

CROP

The following table gives the production of apples and pears according to provinces for each of the three years the purchase plan has been operating :—

District Production

Year.	Auckland	Poverty Bay.	Hawke's Bay.	Wellington.	Marlborough.	Port Nelson.	Mapua.	Motueka.	Canterbury.	Timaru.	Otago.	Total.
Apples												
1940 ..	278,612	19,455	701,920	31,234	71,935	211,733	420,304	291,903	102,671	7,039	115,593	2,252,399
1941 ..	251,623	22,992	525,691	33,240	78,917	294,877	473,102	353,420	96,961	11,179	158,783	2,300,785
1942 ..	167,110	40,076	770,923	34,473	70,557	183,083	243,601	207,072	91,614	5,688	109,498	1,923,695
Total ..	697,345	82,523	1,998,534	98,947	221,409	689,693	1,137,007	852,395	291,246	23,906	383,874	6,476,879
Pears												
1940 ..	21,398	563	69,221	932	1,448	12,148	12,490	19,531	11,232	1,159	17,497	167,619
1941 ..	49,324	4,403	153,395	3,483	2,202	26,119	29,769	43,747	9,808	1,702	23,732	347,684
1942 ..	17,052	2,708	90,215	816	865	9,446	9,266	16,830	14,016	1,525	20,679	183,418
Total ..	87,774	7,674	312,831	5,231	4,515	47,713	51,525	80,108	35,056	4,386	61,908	698,721

Year.	Crop.	Export.	Sales in New Zealand.
	Cases.	Cases.	Cases.
1940 ..	2,420,018	587,504	1,932,514
1941 ..	2,648,469	4,181	2,644,288
1942 ..	2,107,113	..	2,107,113

QUALITY OF CROPS

On the average, the quality of the fruit received this year was somewhat lower than in 1940 or 1941. Each season brings its own particular problems to fruitgrowers, and constant care must be exercised throughout the growing period to avert as far as possible the many dangers to which fruit crops are always open. Growers, in common with all other members of the community, are suffering the effects of the war in a greatly reduced labour pool, restricted supply of fertilizers, &c., and it is most difficult to give the orchards that amount of care which would normally be regarded as no more than necessary. A lessening in the normal programme of thinning, pruning, spraying, and similar sections of orchard practice must inevitably affect the season's working. Russet in the Nelson Province, combined with a large percentage of small sizes, was responsible for a considerable reduction in the marketable crop, and ripe spot later was the cause of much fruit becoming unsaleable both during the harvesting period and the storage period.

It is apt at this stage to pay tribute to the officers of the Horticulture Division for their efforts and valuable assistance to the Division in the maintenance of quality. The policy of the Division is to market fruit in the best possible condition, and the function of these officers is a most important one towards this end.

The following table shows the grading percentages during the past three years :—

	1940.	1941.	1942.
Apples—			
Extra Fancy	49.9	45.5	..
Fancy	32.6	31.2	74.5
Commercial	17.5	23.3	25.5
Pears—			
Fancy	71.4	74.6	81.8
Commercial	28.6	25.4	18.2

STORAGE

The amount of fruit which the Division can supply during the later months of the year is dependent mostly upon the amount of cool-storage space which can be allocated for fruit storage. The Division has been handicapped in this respect that, after prior claims have been met, the amount of space remaining is insufficient for fruit needs. The shortage of space has the effect of forcing fruit on to the mid-season markets, portion of which could have been held back for a later period, notwithstanding that the majority of mid-season harvestings are of varieties unsuitable for long storage. The usual practice in order to overcome in part this difficulty is to arrange with growers for the orchard holding of portion of their crops for short periods. The quantity thus held during 1942 was 198,000 cases. The summarized position is as follows :—

Total crop	Cases.
Quantity cool stored	2,107,000
	735,000
	1,372,000
Quantity orchard stored	198,000
Quantity available direct to markets up till end of June	1,174,000