

received. New Zealand supplies reached their maximum of 255 thousand cwts. (one-fifth of the total for the year) in March, while Irish Free State shipments were lowest between January and March.

From Denmark, the imports were fairly evenly distributed throughout the year, though they were slightly higher in the summer.

Period and Scope of Enquiry.

The object of the enquiry was to examine the position of Empire butters in the retail shops of the main population centres, to estimate the extent and nature of the competition from butters of foreign origin, and to obtain information on certain aspects of retail policy in relation to regional preferences.

In view of the seasonal variation in the supply of Empire butters, the enquiry was undertaken in two parts; the first survey from April to June, and the second from July to September, 1929. In this way it was hoped to secure a picture of retail market conditions; in the first case when supplies of New Zealand and Australian butters were relatively plentiful, and in the second case when the butter export season of the Irish Free State was at its height. The shops were visited in the same order once in each period, and the area surveys were carried out simultaneously except in Scotland, Bristol and South Wales, where the first round of enquiries was rather later than the others. On the whole, therefore, a comparison of the nature of the stocks held at each period may be taken to reflect fairly accurately the seasonal interchange, but allowance must be made for the fact that, in some of the shops visited towards the end of the First Survey, the change-over may already have begun to operate.

The enquiry was conducted in 18 towns, the total population of the districts covered being approximately twelve millions. In all, 2,918 shops were visited and information was obtained, according to a standard questionnaire, by personal interview with the proprietor or manager of the shop.

From a preliminary inspection of the returns, it was found possible to group the towns into seven roughly homogeneous areas, as shown in Table I.

In apportioning the number of visits in each town, consideration was taken of population and local conditions, and an attempt was made to include a fair representation of each type of organisation, size of shop, and class of trade.