

## FOREWORD.

THE need for a more thorough study of the retail demand for Empire products has been emphasised both by the Imperial Economic Committee and by the Agricultural Economics Committee of the Empire Marketing Board. It is of considerable importance to oversea producers to understand the working of the agencies through which their produce passes, and to ascertain as closely as possible the preferences of consumers in the matter of quality, grading and presentation.

The retail trade constitutes a particularly difficult problem for study since so little exact knowledge is available. The number of retailers selling foodstuffs is very large, and they do not specialise in the sale of a few commodities as in the wholesale trade. Further, retail shops differ greatly in size, type of management, class of trade, and in many other respects. It is impossible, therefore, by reference to a few firms only, to obtain a clear picture of the variations in conditions and in policy; it is necessary to study the practice of a large number of shops before reliable knowledge of the retail marketing of even one commodity can be obtained.

The Empire Marketing Board has accordingly set on foot a systematic study of the retail demand for certain Empire products, starting with those on which the Imperial Economic Committee have already published the results of their more general survey.

The present report on the Demand for Empire Butter is the second of the series, and follows a similar study published a year ago on the Demand for Cheese in London (E.M.B.22). The object of the enquiry was to examine the position of Empire butters in the retail shops of the main centres of population in the United Kingdom, and to estimate the extent and nature of the competition from butters of foreign origin. The investigation extended over the greater part of the year 1929.

The information was obtained by interview with the proprietors or managers of the retail shops visited, and the Board has been gratified with the sympathetic response with which the enquiry has been received by the Trade. Acknowledgment and thanks are here given to members of the wholesale and retail distributive trades for the assistance they so willingly afforded.

Economic Section,  
Empire Marketing Board.

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