

Under the new agreement a Fruit Marketing Council was established to market the fruit on behalf of the growers. In addition to market returns, the Government granted a subsidy, and guaranteed that the overall average payment to growers would not fall below 6s. per bushel case.

During the war years the abundant supply of apples on the New Zealand markets resulted in market returns at a level lower than was necessary to keep orchards in full production. Consequently, to conserve the national asset of apple orchards, market returns had to be supplemented by Government subsidy. The introduction of economic stabilization fixed the level of market prices and necessitated the continuance of such a subsidy.

Under the new agreement it was arranged that the annual subsidy would be fixed at £169,000, of which £144,000 would be available to supplement market returns and £25,000 available to assist uneconomic orchards on to an economic basis, or be used for such other general benefit to the industry as may be agreed upon by the Minister in consultation with the Council.

Until such time as the industry had an opportunity to select by postal ballot its representatives to the Council, an interim Council was appointed by the Minister after consultation with the industry.

The election for grower representatives took place in October and the new Council assembled in November, the personnel being as follows:—

Government representatives:—

Internal Marketing Division: Messrs. R. P. Fraser (Chairman) and W. Benzie.
Department of Agriculture: Mr. W. K. Dallas.

Grower representatives—

Messrs. A. B. Congdon (Auckland), A. C. Ward (Hawke's Bay), L. B. Robinson (Nelson), H. R. Sampson (Canterbury), and J. Hainsworth (Otago).

Consumer representatives—

Hon. R. Eddy (Member of the Legislative Council) and Mr. F. B. Stephens, M.A.

The Internal Marketing Division administers and operates the policy of the Council.

In addition to the Council, district committees were established to ensure the smooth working of the system. Such committees were established at Auckland, Hastings, Gisborne, Nelson, Christchurch, and Central Otago and consisted of the local grower member of the Council, one representative from the Internal Marketing Division, one representative from the Department of Agriculture, and three or four representatives from growers within the district. The operations and functions of local committees were controlled by the general policy of the Council.

The functions of the Fruit Marketing Council were to fix prices to be paid to growers for fruit supplied or services rendered, and to control and direct efficient marketing of apples and pears within the structure of economic stabilization and within the general policy of the Government.

CROP

The crop of apples in 1944 was greater than in any year since the outbreak of war. Both Hawke's Bay and Poverty Bay had record crops. Hawke's Bay also had a record crop of pears. Quality was high, but the wet season in some of the main districts resulted in a softening in texture which slightly impaired storage quality.

Notwithstanding the abundant crop, the Council decided that the greatest possible quantity should be made available to the public. Towards this end, the Council extended the range of official size packs to include apples and pears smaller than those usually put on the market, and, in addition, a third, or Minimum, grade was introduced.