

Customs Department, are as follows: 1920: 9,975 cwt., value £34,141. 1921: 7,633 cwt., value £30,962. 1922: 8,542 cwt., value £31,943. 1923: 10,605 cwt., value £43,032. 1924: 9,157 cwt., value £26,910. The bulk of the honey exported from the Dominion is shipped through the New Zealand Co-operative Honey-producers' Association, Auckland. The following shows the quantity of honey graded for export at the various grading-stores during the year: Auckland, 4,218 cases; Wanganui, 464 cases; Wellington, 129 cases; Lyttelton, 576 cases; Timaru, 896 cases; Dunedin, 345 cases; Bluff, 501 cases: a total of 7,130 cases for the whole of the Dominion. The standard of packing has been well maintained throughout. Liquid honey, fermentation, and honey of two classes in one case, led to the rejection of a number of cases for export.

Registration of Apiaries: The triennial registration of all apiaries took place in June last. The total number of apiaries registered was 6,174, representing a total of 88,127 colonies. Although the majority of persons keeping bees took the necessary steps to register their apiaries, there are still a number who have failed to meet their obligations in this respect. Proceedings were taken by the Department against several such offenders, and it is trusted that the action taken will serve as a warning to others who have neglected to comply with the regulations governing this matter.

#### STAFF.

During the year Mr. W. H. Taylor, Horticulturist, retired on superannuation, and was succeeded by Mr. W. C. Hyde, of the orchard instructional staff. Mr. Taylor was connected with the Department for a considerable number of years, and this opportunity is taken to record a hearty appreciation of his valuable services.

#### FIELDS DIVISION.

The newly constituted Fields Division, under the directorship of Mr. A. H. Cockayne, was established as from 1st May, 1923, and has already proved itself an efficient branch of the Department's services. Its work is mainly instructional and developmental as regards activities in the field, combined with experimental and investigational work at the Biological Laboratory, and in both directions the officers have shown marked keenness and energy. The developments taking place in agricultural instruction and the great interest in this subject now being exhibited throughout the Dominion will increase the demands upon the services of the staff (at present a comparatively small one), and it seems evident that it will need to be strengthened as regards numbers. Among the various activities of the Division special mention may be made of the excellent work done in connection with pasture-improvement and farmers' short courses of instruction, together with excellent investigational work by members of the Biological Laboratory staff.

Following is the report of the Director:—

#### INTRODUCTION.

The duties of the Fields Division comprise agricultural instruction, the control of experimental areas, the laying-out of experimental work on State farms, advice regarding crops, pastures, and farm management, co-operative experimental work, agricultural investigations generally, including crop-management and the control of crop-diseases and crop-pests, seed-testing, hemp-grading, and grain-grading.

At the commencement the fields instruction staff was small in numbers, and, even although during the year three additional appointments were made, the present staff is still below requirements, and further appointments are essential if the work of the Division is to be carried out efficiently. At present the instructorates are far too large, and it is quite impossible for the Instructors to attend to many important matters that require trained men to carry out. The specialist staff attached to the Biological Laboratory is likewise inadequate with regard to the importance and the scope of the work which could be carried out by it. Proposals in the direction of strengthening the staff will be later submitted.

The agricultural year has been signalized by an abnormal duration of dry weather during the summer months—so much so that in some parts the absence of rain approximated to a drought. Following this dry spell, however, abundant rains fell throughout the country. The dry spell had an unfavourable effect on cereal and turnip crops, and with the drying-up of pastures the outlook at one stage from the point of view of autumn and winter feed was disquieting. However, the result of the rains referred to was an abundance of late-grown feed, and the prospects for the wintering of stock appear bright except in South Canterbury and North Otago. Nevertheless it is a well-known fact that the average farmer, even in favourable seasons, does not make sufficient provision for winter feed for his stock. In the spring and early summer an immense wastage of grass occurs, which should be made use of either by an increase in cropping to enable adequate feeding to be carried out when grass-production is low, or should be preserved in some form and be available later on in the season. At the present time it is safe to say that were it possible to make full use of all grass produced, the number of live-stock in New Zealand could be vastly increased.

#### AGRICULTURAL INSTRUCTION GENERALLY.

During the year a very large number of lectures at meetings of farmers and others interested in New Zealand agriculture were delivered by officers of the Division (including the Biological Laboratory)