

so distributed that the consumers as a whole have paid no more in total for the increased quantity. This has been brought about as a result of the reduction in the price paid by the consumer through economies effected in handling and distribution.

So far as the country districts are concerned, they have never previously been so well served in regard either to quantities or prices. Previously fruit sent to such districts was heavily loaded with transport and other costs, but to-day the country distributor sells at port-of-entry prices, plus a charge for freight only.

The scheme of controlled distribution for Samoan bananas through a New Zealand agent expired on the 31st March of this year, from which date the Division assumed the responsibility of marketing not only Samoan bananas, but also those from the Cook Islands, Fiji, Tonga, and Niue. With the inauguration of this scheme, arrangements for the purchase of bananas were made with the various island territories, and the whole method of handling fruit was reorganized simultaneously for the purpose of bringing about an improvement in the system of importation and distribution. Definite improvements have been effected as a result of the arrangements made, which, in turn, have already led to a greater supply at more reasonable prices.

The selling of the above imported fruits has been effected through a panel of distributors in all the main centres and subsidiary towns of the Dominion, and all recognized fruit auctioneers have been included in the panel. In this way the channels of distribution previously in existence have been utilized in such a manner that both country and urban consumers have been catered for on the most economic basis possible.

MAIZE.

As a result of representations made by maize-growers in the Poverty Bay and Bay of Plenty districts, the Division has interested itself in the marketing of maize. When the representations were made, the abundant supplies of imported maize on the market made conditions difficult for the disposal of the local crop, but with the aid of the Division a satisfactory arrangement was arrived at between grower and merchant on the basis of 5s. 3d. per bushel f.o.b. Gisborne.

The Government guaranteed to the growers to find a market for their maize in the event of the merchants being unwilling to operate. This arrangement gave the market the necessary confidence, and with the full co-operation of the merchants and growers sales commenced immediately. This scheme having proved so successful, growers again approached the Government for a continuance in the next season, and a similar arrangement was made on the basis of new season's values. The Division will also exercise control over the imports of maize in order to maintain this market confidence in the New Zealand crop.

The immediate difficulty having been overcome, the Division is now considering the practicability of a scheme which would give growers the protection required from unrestricted importations and at the same time enable New Zealand consumers to purchase supplies at reasonable rates.

BOBBY CALVES.

A very important adjunct to dairy-farming is the rearing and sale of bobby calves, and here, again, lack of system and haphazard methods of marketing have left the bobby-calf trade in a chaotic state. In some areas voluntary pools had been formed which were attended with some success, but mainly due to lack of authority these attempts at co-operative marketing were to a certain extent frustrated and undermined by competitive interests.

Very much thought and investigation has been given to the method which could best be employed to assist the marketing of bobby calves, and conferences have taken place with the representative bodies concerned. A referendum of the whole dairy industry of New Zealand returned an inconclusive opinion as to the advisability of the procedure being handled by the New Zealand Dairy Board; and, following further discussions and conferences, it was decided that in any area in New Zealand where a sufficient majority of farmers is desirous of marketing bobby calves through their own appointed committees protection will be given to the committee in that area against outside interference with their collecting and marketing arrangements. The majority required is one of 80 per cent., and satisfactory evidence of such majority and of the suitability of the committee appointed is required before the necessary protection can be given. Regulations to this effect have been brought down under the Primary Products Marketing Act, and Agriculture (Emergency Powers) Act.

Assistance has been rendered by departmental officers in forming pools and defining areas, and already indications are that the protection afforded under these regulations is much appreciated by the producers of bobby calves.

Under the regulations complete marketing and financial arrangements have been left in the hands of the pool committees, who act as agents for the producers in their areas, and no fixed method of disposal has been adopted. In some cases sales were made at the farm gate on a "per calf" basis, some on live weight, and others direct to freezing-works. The Division is at present making a complete investigation into the operations of all pools formed under the regulations, and is considering the advisability of a standardized balance-sheet for pool operations, in a similar manner to that adopted by all dairy companies.