

As reported on Page One, Croydon yesterday saw the beginning of a great experiment. Vegetable growers opened a market for the direct sale of their produce to housewives. Here is the detailed story:

THE Vegetable Price Rebellion, now spreading through the country, began yesterday at Croydon, Surrey.

It was something new to housewives who, for years past, have accepted rules, regulations, high prices and queues because—"nobody does anything about it."

Yesterday the wives of Croydon went out shopping as usual. Suddenly, in an arcade, they heard an assistant at a stall shout:

"Give us your prices for vegetables, We'll accept them."

Direct sales, cutting out the middle-man, had started.

Women agreed to pay 1s. a lb. for tomatoes, 3d. each for ridge cucumbers, 6d. a lb. for peas and runner beans, and 2d. to 6d. for cabbages.

The deals were done. The crowds grew. "Something had happened."

The DAILY GRAPHIC presents this

Vegetables

THE GREAT EXPERIMENT

factual report of the Croydon Story because it will interest all housewives.

A store had given over 30 yards of arcade space to rebel market gardeners who felt that the middle-men were making fortunes out of vegetables, while the market gardeners themselves received such poor prices for their produce that it was not worth selling.

Tons of good vegetables and fruit, they argued, were rotting, although Britain needed food. Some producers, lacking an adequate return for their work, were ploughing the stuff back into the land.

They decided to deal direct with the public.

Promptly at 9 a.m. seven tons of vegetables (mostly greenstuff) and fruit arrived in two lorries and were put on sale.

Fourteen growers had banded together to follow up the scheme started last week when Mr. James F. Addison, of Springfield-gardens, Kingscote, East Grinstead (Sussex), began selling his produce from a lorry.

In khaki shorts and sports jacket, sunburnt Mr. Addison watched quietly yesterday.

So did Ministry of Food officials.

Earlier they had held conference with the rebels.

It was found that the growers had licences to sell their own produce, and were therefore fully entitled to trade in the arcade.

This settled the big query raised by complaints which had poured into food offices from local greengrocers of "unfair competition."

They sold out

WHEN the rush ended at 1.30 p.m. the growers were happy. They had sold out. They went back to Kingscote with their wallets stuffed with notes and their pockets jingling with silver and copper.

Mr. Addison was happy, too. Said he, to the DAILY GRAPHIC: "I am satisfied by the response from the public—what we want now is the response of the growers. We have here a nucleus out of which anything could grow. Our experience to-day may enable us to formulate a more definite policy. It may take the form of a public trading association or of a limited liability company."

Mr. B. A. Beare, of Worth Hall Farm, East Grinstead, one of the biggest contributors to the scheme, said: "We have wasted a terrific lot already and we decided we would not waste any more. Our main object is to sell our produce at a fair price and profit."

Croydon housewives, too, had the best day's shopping they had had for a long time.

Their spokesman, Mrs. Corlatesque, with a basket laden with penny beetroot and tuppenny cabbage, said, "We have been held to ransom too long."

'It was worth queuing'

MR. L. MUNDAY, of Lebanon-road, Croydon, first in the queue, said: "I've bought one pound of tomatoes at 1s. a pound, four pounds of apples at 3d. a pound, and three pounds of peas at 6d. a pound, and it's wonderful. It was worth starting to queue at 8.45."

Outside, Croydon's street market in Surrey-street was quiet and the few stalls were selling at usual prices. Forty-eight-year-old Tom Dare, of Nursery-road, Thornton Heath, who has worked in the market for 34 years, said: "We are not spivs, and we are not worried. This is the cheapest market in the South of England. They may go on selling direct to the public for a couple of months, and that will be the final result." Tom's 33-year-old brother, Ted, said:

"It's a five-day wonder. When the surplus is over the sale will be over, too."

Tomatoes in Surrey-street were selling at from 1s. 3d. to 1s. 6d. a pound (direct sale price, 1s.) on one stall; peas were 5d. (direct sale price, 6d.); and other market prices were, beans at 8d. a pound (direct sale, 6d.), and cabbages 3d. a pound (direct sale, 2d. to 6d. each).

Surrey-street traders denied that they had cut prices to compete with the direct-sale growers who, they said, had brought more custom to the market.

Two thousand shoppers are again expected to visit the arcade to-day, when 14 tons of vegetables will be on sale. A relay of lorries will carry supplies from the farms to Croydon.

Volunteers, among them two engineers,



No wonder they smile. They're just two of the satisfied shoppers.

a draughtsman and a bricklayer, offered help in selling yesterday:

The strain of the day told on Mr. Jim Addison. He had got home to his converted chicken-run home. A doctor was called to him and ordered him to rest.

Thirty-four-year-old Peter King, ex-Westminster Abbey choirboy, partner of Mr. Addison, said, "We are pleased beyond expression with the result of the scheme. We shall go on, whatever attempts may be made to stop us."

He said that several anonymous attempts had in fact been made, and turned down by Mr. Addison, to buy up their crops.

Croydon greengrocers are contemplating a new approach to the Food Ministry.



