

Normally this country looks to Jamaica to augment orange supplies during the gap between the Australian and Cook Island seasons, approximately December to March. However, for the past few years, Jamaican fruit, due to lack of shipping space and the requirements of the British Ministry of Food, has not been procurable except for one shipment in December, 1944. The forward position in regard to Jamaica is uncertain, but every effort is being made to resume normal trading relations at the earliest opportunity.

Oranges were purchased in past years from the United States of America when necessary, but here again the lack of suitable shipping opportunities cut off supplies from this source. Fiji and Piteairn can supply New Zealand only spasmodically, but supplies are gladly accepted when available.

BANANAS

As disclosed in the figures quoted below, 118,591 cases (10,673,190 lb.) of bananas were imported this year, against 193,692 cases (17,432,280 lb.) last year and 410,160 cases (36,914,400 lb.) in 1939.

	Year ended 31st March,							
	1939.		1940.		1941.		1942.	
	Cases.	Per Cent.	Cases.	Per Cent.	Cases.	Per Cent.	Cases.	Per Cent.
Fiji ..	134,092	32·69	59,580	17·67	93,116	24·38	50,125	18·92
Tonga ..	14,476	3·53	30,501	9·04	29,300	7·67	71,626	27·03
Samoa ..	211,071	51·46	198,295	58·79	228,269	59·74	135,796	51·25
Niue ..	13,030	3·18	13,703	4·06	11,278	2·95
Rarotonga	37,491	9·14	35,206	10·44	20,114	5·26	7,427	2·8
	410,160	..	337,285	..	382,077	..	264,974	..

	Year ended 31st March,							
	1943.		1944.		1945.			
	Cases.	Per Cent.	Cases.	Per Cent.	Cases.	Per Cent.		
Fiji	85,304	34·85	76,380	39·43	32,965	27·80
Tonga	48,989	20·00	55,689	28·75	31,332	26·42
Samoa	88,052	35·96	53,436	27·59	48,242	40·68
Niue	11,699	4·78	7,953	4·11	3,086	2·60
Rarotonga	10,806	4·41	234	0·12	2,966	2·50
			244,850	..	193,692	..	118,591	..

Banana importations during recent years have shown a marked decline, but in late months a considerable improvement has been effected. This improvement is expected to continue, and during the coming year the vessels now catering for the island fruit trade will be more than fully taxed in coping with the increased production. This will mean the reimposition of quotas upon the quantities to be accepted from the various islands. In the period of short supplies when each island was shipping every available banana there was also a decline in quality, but now that production has improved, inspection at the points of shipment has been made more rigorous, resulting in present shipments arriving in much better condition.