

It is natural that with a short crop the direct grower-to-customer trade will grow. In a season of short supply, when the consumer is unable to obtain his requirements from the retailer, he is influenced towards obtaining supplies direct from an orchard. The more this direct trade from the orchard extends the less fruit is available through the Division to the retailer. This year there has been a pronounced increase in the grower-to-consumer trade. The actual quantities involved are not known, but an indication may be obtained by taking the crop as estimated by the Department of Agriculture at the beginning of the season and deducting the quantity received by the Division. The result is approximately half a million cases. It is assumed that a considerable portion of this quantity has been absorbed in the direct-to-consumer trade, the balance going to factories or retailers. Details of the yearly receipts from growers are shown in Table 1.

DISTRIBUTION

The Division has continued its policy of equitable distribution over town and country areas as well as spreading the fruit to ensure that supplies are available for as long as possible. It is anticipated that stocks on hand, together with further receipts to come from growers, will be sufficient to keep fruit on the market until approximately the middle of November.

The allocation to districts, to brokers, and to retailers this year was continued on the basis of the measure period of 1946. Direct selling to hospitals, Armed Forces, railway refreshment-rooms, and schools has been continued, the total quantity sold through these avenues being 91,000 to 30th September, 1947, compared with 121,000 for the year 1946.

In addition, a system was introduced last season of selling direct to retailers, a total of 80,500 cases being disposed of in this way. During the present season the Division continued these direct sales to those retailers who were serviced in 1946, and sales so far total 59,500 cases.

The delivery of apples to schools was limited by the small crop, and only 31,000 cases were disposed of in this way, compared with 43,000 in both 1945 and 1946 and 102,000 in 1944.

A detailed summary of the quantities distributed through the various avenues is shown in Table 2.

STORAGE

There was ample cool-storage space available during the year, and if the fruit had been available over one million cases could have been held, but the maximum quantity stored amounted to 847,000 cases. In the main, the quality of the fruit was fairly high, although some flesh collapse was evident in the Sturmer variety, resulting in earlier marketing than was originally intended. Pears in particular were of a very high keeping-quality. Repacking losses and credits for apples and pears amount to only 0.1 per cent. of the total crop.

EXPORT

Although it was expected that the 1947 crop would be a small one, it was decided to endeavour to ship 500,000 cases to Britain. When crop estimates indicated that the yield would be below expectations the quantity for export was reduced to 250,000. In spite of repeated representations to the British Ministry of Food, no refrigerated shipping space could be made available, preference being given to meat and dairy produce. Inquiries had been received from other overseas markets, notably Canada, Brazil, Sweden, and Singapore, but no apples were exported to these countries.