

obtaining particulars relative to the flora of that locality. Useful information was obtained, which should prove valuable in the event of a more complete survey being undertaken next year. A case of alleged honey poisoning which occurred at Morrinsville was investigated, and samples of the honey obtained and forwarded to the Department's Chemist for analysis.

Some 9,589 cases of honey were passed and graded for export at the various grading-stores by the Department's Honey-grader during the past season. The bulk of the honey was of prime quality, and the packing well up to the requirements of the regulations. A few lines were rejected on account of not being in a suitable condition for export. Honey exported during the year amounted to 8,650 cwt., valued at £27,784. Quantities and values of honey exported from the Dominion during the last five years are as follows: 1924, 9,157 cwt., £26,910; 1925, 10,836 cwt., £30,549; 1926, 15,770 cwt., £51,733; 1927, 10,590 cwt., £34,695; 1928, 8,650 cwt., £27,784.

REGISTRATION OF APIARIES.

The law relating to the bee industry in New Zealand was consolidated and amended during the last session of Parliament. The Apiaries Act, 1927, provides that no person shall keep bees after the 31st March, 1928, except in an apiary registered under the Act. It is estimated some 5,000 apiaries are registered to date under the new regulations, representing approximately 60,000 colonies of bees. There still remains a considerable number of registrations to come in.

STAFF.

I have to thank all officers of the Division for their loyal assistance in carrying out the many and varied duties during a particularly busy year.

FIELDS DIVISION.

REPORT OF A. H. COCKAYNE, DIRECTOR.

SEASON AND CROPS.

The early part of the past agricultural year gave every promise of an extremely good season, but unfortunately a prolonged dry period was experienced during the summer and early autumn. This dry period rather upset calculations, and in some districts it was found necessary to utilize at least some of the hay and ensilage saved for winter feeding. However, after the dry period broke, excellent growing-weather was experienced and the leeway in production was made up.

The season's cereal harvest has proved to be an exceptionally good one so far as actual threshings to date have disclosed. While actual figures are not yet available, it is estimated that 270,000 acres of wheat were sown, as against an actual sowing of 220,083 acres in the previous season. For the 1926-27 season the 220,083 acres yielded a total of 7,952,442 bushels, or 36.13 bushels per acre. The estimated Dominion average yield per acre for 1927-28 was 34.37 bushels, or approximately 9,200,000 bushels total yield. Actual threshings to date show that the yield per acre is 39.08 bushels, which is approximately 4.71 bushels above the estimated yield. At the yield of 39.08 bushels per acre, 6,400,249 bushels have been secured up to the present. This yield is obtained from about 163,800 acres. This leaves approximately 106,000 acres still to be threshed. Even if the average yield of this 106,000 acres dropped to between 26 and 27 bushels the total yield would equal the estimated 9,200,000 bushels. It is hardly likely that the average for the remaining 106,000 acres will drop from 39.08 bushels (obtained for the first 163,000 acres) to 26 or 27 bushels, and I feel confident our actual wheat-supply will exceed the estimated supply, and provide more than sufficient wheat for the Dominion's requirements.

So far as the oat crop is concerned, threshings to date average 45.6 bushels per acre. This is about 3 bushels per acre above last season's actual yield, which was approximately 5 bushels per acre above the Dominion average for the previous five years. The area in oats for 1927-28 was estimated at 312,000 acres, as compared with 372,698 actually harvested in 1926-27. The position in respect of oats and oatens chaff is very satisfactory.

The area in potatoes in 1927-28 was estimated at 22,200 acres, as against the actual area of 24,616 acres in 1926-27. Basing the yield on the average yield per acre for the last five years, it is estimated that for 1927-28 there will be a total of 118,500 tons of potatoes. This will leave a fair quantity above Dominion requirements available for export; but at the present time the prospects of an export trade, in view of Australia's embargo on New Zealand potatoes, are not very bright. A market for a quantity is offering in the Argentine, and 700 tons have already been shipped to that country.

The top-dressing of grassland with phosphatic manures is an operation which is receiving more and more attention each year. An extension of the practice must be reflected in an increased output of the Dominion's primary products—the more so as the top-dressing of grassland is not being restricted to areas on which manures can be applied by machinery, but is extending to hilly sheep-country, where the fertilizers have to be applied by hand. In this latter connection, the patent distributors which enable a man to cover a much larger area per day, and with greater comfort than he could otherwise do, are largely responsible.