

1½d. per case on all fruit exported under the guarantee, the fund thus created to be utilized to offset claims arising from market and transportation losses. In the event of the fund not being sufficient to meet such claims, the Government undertook to bear the balance of any expense that might be involved.

The loading and stowage of the fruit on the overseas vessels was generally careful, and there was a noticeable improvement in comparison with that obtaining in previous seasons. Notwithstanding this, a general supervision was essential. The bulk of the fruit reached its destination in good condition, and the prices realized, taking the season as a whole, were considered satisfactory, there being no recourse of any extent on the guarantee.

An interesting feature of the 1934 season's export was the record quantity exported from the Nelson Province, the total reaching 1,008,538 cases (968,611 cases apples and 39,927 cases pears). To commemorate this event, the millionth case was forwarded to London addressed to Lord Rutherford, of Nelson.

Exports of apples and pears from the Dominion during the last five years are as follows: 1930, 1,330,891 cases; 1931, 1,349,895 cases; 1932, 1,596,058 cases; 1933, 1,430,513 cases; 1934, 1,574,912 cases.

Owing to a light crop and other causes, it is expected that the quantity of fruit exported during the 1935 season, which is now in full swing, will only be slightly in excess of 1,000,000 cases. The first of this season's shipments left New Zealand per s.s. "Akaroa" on 4th February, and consisted of 6,000 cases apples and 39 cases pears.

LOCAL MARKETS FOR FRUIT AND VEGETABLES.

A systematic inspection of locally-grown fruit and vegetables offered for sale in the shops and auction-rooms has been carried out in the main centres. While the markets have been well supplied with fruit, there has been a considerable falling-off of vegetables such as cabbage, cauliflower, &c., due to the ravages of the white butterfly, diamond-back moth, and other insects, and any good-quality lines offering have brought high prices.

The bulk of the fruit and vegetables placed on the local markets has been of good quality—clean and free from disease—and the grading and packing well maintained. However, a number of lines, consisting mainly of apples and pears, which have come under notice were of poor quality, lack of colour and wilt being the chief faults. The marketing of this class of fruit can have the effect only of lowering the prices of the higher grades.

In order to relieve the glut in stone-fruit in the Otago Central District, advantage was taken of the use of a privately owned cool store at Alexandra for the purpose of storing the surplus crop. This arrangement was more in the nature of an experiment, and, while the comparatively small quantity cool-stored did not relieve the situation to any great extent, later in the season prices obtained for fruit stored were quite satisfactory. Central Otago growers are now considering the question of establishing an up-to-date fruit cool store in a central position in their district.

IMPORTED FRUIT, PLANTS, ETC.

The inspection of all imported fruits, plants, bulbs, &c., has been carried out carefully at the different ports of entry in the Dominion. Reports to hand indicate an increase in the quantity of fruit and plants imported as compared with the previous year. The bulk of consignments arrived in good order and condition, and it was found necessary to condemn only one small line on account of fruit-fly infection. Several lots of walnut meat were condemned on account of being infected with the larvæ of the Indian meal moth, and were dealt with in the usual manner. Oranges from the Cook Islands varied in condition, some consignments opening up in a wastey condition requiring a considerable amount of repacking.

At the request of the Cook Islands Department a visit was paid by an officer of the Division to the different Islands of the Cook Group for the purpose of investigating the cause of wastage in oranges exported from these Islands. A report covering this investigation has been duly supplied to that Department.

The fumigation of a fair quantity of grass-seed from New South Wales was attended to.

FRUIT COLD STORAGE.

The successful cold storing of fruit is a very important factor in connection with the fruitgrowing industry, and a considerable amount of attention has been given with the view of effecting further improvements in the cold-storage methods adopted both on land and on overseas vessels.

Experimental work commenced some three seasons ago in co-operation with the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research has been continued during the year, the general aim of the investigations being to determine the effect of a number of factors on the keeping-qualities of fruit during overseas refrigerated transport and local cold storage.

Information of a valuable nature has been obtained in respect to the variations occurring in the keeping-quality of apples grown in different localities and on various classes of soils. Interesting results have also been secured relative to maturity at time of picking, use of oiled wraps, cold storage of passion-fruit, and different varieties of peaches and plums, &c. The trials with a few new features are to be continued during the coming year.

Advice has again been given in the case of a number of local cool stores which have been operating along unsatisfactory lines as far as the storage of fruit is concerned. The remedial measures advocated have been much appreciated.