

(x) *Offences*

A general improvement in the manner in which all classes of traders in rationed goods have complied with their obligations has been evident. In consequence of this there has been a considerable decrease in the number of prosecutions taken as compared with previous years. Ninety-seven prosecutions for alleged rationing offences were instituted in the year. Eight cases briefed were not proceeded with following the recommendation of the police after their further inquiries had been completed. Three cases were dismissed by the Courts. Numerous minor discrepancies and irregularities were reported by the Inspectors and District Rationing Officers and were dealt with by warning letters; but, generally speaking, traders have co-operated faithfully and well in operating the rationing schemes. Several allegations of "black marketing," mostly in regard to meat, were made during the year. Investigations proved in most cases that the allegations were based on suspicion, and no actual evidence was offered. It is conceded, however, that there is some "black marketing," particularly in cream, but evidence to justify Court proceedings is not always obtainable.

(b) *FOOD-CONTROL*(i) *Supply Position*

With the exception of dried vine fruits—viz., sultanas, raisins, and currants—the supply position of imported foodstuffs showed a considerable improvement on the past year over previous years, and with several commodities it was possible to revert to the normal practice of granting import licences to the usual importers.

*Dried Vine Fruits (Raisins, Sultanas, &c.).*—The New Zealand allocation of dried vine fruits from Australia was the lowest for the last ten years and it was necessary to supplement supplies with importations from the United States of America. Although the total quantity for which import licences were issued was sufficient to cover reasonable requirements, there was an acute shortage of these fruits during the latter part of 1947, caused solely through shipping difficulties. Although every endeavour to ease the position was made by the authorities concerned, it was not until December that reasonable shipments were received from Australia.

*Dried Apricots and Peaches.*—During the last few years only limited quantities have been available, and to ensure that essential requirements reached hospitals all imports were made as a Government purchase. During 1947, when dried apricots and peaches were released from control by the International Emergency Food Committee, Washington, it was possible to procure and import, through the usual trade channels, reasonable supplies from Australia, South Africa, and the United States of America.

*Canned Fruit.*—The position with canned fruit has been similar to that relating to dried apricots and peaches. Until 1947 only limited quantities were allocated to New Zealand, and it was necessary for the Government to import the total quantity and control the distribution. However, during 1947 over 100,000 cases were allocated to New Zealand from Australian supplies, and its importation and distribution was arranged through the usual trade channels.

*Rice.*—New Zealand's allocation of rice was again approved for supply to Asiatics, ships' stores, and hospitals only. The total quantity was imported by this office, but distribution was made through the New Zealand Wholesale Merchants' Federation.

*Sago and Tapioca.*—For the first time for many years supplies of these commodities were available in 1947 for export from Singapore, and imports to this country were made by the traders who usually handle these lines.

The prices were considerably higher than those ruling in pre-war years, for whereas the pre-war figure was around £18 a ton, in 1947 it approximated £100 a ton.