

Two years of butter rationing were completed in October, 1945, and the end of the third year is approaching with no immediate prospect of any relief. The world-wide food crisis is expected to reach its peak late in 1946 with the onset of the next European winter.

*Cream.*—During the year illegal sales of cream grew alarmingly. In April, 1946, cream was declared a rationed commodity and a general tightening-up is now proceeding.

*Meat.*—In April, 1945, meat rationing entered into its second year of operation, and during this year a number of reforms were introduced on the basis of experience during the first twelve months.

As with butter, the rationing of meat is maintained solely to provide more meat for Britain. For this reason, also, the meat ration was reduced from 1s. 9d. worth per week to 1s. 6d. worth from 11th June, 1945. Corresponding reductions were effected in meat usage for manufacturing purposes.

*Pork.*—Restrictions on the sale of pork were imposed on 3rd May, 1943. With the cessation of hostilities and the withdrawal of the American troops it was possible for the restrictions on the sale of pork to be lifted on 17th December, 1945. Since then, pork has been a rationed commodity and has not been subject to prohibition on sales.

*Bacon and Ham.*—These items are still subject to control on the basis of quotas. During the year, subsidy amounting to £223,643 was paid to bacon-curers under War Cabinet approval.

*Abattoirs.*—The "Weighing of Meat" Notice was gazetted in June, 1945, and from that date it became compulsory for all meat killed at abattoirs to be weighed and branded. This regulation effectively controlled all meat being released from abattoirs for local consumption.

*Meat Subsidy.*—The payment of a meat subsidy to approximately 1,450 butchers throughout the Dominion was undertaken during the year, under the authority of War Cabinet. War Cabinet approved the payment of subsidy at the rate of 1s. 7d. per £1 worth of coupons, related back to weight, as from 1st November, 1944, to the end of October, 1945. To provide for the increased meat schedule and increased costs, the subsidy rate was increased to 2s. 4d. from 1st November, 1945. The total payments made to butchers for the period ending 31st March, 1946, amounted to approximately £644,000.

*Rehabilitation Assistance.*—Special concessions in the way of allowances of sugar to returned servicemen commencing businesses on their own account were suspended in March, 1945, but were resumed in October with the reversion of the sugar ration to 12 oz. per week. The Office works in close co-operation with the Rehabilitation Department in making these special allocations, and during the year over 750 ex-servicemen were granted supplies of rationed goods. Another type of assistance given is the making of special allowances to manufacturers to enable them to supply increased quantities of ice-cream, soft drinks, and confectionery to returned servicemen. Although the necessity for working within our quota of sugar does not permit unlimited rehabilitation assistance to be given, returned servicemen are given absolute preference in the allocation of supplies and licenses.

*Clothing.*—The fourth year of clothing rationing showed no improvement in supplies on previous years and the restrictions had to be continued. There was no change in coupon values and the regular coupon issue of fifty-two coupons per annum was maintained. A minor amendment brought in during the year was the provision of canvas coats and working-boots free of coupons to farmers and farm workers.

Hosiery-supplies have, until recently, shown no improvement, and the nominal issue during the year was one pair of fully-fashioned stockings each six months to all women sixteen years of age and over. In November, 1945, the failure of importations and reduced local production of hosiery made necessary the extension of availability of the then current hosiery coupon for a further six months. Some improvement is now evident with supplies coming forward more freely from overseas, and it should not be long before the present hosiery-rationing system can be discontinued.