Some of the hundreds of shoppers who took advantage of Croydon's grower-direct sale of fruit and vegetables. Most of the sellers were exhausted when selling finished.

Addison
E.S. 435.

18/8/47

Grower to housewife direct

News Chronicle Reporter

A POET-AUTHOR and a score or so market gardeners and their wives will set out before dawn this morning from East Grinstead, Sussex, in three lorries loaded with 12 tons of fruit and vegetables, destination the arcade of a big Croydon store.

They aim to smash the 600 per cent. middlemen profiteers forcing the housewife to pay extortionate prices in green-grocers' shops. Led by Writer Douglas Trim (37), ex-R.A.F., photographer, they represent a newly formed Direct Supply Association, who will sell "dirt cheap" to housewives, eliminating the middleman.

Some prices

The following are among the probable prices: Cucumbers 3d. or less, cabbages 2d., 4d. and 6d. each, runner beans 6d. a lb., beetroots 1d. each, turnips 2d. a lb. and lettuces 3d. to 5d. Marrows weighing 2lb. will be offered at 6d., and tomatoes will be sold below the Ministry of Food controlled price.

The produce will come from 600 acres of Surrey, where the owners have been unable to sell through the normal channels. Mr. John Addison, East Grinstead, a member of the association, said: "I want to see our crops used, even if we only get back what we spent on growing them."

Mr. R. A. Driscoll, chairman and managing director of Kennards, Ltd., the Croydon store, in whose 120-foot-long arcade the stalls will be set up this morning, told me last night: "We are charging no rent and market gardeners can avail themselves of our arcade as long as they find it profitable. It is time both they and the public had a square deal."

A wholesaler says:

In the Vale of Evesham, Lancashire and Sussex, revolt against the wholesalers was also growing yesterday. Market gardeners were selling from stalls at the roadside.

A Spitalfields wholesaler's comment yesterday was: "The attitude of the growers is ridiculous. There is a glut of vegetables and no one wants to buy them."

"I cannot remember when there was so little demand. Wholesalers have to put up prices a bit to earn a few pence."

Ninepence for a lettuce

Franklin An-
gular, app.
Thurston Hill Rd.
Kingscote

Railway
arch

"YOU CAN HAVE OUR MEN" LEAGUE

CLUB TELLS FARMERS

Six years' wait

BILLY SHORHOUSE, making his first appearance at left back for the Wolves tomorrow, has waited six years for his chance. He spent four years with the Wolves as an amateur before becoming a professional two seasons ago.

A well-made player, standing nearly 6ft., he is a similar type to McLean, whom he will partner.

Brice, secured from Luton Town, is at centre half and Smyth, who joined Wolves last month from Irish club, Dundela, is inside partner to Jimmy Mullen on the left wing.

To aid food production and keep his players fit at the same time, a famous League club manager yesterday offered the services of his staff to local farmers.

Billy Walker, Aston Villa and England star and Nottingham Forest chief, tells me that harvesting has been included in the training of his £50,000 side which opens the season against Bury tomorrow.

"The farmer was delighted at the way my boys worked and players themselves preferred it to lapping and road-work, which are usually overdone anyway," he says.

"Now I'm prepared to offer them to any farmer who needs help."

TIN SOLDIERS HELP TEACHING

TWENTY-TWO tin soldiers marched across a blackboard in the dressing-room of a Second Division club last night.

As a well-known player moved the toys, ten tousel-headed small boys watched intently, asked so many questions that the lesson went on an hour longer than it should have done.

Ambitious Coventry City, alive to the need for making their own stars of to-morrow, will hold these lessons for ten newly-signed youngsters three nights a week through the season.

14-YEAR-OLD "FIND"

ONE of our best players, Harry Barratt, has volunteered to help with the coaching," says manager Billy Frith.

"As toy soldiers look more real than the pieces of wood which usually represent teams on blackboards, he bought a set and painted jerseys on them."

One of Frith's "finds" is Reginald Matthews, 14, "the perfect goalkeeper in miniature."

Injured in a schoolboy game, Reginald walked into the City ground one day to ask for treatment.

He talked so brightly about the art of keeping goal that he was later given a trial and signed as an amateur.

STILL WANT WAYMAN

I HEAR Southampton have made another bid for Newcastle United's Charlie Wayman.

Manager Bill Dodgin is delighted with the way his Arsenal purchase George Curtis has settled down at the Dell.

"That lad talks football from morning till night—just the type I like," he says.

"His quick thinking on the field and enthusiasm and ideas off it are a fine example for my younger players."

LIGHT PROGRAMME

FOUR well-known Wolves (the football kind) helped to judge a beauty queen contest in a Wolverhampton factory. They were Billy Wright (new team captain), Tom Galley, Jim Dunn and Jesse Pye.

Leyton Orient crowd will be entertained by a variety show for an hour before the kick-off of the match against Crystal Palace.

And the Bristol South Band will blow their swan-song after fifty-five years at the Bristol City ground. They're to be replaced by recorded music.

JOHN THOMPSON.