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Prices ranged to 13¾d. per lb. for light descriptions as compared with 16¾d. in February, with heavy weights realising to 12d. per lb. or about ½d. per lb. below the best price ruling last month. Prices at closing were lower, light grade making to 12¾d. and heavy to 11½d. per lb.

G. COLEMAN AND B. G. O'CONNELL.

FRUIT AND VEGETABLE SALES AT CITY MUNICIPAL MARKETS.

March, 1946.

FRUIT.

Heavy Supplies of Apples.

Stocks of apples from local and Interstate sources continued to increase and there was a large accumulation of small sizes for which the demand was mostly dull. Average values were well below those of the previous month but the decline in prices was small when compared with February's closing quotations. Best prices were secured for Delicious from New South Wales centres which realised to 20s., specials higher, per case. Jonathans generally sold to 16s., but the bulk of the Tasmanian supplies brought from 5s. to 11s.

Towards the close of the month values for Granny Smiths showed an improvement when more mature packs became available.

Weak Demand for Ripe Pears.

Green lines of pears met a good demand throughout the month and rates were steady at 14s. to 16s. for best lots of Williams and Packhams from local and Interstate sources. Many lines of Williams ripened quickly on the selling floors and clearances had to be effected to the best advantage, as low as 2s. 6d. was accepted for some packs. The season for New South Wales Williams pears had practically ended by the close of the month, only isolated lots in cool stores remained to be sold. Other varieties, however, arrived on the market and included Beurre Bosc, Howells, Beurre d'Anjou and Winter Cole from Tasmania.

Poor Request for Small Oranges.

Good quality second-crop Valencia oranges again realised to the maximum of 20s. per case, but 16s. was the highest price obtainable when supplies were heavier. Small sizes of fruit, however, was very plentiful and generally sold from 5s. At times some lots were practically unsaleable.

Local Lemons Cheaper.

A firm market ruled for lemons from coastal centres early in the month when selected counts realised from 20s. to 25s., with plain grades from 12s. On the receipt of choice consignments from Queensland, however, values of New South Wales lines declined but improved towards the close when rain restricted harvesting in coastal groves. Queensland lots sold to the maximum.

Choice Peaches Scarce.

Choice peaches from New South Wales centres were somewhat scarce and realised to 20s. per half-case. Consignments from the Irrigation Area, however, increased considerably, but many lines opened up in an unsatisfactory condition, owing to breakdown, with the result that demand generally was restricted. Rates were lower at 3s. to 10s., few higher, per half-case. Victorian consignments also were available but a large proportion of these showed fungus infection and sold at low rates.

Firm Market for Nectarines.

A steady inquiry ruled for nectarines but size and quality showed a wide variation and rates ranged from 4s. to 16s. with special lines to 25s. per half-case.

Fluctuating Supplies of Grapes.

Supplies of grapes fluctuated considerably. Marketing of choice muscats from coastal centres finished prior to the close of the month. Inland consignments were very light at times owing to rain preventing harvesting in the growing centres. Towards the close, however, the market was heavily stocked with supplies from Molong, Orange and the Irrigation Area. Consignments from the latter centre comprised chiefly Cornichons. A substantial proportion of the consignments showed signs of breakdown, owing to the wet season experienced.

Choice muscats generally realised to 25s. and occasionally to 28s. per half-case but values were lower during the final week. Many Area lines sold as low as 4s.

Rates for Bananas Mostly Weaker.

The market for bananas fluctuated according to supplies available, being firm at opening and during the third week, when rates ranged from 20s. to 40s., ripe and inferior lines lower, per tropical case. Rates otherwise were lower, particularly at closing, when quotations ranged from 10s. to 35s., owing to the large quantities of over-ripe and faulty lines on offer.

Passionfruit Scarce.

Passionfruit were very scarce throughout the month, only odd lots being available which realised from 20s. to 50s. per half-case.

Firm Market for Plums.

Plums sold steadily and realised from 4s. to 14s., specials to 18s. per half-case.

Weaker Demand for Cantaloupes.

Cantaloupes continued to be in heavy supply. Demand was weaker, following the cooler weather, and a large proportion of consignments showed breakdown. Rates were easier at 3s. to 10s. per crate. During the second half of the month consignments were lighter and values firmed towards the close, choice lots selling to 14s., with occasional specials higher, per crate.

