

A new method of drying hops was followed during the season, and the results are reported to be quite satisfactory, the process enabling larger quantities to be dealt with at one handling and at a saving in cost. The quantities, in hundredweights, and values of hops exported from the Dominion during the last five years ended 31st March are as follow; 1932, 640, £2,597; 1933, 3,192, £13,793; 1934, 3,872, £17,734; 1935, 3,627, £26,522; 1936, 3,436, £22,684;

TUNG-OIL TREES.

Further planting of tung-oil trees by private companies in the North Auckland District has taken place during the year, the total area now planted being between 3,500 acres and 4,000 acres. Some of the older trees have now reached the nut-bearing stage. The ultimate success of the plantings as a whole will be watched with interest during the next few years.

NEW ZEALAND INSTITUTE OF HORTICULTURE.

A considerable amount of valuable work has been carried out by the New Zealand Institute of Horticulture in the interests of horticulture and fruit-culture generally. Matters connected with nomenclature, improvement of economic plants by selection and hybridization, recording new varieties of plants produced in New Zealand, and the training of young men and women in all branches of horticulture, are some of the main phases of the work of the Institute.

Under the New Zealand Institute of Horticulture Act passed in 1927 the Institute has full legal authority to grant diplomas in horticulture to those qualified and passing examinations during the course of a special training. This very important phase of the work is being taken advantage of, and quite a number of persons have already gained the diploma in question.

The Loder Cup for the year 1935 was awarded to the Bruce Trust in perpetuation of the memory of the late Robert Cunningham Bruce, the founder of the trust, who left his residuary estate in the hands of trustees "for afforestation and making of National Parks and Domains in New Zealand." The cup in question was presented by Mr. Gerald W. Loder, now Lord Wakehurst, for the purpose of encouraging the protection and cultivation of the incomparable flora of the Dominion, and was first competed for in 1929.

The death occurred in September last of Mr. G. A. Green, Dominion Organizer of the Institute. The existence of the Institute was largely due to his foresight and energy, and horticulture generally has lost the services of a much valued servant.

REGISTRATION AND INSPECTION OF NURSERIES.

A total of 644 nurseries was registered during the year, and the sum of £644 collected in registration fees.

Reports to hand indicate that the majority of the nurseries in the Dominion are kept in good condition, and the stock raised is well up to standard and clean and free from disease.

Nurserymen have in the past contributed very materially to the development of our fruit industry by introducing and raising new varieties of fruit, thereby improving the standard of production, and they are still contributing valuable service in this connection.

ORCHARD REGISTRATION AND ORCHARD-TAX.

Registered orchards in the Dominion now total 6,548, comprising 2,804 taxable and 3,744 non-taxable, the total amount of tax payable for the year being approximately £2,304, inclusive of penalty for late payment.

The work of collecting the tax is rendered somewhat difficult owing to the number of properties changing hands, to alterations in areas, and also to financial conditions. A portion of the tax collected, less cost of collection, is paid to the New Zealand Fruitgrowers' Federation, Ltd., for the purpose of furthering the interests of the fruitgrowers of the Dominion, and the balance to the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research to assist in the carrying-out of research work for the benefit of the fruitgrowing industry.

The collection of fireblight tax in two commercial fruitgrowing districts has also been attended to, the proceeds, less collection expenses, being handed over to the fireblight committees concerned for purposes associated with fireblight-control.

THE BEEKEEPING INDUSTRY.

Beekeepers have been rather unfortunate in experiencing another disappointing season. The long spell of dry weather during the 1934-35 season resulted in light crops, and this year extremely wet and unsettled conditions were against the harvesting of honey, and in the majority of the commercial beekeeping districts the crop was again considerably below the average. The exceptional storm which occurred early in February last caused considerable damage to a number of apiaries in various parts of the North Island, and the beekeepers concerned suffered a severe set back.

The marketing of honey, both locally and overseas, is a matter that has been the subject of a good deal of controversy for some time past. With a view to endeavouring to bring about an improvement in the general conditions obtaining the Executive Commission of Agriculture was recently authorized to investigate the position. The Commission's recommendations will no doubt receive the full consideration of the Government.

Notwithstanding the unsettled state of the market, it is interesting to note that beekeeping still continues to attract persons with moderate capital who are desirous of making a living by honey-production, and there is a considerable demand for suitable apiary-sites. Faith in the future of the industry is also evidenced by numerous extensions to existing apiaries during the year.