

TE KAUWHATA HORTICULTURAL STATION (LOWER WAIKATO).

Vineyard and cellar: As the result of unfavourable weather conditions the grape crop was late in ripening, and was considerably lighter than that of the previous year. The total weight of grapes harvested was 38 tons, from which it is estimated 10,500 gallons of wine will be manufactured. Wine sales amounted to 8,769 gallons, which realized £4,268. This shows a considerable falling-off as compared with the previous year's figures, and is no doubt largely due to the financial depression existing throughout the country. The financial position of the Station is, however, satisfactory, receipts exceeding the expenditure for the year by some £2,000.

Sheep: The lambing season was a satisfactory one, 636 lambs being produced, of which 591 were forwarded to the freezing-works. The total receipts for this branch of the farm was £967. This amount includes the returns for fat lambs shipped to Great Britain last year.

TOBACCO-CULTURE.

The cultivation of tobacco-leaf is still receiving a good deal of attention in different parts of the Dominion, and the demands for information and advice have been considerable. The total area devoted to tobacco-culture is approximately 1,600 acres. Reports to hand indicate that the bulk of the season's crop is of high quality, especially that grown in the Nelson and Motueka districts. There has been a marked improvement in the growing and curing of tobacco-leaf, the experience gained by growers during the past few years enabling better results to be obtained. Most of the present crop is grown under contract to the manufacturing companies operating in New Zealand—at payable prices to the grower. In the Auckland District considerable areas are being devoted to tobacco-growing, and a number of flue-curing barns erected.

For the purpose of ascertaining its suitability for the requirements of the Home market, a small parcel of Auckland-grown leaf was forwarded to the High Commissioner for New Zealand, London, towards the end of the year, but a report on the matter is not yet to hand. It should be again mentioned that although leaf of good marketable quality can be produced in the Dominion, the success of the industry very largely depends on a satisfactory overseas market being available for the surplus not needed for New Zealand requirements, and intending planters are therefore advised to proceed with due caution.

Numerous laboratory tests with different varieties of locally-grown leaf were conducted during the year.

HOP-CULTURE.

During the past two or three years there has been a steady decline in the quantity of hops produced. This has been largely due to an unstable market, and to the fact that a number of hop-growers have gone over to the cultivation of tobacco as a more reliable means of livelihood. Owing to the dry weather conditions experienced the season's crop was a light one, the hops not weighing out as well as usual. The quantity and value of hops exported from the Dominion during the year ended 31st March, were 1,943 cwt. and £9,108.

NEW ZEALAND INSTITUTE OF HORTICULTURE.

A considerable amount of valuable work has been carried out by the New Zealand Institute of Horticulture during the year in the interests of horticulture 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 features 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 a number of persons have already gained the diploma in question.

ORCHARD REGISTRATION AND ORCHARD-TAX.

The number of registered orchards in the Dominion now stands at approximately 6,050, representing some 3,000 taxable and 3,050 non-taxable; £1,400 was collected in orchard-tax, which amount, less cost of collection, has been handed over to the New Zealand Fruitgrowers' Federation, Ltd., for furthering the interests of the fruitgrowing industry generally.

REGISTRATION AND INSPECTION OF NURSERIES.

Reports to hand indicate that the bulk 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.

Nurseries registered during the year numbered 662, and £662 was collected in registration fees.