CONTENTS.

of Agriculture and Fisheries: Economic Series.

FIG. 1.—The old Market Place, Manchester, a century ago.

[Frontispiece.

Economic Series No. 13.

(For list of other Reports in this Series, see inside of cover).

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES.

Report
on
Markets and Fairs
in
England and Wales
(Part I: General Review).

LONDON:
PUBLISHED BY HIS MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE.

To be purchased directly from H.M. STATIONERY OFFICE at the following addresses:
Adastral House, Kingsway, London, W.C. 2; 120, George Street, Edinburgh;
York Street, Manchester; 1, St. Andrew's Crescent, Cardiff,
15, Donegall Square West, Belfast;
or through any Bookseller.

1927.
Price 6d. Net.

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

PREFACE.

During the 18th and 19th centuries, various Royal Commissions were appointed to enquire into the prevailing condition of agriculture, but, in the published reports, little or nothing was said on the subject of markets and marketing. The first special enquiry into markets was that of the Royal Commission on Market Rights and Tolls, which was appointed in 1887 and issued its final report in 1891, but the Commissioners made no attempt to deal with the more general aspects of marketing. The next enquiry was undertaken by a Departmental Committee in 1920, but was limited to the wholesale food markets of London. The appointment of the Linlithgow Committee followed in December, 1922. This Committee surveyed the whole marketing field and its Final Report* contained the following recommendation :—

> "During the course of our enquiry we have been struck by the lack of readily available information regarding the markets of the country. This appears to be due to the fact that there is no general body of legislation on the subject; many markets owe their origin to early charters, others are controlled by Local Authorities under private Acts of Parliament, while others have been established under the general powers of the Public Health and other Acts. As a result, there is no Government Department which is concerned to consider the relation of local markets to the food supply of the country, their influence on prices, or their general suitability from the point of view either of the consumer or the producer. The Ministry of Health in England and Wales and the Department of Health in Scotland only come into the picture, we understand, in connection with the powers of Local Authorities (mainly in regard to sanitation and finance) as prescribed by certain Acts of Parliament, and cannot deal in any way with the wider aspect of the question to which we have referred above. As a preliminary step to the further consideration of this question, we think it desirable that the Government Departments concerned should collect and publish information as to the control and ownership of markets, and any relative information likely to be useful."

In furtherance of this recommendation, a survey of the agricultural markets and fairs of England and Wales has been undertaken by the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries in connection with and complementary to its investigations into the marketing of agricultural produce. A knowledge of the markets of the country is essential if the methods of marketing agricultural produce are to be fully understood.

* Cmd. 2008. 1924.

(1399) Wt 10264—603. 3,000 8/27 Wy & S., Lt!. Gp 2.

For the purpose of this survey, it has been found convenient to divide the country into areas comprising groups of counties, and particulars have been obtained, or are in course of being obtained, of the markets in each group. It is proposed, in due course, to publish Reports in the Economic Series which will present the information so accumulated in a form which will be of value to producers and other users of the markets. Sufficient information is, however, now available regarding markets generally to provide material for the present introductory Report. The general view of markets and market conditions which this Report affords will give perspective to the necessarily more detailed Reports to follow.

It is desired to acknowledge the assistance rendered in connection with this Report by the Northern Market Authorities Association, the Association of Midland Market Authorities, and a number of individuals, including auctioneers and market owners, officers of County Councils, Borough Councils and other local authorities, and of local branches of the National Farmers' Union.

APPENDIX I.

Markets in the London Metropolitan Area.

(This statement is compiled from information furnished by the owners or lessees of the markets and sales enumerated. The commodities included under the heading "Character of Market" are sold wholesale by private treaty unless otherwise indicated.)

Abbreviations used throughout this Appendix:—
c=Covered area. u=Uncovered area.

