

Branch offices of the Division operate in Auckland, Christchurch, and Dunedin. It is evident that the service which these offices are rendering is welcomed by the traders and the public in the districts concerned, although the degree of decentralization which can be achieved is limited by the necessity for the maintenance of uniformity in the Dominion's price structure.

(d) PRICE TRENDS

During the year a close watch was kept on price trends, both overseas and within the Dominion. While the prices of New Zealand manufactures remained relatively stable, the cost of some imported commodities continued to rise fairly steeply. The movement in certain lines was sufficiently marked to warrant reductions in approved mark-ups to retain reasonable balance in the over-all price structure.

(e) PRICE ORDERS

During the year 193 Price Orders were issued by the Tribunal. These Orders, which included amendments to existing Orders, were distributed as follows :—

Commodity Group.						Number of Price Orders.
Foodstuffs	..	..	..	..	..	162
Metal and wood products .. .	..	..	..	..	..	4
Apparel .. .	..	..	..	..	..	2
Services .. .	..	..	..	..	..	1
Other Goods .. .	..	..	..	..	..	24

(f) ENFORCEMENT

The activities of enforcement officers during the year covered a wide field in both town and country. Although the great majority of traders is prepared to co-operate with the authorities, it was found necessary to institute proceedings in a number of cases, particulars of which were as follows :—

Number of cases heard during year .. .	..	..	..	..	320
Number of traders affected .. .	..	..	..	..	193
Number of convictions secured .. .	..	..	..	..	315
Amount of fines imposed during year .. .	..	..	..	..	£1,352 10s.
Cumulative total of convictions secured from inception to 31st March, 1948 .. .	..	..	..	..	2,243
Cumulative total of fines imposed from inception to 31st March, 1948 .. .	..	..	..	..	£12,097 5s.

(g) RELATIONS WITH TRADE ORGANIZATIONS AND OTHER GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS

The success of price-control in New Zealand has been due largely to the helpful co-operation which has almost invariably been forthcoming from organizations of manufacturers and traders. This co-operation was continued during the year, and frequent discussions took place on matters affecting the administration of control measures.

Constant liaison was also maintained with the Economic Stabilization Commission, Standards Institute, and other Government Departments.