

To spread the restricted supply in the fairest possible manner, the Division has held fruit into the "off" months as far as its keeping-quality will permit, has sold at one price for the whole year and for the entire Dominion, and has divided the supply among each district in proportion to its past requirements. Merchants are also required by the Division to apportion the fruit on a similar basis among the retailers they serve.

All citrus fruits are in future to be sold by weight, not number, and all come under Price Order. This rectifies the previous anomaly when New-Zealand-grown citrus, except standard lemons, were not under price control. This simplifies buying for the consumer and has met with general approval.

#### ORANGES

During the year the equivalent of 189,300 export cases were imported, an increase of 18,300 over 1942-43.

The increase was due to a larger number of Australian Valencia oranges being imported. Unfortunately, the Cook Islands had a further series of hurricanes, with the result that there were only 44,000 cases available in spite of better shipping facilities. The condition of the island fruit was good on landing in New Zealand. The percentages of supply were as follows:—

Source of Supply.					Year ended 31st March, 1944.	Year ended 31st March, 1943.
					Per Cent.	Per Cent.
Australia	..	..	..	..	76·86	70·95
Cook Islands	..	..	..	..	23·14	29·05

#### BANANAS

This year 17,432,280 lb. were imported, against 22,036,500 lb. for the previous year, a decrease of 4,604,220 lb. or 21 per cent. The percentages of supply were as follow:—

Source of Supply.					Year ended 31st March, 1944.	Year ended 31st March, 1943.
					Per Cent.	Per Cent.
Samoa	..	..	..	..	27·59	35·96
Fiji	..	..	..	..	39·43	34·85
Tonga	..	..	..	..	28·75	20·00
Rarotonga	..	..	..	..	·12	4·41
Niue	..	..	..	..	4·11	4·78

The decrease in importation was mainly due to Samoan growers having been employed on war work, resulting in neglect of their plantations, and to the hurricane in Rarotonga, making only 234 cases of bananas available, compared with 10,800 cases supplied the previous year. Indications point to larger supplies next season, as Samoa has undertaken a big replanting scheme.

#### GRAPEFRUIT

As the Australian authorities had requisitioned all the grapefruit crop for war purposes, and Jamaican and Californian fruits were unobtainable, the New Zealand public has been confined to New-Zealand-grown fruit. Only 366 cases of grapefruit were imported from the Cook Islands, compared with 963 cases the previous season.

#### LEMONS

The Division again controlled the curing and marketing of New Zealand lemons and the importation of Australian lemons. The New Zealand crop of 113,157 loose bushels was only 9,000 cases short of the record season, 1941-42, when 122,000 cases were handled. Hence it was not necessary to import to the same extent as in previous years, and indications are that next year will show a further reduction in importations.

The new method of paying an increased price for lemons picked in the off-season had had some success in spreading the crop, because March was the month of highest intake. Nevertheless, there is still a shortage during the out of season months—February-April.