Market and Area in sq. yds.	Name of Occupier (*i.e.*, owner or lessee) of Market.	Market Days.	Character of Market.
Bermondsey			
Hide and Skin Market	City of London Hide & Skin Co., Ltd., Leather Market, Bermondsey	Tues. (usually)	Hides and skins.
Hide and Skin Market	M. Clench & Co., Ltd., 30, Skin Market, Bermondsey	Daily ..	Hides and skins.
Hide and Skin Market	Victor Herrmann, 75, Maltby Street, Bermondsey	Daily ..	Hides and skins.
Hide and Skin Market	London Butchers' Hide & Skin Co., Ltd., 44, Leather Market, Bermondsey	Thurs. ..	Auction sales of hides and skins.
Hide and Skin Market	T. F. Robinson, 12, Hardwidge Street, Bermondsey	Daily ..	Hides and skins.
Hide and Skin Market	Strong, Rawle & Strong, Ltd., 24, Upper Russell Street, Bermondsey	Daily ..	Hides and skins.
Hide and Skin Market	W. B. Walker & Co., Ltd., 16, Whites Grounds, Bermondsey	Daily ..	Hides and skins.
Hide and Skin Market	E. W. Williams, Leather Market, Bermondsey	Daily ..	Hides and skins.
City of London			
Billingsgate Market 6000 c	Corpn. of London	Daily ..	Auction and private-treaty sales of fish.
Central Markets (Smithfield) 48400 c	"	"	Meat, also dairy produce, eggs, game and poultry. Retail fish, fruit, veg. and meat.
Leadenhall 5500 c Market	"	Daily ..	Poultry and game (chiefly) also eggs. Retail poultry, eggs, fish, fruit, meat and provisions.

Market and Area in sq. yds.	Name of Occupier (*i.e.*, owner or lessee) of Market.	Market Days.	Character of Market.
City of London—	*contd.*		
Baltic Exchange 1588 *c*	Baltic Mercantile & Shipping Exchange Ltd., St. Mary Axe, E.C.	Daily ..	Imported grain, etc. (by description).
Corn Exchange 1647 *c*	The Corn Exchange Co., Mark Lane, E.C.	Mon., Wed. Fri.	Corn, flour and millers' offals, hay, straw and feeding stuffs, agricultural seeds, etc. (by sample or description).
Hide, Skin, etc. Auction (Mincing Lane)	(*a*) Anning & Cobb (*b*) Chadwick and Hollebone. (*c*) Culverwell, Brooks and Co. (*d*) Dyster, Nalder and Co. (*e*) Flack, Chandler and Co. (*f*) Goad, Rigg & Co.	Usually Thurs. or Fri. on dates fixed annually	Auction sales of foreign & colonial hides, leather, skins, furs, horns, bones, etc.
Wool Exchange 600 *c*	Associated London Selling Wool Brokers, Coleman Street, E.C.	Series of 6 sales per annum on advertised dates.	Auction sales of wool (chiefly colonial and foreign).
Deptford			
Market 2000 *u*	Southern Rly. Co. Lessees: London Markets, Ltd., 111, Moorgate, E.C.2	Daily ..	General retail produce.
Fulham			
Market Hall 3667 *c*	Fulham Market Hall Ltd., Harwood Road, S.W.	Daily ..	General retail produce.
Greenwich			
Market 1788 *c*	Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty as Trustees for Greenwich Hospital	Daily (chiefly Tues., Thurs. and Sat.)	Fruit and veg.
Hammersmith			
Shepherds Bush Market 2905 *c* 5050 *u*	Metropolitan and Gt. Western Rlys., Baker Street Stn., N.W.1	Daily ..	General retail produce.
Islington			
Metropolitan Cattle Market 6986 *c* (*Public Slaughterhouse*) 64125 *u*	Corpn. of London ..	Mon., Thurs Tues., Fri.	Fat cattle & sheep; horses. General retail produce.

