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**FRUIT AND VEGETABLE SALES
AT CITY MUNICIPAL MARKETS, SYDNEY.**

Fruit stocks diminish.

There was a further falling-off in supplies of fruit during the month, especially towards the close when such lines as pineapples, pears, oranges and apples were insufficient to meet other than a relatively small percentage of trade requirements. The supply position was described by a number of agents as the worst on record.

Stone fruit season commences.

The first of the new season's apricots made their appearance about the middle of October but the quantities were small until towards the close of the month when supplies increased. The quality generally was satisfactory and some good sized fruit was to be seen. Sales of best packs were made at high rates, up to 25/- per quarter-bushel case being obtained.

Chorries from the Lakesland district were available and values, although showing a downward trend as supplies increased, were maintained at high levels and at closing the top price was 28/- per quarter-bushel.

Only isolated lots of plums and peaches were received but supplies are expected to show considerable improvement during November.

Valencia oranges in light supply.

Main crop Valencia oranges had ready sale. A large proportion of consignments was reserved for service requirements at times and during these periods retailers had to be content with only a portion of their requirements. With the limited stocks available, the market was very firm and rates remained at ceiling levels. Intermediate crop Navels and Valencias were more plentiful; much of the fruit had poor juice content and a heavy rind but some good quality lines realised the ceiling rate of 20/- per bushel.

There was a steady inquiry for lemons and values were firmer, choice fruit realising to the ceiling price of 20/- per bushel. Further disposals to factory buyers were effected.

Supplies of apples light - buyers rationed.

Apart from Tasmanian apples, supplies from other interstate sources were meagre and prior to the close of the month consignments ceased. On many days the only apples on offer were Tasmanian Democrats and supplies of this variety were rationed to buyers mostly in one or two bushel lots. Other Apple and Pear

Marketing Board stocks included some Croftons and Granny Smiths from Western Australia; the latter variety was on offer at times. From Victoria and South Australia, Rokewood Yates and a few other varieties were received but the quantities were small.

All sales were effected at the maximum rate of 29/- per bushel. An increase in the retail price of one half penny per pound from 10^{sd} to 11^d came into operation on 10th October.

Pears sell freely at maximum rates.

Consignments of pears from Victoria continued to come forward but supplies showed a considerable decline towards the close of the month. Demand was particularly keen owing to the scarcity of other fruits and agents had little difficulty in disposing of sound fruit at the top rate of 30/- per bushel. The varieties available included, for the most part, Josephine, Packham's Triumph, Winter Colo and Winter Nellis.

Pineapples in short supply.

With reduced consignments of pineapples, which were insufficient to meet demand the market was very firm at the fixed maximum of 21/3 per case. During the latter half of the month the bi-weekly receipts were very light and buyers had to be content with a small percentage of their requirements.

Maximum price for bananas lowered.

With the scarcity of other fruits, there was a good inquiry for bananas and the ceiling rate of 7^d per lb. was obtained for other than under-grade and poor quality packs. On the 29th October, the maximum wholesale rate was reduced from 7^d to 5^{sd} per lb.

Firm rates rule for choice passionfruit.

Choice passionfruit continued to realise relatively high prices, as much as 50/- per half-case being paid on some occasions. The quantities on offer were light.

Papaws sell at higher rates.

Fairly large quantities of papaws were received. Demand up to about mid-October was moderate, but there was a marked improvement subsequently and a substantial rise in values occurred. This was largely owing to reduced consignments of pineapples and the general scarcity of other fruits. Values advanced from around 20/- to 35/- per case, and occasionally higher for a few extra choice lines.

Vegetable supplies increase.

Early in October, the market for those green vegetables not under price control was very firm and high prices were obtained for such lines as cabbages, cauliflowers and spinach. This could be accounted for, in the main, by the limited supplies available to the trade after Service requirements had been met. Towards the close of the month, however, there was a considerable improvement in supplies, particularly of peas, while beans from such districts as Port Macquarie and Gosford came forward in increasing quantities. With the larger quantities of these two vegetables arriving regularly there was a slackening in demand for other greens and a general easing of values followed.

More peas available.

Consignments of peas continued to be light until fairly late in the month and the maximum of 23/4 per bushel was readily paid. With the arrival of large quantities from Victoria and with receipts from Tableland sources and the M.I.A. increasing values could not be maintained with the result that only the choicest quality lines could command the top rate, other grades selling from 10/- per bushel.

Bean market closes easier.

During the period of limited supplies of peas, a particularly keen demand ruled for beans and the maximum of 25/- per bushel was realised for any reasonably good quality lots from the North Coast and Queensland. Values for choice descriptions continued to be firm until consignments of peas were such that retailers were able to obtain the greater proportion of their requirements; a slackening in request then occurred and prices had to be lowered to enable clearances to be effected. On Monday, 29th October, the maximum wholesale price was reduced from 25/- to 20/- per bushel but only an isolated sale could be made at the new ceiling rate. The position at closing, however, was brighter and rates for choice descriptions were showing an upward trend, 18/- being paid. The dry weather prevailing throughout the growing area was showing its effect on the quality of the greater percentage of supplies.

Price control on tomatoes ceases.

Generally good demand ruled for tomatoes, especially coloured packs, and choice lines realised the maximum price of 22/- per half-case. Supplies of local glasshouse tomatoes increased as the month progressed; as most packs were coloured prompt disposals were effected of good quality lots but very small fruit was difficult to clear, even at as low as 5/- per half-case. North Coast consignments also increased. There was a keen request for this fruit and many lots realised the ceiling level of 22/- but a number of growers forwarded immature and grub-infested packs;

these lines failed to pass inspection and were withheld from sale. The quality of Queensland consignments showed considerable variation and values covered a wide range. Some packs were faulty and a number were unsaleable.

The lifting of price control on 26th October was followed by a sharp rise in rates. Sellers of glasshouse tomatoes increased prices to much higher levels and at one stage requested over 40/- per half-case. Relatively few sales were effected at that figure, although from 30/- to 40/- was paid. The market was much easier on subsequent days, few sales being made above 28/-.

Cabbage market eases.

Exceptionally high prices ruled for choice cabbages during the first week of October, as much as 50/- per dozen being paid, largely as a result of heavy buying for Service needs and the light supplies of other greens. Subsequently, increased quantities of peas and beans reached the market and values of cabbages declined appreciably; on a number of days it was difficult to obtain above 24/- per dozen for choice heads.

Cauliflower season over.

There was a good inquiry for cauliflowers early in the month and relatively high prices ruled but the market was easier later owing mainly to a decline in the quality of supplies. The season for this vegetable was practically finished, only a few lines being available at the close of October.

Carrots and swedes in short supply.

Supplies of choice carrots and swede turnips declined appreciably as the month advanced and maximum rates ruled for both lines prior to the close.

Lettuce plentiful.

Considerable quantities of lettuce were forward and supplies late in October exceeded requirements. On some days stocks could not be cleared, even at the very low prices ruling.

(R.D. Moaker).