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A PRELIMINARY ECONOMIC SURVEY OF THE CITRUS INDUSTRY

IN NEW ZEALAND.

Vol. I.

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W. H. Hamilton  
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C O N T E N T S.

A PRELIMINARY ECONOMIC SURVEY OF THE CITRUS INDUSTRY  
IN NEW ZEALAND.

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FRONTISPIECE.

A fine cluster of St. Michael sweet oranges grown in a commercial North Auckland orchard. New Zealand can produce a type of sweet orange, which, while perhaps not equal to the finest imported is of a sufficiently high standard of quality to meet with consumer approval and could probably supply a large part of the local demand for oranges.

## F O R E W O R D.

This survey was undertaken primarily because it was considered that some comprehensive survey was a necessary preliminary to any sound advancement in the citrus industry in New Zealand. Of necessity it has been subject to limitations of time and of means to collect all the data which would have been desirable; many of the data are not yet available or are of a confidential nature while many of the "facts" frequently quoted with regard to the industry are little more than assumptions - an unsafe foundation for the sound development of the industry. The survey is therefore tendered, not as the last word with respect to the aspects of the industry discussed, but rather as a partial collection of such information as is at present available, presented in fairly logical sequence, and with some attempt to give a balanced and comprehensive, if somewhat sketchy outline of the industry in its various phases.

Much information, of a detailed nature, dealing with particular phases of the industry was, of necessity, excluded, in order to preserve the balance of the whole, while owing to the limitations of time and finance it has not been possible to check as carefully as would have been wished, the tables and statistical analyses. There are doubtless minor errors in computation in some of the tables and some errors in the typing which have escaped detection but it is hoped that these omissions will not be regarded too critically.

In the sections dealing with factors affecting production, and production costs the analyses deal with only one years figures and it is realised that the analysis of subsequent years data might yield results of quite different magnitude although it is considered unlikely

that general trends would be affected. This weakness has been corrected as far as possible by giving tables in terms of relative yields wherever possible, but in certain cases this has not been possible, e.g. age and production, and surveys conducted over a period of years are necessary in order to form a sound judgment as to average values. Similarly costs per case vary considerably according to the size of crop marketed in any given year, and the figures drawn out for 1934 may be wide of the average. Only a series of surveys can determine points such as these, and such a basis for the development of the industry is very necessary.

Such limitations do not, however, destroy the significance of the analyses, nor seriously detract from the original intention of giving as comprehensive a survey of the field as was possible with the limited time and funds available. It will be serving its purpose if it succeeds in inducing those interested in the industry to undertake a systematic stocktaking, and review the whole problem before embarking on any scheme of greater development to supply the local market.

It is only with some trepidation that the last two chapters dealing with the organisation of the industry and its possible future have been added. This was never intended to be more than a preliminary survey and the conclusions or suggestions which are made in those concluding chapters are, therefore, of a somewhat tentative nature. The writer reserves the right to alter his opinions on the policies suggested there when more complete data are at his disposal and more time is available for consideration of the problems which they present.

August, 1935.



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### PART 1 INTRODUCTORY.

#### CHAPTER 1. SCOPE AND METHOD.

- A. Introductory. B. Method of Collecting Data.
- C. Location of Orchards Visited.

##### A. INTRODUCTORY.

With increasing competition in the world's markets for our main primary products and the imposition of quotas and other restrictions to the free flow of international trading the Dominion is faced with a serious economic crisis. A plexus of favourable factors operating over a period of years has resulted in the rapid expansion of our main primary industries. This rapid expansion has been accentuated rather than retarded by the fall in world prices for our primary products, producers having endeavoured to offset the fall in prices by increasing their volume of output, thus tending further to accentuate the drop in prices.

The possible diversification of our primary production therefore assumes fresh importance under the stress of adverse world prices for our staple products and the threat of regulated shipments to our main market, Great Britain. The Dairy Industry Commission in its report states (p.50) "The development of the citrus-fruit industry to supply fully the local market with those types which can be grown in New Zealand is a reasonable objective".

It was therefore felt that the time was opportune for collecting and collating such information as was

(2).

available regarding the citrus industry; the types of product that might profitably be produced, the methods of management in vogue, the cost of production, the markets available, a careful study of imports and the possibility of replacing imports, in part or in whole, by locally grown citrus fruits.

#### B. METHOD OF COLLECTING DATA.

The information contained in this analysis was collected by personal visits to seventy-two of the larger growers of citrus fruits. These growers kindly consented to supply such information as they had available regarding methods of management, production and prices realised etc. (See Survey form used, Appendix 1.) At the same time visits were made to the establishments curing and marketing citrus fruits, the main growers' and research organisations were approached for information, the wholesale and retail trade in the main centres of the North Island was interviewed while the various Government Departments co-operated in supplying information.

