

## GENERAL

This Section of the Division has continued to experience difficulties in the matter of distribution on account of the inability to import sufficient fruit to meet the demand. In general, all fruit arriving in the country has been allocated firstly proportionately to all territories in both North and South Islands, and secondly to retailers and consumers in each individual area, the basis of distribution being the consumption of each district in the last period of plentiful supplies.

Island fruits continue to arrive at Auckland, and consequently transport to the South Island still presents its problems. South Island consumers are, however, serviced to the utmost as far as quantities of fruit are concerned, but unfortunately, due to delays, the condition often deteriorates somewhat in transit. Retail prices of oranges and bananas are the same in both Islands, and consumers in the far South are not penalized in this respect.

Although importations are still affected by the recent war, it is evident that production is now returning closer to normal, and it is anticipated that increased shipping opportunities will allow larger quantities of overseas fruits (particularly oranges) to reach New Zealand in the coming year.

## BRANCHES

## AUCKLAND

During the period under review the Auckland Branch continued to carry out the various activities administered by the Division. The seaweed collected for manufacturing *agar agar* amounted to 41 tons. This amount compares favourably with that collected during the same period last year. The *butter depot* has continued patting and tinning butter, the latter for the Export Division. The *dry-butterfat* plant handled 15 tons of fat received from parchment. *Egg* distribution was supervised, the local receipts for the period showing a decrease of approximately 17 per cent. on the corresponding period last year. The 124,000 dozen eggs chilled last year were withdrawn in two batches from cool store, the first in April and the second in June. These eggs met with ready sale, whilst the overall loss from cool store wastage was only 2 per cent. The *honey* blending and processing plant continued to operate, although at a greatly reduced capacity, owing to the small amount of honey received at the depot. The *lemon* curing plants are also operated from Auckland, and during the period under review 33.5 tons of peel and 2,683 gallons of lemon-juice were manufactured. At Pukekohe Vegetable Processing Plant, preparations are under way for the coming canning season, when peas and beans will be processed. The *storage* floor was kept working to full capacity even when the apple-assembly work declined.

## CHRISTCHURCH

This Branch continued to supervise the contract system of *potato* and *onion* growing in the South Island, and a considerable amount of information has been compiled in a complete system of records. Grain-conditioning was carried out in the processing factory's dehydration tunnels with excellent results, whilst experiments were carried out in connection with the drying of surplus produce for conversion into stock-food. The *storage* floor was utilized for storing artificial manures and various varieties of grain and seed. *Apple* assembly, which was again carried out, was the lowest on record as far as the local growers were concerned. The distribution of *imported* fruits for the whole of the South Island was again continued by this Branch. The supervision of all *egg* floors and the auditing of egg pools in the South Island were again carried out.

## HASTINGS

The main activity of this Branch is the assembling, cool storing, and distribution of *apples* and *pears* (733,014 cases of apples and 74,417 cases of pears to 30th September). The only *vegetables* handled by this Branch were carrots from uncompleted contracts.