

throughout the season. The shortage of space to all North Island ports, and to Auckland particularly, has been very acute, and constant attention has been necessary, with frequent rearrangements of shipping schedules, to ensure that sufficient supplies have come forward to meet requirements.

With yields per acre running below the average, the crops in North Canterbury were inclined to be poor, due mainly to the dry weather experienced during the late summer months. However, in South Canterbury the yields were very good and fully compensated for the reduced quantity available in North Canterbury. When the digging of the South Canterbury crops commenced in May it seemed possible that there would be a substantial surplus beyond normal consumption at the end of the season, such surplus being then estimated to be about 15,000 tons. Having this possibility in view, every possible effort was made to stimulate consumption, and an extensive advertising campaign was initiated in an endeavour to induce consumers to use more potatoes, thus not only helping to reduce the prospective surplus, but also to save some consumption of bread and flour products, which were in critical supply the world over. Continual efforts were made to keep the potatoes moving from the South to North Island ports to ensure that no consumption was lost through potatoes not being available. Largely as a result of the advertising undertaken, the North Island has this year absorbed more potatoes than has been the case in any comparable peacetime year, and shipments up to the 30th September were 486,445 sacks.

Later estimates of the quantity still available seem to indicate that there will now be little or no surplus remaining at the end of November.

Whilst this report was in the course of preparation a shortage did occur in December through the following reasons :—

- (1) Adverse weather conditions in July prevented the sowing of the early crop.
- (2) Continued bad weather after planting retarded the growth of the crop.

For the forthcoming season it has been decided by agreement between growers (on their representations through the Potato Advisory Committee), the New Zealand Grain, Seed, and Produce Merchants' Federation, and the Government that the contract system, which has been in existence during the past four years, should be continued to cover the main crop for the coming season, March to November deliveries, and arrangements for these contracts are now in hand. Estimated area (including early potatoes) required is a total of 22,000 acres, but it is anticipated that some little difficulty may be experienced in obtaining the full acreage.

ONIONS

During the early months of the period there appeared to be a fairly substantial surplus of onions in Manawatu and North Canterbury districts, and extensive advertising throughout both North and South Islands was undertaken to stimulate consumption of onions and to get them in the hands of consumers while they were at their lowest prices for the season. This effort, which was continued during April and May, had the effect of greatly increasing regular trading in onions over that period, with the result that the estimated surplus had disappeared by the end of May, and since that period the market has been regularly supplied with onions coming forward from growers in the normal manner. The quantity now available is considered to be just sufficient for requirements until the new season's onions become available in December.

As in the case of potatoes, arrangements have been made under which the contract system for onions will be continued to cover the coming season's crop for an estimated area of 1,000 acres.

BARLEY

Owing to supplies of barley being diverted from Australia to Europe, where much higher prices are obtained than in New Zealand, there has been no improvement in the supply position. For the coming season it is reported that the Australian barley crop is a good one, but prospective prices are even higher than was the case last year, and importation by New Zealand seems very unlikely.