Market and Area in sq. yds.	Name of Occupier (*i.e.*, owner or lessee) of Market	Market Days.	Character of Market.
St. Pancras			
Euston Market 2716 *c*	Euston Markets, Ltd. Euston Road, N.W.1	Daily ..	General retail produce.
King's Cross Potato Depot 18000 *c*	L. & N. E. Rly, Co.	Daily ..	Vegetables (chiefly potatoes).
Somers Town Potato Depot 4900 *c*	L.M. & S. Rly., Co.	Daily ..	Fruit and vegetables (chiefly potatoes).
Southwark			
Borough Market 14520 *c* 2420 *u*	Borough Market Trustees	Daily ..	Fruit and veg., also dairy produce, eggs and poultry.
London Egg Exchange 278 *c*	London Egg Exchange, Ltd., 24, Southwark Street, S.E.1	Mon. ..	Eggs (chiefly), butter, cheese and margarine, chiefly imported (by description).
London Provision Exchange 525 *c*	London Provision Exchange Ltd., Hibernia Chambers, London Bridge, S.E.1	Daily ..	Butter, cheese, bacon, hams, lard and canned goods; chiefly imported (by description).
Stepney			
Spitalfields Market 25000 *c*	Corpn. of London ..	Daily ..	Fruit and veg.
Fruit Exchange 6000 *c*	,,	Mon., Wed., Fri. ..	Auction sales of fruit (chiefly imported) and onions (by sample).
Wandsworth			
Blunt's Market 300 *c*	G. Blunt, Mitcham Road, S.W.	Daily ..	General retail produce.
Streatham Market Hall 80 *c*	—	Daily ..	Retail produce.
Tooting Market Hall 936 *c* 430 *u*	—	Daily ..	General retail produce.
Westminster			
Covent Garden Market 20172 *c* 7640 *u*	Covent Garden Properties Co., Ltd.	Daily ..	Auction and private treaty sales of fruit, veg. and flowers.
Woolwich			
Market 4600 *u*	Woolwich Borough Council	Daily ..	General retail produce.
Eltham Market 780 *u*	,,	,,	General retail produce.

APPENDIX II.

List of Street Markets in the London County Council Area.

Battersea:

High Street.
Northcote Road.

Bermondsey:

Albion Street.
Bermondsey Street.
Lower Road.
Southwark Park Road.
Tower Bridge Road.

Bethnal Green:

Bethnal Green Road.
Brick Lane, and side streets.
Green Street.
Hare Street } Sunday
Virginia Road } mornings.

Camberwell:

Atwell Road.
Choumert Road.
Hardcastle Street.
North Cross Road.
Peckham Rye.
Triangle, Rye Lane.
Waterloo Street.

Chelsea:

Draycott Avenue.
King's Road.

Deptford:

Douglas Street, High Street.
Hatcham Park Road, New Cross Road.
Reginald Road, High Street.

Finsbury:

Chapel Street.
Exmouth Street.
Farringdon Road.
White Conduit Street.
Whitecross Street.

Fulham:

Munster Road.
North End Road.

Greenwich:

Earlswood Street, Trafalgar Road.
Tyler Street, Trafalgar Road.

Hackney:

Bradbury Street.
Chatsworth Road, and side streets.
Garnham Street.
Kingsland Road.
London Fields (and off-streets).
Ridley Road.
Well Street, and side streets.
Wick Road.

Hammersmith:

Bradmore Lane.
Norland Road, Shepherd's Bush.
Railway Approach, Shepherd's Bush.

Hampstead:

Netherwood Street.

Holborn:

Leather Lane.
Little Earl Street.

Kensington:

Golborne Road.
Portobello Road.

Islington:

Baron Street.
Caledonian Market.

Lambeth:

Brixton Road.
Lambeth Walk.
Lower Marsh.
New Cut.
Pope's Road.
Station Road, Brixton.
Wilcox Road.

Lewisham:

Lewisham Market, Lewisham High Street.
Off Springfield Park Crescent.

Poplar:

Chrisp Street (and off-streets).
Devon's Road.
Roman Road.

St. Marylebone:

Bell Street.
Blandford Street.
Church Street.
Great Titchfield Street.

St. Pancras:

Chalton Street.
King Street.
Queen's Crescent.
Seaton Street.
Wellington Street.

Shoreditch:

Hoxton Street.
London Fields.
Nile Street.

Southwark:

East Street.
Westmoreland Road.
Draper Street.

Stepney:

Bow Common Lane.
Burdett Road (off-streets).
Burslem Street.
Cambridge Road.
Cobb Street.
Goulston Street.
Hessel Street and Hessel Street Market.

