

## TE KAUWHATA HORTICULTURAL STATION (LOWER WAIKATO).

The wet weather experienced in this locality during practically the whole of the year interfered to a considerable extent with the various operations carried out at the Station. The conditions, while favourable to grass-growth, were not suitable for the production of grapes and other fruits. The breeding-ewes kept for utilizing the surplus feed produced a good percentage of lambs.

Plantations: Under the lands-for-settlement scheme a commencement was made during the year with stumping and clearing some 900 acres of wattle land at Te Kauwhata preparatory to laying the areas down in grass, the work being carried out under the direction of the Station Manager. The revenue collected from the sale of posts, firewood, &c., is being credited to the Lands for Settlement Fund. Prior to the commencement of these operations £184 6s. 2d. was received for firewood sold, and credited to the Farm; also £140 10s. 3d. for wattle-bark disposed of.

Vineyard and cellar: Owing to unfavourable conditions the grape crop was considerably below that of the previous year. Several improvements were effected in the cellar, the main feature being the erection of three new concrete fermenting-tanks. Wine-sales for the year were well maintained, a total of 13,921 gallons being sold, which realized £6,492—a substantial increase on the previous year's figures.

## TOBACCO-CULTURE.

Highly remunerative prices received by tobacco-growers a season or two back led to a considerable interest being taken in the growing of tobacco in the Dominion, and numerous inquiries were received for information on this subject, supplies of seed, &c. Intending planters were advised to proceed slowly in the matter in view of the fact that, although leaf of good marketable quality could be produced, the success of the industry very largely depended on a satisfactory overseas market being available for the surplus not needed for New Zealand requirements. Fairly extensive plantings took place in the Hokianga and Rotorua districts, chiefly by Maoris who had become interested in the growing of tobacco as a means of livelihood. While a quantity of the leaf produced from this source was disposed of to the local manufacturing companies, a fairly large surplus remained on hand. With a view to relieving the situation, arrangements were made for the Government to advance 8d. per pound against a proportion of the leaf considered to be suitable for export, and some forty-two bales were shipped to London. Up to the present time this leaf has not been sold. That considerable faith is manifested in the future of the industry is evidenced by the fact that a number of tobacco-growing companies have been formed in the Auckland District, and several large blocks planted in tobacco, with further extensions to be made next season.

The industry is now well established in Nelson and Marlborough, where some heavy crops are being harvested this season, thus affording a good indication that these districts are well adapted to this class of production. Satisfactory returns are being received by the growers, as the bulk of the crop is sold under contract to the manufacturing companies operating in New Zealand, who provide a good, though distinctly limited, market.

The total area devoted to tobacco-culture for the whole of the Dominion is estimated at some 1,500 acres. Instruction in all phases of tobacco-growing has been given in the different localities during the year by the Instructor attached to the Department. Regulations relating to the grading of tobacco-leaf have been receiving attention, and will no doubt be gazetted at an early date.

## HOP-CULTURE.

The hop-growing industry has not made any appreciable progress during the past few years, owing to the difficulty of disposing of the crop at payable prices. In a number of gardens hops have been replaced by tobacco with a view of obtaining better returns. Although the season's crop was a heavy one, the hops did not weigh out as well as in previous seasons, due, no doubt, to the very dry weather experienced prior to picking. The quantity and value of hops exported from the Dominion during the year ended 31st March were 2,402 cwt., valued at £14,378.

## NEW ZEALAND INSTITUTE OF HORTICULTURE.

The New Zealand Institute of Horticulture, established in 1923, has carried out a considerable amount of valuable work in relation to the objects for which it was formed. The first Loder Cup competition took place in connection with the Auckland Horticultural Society's rose show held in November last, and was won by Messrs. Duncan and Davies, Ltd., of New Plymouth, with a fine collection of New Zealand native plants. The exhibits made by the other competitors were also highly commended upon by the judges. This cup, which is a valuable one, was presented by Mr. G. Loder, a prominent English horticulturist, for competition throughout the Dominion in a class dealing specially with New Zealand native plants.

## ORCHARD REGISTRATION AND ORCHARD-TAX.

Under the regulations which came into force on the 1st January last all occupiers of orchards from which fruit is sold or intended to be sold are required to make application for registration. Previously all such orchards required to be registered annually, but under the present regulations registration is permanent. During the year 3,048 taxable and 3,027 non-taxable orchards were registered, the amount payable in tax being approximately £1,413.