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residents, especially when there were gluts on the main markets. The local stationmaster accepted orders from residents and forwarded them to the Committee of Direction, who despatched the required commodities. In 1939, increased costs caused a drop in railings, which decreased by 3,000 cases per year till 1942, when the scheme was abandoned, due to staff shortages. It is, however, intended to resume the scheme as soon as possible.

In addition to these activities, the Committee of Direction conducts advertising campaigns to popularise Queensland fruits. Scientific research work is subsidised and efforts made to improve the quality, transportation and marketing of fruit and vegetables.

The Committee of Direction acts like any other agent and charges the same commission rates as its competitors (Queensland, 10 per cent.; Sydney Municipal Market, 7½ per cent.). This section of its activity comes in for much criticism, but the report by the Royal Commission states:—

“It is clear to us that if the Committee of Direction did not act as an agent it would be powerless to assist growers—it would have little funds for other activities and its absence from the markets would leave the grower at the mercy of the ordinary agent . . . The allegation of unfairness of competition is absurd. The Committee of Direction is merely the directorate of a co-operative private enterprise, the co-operators being the growers who choose the Committee of Direction as managing agents. . . . In our view, the expansion of this co-operative business should be fostered.”

Recent amendments to the Fruit Marketing Organisation Acts have widened the scope and activities of the Committee of Direction. A summary of the amending Act as it affects the Committee of Direction appears in the December, 1945, issue of this publication.

MARKETING BACONER PIGS.

At a recent interstate conference between representatives of producers, officials of the Departments of Agriculture of the various States and the Meat Industry Advisory Committee, recommendations were made with a view to assuring the post-war stability of the pig-raising industry. The Government had previously decided to reduce, in the near future, the maximum weight of baconer pigs under the present Pigmear Plan from 200 lb. to 180 lb. and, among the resolutions at the Conference referred to was one recommending the inclusion of an additional weight range of 180 lb. to 200 lb., with basic values 1d. per lb. below the scale for baconers.

During the war, the average weight of baconers produced in Australia was raised considerably above the normal level, and the above decisions presumably are a move in the direction of encouraging the production of pigs more suited to pre-war export requirements. The object of the additional grade is to minimise the adverse effect of the sharp drop in values from the baconer to the chopper grade; that is, the pig which exceeds in

weight the maximum of the baconer range. In considering the position which had arisen in connection with the marketing of the heavy baconer, similar recommendations were made to the Meat Advisory Committee by the Division of Marketing and Agricultural Economics early in 1945.

The Conference also supported the efforts of the Meat Industry Advisory Committee to bring about a more rigid grading system for pigmeats, and considered it most important to the industry's future that a uniform standard pig of good quality be developed for export. This aspect was fully dealt with in an article prepared by the Division and published in the September, 1945, issue of the "Agricultural Gazette of New South Wales" under the heading of "Market Requirements for Bacon Pigs, Local and Overseas."

J. R. WILLIAMS.

GENERAL NOTES AND NEWS.

The Australian wheat harvest in the current season (1945-46) is expected to be in the vicinity of 135 million bushels. Official forecasts are as follow:—New South Wales, 53,600,000; Victoria, 25,000,000 (to be delivered); South Australia, 20,700,000; Western Australia, 20,500,00; Queensland, 7,000,000. The Victorian figure presumably does not include wheat which will be retained for seed, stock feed, etc., which, according to private estimates, should account for an additional 7 to 8 million bushels.

It is proposed to conduct a poll of growers of navy beans on the 22nd March, 1946, on the question whether or not a Marketing Board shall be constituted in the State of New South Wales under the provisions of the Marketing of Primary Products Act. If an affirmative vote is recorded an election of producer-representatives on the Board will be held later.

With a view to lessening congestion in the Sydney Municipal Markets and environs, the City Council, acting upon representations made by the Markets Advisory Committee, has issued instructions that fruit and vegetables arriving at the markets by road transport will not be received after 6.15 a.m. each sale day until such time as produce carried by rail to Darling Harbour has been unloaded in the markets.

Ginger has ceased to be a crop of any importance in this State, and the question of terminating the activities of the Board, whose term of office expires on 25th February, 1946, is now under consideration.