

As compulsory standardization to be effective necessitated compulsory inspection, the industry was called upon to provide the necessary revenue to defray the cost of the work, and provision was made whereby this was collected by means of an inspection-fee stamp to be affixed to packages of fruit before sale—a 1d. inspection-fee stamp to be placed on all bushel cases of apples and lemons and standard cases of pears, and a $\frac{1}{2}$ d. stamp on packages of smaller dimensions. The revenue received from the sale of fruit-inspection-fee stamps as at the 31st March, 1939, since the regulations came into force in March, 1938, was £7,814 9s. 8d.

Unfavourable weather conditions seriously affected the supply of vegetables during the winter and early spring months, and as a result high prices ruled, especially for green vegetables.

Notwithstanding the warnings given in the past, several cases of fraudulent packing or "topping" came under notice during the year which necessitated proceedings being taken against the offenders for thus contravening the fair-packing regulations.

ORGANIZATION OF MARKET-GARDENERS.

The recent legislation which brought market-garden employees under the labour laws as regards hours and wages revealed the necessity of better organization amongst the employers, and the proceedings of the 1938 annual conference of market-gardeners held in Wellington were devoted chiefly to this object.

The market-garden industry is not as well organized as some of the other primary industries, due, mainly, to the lack of sufficient organization and co-operation amongst producers. To complete the organization throughout the country and assist the growers to bring about improvements in the marketing of their produce, the Department made available the services of an officer to assist the industry in these matters.

The request of the Market Gardeners' Association for the setting up of an Advisory Board was also arranged, and several meetings of the Board have already been held. At quarterly meetings representatives from the main producing centres report progress and deal with the more important problems that have arisen. As a result of the work being done it may be expected that ultimately the present association will be more fully representative of producers and will take a greater part in the building-up and organization of the market-gardening industry.

IMPORTED FRUIT, PLANTS, ETC.

The Fruit Inspectors attached to the Division at the main ports of entry were kept fully engaged in the inspection of imported fruit, plants, &c., and also with exports of produce, which showed a substantial increase on the previous year's figures.

Imports of citrus fruits from Australia, Jamaica, and California were higher, as were oranges and bananas from the Cook Islands and pineapples from Queensland. The bulk of the consignments arrived in satisfactory condition, and were clean and free from disease.

The fumigation of fairly large lines of grass-seed from Australia was attended to in accordance with the requirements of the import regulations.

EXPORT OF VEGETABLES, ETC.

Owing to the drought in Australia, a considerable quantity of market-garden produce was inspected and passed for shipment to Sydney and Melbourne, as well as several large consignments of onions and potatoes.

FRUIT COLD STORAGE.

The cold storing of fruit—a very important factor in connection with the fruitgrowing industry—has received a considerable amount of attention, with a view to extending the cool-storage facilities and effecting further improvements in cool-storage methods for the purpose of eliminating as far as possible wastage in land cool stores and in transit on board ship.

Work of an experimental nature was continued during the year in conjunction with the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, and interesting results were obtained in connection with tests made in the use of all-round pads in the staining of pears; the influence of copper-sulphate wraps in controlling the spread of grey mould on Winter Cole pears; the condition required for the successful cold storage of pears, different varieties being used in the test; the effect of oil wraps as against plain wraps in the control of superficial scald in Granny Smith apples.

Considerable attention was given to the loading and stowage of fruit on overseas vessels, for the purpose of minimizing as far as possible the bruising of fruit through careless handling. In the cooling-systems operating on the older types of vessels extra care is necessary in the dunnaging of the fruit cargo, in order that an even distribution of air may be maintained throughout the holds.

Arrangements have been made for the carrying-out of further experimental work during the coming year, which includes the pre-cooling of pears prior to export, cause of post cool-storage discoloration of Granny Smith apples and soft scald in the Jonathan variety, efficacy of direct-expansion cooling versus forced air-circulation in relation to bloom and wilt of certain varieties of apples.

INSTRUCTIONAL AND EXPERIMENTAL WORK.

Every endeavour has been made to comply with the numerous requests for advice on the many phases connected with fruit and vegetable growing and horticulture generally. The instructional work carried out by the field officers covers a very wide field and forms an important part of their duties.