#### C. ORCHARDS VISITED.

Of the seventy-two orchards visited twenty-four were situated at Keri Keri, eight at Whangarei, one at Warkworth, twenty-two in the Auckland District, fourteen at Tauranga, two at Gisborne and one at Petane. (Plate 1. shews the position of the groves visited). The wide distribution of the growers visited is recognised as being a distinct disadvantage insofar as the validity of any conclusions in regard to management practices may be concerned, but, owing to this being a preliminary survey, unavoidable. In any case after making due allowance

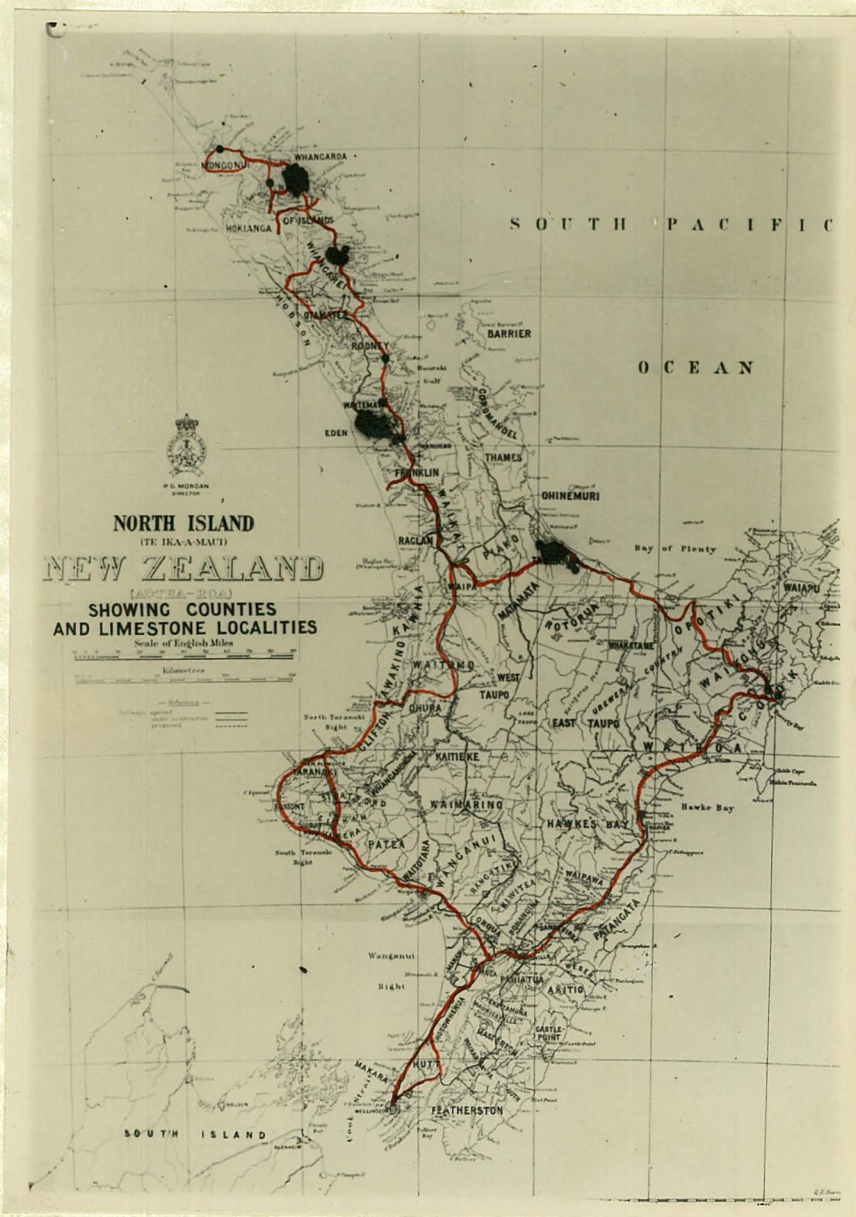


PLATE 1. Pin Map shewing the distribution of the groves visited during the course of the survey, 1934. The red line indicates the main route followed.

(3).

for the wide distribution of the growers it must be stated that the growing of citrus fruits demands a set of conditions which can vary only within certain limits, and except in isolated cases such as Keri or Tauranga it is doubtful whether any one district contains sufficient growers working under uniform conditions to warrant the application of the survey method to the study of their problems of management.

For the purposes of this survey, which can be regarded only in the light of a reconnaissance of the position, the returns from the various districts have been treated as a unit with the consequence that the conclusions drawn must not be accepted as final nor as necessarily applicable in individual cases but serve only as an indication of probable trends as a basis for further investigation.