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Review of



Marketing and

Agricultural Economics

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DIVISION OF MARKETING
AND
AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS

REVIEW OF MARKETING AND AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS.

Issued by authority of the Minister for Agriculture
(HON. E.H. GRAHAM, M.L.A.)
and prepared under the direction of the Chief of the
Division of Marketing and Agricultural Economics,
Department of Agriculture, New South Wales, Australia.

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CO-OPERATIVE MARKETING NEEDS A STIMULUS.

Although it is 101 years since the co-operative movement was inaugurated in December, 1844, with the establishment by 28 weavers of a store at Rochdale, England, and the International Co-operative Alliance was recently reported to have had an affiliated membership of about 100 million in 40 different countries, the movement in Australia has only made steady progress since its development began here in the latter part of last century. The outstanding achievements have been in the dairying and fruit industries, yet the opportunities are just as great in other primary industries. Producers commonly complain of the high costs of marketing their commodities, and it is unfortunate that the present day demands of specialisation have forced the farmer to concentrate on production methods without seriously considering co-operative enterprise as a means of improving his lot on the marketing side. Perhaps more apostles or leaders in the movement are required, but the fact remains that with an assured volume of business, good management, adequate finance in the early stages and elimination of costly, non-essential services, it is possible through co-operative enterprise to increase the margin between costs and returns - to obtain for members the highest farm price. There are numerous instances of farmers having become the victims of shrewd and well-informed market operators, and just as this fact has, in many instances, forced growers into co-operative organisations, so the opportunities still remain for collective action in marketing to remedy these unworthy practices so freely acknowledged yet taken for granted, in spite of their obvious imperfections and the need for reconstruction. But if a co-operative society is to be successful it must be as efficient as a prosperous private concern, and it must at the same time perform the marketing services of the middleman for less than the total gross margin that would be deducted by him.

Organised marketing in the co-operative way offers untold advantages: it makes possible a better footing of all markets; it is the only sound means of eliminating the profit motive, for the middleman's profits and losses are transferred to the producer in higher or lower prices; and, finally, it encourages uniform grading and packing and emphasises to the producer the advantage of selling strictly on grade. Less individualism and greater enterprise amongst growers are essential to progress in the co-operative movement.

A. J. Hynes.
Chief of Division.