Fluctuating Market for Pineapples.

Pineapples were well supplied early in the period and values were fairly firm at 12s. to 18s., few 20s., per tropical case. Rates subsequently fluctuated according to supplies and the degree to which consignments were affected by "blister." At the close consignments were lighter than usual and stocks of choice fruit of the best sizes cleared at the maximum rate of 21s. 3d.

Papaws Cheaper.

Papaws were in light supply, but the general quality was only fair and values were easier, closing rates ranging from 10s. to 25s. per tropical case.

Dull Demand for Persimmons.

Stocks of persimmons increased considerably during the month but demand, except for choice large sizes, was poor. Rates ranged chiefly from 3s. to 6s., special large to 10s., per half-case.

VEGETABLES.

Further Vegetables Freed from Price Control.

On the 16th March price control was lifted from all vegetables, except onions and potatoes. Values of parsnips rose sharply but rates otherwise were not materially affected.

Fluctuating Market for Peas.

Supplies of peas were fairly steady during the first week and daily totals ranged chiefly between 2,000 and 2,500 bags, the bulk being consigned from the Central Tableland. Rates ranged chiefly from 12s. to 20s. with choice lots to 24s. Stocks were lighter during the second week and choice lines realised to 30s., specials higher, per bushel. Supplies subsequently fluctuated and values, accordingly, were very uneven. Choice lines sold to 34s. per bushel, but rates at closing were from 16s. to 24s., odd higher.

Choice Beans Scarce.

Receivals of beans during the month were very uneven and marked fluctuations in values occurred, rates varying considerably at times, even during the morning trading. Agents' supplies were augmented by stocks in the growers section and later in the month consignments were received from Victoria. A considerable proportion of the stocks available was of inferior quality and, at times choice lines were difficult to secure. Many Victorian lots were affected by delay in transit and some were practically unsaleable.

Lowest values were noted during the first week when rates ranged from 4s. to 10s., choice to 12s. per bushel. Towards the close, however, choice lots realised to 26s. per bushel.

Weaker Demand for Cabbages.

Cabbages were fairly well supplied but a substantial proportion of the offerings was of poor quality, particularly early in the period. The market was steady during the first half of the month and rates ranged chiefly from 5s. to 30s. per dozen with special

large heads to 36s. As more cauliflowers became available, however, values declined sharply, but the market partly recovered when large purchases were made for service requirements. Rates, at closing, ranged chiefly from 4s. to 18s., odd large to 24s. per dozen.

Increased Supplies of Cauliflowers.

Consignments of cauliflowers from the Bathurst district were mainly very light and as much as 45s. per dozen was secured for choice large heads. During the final week supplies increased substantially and, although stocks sold readily, values receded. Rates, at closing, were chiefly from 5s. to 30s. per dozen.

Variable Supplies of Tomatoes.

Early in the period choice Metropolitan tomatoes realised to 20s. per half-case, but consignments from local, Queensland and Victorian centres showed a considerable increase during the first half of the period. Demand for other than choice packs was dull; values generally fell sharply and by the 14th 4s. to 8s. ruled. Supplies subsequently showed a decided falling off and at the close of the month stocks were very light and values had recovered to those ruling at opening.

Lettuce Cheaper.

Lettuce continued to be fairly scarce during the first half of the period and choice lines realised as high as 24s. per case. Supplies subsequently, however, increased and demand, owing to cooler weather, was much weaker. Prices fell sharply and, at closing, ranged from 3s. to 8s.

Carrots Plentiful.

A good demand continued for bagged and bunched carrots and, for the most part, maximum rates were secured for choice lines. When price control was lifted on the 16th values showed only a slight advance as supplies were continually increasing. Prior to closing bagged lots were quoted at the lower levels of 12s. to 16s. per cwt. Inferior lines were difficult to clear.

Values of Parsnips Advance Sharply.

With the lifting of price control values of bunched parsnips rose sharply and ranged to 14s. per dozen bunches. Bagged lots subsequently became available from Victoria and realised to 56s. per cwt. As supplies increased, however, values declined for both lines.

Spinach Values Decline.

Spinach realised as high as 18s. per dozen bunches during the early part of the period but values gradually weakened as supplies improved. At closing this vegetable was considerably cheaper.

J. R. WILLIAMS.