Stepney—*continued.*

Hope Street (and off-streets).
Leyden Street.
Middlesex Street.
Mile End Road.
Old Castle Street.
Salmon Lane.
Watney Street (and off-streets).
Wentworth Street and side streets.
Whitechapel Road.
White Horse Street (and off-streets).

Wandsworth:

Hildreth Street, Balham.

Westminster:

Berwick Street.
Little Pulteney Street.
Lupus Street.
Peter Street.
Pimlico Road.
Rupert Street.
Strutton Ground.
Tachbrook Street.
Warwick Street.

Woolwich:

Archery Road Market, Eltham High Street.
Beresford Square.

Markets and Fairs

in

England and Wales

PART VII: FINAL REVIEW

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

MARKETS AND FAIRS IN ENGLAND AND WALES, PART VII.—FINAL REVIEW.

INTRODUCTION.

This Report is the last of the series of Reports on the markets and fairs of England and Wales. These Reports are based on a comprehensive survey which has been undertaken by the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries in connection with its investigations into the marketing of agricultural produce. The need for the survey was emphasised by the Linlithgow Committee in its final Report.*

Part I of the series was a general review of market conditions throughout the country, dealing with such subjects as market rights, market administration, charges and finance, market construction and market practice generally. Parts II to IV, published as Economic Series Nos. 14, 19 and 23, and Parts V and VI, published in this volume, reviewed in detail the markets and fairs of the Midland, Northern, and Eastern and Southern Counties, Wales and London, respectively.

This Report (Part VII) reviews the Introductory Report (Economic Series No. 13) in the light of the detailed investigations which have since been made of market conditions throughout the country.

(I) MARKET RIGHTS AND CONTROL.

The principle that there should be some form of public control over the establishment of markets and over the carrying on of markets after they are established is sound. Markets are essentially a public service; it has been recognised from the earliest days of markets that the owner of a market had public functions to perform, failure in which could be visited by forfeiture of his franchise. At the present day, it is important that the ownership of markets should rest with bodies who are susceptible to public opinion, and, once this is secured, it is desirable that unreasonable competition between markets should be prevented.

At present, however, the system under which markets exist is haphazard. The process of development of markets was outlined in Part I of this survey (pages 5–14). It may generally be said that this process has in the past had no relation to the organisation of a system of markets adapted to the needs of agriculture. Two main types of markets may be distinguished, those based on some legal title—Charter or statutory right—and those which have no real legal title, which include a large proportion of

* Com. 2008|1924.

the privately owned auction marts. Many of the markets based on legal title, while they may at the date they were established have filled an economic need, often fail under modern conditions to promote the efficient marketing of agricultural produce. In most cases, the motive underlying the establishment and working of the unauthorised privately owned markets has been the financial profit of the owner. (See later, page 198).

It is still possible for a new market to be established under Charter, but, in fact, this method of setting up markets is extremely rare at the present day. So far as new markets are established on a lawful footing, they are commonly set up by local authorities in virtue of the Public Health Acts (1875 and 1908) or, occasionally, of local Acts. In practice, therefore, so far as the general law is concerned, the only effective control over the establishment of new legal markets is that exercised by the Minister of Health as the authority for sanctioning loans or for assenting to the use by a Rural District Council of the Public Health Act, 1908, if application is made to him. So far as it goes, this power could no doubt be used to limit the establishment of new markets in unsuitable places, or in areas which were already adequately supplied, but if the proposed new market were not within the Common Law distance of 7 miles from an existing market, there would be manifest difficulties in the way of his refusing assent to the proposals of a local authority merely on the ground, for example, that the market proposed to be established could not be considered necessary in view of modern developments in transport which have enlarged the drawing area of neighbouring markets.

Excessive competition, however, may arise not so much from markets which have a formal legal existence as from the establishment of new auction marts or other privately owned "markets" which enjoy no legal protection but are not interfered with, either because they are not near enough to infringe an existing market franchise, or because the owners of an existing franchise may not have thought it worth while to test their legality in judicial proceedings.

