

and traders, issued appropriate new Price Orders or approvals either to have effect as exchange-free imports passed into production or distribution, or to have effect from a specified date which allowed reasonable time in which to clear stocks that had borne the exchange loading.

(e) DE-CONTROL OF CERTAIN FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

In November, 1948, fruits and vegetables were released from price control with the exception of potatoes, apples, pears, New Zealand lemons other than Meyer lemons, imported citrus fruits, bananas, New Zealand walnuts, and all imported nuts. The immediate consequence was that prices of the de-controlled items rose considerably, but they later receded to levels which were in all centres above the ceiling prices at retail formerly applied by the Division.

(f) PRICE ORDERS

During the year 128 Price Orders were issued by the Tribunal. Of these Orders (which included amendments to existing Orders), no less than 111 related to foodstuffs and allied products.

(g) ENFORCEMENT

The duties of Enforcement Officers and Price Inspectors include the investigation of alleged breaches of price-control measures. In the past year such investigations numbered almost two thousand, the result being on the one hand that in some cases Court proceedings followed, but on the other that inquiries showed either that no breach had been committed or that no breach could be proved.

Particulars of proceedings taken in the Courts during the year are as under :—

Number of prosecutions instituted during the year	..	..	432
Number of traders affected	..	..	331
*Number of convictions	..	..	563
Amount of fines imposed	..	..	£1,878 15s.

*An individual prosecution often involves more than one charge.

During the year 1 prosecution was taken under section 23 of the Act, which covers profiteering. A conviction with a fine of £50 and an order to refund a sum of £100 was obtained.

In the period from early 1940 to 31st March, 1949, 2,806 convictions have been made and fines to a total of £13,976 imposed.

Apart from their function of investigating breaches, Price Control Inspectors assist traders and others in interpreting or applying Price Orders or approvals. There can be no doubt that the activities of the inspecting staff in the various centres has a salutary influence in obtaining compliance with price-control requirements.

SECTION 2—FOOD AND RATIONING CONTROL

(a) RATIONING

(i) Sugar

Rationing of sugar to individual consumers was lifted as from 30th August, 1948, and manufacturers enjoyed similar treatment as from 29th November, 1948. Until these respective dates the ration scale to individuals was maintained at 12 oz. per head per week, with supplementary allowances from time to time for jam-making, and to