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Distribution and Production in the Philadelphia Area

Industrial Areas Defined

With respect to production and distribution in industry the United States divides into many homogeneous areas which take their names, as a general rule, from the principal city contained within their borders but which exceed in geographical limits and in commercial influence the physical boundaries of these cities themselves. When we speak of New York in the industrial sense, for instance, we do not limit ourselves to the confines of Manhattan Island or even to the five boroughs which make up the city proper. We mean the whole territory which holds together as a producing and distributing unit and which extends many miles up the Hudson River and down the Bay and strikes inland even into another state.

Similarly when we speak industrially of Philadelphia we do not mean the city which William Penn laid out but that whole territory lying generally along the Delaware River, embracing parts of three states, whose functioning is unified by common interest and identical facilities.

The New Standard

This building up of homogeneous districts of a common interest based on the industrial viewpoint and the gradually developing consciousness that they constitute entities broader in scope than the mere political divisions of city and county which formerly sufficed, is a sign of the times. The new tendency has not yet been established long enough so that the precise boundaries of the various production and distribution areas of the country are exactly defined. But there are steps being taken in that direction. Official government cognizance is being taken of the new trend and in the census of 1930, when the report is finally made, there will be population and statistical information tabulated on the basis of these industrial or metropolitan areas.

The United States Chamber of Commerce is at present working with the Census Bureau to establish the determinants which should influence the definition of such areas. It should be added that in this publication the Philadelphia Business Prog-

ress Association makes one of the first, if not the first, contributions to practical work along this line. As far as there is any definite agreement on these determinants, the efforts of its Research Department have been directed along lines that conform to them. The former determinants, like arbitrary circles drawn with this or that radius, have been ignored. It is believed the present study represents the first attempt to define the Metropolitan Area and the various distribution areas of Philadelphia along scientific lines in keeping with the present-day standards of definition.

Philadelphia The Atlantic Coast Center

Actual study of conditions that surround distribution in the Philadelphia Area has led to the conclusion that from Philadelphia you can reach more people with less effort than from any other great distribution center in the country. Let us see why that is so.

The Philadelphia Area occupies a strategic position with regard to distribution to the great markets of the country east of the Mississippi. These may be roughly defined as northern, middle western and southern, stated in the order of their relative importance.

The distribution advantage of Philadelphia with respect to these great market divisions is that it is a seaboard city, central to all of them.

Baltimore may be taken as the industrial city at the gateway to the southern market. New York may be considered similarly with respect to the northern market, embracing also the New England states. Philadelphia, lying midway between these two, is in the strategic position of being able to reach these two great markets with greatest ease.

As to The West

Pittsburgh and Buffalo might be considered the gateways to the mid-west and the seaboard cities have no material advantage one over the other in reaching these two points, except perhaps New York, Philadelphia and Baltimore, which are for all practical purposes on a parity and have some advantage over Boston in access to the Pittsburgh gateway.