

Events over the past six months give no reason for amendment to this statement in so far as the marketing of fresh vegetables within New Zealand is concerned, for in this period the Division has taken no part in vegetable marketing, confining its activities to the rounding-off of its wartime responsibilities and the exploration of possible avenues for the disposal of processed vegetables at home and abroad.

The Sale of Fruit and Vegetable Containers Emergency Regulations, introduced in January, 1945, and administered by this Division, were revoked in April, 1946. These regulations were instituted because of the necessity to preserve certain containers for further needs. Extensive use of banana-cases is made by vegetable-growers, and whilst the supply of imported fruits was greatly curtailed in wartime it was highly necessary to safeguard the imported cases for the vegetable-growing industry, hence the regulations, which imposed on the grower the obligation of making specific charges on certain types of containers at time of sale, together with restrictions on their alternative uses. As imports became more plentiful and adequate quantities of containers became available in consequence, the regulations were revoked.

During the winter there has been no shortage of basic vegetables, the general tendency being towards over-supply. Gluts of cabbage have recently occurred, but gluts and shortages with their attendant price fluctuations will always recur under the present method of unplanned production and distribution. It would appear that the growers realize the need for consideration to be given to this unsatisfactory state of affairs from the action that was taken at their last annual conference in appointing a select committee whose order of reference requires their report on "whether a change in the present methods of marketing vegetable produce is necessary or desirable."

Inquiries from the British Commonwealth Occupation Forces and the British Pacific Fleet have been made of this Division in regard to the supply of fresh vegetables from New Zealand. Unfortunately, the complete absence of suitable refrigerated shipping has prevented advantage being taken of this otherwise excellent opportunity for export.

Although occasional inquiries are received concerning *dehydrated* vegetables, they prove to be somewhat nebulous, lacking the degree of positiveness sufficient to warrant the resumption of operations. Eastern countries are reported to have acquired large supplies of dehydrated goods from surplus war stocks held overseas, and by the time these are exhausted, production of fresh vegetables will probably have been regained in the countries affected. Vegetable dehydration can be considered only as a temporary expedient for providing foodstuffs under unusual conditions, and therefore cannot be regarded as a potential place-winner in a normal peacetime vegetable production and marketing structure.

Vegetable *canning*, however, holds most promising prospects. The Division at present has arranged contracts for the growing of 350 acres of peas and 75 acres of beans adjacent to its Pukekohe factory, where the crops will be canned. The quality of the Division's former pack of canned peas and beans has engendered a ready demand within New Zealand for the forthcoming season's production.

In pursuance of overseas trade in canned goods in future years, negotiations are also proceeding in Australia, India, Ceylon, and China. Firm orders are held from Cingalese importers which it is proposed to fulfil next year, subject to the availability of shipping.