

of wet weather, and this affected the keeping-quality of those varieties which are normally placed into cool storage for sale during the later months of the year. No major losses of fruit have been experienced as a direct result, but it has been necessary for the Division to market fruit earlier than had been intended in order that doubtful fruit could be disposed of before maturity became advanced.

The large crop, together with the inferior quality, necessitated constant pressure on the markets, but the Division anticipates making fresh fruit available well into the month of November.

EXPORT

Protracted negotiations between the Council and the British Ministry of Food resulted in space at first being allocated for the export of 500,000 cases of apples to the United Kingdom and 100,000 cases to Canada. Unfortunately, this offer was withdrawn temporarily, and although at a later stage space was again offered to the extent of 250,000 cases for the United Kingdom, this offer came too late to effect export of Cox Orange or Jonathan. The export of these two varieties would have relieved local market conditions early in the season. Although harvesting had commenced, the Council seized the opportunity for export, and arrangements were made for the provision and packing of suitable varieties and sizes of Fancy Grade. There were some difficulties in regard to the supply of packing-materials, but following urgent requests to growers to conserve materials for export fruit and to exchange surplus materials with other growers enabled the fruit to be packed up mostly in accord with the requirements of the Ministry of Food. The fruit was supplied by the Council to the New Zealand Government and sold by the Government to the Ministry of Food.

Reports received indicate that the fruit arrived in reasonably good condition and was disposed of immediately.

Shipping was effected from Nelson, Napier, Auckland, and Wellington, and a total of 281,961 cases were exported. No fruit has been exported from the Dominion since 1940, when almost 600,000 cases were forwarded to the United Kingdom. In the meantime the local market has been developed, and distribution has been expanded to the extent that, whereas the pre-war capacity of the domestic market was in the region of 1,250,000 cases, it is not too much to claim that the market could now absorb under pressure double the quantity. While export is a valuable outlet, it may never again be necessary to export the large quantities which were disposed of overseas in pre-war years.

MARKETING

With an increased crop, a greater quantity of fruit has naturally been available for the domestic market than has been the case for the last few years. During the years 1943, 1944, and 1945 the requirements of Armed Forces both in New Zealand and overseas reduced the quantity which was available for domestic marketing, and in those years the markets did not receive more than 1,800,000 cases, whereas this season the domestic market will have been provided with at least 2,200,000 cases.

Most of this fruit has been sold through the ordinary channels of wholesaler and retailer, but definite action was taken during the year to effect sales direct to retail organizations. Certain conditions under which this trade could be undertaken were laid down, and the strict observance of these by the Division made it difficult to extend the trade as much as had been hoped. A pleasing result of the introduction of this trade was, however, a stimulation of sales generally.

Advantage was taken of the abundance of fruit available on the various markets in the earlier months of the year to make fresh determination of allocations to the Division's various agents in the districts. The period in each district during which fruit was in greatest supply was selected as being the measure, and allocations were determined accordingly. Since 1943, when allocations were last determined, there have been some marked changes in the quantities sold by individual agents.