

## LEMONS.

After repeated requests from representatives of the majority of the lemon-growers in the main producing-areas, the Government decided that the Division should assume control of the marketing of all New-Zealand-grown lemons for commercial sale, and as from 1st May, 1939, the Lemon Marketing Regulations came into effect.

Lemon-packing sheds at Tauranga, Auckland, and Kerikeri were taken over, and sheds established at Gisborne and Hastings. The processing of by-products (peel and juice) is also conducted at Tauranga and Kerikeri. During the year, 44,266 cases of marketable-grade fruit were handled and 17,291 cases of peel and juice fruit.

The average pay-out to growers for the period 1st May to 31st December, 1939, was 5s. 1-76d. for sufficient fruit, which when cured, packed a  $\frac{3}{4}$  bushel case, this payment including an additional 3d. per case covering overrun. As from 1st January, 1940, it was agreed to pay a differential price based on the estimated proportion of the crop available at different times of the year, and these prices are estimated to average 5s. 3d. for sufficient fruit which, when cured, will pack a  $\frac{3}{4}$  bushel case.

It was considered advisable to pay a differential price in order to encourage growers to pick their lemons in periods of short supply and endeavour to so arrange their growing in order that a portion of their crop may be marketed in this period and avoid periods of oversupply as much as possible.

Lemons are forwarded by growers to the various packing-sheds, usually in cases containing approximately one loose bushel of unsized fresh fruit, and upon receipt graded into bushel-measure cases in accordance with the various standards set by the Department of Agriculture and the Lemon Marketing Regulations. Any diseased fruit is rejected, and fruit which, because of its size or appearance, is unsuitable for commercial sale is used in the manufacture of by-products.

Close contact is maintained with the Department of Agriculture Orchard Instructors in order that growers whose fruit is degraded or rejected may receive advice for the improvement of the quality of the fruit by correct orchard culture.

The work in connection with the preparation of lemons for market is much greater than that involved in the packing of any other fruit in New Zealand, and covers grading, colouring, shrinking, washing, sizing, and packing.

A Harvey processing-machine imported from Australia has recently been installed at Tauranga, and it is hoped that this machine will substantially reduce shed costs and so warrant the purchase of similar units for our new Auckland shed. At a field-day the working of this machine was demonstrated to growers in the Tauranga district.

The regulations regarding grading provide for two grades, Fancy and Commercial, with an additional third grade, Minimum, which is accepted at the option of the Division during periods of short supply. In the past much inferior-grade fruit was marketed, but grading regulations are now rigidly enforced, with resulting benefit to the consuming public.

The marketing of New Zealand lemons is carried on in conjunction with the marketing of imported fruit by the Head Office of the Division at Wellington, and the Auckland Branch carries on the general management of the various packing-sheds and the marketing of by-products.

Lack of cohesion between the various packers in the past has been eliminated, and central management has resulted in the grading being uniform throughout the industry. Continual experiments and investigations regarding mould trouble are being made by the Department of Agriculture.

Invaluable assistance has been given by the Citrus Advisory Council representative of the industry to both growers and this Division.

Lemon-growers in certain areas have been faced with serious difficulties owing to hail and frost damage, and a grant was made to assist them.

The fact that this Division is marketing New-Zealand-grown lemons and is also the sole importer of lemons from overseas now results in the fruit being imported only when home supplies are insufficient. Estimates of local production will at all times determine our overseas buying.

## BARLEY.

The quantity of barley imported for the season amounted to 115,825 sacks (359,057 bushels) unclipped and 28,440 sacks (91,008 bushels) clipped. The whole of this was imported into the North Island and was used both for poultry-feeding and manufacture of pigmeal.

After the outbreak of war it became apparent that it was urgently necessary to increase the pig-production in New Zealand owing to the requirements of baconers and porkers for the United Kingdom, and the Division entered into further contracts with Australia for a large quantity of barley totalling 150,000 sacks for delivery during the first half of the current year in order to meet the anticipated increased demand.

The Division was also influenced in making this large purchase by the fact that it was available in Australia at a very low figure and could be consequently sold to consumers to their advantage.

The anticipated demand has proved fully up to expectations, and regular shipments have been coming forward to North Island ports and have been going into consumption immediately.

Not only have the pig-producers benefited very substantially thereby, but poultry-farmers also have been enabled to obtain feed barley of good quality at an unusually reasonable figure.

We are now experiencing a strong inquiry for feed barley from the South Island, where supplies of cheap feed for pig-raising appear to be almost exhausted, and conferences have been held with the Department of Agriculture with a view to admitting certain quantities of feed barley for pig-raising purposes to South Island ports, and it is probable that such arrangements will be completed shortly.