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## AN ANALYSIS OF THE ESSENTIALS OF A GOOD MARKET.

John Morley once stated that the history of civilisation is the history of the displacement of old conceptions by new ones more conformable to the facts. It is the record of the removal of old institutions and ways of living in favour of others of greater convenience and ampler capacity, at once multiplying and satisfying human requirements.

There comes a time in the development of every metropolis when it is necessary to face boldly up to the fact that existing institutions, which hitherto have essayed to cater for the city's needs, are no longer adequate themselves to fulfil their original purpose. Such a stage, it is claimed, has been reached with regard to the City Municipal Fruit and Vegetable Markets.

In recent years the inadequacies of the Sydney markets to cope with the volume of fruit and vegetables required to feed Sydney's ever-growing population have concentrated attention upon the need, either to reorganise or renovate the facilities at the present site or to make a complete break and to build new markets at a new location. To bring about the changes involved or to build a new market is a complicated task in any large city. Such a problem now faces the City of Sydney. It is profitable, therefore, at this time, to examine broadly some of the findings of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics and the Agricultural Marketing Service of the United States Department of Agriculture with respect to a special report prepared by them in 1940 on the wholesale Fruit and Vegetable Markets of New York City. The Department of Agriculture in the United States made this study, as it had made similar studies in other important consuming centres, because it is necessarily concerned with the economical distribution of farm products.

The purpose of the present article, therefore, is to set out as briefly as possible what were the findings of the U.S.A. Department as to the minimum essentials of a good market.

*Completeness*—A market should be complete in that it should handle a complete range of fruit and vegetables. It should be open to all transportation agencies on an equal basis and should cater for receipts by rail, motor truck and boat. The market should be open to all types of dealers. Its situation should be such as to eliminate any need for jobbers or retailers to visit several areas to secure the complete variety of fruit and vegetables they need.

*Design*—There should be ample space on sale platforms or in individual stores, or both, for the unloading, display, storage and sale of supplies. Store buildings should have both front and rear entrances, so arranged that each end of every store will be open to a street. The stores should have covered platforms at both front and rear; full-sized basements for storage (both common and refrigerated, if needed), washing, repacking, ripening, etc.; mezzanine offices overlooking the sales floors, and elevators or conveyors to connect the basement and the first floor.

All streets within the market should be at least 100 feet wide so that trucks could back up to both sides of the sale platforms, including both front and rear of stores. Adequate parking areas should be provided. Insofar as possible, it should not be necessary for supplies arriving by rail to be moved by motor trucks from the railroad to the sales floor.

It is desirable that the market be so located that it can be completely enclosed with fences and gates to make possible the regulation and enforcement of selling hours and to expedite the collation of information on the volume of current receipts.

*Proper Location*—The market should be so located that supplies arriving over railroads can be moved into it. It should be located conveniently with respect to highway transportation. From it should radiate arterial roads from which buyers come. The market should be located as near as possible to the centre of consumption so that supplies may move as far as possible towards the final consumers before leaving the original transportation agency and that buyers may be able to make their purchases in as short a period as possible.

A factor of considerable importance in picking a site is the ability to secure a large area of land to meet current needs and to provide for inevitable expansion.

*Cost Factor*—Only necessary facilities should be provided. These should be plain and relatively inexpensive. Additional office space, auction rooms, etc., can be provided above the store units or sale platforms without requiring additional buildings. Modernistic buildings, with round corners, glass bricks, marble wainscoting, unnecessary additional stories and elaborate utilities, may be decorative but there is little justification for them if the cost has to be loaded into distribution charges.

*Effective Price Making*—A good market should so focus supply and demand that a correct market price will be established.

*Sound Management*—A market should be so managed that it will operate in the public interest without discrimination against any type of dealer or buyer or grower, against any form of transportation, or against produce from any State. Charges levied for the use of the facilities should provide only for cost and maintenance and should not produce a profit for any non-market purpose.

The market management should be strong enough to enforce desirable regulations and to stop practices which are an unnecessary burden on the cost of distribution.

The managing agency should include representatives of each of the groups which have a direct interest in it—shippers, dealers, buyers and consumers, as well as the appropriate agencies of government.

The principles enumerated are those which are considered to cover the essentials of a good terminal market for almost any city.

The planning of a market to meet the needs of the changing times will require a concentrated piece of co-operative planning based upon the pooled recommendations of the widest and most disinterested experience that can be obtained. No effort has been made in the present article to evaluate the relative merits of centralised, as compared with decentralised, marketing. The analysis of the U.S.A. Department appears to favour centralisation. It is proposed to make the points in favour of decentralisation the subject of a further article.

R. N. SMITH.

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### GENERAL NOTES AND NEWS.

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The poll of potato producers in this State on the question of whether or not a Potato Marketing Board should be constituted under the provisions of the New South Wales Marketing of Primary Products Act, resulted in an overwhelming affirmative vote. Of those eligible to vote, 82 per cent. returned their ballot papers, and of these 90 per cent. voted in favour of the establishment of the Board. Preparation is now being made for the conduct of a poll on 12th March, 1947, for the election of producer representatives to the Board. It is proposed to divide the State into five electoral districts, each electing one representative.

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As the result of negotiations conducted by the Division it is now expected that the Navy Bean Board will be able to acquire the necessary facilities for the conduct of its operations, *i.e.*, the land, buildings and seed cleaning machinery at Guyra Pool Headquarters.

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Representations have recently been received from several producer organisations favouring Governmental action towards ensuring greater freedom for unlicensed barrowmen as a means of promoting better distribution of produce. From the nature of their operations and their mobility barrowmen, especially in times of glut supply, are particularly well equipped to serve as a medium for the speedy distribution to consumers of perishable produce which has reached such a stage of maturity as to make quick sales the only alternative to destruction at the tip. It is agreed, however, that there are other factors warranting consideration and the problem appears to be that of reconciling, to the greatest degree possible, the more or less conflicting interests of the various parties concerned.