A case seems to be made out both for increased control of legally established markets, so as to reduce (it may be gradually) wasteful competition, and for the control of the indiscriminate organisation of auction marts or other "markets" which are not markets in law, by some authority other than those presumed under the existing law to have a financial interest in preventing the infringement of existing market franchises.

Where a market has been established under Charter, the terms of the Charter may be unsuitable for modern requirements. For example, the Charter may prescribe a market-day which no longer corresponds to the needs of the community or, less often, may require the market to be held in a particular place which is unsuitable. While there is no reason in law why such matters should not be remedied by obtaining a fresh grant of a new or amended Charter, in practice this is seldom done. Another course which is available, where the owner of a Charter market is a local authority, is to take formal steps for establishing a statutory market in virtue of the incorporation with the Public Health Act, 1875, of the Markets and Fairs Clauses Act, 1847, in which case, the Charter market merges in the statutory market and it becomes possible for the local authority, by its own by-laws, to change the market-day and, if necessary, the situation of the market, subject to certain legal restrictions which need not be set out here. Again, however, this step is comparatively seldom taken, and it might be worth while for local authorities who are market owners to consider it afresh. In this connection, a steady tendency may be recorded on the part of the local authorities owning markets, established not by Charter but under special Acts, to bring them instead under the powers of the Public Health Acts, which are much more convenient and flexible than most of the market Acts passed in the first half of the 19th century.

Where a market legally established is a Charter market or a statutory market, a clear defect in the existing powers is that the owner is unable to limit the number of auctions which may take place within the market limits. An auction is virtually a market in itself, and it appears just as desirable to restrict the number of auctions in a market as of markets in the full sense. The general position is that, by the common law, a person desirous of selling animals or goods may employ any lawful mode of sale, including sale by auction. In some markets, practical inconvenience has been reduced by the letting of space, and particularly by the letting of sale-rings, to certain auctioneers (this is within the powers of the market authority), and also, where the powers of the Public Health Act have been applied, by the making of by-laws—which there is power to make so long as they are framed to meet general convenience and not to give protection to the market owners or tenants—putting restrictions upon auction sales; but all such devices are subject to the over-ruling principle of the common law that freedom of trade in the market must not be infringed. If it were possible by some amendment of the law to give market authorities, or some central authority acting, it may be, through regional authorities* dealing with markets, power to restrict the number of auction sales, whether within legally established markets or in separately existing auction marts, much wasteful competition would be eliminated and funds would be set free for the improvement of market accommodation.

On the other hand, in places where a market authority, either through inertia or through lack of means, has not provided adequate accommodation, particularly for the sale of livestock, there might be considerable advantage if power were given directly to some central authority, or indirectly to regional authorities such as those referred to above, to render auction marts legitimate even

* Economic Series No. 13, page 59.

within the territorial limits of a franchise and without the conse of the market authority. The latter would then be driven, if had funds available, to improve its own accommodation alternatively, if it did not do so, the franchise would cease to a direct obstacle to the provision of proper accommodation private means. Cases have actually occurred where a mark authority, unable or unwilling itself to provide adequate acco modation, has given or offered to give licence to a private pers or body to erect a mart within the territorial limits of the franchi In such cases, however, the difficulty met with is the impossibili of guaranteeing freedom from competition to the owners of t private mart owing to the necessity for the provision by the mark authority of facilities for all and sundry to sell, whether auction or otherwise. This difficulty has been known to sufficient to deter private individuals from taking advantage the licence offered them.

In view of the inadequacy of existing market accommodation many towns, it is a defect in the powers of many public authorit that they are unable to provide for the accumulation, out of mark profits, of a fund for the improvement or extension of their marke It was pointed out in Part I of this Series † that, under the Munici Corporation Act, 1882, all boroughs are bound to pay profits arisi from their markets into the borough funds, while the Public Heal Acts require similar action in the case of authorities holding mark pursuant to them. Amendment of these Acts to remove t disability would appear to be desirable.

