

tinue the requisition in New Zealand as on the 28th March, 1918. Efforts were made to have the purchase continued to the 30th June, 1918, but without avail, and the requisition of hides ceased on the 28th March, 1918.

As negotiations proceeded conferences of parties interested were held, at which the position was fully explained, and after full consideration it was decided at the last meeting so held that in view of the Imperial Government's decision it was inadvisable for the New Zealand Government to continue to exercise any control over the marketing and sale of hides locally. A *Gazette* notice was accordingly prepared, and has since been issued, removing the restriction on the export of hides gazetted on the 12th March, 1917, and a fresh Order in Council has been gazetted granting permission to export under specified conditions, with the consent of the Minister of Customs.

RABBITS.

Negotiations have at various times been conducted with the Imperial authorities with a view to obtaining their consent to the purchase of the output of frozen rabbits available for shipment from southern ports, and a number of conferences were held between rabbit-exporters and representatives of the Government with a view to arriving at terms satisfactory to the Imperial authorities in this connection.

Finality was reached in February, 1918, when the Imperial authorities agreed to accept all rabbits for shipment in the space available of the undermentioned grades :—

- Grade A—Prime rabbits, $2\frac{1}{2}$ lb. each and upwards, 24 in crate.
- Grade B—First-quality rabbits, $2\frac{1}{2}$ lb. each and upwards, 24 in crate.
- Grade C—Second-quality rabbits, $2\frac{1}{2}$ lb. each and upwards, 24 in crate.
- Grade D—Young rabbits, 2 lb. to $2\frac{1}{2}$ lb. each and upwards, 30 in crate.
- Grade E—Small rabbits, $1\frac{1}{2}$ lb. to 2 lb. each, 40 in crate.

Net weight per crate to be not less than 62 lb.

The price fixed was 19s. per crate delivered f.o.b. ocean steamer, all storage and insurance charges being borne by the seller.

It was also stipulated by the Imperial Government that shipment of rabbits was not to be made in the space usually set aside for the shipment of beef, mutton, and lamb requisitioned, but that all rabbits should be shipped in the balance of the 5-per-cent. space usually allotted for the shipment of sundries from freezing companies on private account.

To the 31st March, 1918, 4,133 crates had been shipped, with an f.o.b. value of £3,926.

Several contracts have also been completed by the Director of Contracts, Admiralty, with individual exporters of canned rabbits during the year, and the accounts in connection with these contracts have been kept by the Department of Imperial Government Supplies.

Under the arrangements made 16,031 cases have been shipped to the 31st March, 1918, valued at £37,955, including freight, and a further contract for the supply of 20,000 cases is at present in course of completion.

The quantity of frozen rabbits remaining in store on 31st March, 1918, and awaiting shipping facilities is 105,637 crates.

WORK UNDERTAKEN FOR THE NEW ZEALAND GOVERNMENT.

In addition to the arrangements made in connection with the purchase and shipment of the various commodities requisitioned by the Imperial Government, the Department has also undertaken the supervision of certain matters on behalf of the New Zealand Government.

BUTTER-FAT LEVY.

On the 13th October, 1916, an Order in Council was gazetted with the object of fixing the maximum price at which butter should be sold for local consumption.