

Towards the end of this financial year the method of purchase from growers was altered to a size basis plus a premium fluctuating with the season. The intention is to encourage regular picking and thus provide a better spread of supplies throughout the year, as well as to give the public a larger proportion of the more popular sizes.

Since the Division assumed control the annual crop payments have been —

1940	..	6s. 11d.	per cured packed bushel.
1941	..	7s. 7-15d.	per cured packed bushel.
1942	..	8s. 1-14d.	per cured packed bushel.
1943	..	8s. 2d.	per loose bushel estimated to equal 12s. 3d. per cured packed bushel.

KUMARAS

The Division has imported and distributed 587 tons, as compared with 313 tons last year, viz. :—

					Year ended 31st March, 1943.	Year ended 31st March, 1942.
					50 lb. bags	
Niue	..	..	..	..	20,961	9,416
Cook Islands	..	..	..	..	5,011	4,626
Fiji	..	..	..	..	324	..
					26,296	14,040

Although every effort is made to avoid importations at the season of peak production in New Zealand, it is the policy of the Division, as far as possible, to accept supplies from Niue as they become available for shipment.

PINEAPPLES

Owing to abnormal local demands in Australia and in other countries normally supplying pineapples, combined with the lack of suitable shipping opportunities, it has not been possible to import sufficient quantities to meet normal requirements.

					Year ended 31st March, 1943.	Year ended 31st March, 1942.
Australia	..	..	..	..	2,528	5,509
Tonga	..	..	..	..	336	2,800
Fiji	..	..	..	..	..	1,258
Samoa	..	..	..	..	..	153
					1,864	9,720

The f.o.b. prices in Australian pines have shown an extremely sharp rise, as the following figures show :—

Year ended 31st March,					Cases shipped.	Average f.o.b. Price.
						s. d.
1941	..	..	..	..	6,942	11 6-26
1942	..	..	..	..	5,509	14 8-71
1943	..	..	..	..	2,528	20 7-83

Present quotations have advances to the vicinity of 33s. per case, with only limited quantities of doubtful export quality available for shipment.

APPLES AND PEARS

The purchase scheme for apples and pears was continued during 1942 on substantially the same terms as the previous season. The purchase-price was designed to return a Dominion overall average of 5s. 3d. at assembly depots. This price was paid on fruit packed for local market according to the established standards. Because of the national need to utilize shipping-space for more important products, the Division was unable to export any of the fruit received, and the whole of it was sold on the domestic market.

Major changes in the conditions surrounding the purchase were the introduction of a system of premiums for fruit of preferred sizes and the amalgamation of the former Extra Fancy and Fancy into one grade. The combination of grades was of benefit not only to the Division and the wholesalers in the lessening of handling costs, but also gave producers a benefit because it reduced their grading costs.