

Emergency Regulations, gazetted for Dunedin on 3rd July, 1944, and the zoning of the city for supplies, concluded long efforts to rationalize local distribution. Helped by the subsidy, agreement was made with producers who had hitherto sold direct. In Invercargill, producers allied with a dairy factory to establish their own co-operative floor.

HASTINGS

The Hastings Branch has experienced a tremendously busy year. The total weight of goods unloaded into store amounted to 35,000 tons—equal to 7,000 5-ton railway wagons or a train twenty-six miles long. This has severely taxed the Division's premises and siding which was erected four years' ago, despite the *apple and pear* cool store having space for 90,000 cases and the assembly shed space for 120,000 cases, and despite twelve other local privately owned stores holding 147,000 cases. The total Hawke's Bay cool-store space for 267,000 cases, holds, indeed, only 33.75 per cent. of the annual average crop of 792,000 cases. The balance has to be sent from the district at harvest-time either to Auckland or Wellington for cool storage or for marketing according to the numerous factors which influence the disposal of the Dominion crop. Distribution is also made from Hastings to country towns in the North Island, and from there also are serviced some six hundred schools in the lower half of the North Island during the "apples-in-schools" season. Although, in order to conduct orderly distribution, avoid unnecessary handling charges, and safeguard quality, cool storage at the point of production is of prime importance, only 3,950 cases—0.003 per cent. of the record 1944 crop of 1,090,000 cases—required repacking before dispatch. These buildings have also eased the wartime strain on transport and are still in first-class condition.

During the year, 29,591,757 lb. of fresh *vegetables* have left this building for Pacific service after being trimmed, crated, wired, and cool stored. Introduction of machinery has gradually eased staff shortage, but long hours have been necessary. In addition, there passed through the store for overseas 4,000 crates (equalling 150 tons) of *cheese*, 26,000 boxes (or 650 tons) of *butter*, and 1,100 cases of *lemons*, also 40,000 bags of potatoes (2,000 tons) and 14,000 bags of onions (700 tons). Apples and four vegetables were dehydrated in the Division's factory. *Eggs* were directed upon occasions to more needy districts from the local egg floor, which received 432,819 dozen, a 47.8 per cent. increase.

The Branch represents the Economic Information Service in Hawke's Bay and has answered numerous inquiries on its behalf.

NELSON

The decentralization of the Division's accounting system from Head Office in Wellington has resulted in a considerable expansion of the Nelson Branch. The Branch now handles all its own receipts and payments, and those of the dehydration factory at Motueka.

Initial operations at the *apple-dehydration* factory were hindered by necessary experimenting and by additions to the plant, but gradually swung into full stride as technical difficulties were overcome. A girls' hostel was erected for the Division nearby, and the Y.W.C.A. accepted responsibility for its administration, obtaining the help and assistance of a group of local ladies who act as the controlling committee and sponsor activities and functions which provide additional comforts and interests for the boarders.