HELPING AMERICA TO KEEP HOUSE: HOW THE FARMER AND THE HOUSEKEEPER CAN DO IT: BY M. IRWIN MACDONALD

The consumers in the city of New York pay five hundred million dollars a year for their food. At the railroad and steamer terminals the food costs the commission men and jobbers three hundred and fifty million dollars. The handling of food supplies from the time they land on Manhattan Island until they are delivered at the door costs approximately one hundred and fifty million dollars a year.

These figures are compiled from the most careful estimate of the cost of our present method of food distribution in New York. They cover only one of the items in our composite bugbear,—the high cost of living,—but this item is so overwhelming and so unnecessary that it makes an admirable point of attack for economists, as well as for those who would bring their household bills down to a reasonable figure.

The situation in New York, as compared with cities of like importance in Europe and with certain of the other large cities in America, shows almost unbelievable neglect and stupidity in the matter of distributing food supplies. As to markets and marketing facilities, this city stands today exactly where it stood twenty-five
years ago, when the receiving docks on the lower west side of Man-
hattan Island were adequate to supply a city of the size that New
York was then.

It is only a year or so since we began to realize in this country
that our entire system of food distribution was so clumsy and wasteful
that the shortage and consequent high price of almost any item in the
country’s food supply was really not due as much to lack of production
as to the mismanagement of marketing. In the last issue of this
magazine, the story was told of the way the housewives of many
smaller cities and towns have grappled with this situation by the
establishment of public retail markets. But no markets of this sort
could meet the needs of New York.

As it stands now, the greater part of the food used by the five
million inhabitants of the city is landed by rail and steamboat on the
extreme southwesterly edge of Manhattan, than which no point more
remote from the center of population could well be found. This
means that a large part of the food supply of the Bronx and Brooklyn
is actually carried past these two boroughs to the wholesale district
of Manhattan and then carried back to them again. And in addition
to the inconvenience of location, the docks are singularly lacking
in facilities for the proper care and handling of food products. The
arrangements for delivery are so limited that truckmen have to get in
line at ten o’clock at night in order to receive their supplies at five
in the morning.

EVEN this is only the beginning of the trouble. It is almost
impossible for the smaller dealer or the man who has no influence
to get in line at all, for the street during nearly the whole night
is almost a solid mass of wagons which present an impassable barrier
to the man whose claim to be there is not recognized and admitted.
Therefore, he must buy from the jobber. The result of this system
is tersely embodied in the report of the New York Commission on the
Cost of Living, which says:

“Stock is carted from the railway and steamboat terminals to the
various and numerous places of the commission men, then sold to
wholesalers, jobbers, speculators and storage men and carted to their
respective places. It is often sold to other jobbers and speculators
and storage men and is again carted. Finally it is sold to the con-
sumer and delivered. All these dealers make profits or charges against
the stuff which aggregates from forty to seventy per cent. of the amount
finally paid by the consumer.”

This is an exceedingly moderate estimate, because the personal
observation of investigators from the Housewives League who have
THE GARDENERS' STALLS IN THE NEW PUBLIC MARKET IN MUNICH: ONE OF THE MOST PICTURESQUE FEATURES OF THIS RETURN TO OLD BAVARIAN WAYS OF LIVING.
SCENES IN THE NEW MARKETPLACE IN MUNICH—THE MOST MODERN OF ALL EUROPEAN MUNICIPAL MARKETS: THE DIGNITY OF ITS ARCHITECTURE IS SYMBOLIC OF THE IMPORTANCE WHICH THIS CENTER HOLDS IN THE LIFE OF THE PEOPLE.
By Courtesy of E. E. Pratt.

A GLIMPSE OF THE INTERIOR OF MUNICH'S NEW MARKET:
THE RETAIL DEALERS' SECTION.

MORNING SCENE AT THE OPEN-AIR MARKET IN FRANKFORT
WHERE FARMERS AND HOUSEWIVES MEET.
A BUSY HOUR IN THE FRANKFORT OPEN-AIR MARKET: THE PICTURE SUGGESTS SOMETHING OF THE WEALTH OF COLOR AND INTEREST THAT PERMEATE THIS WELL PATRONIZED PLACE.

AN IMPORTANT FIGURE IN THE FRANKFORT MARKET IS THE OFFICIAL WEIGHER, WHO IS SHOWN HERE BENEATH THE BIG UMBRELLA THAT PROTECTS HIM AND HIS SCALES FROM SUN AND SHOWER.
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visited the docks and compared the wholesale prices at which the goods were sold there with the prices paid by them in the uptown groceries, showed a profit ranging from one hundred to three hundred and fifty per cent. on staple fruit and vegetables. For example, a crate of string beans, holding thirty quarts, can be bought on the dock for fifty cents, either wholesale or at retail, by any one who cares to go down in the middle of the night and get it. These same beans were selling at that time in the groceries for fifteen cents a quart, or four dollars and fifty cents for the crate.

