

The latest import figures available are for the eight months ended 31st August, 1931, and the following table is submitted showing a comparison with the same period of 1930 :—

	Bulk.		Cases.		Drums.	
	Imperial Gallons.	Percent- age of Total.	Imperial Gallons.	Percent- age of Total.	Imperial Gallons.	Percent- age of Total.
Eight months ended 31st August, 1930	35,953,878	80·31	6,063,215	13·54	2,754,141	6·15
Eight months ended 31st August, 1931	35,689,891	85·32	3,136,403	7·5	3,004,007	7·18
Increase .. .. .	..	..	..	..	249,866	..
Decrease	263,987	..	2,926,812	..	..	..
Total imports, eight months ending—						
31st August, 1930 .. .. .	..	..	..	..	44,771,234	
31st August, 1931 .. .. .	..	..	..	..	41,830,301	
Decrease .. .. .	..	..	..	..	2,940,933	

F.O.B. PURCHASE PRICE.

As the original invoices of three of the major companies were available in the New Zealand head offices, these were produced for the inspection of the Department. In each case supplies were obtained from an associated company in the country of production. Comparisons have been made between published prices which appear in the *National Petroleum News*, issued at Cleveland, Ohio, U.S.A., and the prices invoiced to the New Zealand companies by the allied selling organizations overseas for bulk shipments during the past two years. The invoice-prices to the New Zealand companies are in excess of those appearing in the publication as the market prices at the dates of invoices.

The prices at which the supplies to one company are invoiced are fixed at the beginning of each quarter by the associated supplying company overseas.

In making these comparisons the Department has selected the Gulf Coast bulk market prices as a basis, and quotes as an authority for selecting this export market the statement made by the Anglo-American, Anglo-Persian, and Shell Mex Oil Companies in their statement on oil-prices submitted to the House of Commons in March, 1929. This report (on page 4) states,—

“The Gulf of Mexico may therefore be said to constitute the ‘centre of gravity’ of the world’s petroleum trade, and in consequence the prices ruling there represent the basis of world values for petroleum products.”

Quoting from an independent source of information, it is stated,—

“The published Gulf export prices are generally accepted as a reliable indication of the market value of bulk gasoline in cargo lots for both export and domestic consumption. Bulk prices quoted on the Pacific Coast are said to be based upon Gulf export prices; if for export, the Coast’s geographical position may allow a slight margin over Gulf prices for shipments to the Orient, but this may be offset by the position and ownership of tankers; if for the eastern States of U.S.A., the Coast’s prices must compete with those of the Gulf.”

The *National Petroleum News* makes the following reference to “Pacific Coast export market” prices :—

“Pacific export market prices for gasoline and kerosene in cargo lots apply only on goods for coastwise shipment. Gasoline and kerosene prices for shipment to foreign ports are determined as follows: Difference in freight between U.S. Gulf to European Continent and California to European Continent—this difference plus 0·125c. for handling, deducted from prices posted at U.S. Gulf by the Export Petroleum Association, Incorporated, will determine prices seaboard Los Angeles.”

In regard to the reliability of prices appearing in the *National Petroleum News*, the Department is informed that these quotations are obtained from Platts Oilgram, which is considered the recognized authority for petroleum product prices. The Petroleum Section of the Minerals Division of the United States Department of Commerce in Washington has expressed the opinion that “the *National Petroleum News* is one of the most outstanding and reliable trade journals,” and that “the gasoline and kerosene prices which it publishes are as reasonably accurate as may be obtained.”

QUALITY OF MOTOR-SPIRIT SHIPPED TO NEW ZEALAND.

It has been stated that the quality of the motor-spirit used in New Zealand is of a grade higher than that generally used in the United States of America. There appears to be considerable difference of opinion as to the extent to which this statement is correct. Some importers contend that motor-spirit exported to New Zealand is a more refined (and consequently a more expensive) product than