

Notwithstanding that the industry is passing through a difficult period, signs of optimism are noticeable in the establishment of new apiaries and extensions to existing ones. Considerable inquiry is also being made by persons desirous of taking up beekeeping as a means of livelihood.

The weather conditions during the spring and summer months were favourable to the carrying-out of apiary inspection, and this work was maintained as far as restricted travelling-expenses would allow.

Disease is being satisfactorily controlled by the bulk of commercial beekeepers, and in this connection useful assistance has again been rendered in some of the main producing districts by a number of experienced beekeepers who offered their services as honorary apiary inspectors at no expense to the Department.

The usual practice of giving demonstrations and lectures on all phases of beekeeping was adhered to during the year by the Apiary Instructors in their respective districts, and considerable appreciation was evinced in this means of imparting practical advice and instruction.

The grading of honey for export was carried out under the new standards fixed last season by the New Zealand Honey Control Board in conformity with its powers under the Honey-export Control Act, 1924. While it is yet early to forecast the effect of the new grading-system, it is clear that it will have the effect of eliminating the low grades of honey previously sent forward by beekeepers, in the hope of getting them exported, which were unsaleable locally, and for which there was no better demand overseas. It is very evident, in order to maintain the high position our honey holds in the English market, that only the best honey the Dominion can produce should be exported.

The total packages of honey graded for export at the different grading stores for the year ended 31st March last amounted to 4,790 cases, which was a considerable decrease as compared with the previous year's figures. This was largely due to the 1933-34 honey crop being a very light one.

Quantities in hundredweights and values of honey exported from the Dominion during the last five years ended 31st March, are as follows: 1931, 1,958, £7,845; 1932, 4,749, £17,606; 1933, 2,005, £7,014; 1934, 7,342, £23,784; 1935, 5,427, £17,844.

APIARY REGISTRATION.

The total number of apiaries registered to date is 7,621, comprising 116,050 colonies of bees. It is considered that the regulations relative to the registration of apiaries have been complied with by the majority of beekeepers in the Dominion.

STAFF.

I have to thank the staff of the Division as a whole for the loyal and efficient service rendered during another busy year.