

RASPBERRIES.

Under regulations introduced last year the marketing of the whole of the raspberry crop intended for manufacture and produced in the Nelson Province will be handled by a Committee consisting of four producers and one Government representative. The function of the Government representative will be to communicate to the Committee the Minister's decisions on matters of policy, and in general to direct the Committee's activities into channels which will ensure their co-ordination with general Government policy and other activities of the Division.

For the purposes of the election of producer-members the Nelson district has been divided into two parts—viz., Tapawera-Tadmor and Motueka-Riwaka. The first election was held in November, 1940, and the following members elected to the respective wards—Northern Ward: Mr. D. I. Llewellyn and Mr. S. I. Llewellyn; Southern Ward: Mr. A. Eden and Mr. C. W. Warnes; with Mr. K. J. Gunn, Internal Marketing Division, as the Government representative.

The next election will be held in June of this year, and nominations for producer-representatives close on the second Wednesday of the month.

The raspberry crop is harvested in January and February, and as this year's crop was the first over which the Committee had control, activities were mainly confined to preliminary work and the formation of a policy for stabilization of the industry in the future.

In the past the price which the producer received for his raspberries has varied according to the demands of manufacturers and the quantities imported, and as a result raspberry-production has fallen considerably over the last twenty years, until the Dominion is now at the position where only half the requirements for jam are locally produced. The control effected through the Committee should result in increased plantings, stability of price, and an assured supply of raw material to the manufacturer by reason of orderly marketing giving confidence to producers. To this end the Committee is co-operating with the manufacturers, and a plan to cover the next few years is being negotiated.

It is proposed that, should there be any possibility of a surplus, plantings will be controlled by the issue of quotas to producers for supply to manufacturers, but no restriction will be placed on the local market or "bucket" trade.

The manufacture of fruit essences in the Dominion has opened up another field for the utilization of raspberries, and with the increasing demand for these and other products it is not expected that production in New Zealand will be able to cope with the demand for some years to come.

POTATOES.

DISPOSAL OF 1940 SURPLUS.

The season last year proved an exceptionally favourable one for the growth of potatoes, which benefited very greatly through the late summer rains that unfortunately were too late to help the cereal crops. The result was that the crop when harvested proved to be of record proportions, the yield per acre being the highest ever recorded—viz., 7.04 tons per acre, whereas the Dominion's average for the past five years has been 5.83 tons per acre. The area planted 20,033 acres—was below the average for the past five years, area and yields over this period being as follows:

				Acres.	Yield.	Total Crop.
					Tons.	Tons.
1936	..	..	..	22,958	5.27	121,000
1937	..	..	..	22,462	5.62	126,000
1938	..	..	..	23,090	6.36	147,000
1939	..	..	..	18,032	4.86	88,000
1940	..	..	..	20,033	7.04	141,000
Average for five years				21,315	5.83	124,600

In addition to the commercially-grown crop for which statistics as above are obtainable, there was also a substantial increase in the quantity of potatoes grown by householders in their kitchen gardens and through local-body schemes, which, with very favourable growing-conditions, were in the early part of the season a substantial factor in reducing the demand for those produced by commercial growers.

Prices to growers during the early part of the season were on the whole fairly satisfactory, and it was not until the digging of the main crop in the South Island commenced in May that the exceptional yield became apparent, and prices then began to sag to an unremunerative level. Every effort was made by this Department to find an outside market. Potatoes were in short supply in Australia and prices thus were at a level at which export from New Zealand would have proved profitable if permission for importations had been obtained, and in May the Director of Internal Marketing during a visit to Australia endeavoured to obtain the removal or modification of the long-standing embargo on New Zealand potatoes.

As a result of his negotiations he was, after considerable difficulty, able to obtain permission for the importation of 5,000 tons—1,000 tons each in July, August, and September, and 2,000 tons in October—under certain conditions laid down by the Commonwealth Authorities, which included the nomination by them of one agent in Sydney to whom the potatoes were to be shipped "on consignment" by the New Zealand Government.