. The work in this connection has, as a whole, been carried out in a very satisfactory manner. It was found necessary to take proceedings during the year against a number of persons for failing to take steps to control disease, using box hives, &c.

In connection with the alleged honey-poisoning cases in the Whakatane district, a botanical survey of the Kutarere district was carried out by two officers of the Division with the view of