(II) MARKET CHARGES.*

In the types of market charge in use, particularly in co suming centres, a general tendency may be noted in wholes produce markets to substitute, for tolls on produce sold, fix rents for space occupied. This tendency is a natural sequel the change which has taken place in the type of trader using t markets. Originally, markets were used almost entirely producers who came to the markets to sell their own goods; to on the produce sold were then the most appropriate form of char Later, middlemen began to establish themselves permanently markets, and, in consuming centres, business in wholesale marke and in many retail markets is nowadays carried on mainly traders who occupy permanent stands. For traders of this ty fixed rents for space occupied are a much more convenient form charge than tolls, which cause considerable inconvenience collection both to market owners and market users. It is st common, however, in markets where a direct trade is carried by producers, for tolls to be charged on goods sold by produce or for a charge to be made on each loaded vehicle brought to t

* *See also* Economic Series No. 13, Chapter II.

† Economic Series No. 13.

market. Tolls are practically universal in legally constituted livestock markets, except where they have been commuted by auctioneers for an annual lump-sum payment.

While the agitation which is sometimes raised against market charges on the score of their magnitude may frequently be out of proportion to the economic burden imposed, it should be borne in mind that, when prices are low and production profits are small, increases in market tolls may not unnaturally give rise to considerable irritation. So long as tolls remain, it is essential, therefore, that some system, such as exists at present, of public control over these charges should continue. The necessity for obtaining the consent of the Ministry of Health, which consults with the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, to any increase in tolls in markets established under the Public Health Acts, should give agriculturists a feeling of confidence that tolls will not be unreasonably increased against them. In other legally constituted markets—i.e., markets established by Charter or special local Acts, the tolls chargeable are usually limited by those Charters or Acts and the limits can only be varied by the granting of new Charters or by fresh legislation.

The question of what constitutes a fair level of market charges in publicly owned markets is, of course, a vexed one. The contention of those using the markets for selling purposes, whether tenants of stalls or warehouses, or producers who sell through the markets, is that charges should not be so high as to yield more than a normal return on the capital value of the market; publicly owned markets, it is claimed, should not be regarded as institutions expected to earn profits which may go to relieve the rates. On the other hand, public authorities owning markets may naturally be disposed to operate them primarily in the interests of their ratepayers and to aim at securing the maximum profit on the market undertakings.

A public authority, however, possessing a market franchise which confers on the possessor the exclusive right to hold a market within a certain radius, cannot justly claim the right to conduct the market primarily in the interests of its ratepayers. Its position of monopoly makes such an authority responsible for providing adequate market accommodation at a reasonable cost for all who require it, seeing that market users are precluded from finding better and cheaper facilities elsewhere within the area over which the franchise extends. Where market charges are so high that the market authority is known to be securing a high rate of profit, and where it can thus be reasonably claimed that cheaper facilities could be provided by private enterprise, given freedom from the restriction imposed by the Charter, there would appear to be a reasonable claim for a reduction of charges.

In any event, the maintenance of high market charges may not necessarily be in the best interests of the town to which the market belongs. In produce markets, the lower the stand rents the more cheaply can market traders sell, with consequent benefit to t] town's population as consumers ; in all cases, lower tolls tend attract producers from the countryside to the town as a mark centre, to the benefit of the local shopkeepers—an importa consideration in many small towns possessing livestock market Low stand rents in produce markets may, on the other han damage the trade of local shopkeepers by giving market tenan the advantage of lower working expenses. Further, if, as is t] case in many towns, stand rents are not only very low but spa in the market is insufficient to accommodate all who apply for i the market traders may be said to enjoy an unfair monopoly cheap business premises.

The lack of uniformity in market charges—as regards not on rents and tolls but porterage and other charges—throughout t] country, together with the inability of market authorities, in mar cases, owing to the terms of their franchise, to regulate the markets in the manner best suited to the economic needs of t] day, adds force to the suggestion that some form of external contr over markets is desirable—in this instance, not only to introdu greater elasticity into their administration, but also some degr of standardisation into their working.

(III) WHOLESALE PRODUCE MARKETS.

