

## PART IV.—ASSEMBLING THE PRODUCE.

Agricultural produce is raised in small units insufficient, as a rule, to constitute commercial shipments; these have first to be assembled and concentrated at certain points before distribution from the areas of production to those of consumption can be conveniently and economically carried out. In purely local marketing, when producers sell direct to local retailers or consumers, assembling may not always be necessary: in long-range marketing, it is, as a rule, inevitable.

So far as eggs are concerned, direct sale by producers to retailers is probably the dominant marketing method in this country; at the same time, the trade conducted through higgler and country dealers is considerable, and it is this more circuitous route, involving the concentration of produce for transfer to distant consuming areas, which is examined in the present section of this Report.

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### CHAPTER XI.—THE HIGGLER.

The collection of eggs from farms, as a means of livelihood, has increased considerably since the war, due partly to unemployment and partly to the desire for outdoor occupation. Many who took up small holdings and commenced poultry keeping find egg collection more remunerative; others, in regular employment, engage in this work in their spare time. As a side line, carriers also take up egg collection in many parts of the country. Similarly, many country shopkeepers, mainly grocers, make a business of collecting eggs from farms when calling to deliver other goods; to oblige their farmer customers, or as a speculation, they frequently collect more eggs than they require for their own retail trade and rely on dealers to relieve them of the surplus. Sometimes, the agreed value of the eggs is deducted from the farmer's grocery account; sometimes the eggs are paid for in cash. The former is a relic of a primitive barter economy; it is dying out in England, but is still common in Wales, notably in the outlying districts of Merioneth, Montgomery and Cardigan.\* There are obvious objections to the practice.

Collection by carriers is important and has increased in importance with the rapid development of motor transport. Carriers usually collect at stated points on their regular routes, bring the produce any distance up to 12 miles into a market, collect and return the empty baskets and frequently also take back to the producer the proceeds of sale. For this they charge from 1*d.* to 1½*d.* per dozen according to the quantity handled. The carrier-service is also of considerable value to auction

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\* See also J. Morgan Jones: "The Poultry Industry in Wales." 1925.