

Agar Agar Seaweed.—The Branch has now undertaken the organization of the collection of agar seaweed through the territory from Hicks Bay to South of Castlepoint on the east coast of the North Island. Representatives of the Branch have made periodic visits along the coast and have successfully interested a number of people in undertaking the collection of the weed. The amount of weed received by the Branch was 36 tons 14 cwt.

Dry Storage.—Increased use has been made of the assembly stores during the off-season for the storage of mixed produce, the quantity handled being 640 tons.

Economic Information Service.—The Branch acts as the district agent of the Economic Information Service, and in this connection is a clearing-house for all inquiries emanating from *Consumer Time* broadcasts over the local broadcasting-station at Napier.

GISBORNE

Apples and Pears.—During the period under review one of the main activities of this Branch was that of supervising the *assembly, cool storing, and distribution* of pip-fruits. This area was the only one which showed an increase in these fruits, the receipts being 24,686 cases of apples and 3,514 cases of pears.

Lemons.—The operations of the lemon-packing shed at Gisborne were operated under the supervision of the Branch, the receipts being 3,080 cases, a substantial increase on the number of cases received during the same period last year.

In addition to the above, the Branch deals with problems and inquiries with regard to *honey, agar agar, eggs, and maize.*

NELSON

Apples and Pears.—For the first time on record the Nelson Branch found it necessary to close the assembly depots against the receipt of these fruits from the growers for one week, owing to the shortage of shipping and the lack of adequate storage space. The receipts of apples and pears, including Blenheim, up to the 30th September, 1947, totalled 960,458 cases. On account of climatic conditions during the growing season the quality of the fruit available for *cool storage* was not up to the usual standard.

Eggs.—The receipts of eggs at the local egg floor were 96,000 dozen, a decrease of nearly 20 per cent. as against the same period the previous year.

DUNEDIN

Apples and Pears.—The receipts of apples and pears from the Otago area during the period under review were amongst the lowest on record. A series of severe frosts did extensive damage to the orchards, and only 11,191 cases of apples and 5,748 cases of pears were received, as against 119,525 cases of apples and 20,162 cases of pears for the previous year.

Eggs.—A marked increase in the receipts through the local egg floors has been noted by this Branch, the receipts for the period under review being 1,294,585 dozen, as against 1,251,674 dozen for the same period last year, an increase of 42,884 dozen.

The supervision of *imported fruits* distribution, and the handling of produce manures were also continued.