Two types of wholesale produce market may be distinguish —markets in producing areas, used largely by producers f selling their own goods to country wholesalers (dealers) who subs quently "export" them to consuming centres, and markets consuming centres in which the traders are either middlemen local producers selling their own goods for consumption in t] district. The general statements already made* as to the ma physical requirements of large wholesale produce markets in co suming centres can be substantially confirmed from the experien gained as this survey has progressed. The private-treaty marke in producing areas may, on the whole, be said to be declining importance, though, in certain areas—e.g., Devonshire, Cornwa and Wales—they still fulfil a useful function. There is a tendenc which may become more marked with the development of t] process of grading agricultural produce by wholesalers (wheth private individuals or producers' organisations) and of farm-t farm collection by motor transport, for country markets to side-tracked and for the produce to be delivered direct to packin stations, whence graded supplies are dispatched in bulk to co suming centres. These producers' markets seem destined, ther fore, to become more and more confined to the supply of loc needs.

* Economic Series No. 13, pages 34–36.

(IV) LIVESTOCK MARKETS.*

Small Markets.—Throughout the country, the general practice of farmers selling livestock through markets is to make use of a market close at hand. As was pointed out in Part I of this survey, this implies the existence of a network of small or medium-sized markets at comparatively short distances apart. The majority of livestock markets all over the country are, in fact, of this type. There are in England and Wales approximately 1,008 livestock markets, and, in approximately 470 of the centres in which livestock markets are held, the average annual number of stock of all kinds passing through the markets is less than 10,000. The principal disadvantages of small livestock markets, as has been repeatedly emphasised throughout this series of reports, are, first, the likelihood of less freedom of competition due to the comparatively small number of buyers, and, secondly, the sensitiveness of the small market to comparatively minor variations in the numbers of stock on offer and the number of buyers present. A further disadvantage likely to attend the small market is the poorness of transport facilities, due to the fact that the number of stock moved on each market day may not call forth the provision of a good railway service or of motor haulage by private contractors. Accommodation for stock in the small market, again, is likely to be poor owing to the revenue from the market being insufficient to enable its owner to provide adequate facilities.

The mere fact that the average turnover of a market is small, however, does not necessarily justify the conclusion that the market is superfluous. The number and position of markets essential to each district are largely influenced by geographical conditions and means of communication. In parts of Wales, Devonshire and Cornwall, and the north-west of England, for instance, many markets which are comparatively small fulfil an essential function owing to the difficulty in those districts of transporting stock long distances to markets. Seasonal fluctuations in trade, again, may result in markets, which during a year have a relatively small turnover, becoming at certain seasons important centres with large entries of stock. The type of trade handled also has a bearing on the question whether a market is or is not redundant. Those markets engaged in purely local trade, such as the supply of cows, store sheep or store pigs by farmers to other farmers in their locality, or the supply of fat stock for local consumption, do not need the large turnover which is desirable for efficient working in an "export" market, which has to attract buyers from a distance.

A large proportion of the small livestock marts have been established by auctioneers for their private profit or as a means of keeping in touch with farmers for the purpose of securing farm

* *See also* Economic Series No. 20, pages 69–75.

sales and local valuations, and this process has been stimulated l competition between rival auctioneers.

Farmers' representatives, in negotiation with auctioneers each district, might do much to secure the elimination of superfluo marts, at any rate in districts—of which there are many—whe single firms of auctioneers own a number of small marts. A sugge tion that some regional body should be set up in each district organise the rural markets with a view to the elimination of sma economically and financially unsound markets, was referred to Part I of this series of reports.*

Motor Transport.—Motor transport is widely used in mo parts of the country for transporting livestock, but there is st much room for further development all over the country. Tl use of motor transport for stock is least common in the hilli districts—e.g., Wales, Devon and Cornwall—and, at least in tl two latter counties, lack of it appears to be associated with super-abundance of small markets. The use of motor transport f taking livestock to market is bound to accelerate the process substitution of the large for the small mart. The labour involv in driving stock from the farm to a railway station, trucking ar driving from station to market on arrival, combined with tl comparative slowness of rail transport over short distances, sufficient to deter most farmers from sending livestock away to large market in the absence of any means of transport other th rail.

