

maintain supplies to New Zealand past December up to the end of March, which period would normally be covered by supplies from Jamaica. Although Australia was able to do this, oranges during the latter period came from a short market and the f.o.b. prices for this end-of-the season fruit were increased by as much as 25 per cent., which was necessarily reflected to some extent in the New Zealand wholesale prices.

In view of the shipping difficulties, New Zealand has really been fortunate in the supply of oranges available, and only organized marketing and distribution could have spread the quantities over the difficult period with so little inconvenience to consumers.

The Cook Islands Group, comprising the islands of Rarotonga, Aitutaki, Atiu, Mangaia, and Mauke, supplied 127,000 cases, which was the largest importation from this source for the past ten years. The quality of the Rarotongan oranges was rather disappointing, but it is hoped that the general condition will be greatly improved in the coming season as a result of gassing-rooms being installed at all islands; Rarotongan fruit will in future arrive in this country debudded and unwrapped. Regardless of the recent hurricanes, the Cook Islands crop for the coming season is expected to be on a par with last year's, but early indications from Australia are to the effect that a smaller crop may be expected there, but that New Zealand supplies of Australian oranges will be maintained.

BANANAS.

During the year under review a total of approximately 34,500,000 lb. of bananas was imported from the various island groups, in the following proportions compared with the year ended 31st March, 1940 :—

					Year ended 31st March, 1941.	Year ended 31st March, 1940.
					Per Cent.	Per Cent.
Samoa	..	..	..	..	59·74	58·79
Fiji	..	..	..	..	24·38	17·67
Tonga	..	..	..	..	7·67	9·04
Rarotonga	..	..	..	..	5·26	10·44
Niue	..	..	..	..	2·95	4·06

The effect of the 1939 Fiji hurricane has now passed, and although for a part of the 1940-41 season the production and quality of the bananas were below standard, the position has in the main recovered and Fiji is shipping up to its full quota, quality also being considerably improved. Unfortunately, the hurricanes this year have again affected Fiji very badly as well as Niue and Rarotonga, and the last Fiji shipment of this year was reduced from approximately 9,000 cases to approximately 3,000 cases. Tonga was not in any way affected, and Samoa only slightly so, and the acceptance of the full quantities available from these two production areas will assist in maintaining normal supplies for the coming twelve months.

Shipping schedules for 1940 have been maintained, and this, combined with a normal Fijian production for a portion of the year at least, has resulted in banana imports being increased by 17 per cent. on last year, which was 20 per cent. under the 1939 importations. Bananas were therefore in nearly full supply for most of the year, and during the summer months the demand was fully covered.

GRAPEFRUIT.

As last year, the marketing of New Zealand grapefruit was assisted by regulation of imports. Importations were made from Australia, with one shipment only from Jamaica.

The demand in New Zealand for this fruit is definitely increasing, and it is hoped that local production will improve in marketable quality in order to preserve the market for local producers.

LEMONS.

As with last year, the marketing of New Zealand lemons for the past twelve months was carried out by the Division in conjunction with the importation and marketing of lemons from overseas. Estimates of local production at all times determine our overseas buying, which is done only when home supplies are insufficient. This fact is made apparent when comparing the following quantities and percentages of lemons imported during the 1939-40 and 1940-41 seasons. The periods taken are for eleven months only, as the April figures for 1939 were not available owing to the Division's taking control in May of that year. The quantities are shown in $\frac{3}{4}$ -bushel cases, which is the size of the New Zealand lemon case :—

			Eleven Months ended 31st March, 1941.	Eleven Months ended 31st March, 1940.
Californian	..	..	10,500	17,900
Australian	..	..	7,300	15,800
New Zealand	..	..	66,700	47,500