

Quick-freezing of vegetables and other products will also be undertaken at Pukekohe, this activity being correlated to the preparatory phases of the canning process. In various overseas countries, quick-freeze is now a firmly established process and an accepted method of providing choice products out of season for the greater enjoyment and convenience of food-conscious populations. Next year the possibilities surrounding the consumption of quick-frozen goods within New Zealand will be assessed with a view to determining the extent to which this mode of food-processing should be carried in future years. Accepting as a criterion its popularity overseas, "quick-freeze" should within a few years become established as a regular, if limited, method of food-supply in this country.

IMPORTED FRUITS SECTION

BANANAS

As indicated in the last report, island growers of bananas have continued to show increased interest in bringing their banana plantations back into production. The position has now been reached where production and the availability of shipping-space are about equal, and until an additional steamer is allotted to this service there will be little opportunity of banana importations being lifted above the present level. At times overseas steamers make calls at Island ports, and on these occasions advantage is taken to occupy any suitable cargo space with bananas then available for shipment. These irregular calls provide the only opportunities to land additional supplies of this fruit in New Zealand.

Source of Supply.	Six Months ended 30th September, 1945.		Six Months ended 30th September, 1946.	
	Cases.	Per- centage.	Cases.	Per- centage.
Fiji	30,893	28.9	35,927	26.2
Tonga	11,165	10.5	39,383	28.8
Samoa	59,904	56.0	53,630	39.1
Niue	3,941	3.7	8,105	5.9
Rarotonga ..	1,008	0.9	6	..
	106,911	..	137,051	..

ORANGES

In the six months under review, importations from both Australia and the Cook Islands are lower than during the same period in the previous year. Although Australia experienced a short crop of Navel oranges this season, the main cause of the decreased quantity arriving from this source of supply was the landing of 18,000 cases early in October, while last year this shipment was included in the September figures.

Shipments from the Cook Islands reached a very low level. This was mainly due to an outbreak of infectious disease in the islands causing the usual carrying vessel to miss one orange trip to the outer islands and hurricane damage spoiling the crops. There are indications that, providing climatic conditions are suitable, crops in Australia and the Cook Islands will be much improved, thus making larger quantities available for consumption in this country in the coming season.