Planning.—The accommodation requirements of a good liv stock market were outlined in Part I of this survey (pages 53–5 The survey has shown that, generally in the North and to a le extent in the Midlands and the East, the larger markets ful these requirements reasonably well. In the South and in Wal however, there are comparatively few well laid-out large marke and all over the country the small marts are on the whole inad quately equipped. The principal defects are lack of cover for cow calves and fat cattle, bad planning from the point of view of rap movement of stock into and out of sale-rings, and, in a number important marts, lack of space. The number of street livesto markets remaining is remarkably high.

Market Intelligence.—One important function of a market to establish prices throughout a district as a basis for priva dealing. In the marketing of agricultural produce, buyers a generally better informed of the state of the market than produce In order, therefore, that the markets may satisfactorily perfor their function, an accurate system of market reporting is essenti At present, prices at some 34 livestock markets in England ar 5 in Wales are reported in the Ministry of Agriculture's Week Agricultural Market Report. The defects of most market pri

* Economic Series No. 13, page 59.

quotations are the lack of definition of grades or age groups for stock, the practice of quoting top and bottom prices rather than averages, and the necessity for basing quotations on estimated rather than actual weights for fat stock other than cattle, and for all store stock, owing to the general practice of weighing only fat cattle for sale in markets. The advantages of weighing stock before sale have been pointed out in previous reports in the Economic Series* and were emphasised by the Linlithgow Committee in its Third Interim Report.† Farmers stand to gain most by the practice. Its adoption for stock of other kinds than fat cattle would probably be secured if farmers collectively demanded it. The Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries has recently arranged for the broadcasting of prices realised in certain markets for fat cattle of defined weight and quality.

Notification of Entries.—The desirability of a system of prior notification of entries of stock in organised marts by farmers was emphasised in the Report on the Marketing of Cattle and Beef.‡ Investigation of market practice all over the country has shown the small proportion of markets in which such a system exists. If entries were generally notified in time for a catalogue to be prepared by the auctioneer for circulation to buyers showing the numbers of stock expected on the following market day, the bad effect of week-to-week fluctuations in entries, particularly at the smaller markets, would be mitigated.

(V) PUBLIC ABATTOIRS.

Throughout the country, there is a lack of up-to-date public slaughtering facilities. The Linlithgow Committee, in 1923, drew attention to the need for a considerable extension of public abattoirs.§ Much has been done since that date, but a number of towns of over 100,000 inhabitants still have no public abattoir, while few of the existing public abattoirs are planned and equipped on modern lines. The way in which they have developed in this country is outlined in the Report on the Marketing of Cattle and Beef.¶ As is there pointed out,‖ improvement in these facilities is urgently needed, both on public health and economic grounds. A number of local authorities are known to be considering the construction or extension of abattoirs, but some are deterred by the expense. It was explained in the Report referred to that much of the expenditure usually incurred in erecting public abattoirs might be saved by planning them on the lines of modern meat works, and by some form of control over the flow of stock

* Economic Series No. 12, pages 75–77; Economic Series No. 13, pages 45–46; and Economic Series No. 20, pages 73–75.

† Cmd. 1927/1923, pages 23–27.

‡ Economic Series No. 20, pages 71–72.

§ Cmd. 1927/1923, pages 43–46.

¶ Economic Series No. 20, pages 90 and 91.

‖ op. cit. No. 20, pages 89 and 90.

through the abattoir, such as has been carried out, for example by the municipality of Adelaide, South Australia.* It may b added that the building of public abattoirs, provided they can b shown to be necessary in the interests of public health, can be aide by grants from State funds through the Unemployment Grants Com mittee, operating under Part II of the Development (Loan Guarantee and Grants) Act, 1929. This Act empowers the Minister of Labou until 1932, with the approval of the Treasury, to make grants toward any expenditure for carrying out works of public utility that ar calculated to promote employment, on condition that it appear likely that the works would not be proceeded with in the nea future unless the grant were made.

Markets Division,
Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries.
January, 1930.

---

* Economic Series No. 20, pages 91–95.