

scarcity of all lines of table poultry in New Zealand to-day than has been the case for many years, and the consumer must be paying record prices. Good dressed hens are being retailed at 10s., cockerels 12s. to 14s., and ducks 10s. to 12s. per pair, while choice turkey gobblers are in short supply at 1s. 10d. per pound. These prices are sufficient to indicate that the somewhat despised table branch of the industry is well worth catering for. As it is to be anticipated that the demand will continue to grow towards the Christmas season, poultry-keepers will be well advised to turn their attention to this section of the business, especially as they need not fear competition from outside sources as is the case with eggs. There is also considerably less poultry in cool storage this year than there has been in the past.

To cater for the high-class trade the poulterer requires something more than birds in merely store condition. Great improvement is needed in the manner in which the majority of table birds reach the market. The production of eggs is, and rightly should be, the chief aim of the poultryman, but unless he pays proper attention to the marketing of his surplus stock he cannot expect to obtain prices that will pay him for raising them. On the majority of plants the cockerels make good development prior to separation of the sexes, but it is too often the case that after the drafting takes place they get a severe set-back by reason of the poor feeding to which they are subjected. If any profit is to be made out of the cockerels they must receive the same care and attention as the pullets, though, of course, they require less range and different kind of food from the latter. Many of the poulterers are prepared to buy by the pound, provided they are supplied with proper-conditioned birds. Therefore it should not be forgotten that every ounce of flesh put on increases the profit made by the producer. It is gratifying to note that the custom of buying table birds by weight is becoming established and has been fairly general in Wellington for some years.

Table cockerels should be marketed when about four and a half months old. If allowed to go beyond this stage they commence to produce their second feathers and will lose weight instead of gaining it. It is generally the case that more money will be realized for a bird at four to four and a half months old than will be obtained for it at any time later on. It should be remembered that one fatted bird is worth more than two unfatted, and it costs more to produce a frame than to put flesh upon it. Readers should carefully study the results of the feeding-test with table poultry recently conducted by the Department and published in the July issue of the *Journal*.