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*Editorial.*

## **DISTRIBUTION IN A CHANGING WORLD.**

When it is realised that probably from one-third to one-half of the money expended by consumers in the purchase of some products of agriculture is absorbed in what we may term "marketing operations," it is evident that here is a most important field for investigation and analysis.

To the mind of the man in the street who may not have given the matter overmuch critical thought, the ideal system of marketing of primary products might probably picture itself as one where producer and consumer are brought face to face to complete their transactions. As a matter of historical fact, the gathering together of people at convenient centres on occasions for the interchange of food and other necessities of life does represent one of the oldest practices of civilisation.

It has been said that, for generations, we have been analysing the production process and discovering where detailed improvements could be made and that, for generations, improvements have been made, item by item, until the gross result has become impressive.

Change of ownership of produce from farmer to consumer is achieved in these days only after goods have passed through various processes or channels of sorting, packing, transportation, storage, etc. In an age of specialisation, specialisation in production has long since passed the stage where direct dealing between producer and consumer is practicable. Specialisation in production has, therefore, been the fore-runner of another form of specialisation. Agencies devoted to the marketing of produce have sprung up whose important function it is to bridge the gap between producer and consumer.

The Sydney Municipal Markets receive fruit and vegetables from every State in the Commonwealth and they are, in fact, regarded as the principal single unit of the type in the Southern Hemisphere. It is obvious that quite a number of factors has contributed to the development of these markets and it is **equally** evident that the stage has been reached when intimate knowledge of the distributive process generally, by which produce passes from the producer to the consumer, is an essential requisite to further progress. In other words, there is every need for the problem of distribution to be tackled as persistently and as scientifically as the problems of farm production have been attacked in the past. This is not going to be easy. The economic interests of numbers of people and organisations are involved. To plan marketing on a basis calculated to meet the needs of changing times, changing methods, demands, population and products, will require a concentrated effort of co-operation built around the recommendations of the widest and most disinterested experience which can be assembled.