

transactions involving the Ministry, Consolidated Importers (N.Z.), Ltd., Steel Distributors, Ltd., and the many agents has decreased greatly. Where they are still acting, their functions are in the main confined to the disposal of remaining stocks, and this should be completed in the cases of most commodities by the end of the present year. In retrospect, the arrangements whereunder commercial interests co-operated with the Government in carrying out the distribution of goods through the emergency stand out as having been very successful.

Sufficient will have been said for it to be clear that the end of hostilities did not mark the end of the Ministry of Supply's operations. However, with the great decrease in Government orders, its purchasing, its shipping, its storage, and its accounting problems are also decreasing. Unfortunately, so many of the Ministry's staff were obtained and held under man-power controls that when these were relaxed a large number resigned, even though in many instances it would have been helpful if they could have been retained. Staff changes and difficulties in obtaining replacements are adding substantially to the administrative problem of liquidating the Ministry.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE FOOD AND RATIONING CONTROLLER FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH, 1946

RATIONING

The year 1945-46, the fourth year of food and clothing rationing, was marked by the end of hostilities in Europe and Asia and saw the growth of the now all-important problem of world food-supplies. The effects of the food crisis were reflected during the year in the increasing importance of rationing as a means of increasing our basic food exports. Other factors of note affecting rationing administration during the year were shipping difficulties and the cessation of lend-lease and of delivery of food-supplies to the American Pacific Forces. There were no additions to the list of rationed commodities.

Details of movements for the various commodities follow :—

Sugar.—Early in 1945, in addition to the low world stocks of sugar, a shortage developed in shipping for the transport of raw sugar, so that by the middle of March no shipping was in sight for some months and stocks of sugar were insufficient to carry through this period. Accordingly, the consumer ration, which, with little variation since the beginning of 1942, stood at 12 oz. per week, was reduced on 19th March, 1945, to 10 oz. per week, with complementary reductions in the usage of sugar by restaurants and manufacturers. Shipping difficulties were overcome later in the year so that it was possible to reinstate the sugar ration to 12 oz. per week on 1st October, 1945. At the same time household allowances for jam-manufacture were resumed, and during the twelve months a total amount of 9 lb. per head was released for this purpose.

Tea.—There has been no change during the year in the tea position. A small increase in our tea quota for the year 1946-47 has been granted and an increase in the tea ration for old people seventy years of age and over has been arranged. The ration scale throughout the year was 2 oz. per week for all persons ten years of age and over.

Butter.—Butter is rationed in New Zealand purely to provide greater exports to Britain and so assist in maintaining the British fats ration. The New Zealand butter ration was reduced to 6 oz. per week on 11th June, 1945, and corresponding reductions were made in manufacturing and restaurant allowances. The effect of the cut was mitigated by exempting people over the age of seventy years, expectant mothers and nursing mothers, workers living in isolation or under camp conditions, and workers requiring to take two cut lunches to their work each day.

The problem of dairy butter was again in evidence during the year and a substantial quantity was successfully diverted for use in manufacturing industries and for conversion into dried butterfat, thus releasing factory butter for export.