

IMPORTED FRUIT, PLANTS, ETC.

A careful inspection of all imported fruit, plants, bulbs, &c., has been carried out at the different ports of entry in the Dominion—viz., Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, Dunedin, and Bluff. Fruit imports show a substantial increase on the previous year's figures, mainly due to large shipments of citrus fruit (oranges and mandarins) from Australia following a light season experienced in 1929. There was a considerable increase in the quantity of bananas imported from Samoa, most of the fruit being of good quality. Later shipments, however, contained an excess of small, immature bananas, which gave cause for much dissatisfaction amongst importers. All lines of citrus fruits were closely examined for fruit-fly infection, and it was found necessary to condemn four consignments from Australia (three of oranges and one of mandarins) on this account.

THE BEEKEEPING INDUSTRY.

The weather conditions which prevailed during the past season were not favourable to the production of a normal honey crop. With the exception of the Auckland, Hawke's Bay, and South Canterbury districts, light to poor crops were produced. Otago and Southland suffered a particularly adverse season, the yield of honey in these districts being the lowest obtained for a number of years. Notwithstanding the somewhat unsettled state of the local and export markets, commercial beekeepers are extending operations and installing modern apiary and honey appliances, it being realized that overhead charges must be kept down to a minimum if the business is to be made a payable one.

Following the usual practice, lectures and practical demonstrations connected with the various phases of beekeeping were given as far as it was possible to do so by the Apiary Instructors in their respective districts.

Owing to the poor season there was a very considerable decline in the quantity of honey submitted for export, the total number of cases passed at the different grading stores being 2,269, a decrease of 14,119 cases on the previous year's export. The following shows the quantities and values of honey exported from the Dominion during the last five years ended 31st March :—

						Quantity	Value.
						Cwt.	£
1927	..	..	..	..	..	10,590	34,695
1928	..	..	..	..	..	8,650	27,784
1929	..	..	..	..	..	22,062	82,230
1930	..	..	..	..	..	19,234	75,623
1931	..	..	..	..	..	1,958	7,845

The number of registered apiaries now stands at 6,523, comprising a total of 102,418 colonies of bees. The majority of beekeepers are now fully aware of the regulations relating to registration, and it is considered the number that have not so far registered are very few.

STAFF.

With the increasing demand for information and advice on the many activities coming within the scope of the Division, and the extension made in experimental and other investigational work, I desire to tender my thanks to all officers of the Division for their cordial assistance and co-operation during the year.