

packer observed packing sizes 11½, 2 or 10 dozen. Three packers, putting up the same size, were observed for sizes 3, 4 and 6 dozen, and in each case the first packer packed the heaviest crates. It will be noted also that there was a wider variation in weights between the successive packers, when three packers were packing the same size than when two were packing the same size (Table 37). The reason for this variation in weight may be explained by the tendency of the packers to select the largest sizes of celery as the stalks move down the packing chain. As a result, the larger the number of packers handling a given size on a particular chain the wider will be the variation in the weight of crates for that size of celery. This is one of the inherent weaknesses of the present system of packing. How this and other weaknesses might be overcome is discussed on page 97.

CRATE CLOSING

After the crate is filled a paper liner is drawn over the top of the stalks and the lid of the crate is pulled up into position for closing. The size is then marked on the crate with a crayon or rubber stamp and the crate is set on a conveyor.

In many houses a special employee stamps the crates, pulls the lid into position for closing and sets the crate on the conveyor. The crate moves to the end of the conveyor where it passes over a trip-switch, which stops the conveyor. As soon as the crate is pulled on the closing table, the switch is released and another crate moves down on the conveyor, while the first one is being closed.

Practically all crates used in the Florida celery business are the wire-bound (Howard) crates. These crates have four wires running around the crate for reinforcement. These same wires serve as hinges on the back of the lid and as clasps on the front of the lid. A number of operation analyses were made of crate closing. The procedure in all cases was essentially the same. After the crate was pulled on the closing table the right hand straightened the paper liner while the left hand worked the lid into place. A closing tool, called a "rocker," was palmed in the right hand. This tool has a large wooden handle. While the left hand held the lid in position the right hand pounded the left end of the crate with the handle of the rocker until the end of the crate fitted under the lid. The rocker was then fitted into the wire loop, which was tightened and fastened. The same procedure was followed on the right end of the crate, after which the two center wires were tightened and closed.