

eggs to any particular pool is protected to the extent that not only does he receive a price return relevant to the ruling wholesale price, but, in addition, indirectly receives the benefit of any surpluses created in the pool accounts. The 3d. per dozen subsidy was withheld for one week, and the £4,400 thus procured was set aside to extend the poultry veterinary and instructional service.

These arrangements, including payments from pool funds, are made with the approval and co-operation of the New Zealand Poultry Board, and the industry in general is taking a very live interest in its own administration and affairs. The Poultry Board's annual conference of registered poultry-keepers, held at Christchurch in February, unanimously favoured retaining and improving the Division's organization of marketing facilities, and, in co-operation with the Division, investigating post-war problems. The Division has been most grateful for assistance given by the New Zealand Poultry Board, by various Government agencies, and by those producers whose active individual co-operation has made possible the year's improvements in rationing.

IMPORTED FRUITS

Although during the war years opportunities for the importation of overseas fruits have been limited, the importance of this section of the Division has not in any way diminished. In many aspects its responsibilities in distribution and marketing, due to the small shipments arriving in New Zealand, have increased. The Division has endeavoured to allocate the available supplies of imported fruits proportionately to all consumers in the Dominion, and at the same time to ensure that supplies of oranges are at all times available to hospitals, necessitous cases, and to the Plunket Society. In the main, an even distribution to consumers has been achieved by instructing wholesale distributors, selling on behalf of the Division, to ration their deliveries on the basis of the quantities purchased by retailers when normal importations were coming to hand. To assist present retailers who were finding it difficult to procure sufficient stocks to maintain trade, it was decided that wholesalers would not accept new accounts unless the applicant was a returned serviceman or was opening a business in an area where consumers had been deprived of a retail service.

During the year a visit was paid by the Right Hon. the Prime Minister to Fiji, Tonga, Samoa, Niue, and the Cook Islands. The Acting-Director of the Division accompanied him and took the opportunity to make as close a study as was possible in so brief a visit of the future prospects for fruit for New Zealand. For the past few years Natives in the islands have found other sources of income much more attractive than growing fruit. This has been brought about by high wages for war work, easy money for such odd jobs as laundry-work for Allied servicemen, and the ready sale at high prices of Native handicrafts. While this money was so easily obtainable, growers allowed their plantations to deteriorate. Now that the war is rapidly receding from these producing areas, interest in fruitgrowing is being revived to the extent that in the not too distant future banana-production at least will in general return to pre-war figures. Cook Island orange-growers, however, have, in addition, had to contend with a succession of hurricanes which, combined with the dying-out of old trees, have materially reduced the quantity of oranges available for shipment to New Zealand. Replanting schemes have been designed to offset these losses, and therefore importations of oranges from the Cook Islands in the future should resume normal proportions.

However, a limiting factor in the volume of fruit that can arrive in New Zealand is shipping space. Unless ample provision is made in this respect, island growers will be loath to grow fruit which there is little prospect of marketing.

The difficulty that has confronted the Division in its endeavours to evenly distribute the small quantities of fruit available over the war period appears in the figures shown below. Under the headings of the various fruits imported, these cover importations from 1939 onwards and indicate the fall in the quantities coming to hand.