

MARKET CONDITION OF LOCAL FRUIT AND VEGETABLES.

THE Fruit Inspectors of the Orchards and Gardens Division report as follows on the condition of locally grown fruit and vegetables in the shops and auction-rooms, and the market position of these, for the month of January:—

AUCKLAND.—Large quantities of locally grown fruit are coming forward, for which there is a very fair demand, but few consignments are free from disease. Black-spot appears to be very bad, nearly every case opened being more or less affected. Codlin-moth is also very plentiful. Growers of the affected fruit have been notified that further consignments of infected fruit will be condemned or destroyed. The grading and packing is decidedly a great improvement on last month, but there is still a good opening for growers who will pack only the best fruit, and advertise their methods by labelling their cases. Such growers would eventually get top prices for their fruit, as retailers will not pay good prices for indifferently packed fruit such as has been coming forward. The following list gives a fair idea of the ruling prices for the month: Apples (cooking), per bushel, 3s. 6d. to 5s.; apples (dessert), per bushel, 4s. to 6s. 6d.; pears, per bushel, 4s. 6d. to 7s.; Japanese plums, quarter-case, 1s. to 2s. 6d.; English plums, 2s. 6d. to 4s.; apricots, quarter-case, 4s. to 4s. 6d.; peaches, quarter-case, 2s. 6d. to 5s.; lemons, first quality, case, 12s. 6d. to 16s.; lemons, second quality, case, 8s. to 10s.—*C. Craigie.*

WELLINGTON.—The markets during the month of January were very heavily supplied with practically every line of seasonable fruit and vegetables. Very heavy supplies of stone-fruits came forward. Peaches are coming forward in large quantities almost daily. Formerly they were arriving in very bad order, due to careless packing, but lately they are arriving in tip-top condition. The principal supplies are from Hastings and Motueka. Prices were very low during the beginning of month, realizing 1s. 6d. per half-case, but at present are selling according to quality at from 4s. to 4s. 9d., prime 3s. to 3s. 9d., inferior 1s. 6d. to 2s. 9d., per half-case. Apricots are plentiful and cheap, some consignments arriving bruised and with leaves, stem, and spurs left on the fruit, showing careless picking. The lots arriving in good order and well packed realized good prices, 4s. 9d. to 5s. 6d., others 1s. 9d. to 3s. 6d., per half-case. Cooking-apples (large green) are in good demand at 5s. to 6s. 6d., others quit at 2s. 6d. to 4s., per bushel case. Several lines of apples which were affected with codlin-moth were destroyed. Nectarines are in good demand, choice lots selling at 4s. 6d. to 5s. 9d. half-case, others 2s. 9d. to 4s. Pears are not in very good demand. It was necessary to destroy several lines on account of their being badly affected with pear-scab, codlin-moth, and scale. Prices for dessert, 2s. 6d. to 3s. 6d. per half-case. Greengages are firm at 4s. 6d. to 6s. 6d. half-case. Plums are plentiful, and the demand lately is keen: Choice Burbanks, 2s. to 3s.; others, 1s. 4d. to 1s. 9d.; Blue Diamonds, 2s. 9d. to 3s. 3d.; Early Rivers, 3s. to 4s., per case. The market is well supplied with tomatoes, and the prices have eased slightly, being 4s. to 4s. 6d. per half-case; overripe lots quitted at 3s. to 5s. per case. Grapes are in good demand; some consignments opened up in poor order, due to the long delay in transit from North Auckland. These brought 7d. to 11d. per pound. Local hothouse-grown realized from 1s. to 1s. 5d. per pound. Black currants continue in excellent demand at 6s. 6d. to 8s. 6d. per half-case. The season is almost over. Gooseberries are almost done, and prime ripe offer 6s. to 8s. per half-case. All vegetables are in good demand, and prices vary according to the supply. Vegetable marrows, 5s. to 8s. per sack; cauliflowers, 5s. to 7s. 6d. per sack, choice 7s. 6d. to 9s.; carrots, per sack, 6s. to 8s.; white turnips, 5s. to 6s. 6d. per sack; swedes, 5s. to 6s. per sack; parsnips, 6s. to 7s. per sack; beetroot, 5s. to 6s. 6d. per sack; lettuce, 1s. 6d. to 2s. 9d. per sack; French beans, 2d. to 3d. per pound; broad beans, 2s. 6d. to 3s. 6d. per part sack. Green peas average 8s. to 12s. per sack; potatoes, 7s. 6d. to 10s. 6d. per cwt.; onions, £8 per ton; cabbages, 7s. to 9s. per sack.—*T. C. Webb, jun.*