

infection was comparatively small. It was found necessary to condemn and destroy a few lines of citrus-fruit from Australia on account of fruit-fly infection. A quantity of shelled walnuts and almonds was found to be affected with the larvæ of the Indian meal-moth, and was condemned as being unfit for human consumption. There was an increase in the quantity of fruit imported from the Cook Islands, especially oranges and tomatoes, the quality, grading, and packing showing considerable improvement. The fruit from Fiji was also of better quality.

HOP-CULTURE.

Hop-growing on a commercial basis is carried on mainly in Nelson Province. The season's crop was a fair average one, the bulk of the hops being of good quality.

The following figures show the quantities and values of hops exported from the Dominion during the last five years ended 31st March: 1925, 4,469 cwt., £31,112; 1926, 3,608 cwt., £21,780; 1927, 2,937 cwt., £15,203; 1928, 4,980 cwt., £29,539; 1929, 3,334 cwt., £21,719.

TOBACCO-CULTURE.

In view of the fact that tobacco-leaf of high quality, both for pipe and cigarette purposes, can be produced in the Dominion, extensive inquiries have been received during the year for advice and information on the growing and manufacture of tobacco. Besides the Nelson District considerable headway has been made in the North Auckland and Rotorua districts, the Natives in these parts being particularly interested in the growing of tobacco as a means of livelihood. Practical instruction in all phases of tobacco-culture, from the sowing of the seed to the curing of the mature leaf, has been given in the different localities by the Department's Instructor in Tobacco-culture.

It is estimated there are now some 1,000 acres devoted to tobacco-growing in the Dominion. Of this approximately 150 acres are in the Auckland District, 30 acres in Marlborough, and the balance in the Nelson and Motueka districts. The bulk of the crop at the present time is grown under contract to tobacco-manufacturers in New Zealand. The future of the industry in this country, however, depends very largely on a satisfactory overseas market being available for the surplus not needed for New Zealand requirements, and until this is definitely assured the planting of tobacco on an extensive scale requires to be carefully considered.

THE BEEKEEPING INDUSTRY.

Unsettled weather conditions experienced during the summer months resulted in the 1928-29 honey crop being below normal in several important producing districts, but in Canterbury and Auckland the returns were generally above the average. There is evidence in all districts that the beekeeping industry is expanding; established beekeepers are extending operations, and quite a number have started in a commercial way.

Applications continue to be received from persons desirous of taking a course of training in apiculture, but owing to this work having been discontinued at the Ruakura Apiary some other means of dealing with these requests is of urgent necessity. The usual practice of affording information to beekeepers generally by means of practical demonstrations and lectures has been carried out in the respective Instructors' districts, and keen interest manifested in the proceedings.

The inspection of apiaries for disease has been well maintained in most districts. The increased powers given to Inspectors under the Apiaries Act, 1927, have helped considerably in controlling disease. Satisfactory work was again carried out by the part-time Inspectors engaged during the past season in the Auckland, Wellington, Canterbury, Otago, and Southland districts. The assistance thus given the Apiary Instructors in the control of disease is much appreciated. There are, however, still a number of beekeepers, mostly in a small way, who neglect to keep their apiaries clean, and it was found necessary to take proceedings against a number of such during the year.

In connection with the alleged honey-poisoning cases which occurred at Morrinsville in March of last year arrangements were made to place a test hive in the district. Honey taken from this hive at intervals during the season was submitted to tests at the Wallaceville Laboratory, but all the tests proved negative.

The total quantity of honey graded for export at the various grading-stores amounted to 20,370 cases. As is the rule in a good year—the 1927-28 season being an exceptionally good one—the honey for the most part was of high quality, white honey being in larger proportion than usual.

The following figures show the quantities and values of honey exported from the Dominion during the last five years ended 31st March: 1925, 10,836 cwt., £30,549; 1926, 15,770 cwt., £51,733; 1927, 10,590 cwt., £34,695; 1928, 8,650 cwt., £27,784; 1929, 22,062 cwt., £82,230.

The regulations under the Apiaries Act, 1927, provide that no person shall keep bees after 31st March, 1928, except in an apiary registered under the Act. The total number of apiaries registered to date is 5,872, comprising 93,675 colonies of bees.

STAFF.

With the many and varied matters coming within the scope of the Division, together with the increasing demands for advice and information covering a wide field of operations, a busy year has been experienced. I have to thank the staff as a whole for the loyal and efficient service rendered during the year.