



FIG. 1. Flour mill at Liverpool.



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THE MARKETING OF WHEAT, BARLEY AND OATS IN ENGLAND AND WALES.

INTRODUCTION.

The following Report gives the results of a detailed investigation into the marketing of wheat, barley and oats, and covers practically all phases of what is admitted to be an immensely difficult subject.

Among the more important facts to which attention is drawn, is the tendency for the manufacture of cereal products of all kinds, in this country, to become concentrated into larger units. There is no corresponding reduction in the number of farmers selling to merchants or of merchants selling to manufacturers. In the result, the balance of bargaining power has gone against the seller. This, of itself, suggests the need for some form of organisation among producers to reduce the number of independent sellers on the market. Further, organisation of producers seems to be necessary in order to ensure orderly marketing and avoid the seasonal depression in prices which usually occurs in the early months of each cereal year.

Then, again, in order to meet the needs of modern industrial conditions, manufacturers require grain—whether wheat, barley or oats—to be delivered in large quantities of uniform quality. To this extent, home-produced grain is at a disadvantage compared with the standardised products arriving from abroad, and, if the demand for it is to be sustained and increased, there is a pressing need for some form of standardisation. It is evident from this Report, however, that a standardisation policy for home-produced grain cannot be applied by transplanting in its entirety any one system now operated overseas, but that such a policy must be spelt out, letter by letter, to suit the conditions obtaining here. Lines of possible development are set out in the Report.

Apart from these wider organisational aspects, the Report shows clearly that much can be done in other ways to extend the market for home-produced grain. Indeed, no effort should be spared in this direction in order that cereal growers, in the present state of their industry, may realise the best possible returns for their crops subject to the limitations imposed by world conditions. In this task, there is room for co-operation between farmers, merchants, manufacturers and consumers.
