

PART V.—TRANSPORTATION.

CHAPTER XIII.—CARRIAGE BY RAIL, ROAD AND
PARCEL POST.

(i) Rail.

The carriage of imported eggs is an extensive traffic in which all the railway companies are more or less involved. Some idea of its magnitude can be gauged from an examination of the quantities received at the various ports (*see* page 10). A large proportion of this traffic is despatched in truckloads direct to the principal consuming centres.

The traffic in home-produce, on the other hand, is split up, at the outset, into small parcels sent from and to many points. The railway companies state that this diffuseness adds greatly to their difficulties in giving the attention to this class of traffic which is required. They also state that special facilities have been repeatedly offered for bulking small consignments for carriage to a central point at reduced rates, but little or no advantage is taken of them. Consignments of English eggs sufficient to form a wagon-load are comparatively rare and, on certain systems, practically unknown.

That it is difficult to induce producers to combine for the bulk transport of their produce, whether eggs, fruit, vegetables or other agricultural commodities is a commonplace, though there are reasons, such as the time and trouble required to organise bulk consignment, which should be recognised by way of extenuation. Moreover, bulk consignment, though cheaper, means conveyance by ordinary goods train as a rule, and this is slower than conveyance by passenger train, which is more suitable for perishable produce and more generally preferred. It is notable, however, that dealers or country wholesalers do not bulk shipments destined for the same consuming centre, having regard to the larger quantities they handle; so far as is known, they practically never combine for the purpose. This compares unfavourably with an instance noted in Holland, where from 10 to 30 shippers, otherwise in keen competition with each other, combine to avail themselves of bulk transport arrangements from Barneveld market to the port of Rotterdam. An agent brings up, say, 4 or 5 rail trucks to Barneveld on market day and arranges the entraining and transport of the shipments to Rotterdam and their embarkation at that port on behalf of the shippers as a whole.

Railway rates for eggs, by both passenger and goods train, stand at about 50 per cent. above pre-war rates in this country.

(a) *Passenger Train Rates.*—The maximum rates chargeable by the companies for the conveyance of consignments exceeding