It took people a long time to realize this state of affairs. The investigations of the various commissions appointed to inquire into the causes for the high cost of living brought out the truth sufficiently to induce a systematic comparison with the marketing methods of European cities. The result was a strong movement to establish a system of terminal markets that would place the food distribution of New York City upon a fairly economical business basis.

The terminal market system has been thoroughly tested out in Europe. It means simply the establishment of a large wholesale market at the terminus of a railroad or steamship line, where supplies in wholesale quantities can be unloaded from cars or boats directly into the market and where retailers can go and buy, thus saving all the extra handling and trucking that adds so much to the cost. This market fills the same place in a large city, which must be supplied principally by railroad, that the street market fills in a smaller place where the farmer can drive in and sell directly to the consumer. The goods are sold at auction by licensed auctioneers under bond to the Government and the money is turned back directly to the farmers.

It was at first proposed that New York establish a terminal wholesale market in the vicinity of the old Gansevoort Market, but there was a strong protest against this because such a plan would only serve to perpetuate the present condition of receiving, handling and distributing food stuffs. The only improvement which could be brought about by the establishment, at a cost of fifteen millions of dollars, of one large terminal market to supply the city of New York would be that the modern building would undoubtedly afford better facilities for unloading from cars and for the inspection of both premises and products. The middlemen would still be necessary and food would still have to be carted long distances to other sections of the city.

Therefore, having the firm conviction that not one but ten or more terminal markets were needed for the city of New York, a committee of experts got together last January to consider the subject
of food distribution and to present to the city officials and to the public a definite plan for a better and more economical system. This committee, which was a large one, represented all the interests most immediately concerned. It included prominent economists, food experts and representatives of the Granges, of the State Agricultural Society, of the Woman’s Municipal League, of the Housewives League and of various other organizations. It was organized under the name of the Housewives League and Allied Consumers’ Committee, with Mrs. Julian Heath as chairman. The Hon. Ezra A. Tuttle, who probably knows as much about the food question as any man in the country and who is qualified to see it from the side of the practical farmer, as well as of the consumer, was made chairman of the subcommittee whose duty it was to submit a plan for a system of markets that would meet the needs of New York. His report was accepted by the larger committee and an architect promptly commissioned to make plans for both wholesale and retail markets as suggested in the report.

In working out this system of distribution, every detail was most carefully considered with reference to its permanent practicability and with full recognition that the problem of feeding the vast population of New York comprised three distinct features. These briefly stated are:

First—Receiving food stuffs from the transportation companies and delivering them to the retail stores, the factories or into cold or general storage.
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Second—Selling at retail and delivering to consumers.
Third—Manufacturing the surplus and also the products liable to loss by deterioration.

It was estimated that to supply adequately the needs of Manhattan there should be three or four receiving terminals on North River, covering the district between Harlem and the lower part of the island, and three on the East River. In addition to these there should be three receiving terminals for Brooklyn, one for the Bronx and one for Queens, all to be located on the East River. Direct railroad tracks from car floats or railway lines should be laid so as to permit the cars to be run into the terminals, there to be unloaded without extra handling and cartage. Cars could be brought on floats from all railroads to these terminals.

The terminal building as planned would allow for all necessary expansion and could easily be adapted to the needs of either a small or large city. This is done by planning the building in units. As shown here, the suggested terminal market would be four hundred by one thousand feet, a size which might be necessary in New York but which would probably be too large for the average need. Therefore it is so arranged that any number of units can be built at one time, down to a minimum of about four hundred feet by one hundred feet, each additional one hundred and four feet adding another unit to the terminal. Each unit would cost approximately four hundred thousand dollars and would be capable of taking care at one time of twenty-seven ordinary forty-foot freight cars and about one hundred wagons.

The cars and wagons would run directly into the basement where there would be several groups of railway tracks, each group containing three lines of railway side by side and about seven feet apart. The central line of the three in a group would serve to feed with its switches the outside ones, so that cars could be easily moved. In case of a rush this central track would serve for a third emergency train.

On a level with the floors of the cars would be platforms about twelve feet wide, on which goods could be taken across directly from the freight cars to the waiting wagons or motor trucks. For these wagons and trucks there is left a clear space about forty feet wide, with another twelve-foot platform on the farther side, then another group of railway tracks just beyond and so on. The space for vehicles is just wide enough to allow for a line of wagons and motors backed up against either platform and a clear space in the

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