

MARKET CONDITION OF LOCAL FRUIT AND VEGETABLES.

THE Fruit Inspectors¹ 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 February:—

AUCKLAND.—Throughout the month of February large quantities of locally grown fruit were handled daily, and compared with previous months the quality is very fair. Apples and pears are of a better size now that early varieties are over, and methods of grading and packing have been considerably improved. Black-spot is still very much in evidence, but, generally speaking, diseased fruit has been reduced to a minimum. It was found necessary to issue only five warning notices in respect of diseased fruit sent to the auction-rooms. This compares favourably with the forty-six notices issued during the previous month. There was a good demand throughout the month for all classes of seasonable fruit, and prices were as follows: Apples, choice dessert 5s. to 6s. per case, medium-quality dessert 4s. to 5s. per case; pears, choice dessert 5s. to 7s. 6d. per case, medium quality 3s. to 5s. per case; peaches, choice 3s. to 5s. per 20 lb. case, medium 2s. to 2s. 6d. per 20 lb. case; nectarines, 4s. to 6s. 6d. per 20 lb. case; apricots, 4s. 6d. to 7s. per 20 lb. case; plums (English), 3s. to 5s. per 20 lb. case; tomatoes, choice 2s. 6d. to 3s. 6d. per half-case, second class 1s. 6d. to 2s. per half-case; choice forced grapes, 1s. to 1s. 6d. per lb.; second-class grapes, 5d. to 9d. per lb.; outdoor grapes, 5s. to 7s. 6d. per 20 lb. case; quinces, 4s. to 4s. 6d. per bushel.—*C. Craigie.*

WELLINGTON.—Supplies of fruit and vegetables have been very heavy during this month. There is a vast change and improvement in the grading, packing, and labelling of cases, and buyers have already noticed the improvement. The prices ruling during the month were as follows: Apples, dessert 5s. to 7s. per bushel case, cooking 3s. 6d. to 4s. 6d. per bushel case; pears, choice 7s. to 8s. per bushel case, ordinary 5s. to 6s. 6d. per bushel case; quinces, 2s. 6d. to 3s. 6d. per bushel case; peaches, choice 3s. to 4s. 6d. per bushel case, ordinary 2s. to 3s. per bushel case; nectarines, 3s. to 3s. 6d. per bushel case; plums are in short supply, and are realizing 2s. 6d. to 4s. per case; blackberries, 2½d. per lb.; cape gooseberries, 5d. to 5½d. per lb.; grapes (Lower Hutt), 6d. to 8d. per lb.; Nelson grapes, 5d. to 7d.; tomatoes are coming in freely, and the prices have eased slightly, Hutt lots selling at 2s. 9d. to 3s. 9d. per half-case, and Nelson 2s. 6d. to 3s.; cucumbers (hothouse), 1s. 6d. to 2s. per dozen; mushrooms sold at 10s. per bushel case; cabbages, choice, good demand at 4s. to 5s., others 2s. to 3s. 6d. per sack; vegetable marrows, 1s. 6d. to 3s. 6d. per sack; pumpkins, 4s. to 5s. per sack; cauliflowers, choice 7s. 6d. to 9s., ordinary 3s. to 6s. per sack; turnips (white), 2s. to 3s. per sack; swedes, 2s. 6d. to 3s. 6d. per cwt.; green peas, 8d. per peck; carrots, 2s. 6d. to 5s. per sack; French beans, 1s. 6d. to 3s. per half-sack; parsnips, 3s. 6d. to 5s. per sack; lettuce, 1s. 6d. per case; rhubarb, 3s. 6d. to 5s. per dozen; onions, £7 to £9 per ton; potatoes, £8 to £11 per ton.—*T. C. Webb, jun.*

CHRISTCHURCH.—Apples were in good supply, dessert varieties bringing from 4s. 6d. to 5s. 6d., and cooking 3s. to 4s. 6d. per case. Australian grapes, 4½d. to 5d. per lb.; New Zealand grapes, 7d. to 9d. per lb.; lemons (Italian), 22s. 6d. per case; nectarines, 2½d. per lb.; peaches, 2½d. per lb.; pears, 1d. to 1½d. per lb.; plums, 1½d. to 1¾d. per lb.; greengages, 2d. to 3d. per lb.; mushrooms, 6½d. to 7d. per lb.; tomatoes, 2½d. to 4d. per lb. Ordinary vegetables were in fair supply.

DUNEDIN.—The markets were fairly well supplied with both fruit and vegetables. Large quantities of peaches came forward, the main supplies being from Hastings. At the beginning of the month a few lines of apricots and nectarines came to hand, but the supply of this fruit is now over. Apples and pears are plentiful and in good con-