

SATURDAY, JULY 3, 1954.

THINGS THAT MATTER

THE market places of Limerick, mouldering away in a state of semi-dilapidation, are a reproach and a challenge to all concerned. Public representatives, from time to time, make passing reference to them, but beyond indulging in generalities they have failed to take progressive measures to prevent a total collapse taking place. Three bodies—the Limerick Corporation, Limerick County Council and the Chamber of Commerce—share, to some extent, responsibility for the administration of the markets. The three, through nominated delegates, function as the Limerick Markets Trustees, but it would seem that they have no statutory powers—that, in fact, the Trustees are more ornamental than useful since they cannot do anything without the authority of the High Court.



OVER half a century ago the market places became a ward of Court because certain annual payments due on foot of loans advanced were not being met. In due time an official receiver was appointed for the express purpose of collecting the tolls and paying off, as far as possible, fixed primary charges. This system is still in operation despite the vicissitudes of time. Indeed, it looks as if it will go on indefinitely because no authority or body seems interested enough to make proposals to end an antediluvian state of things. Obviously, it is the duty of the Corporation to make the first move in this direction.



WE reiterate what we have already said—that the markets are a reproach. Not only are they without primary essentials, such as sanitary arrangements, but lack facilities for the displaying of fowl, eggs, butter and farm produce generally. Worse still, vendors and purchasers, in wet weather, are under the elements and must negotiate their way as best they can over ground that is badly pot-holed, the paving stones that serve as a surface having sunk in their foundations. In no other centre, we venture to say, would such primitive conditions be tolerated. There need be no doubt that if the markets were privately owned the Public Health Acts would be invoked long since in the interest of hygienics.



AT a recent meeting of the Corporation it was stated that steps would have to be taken sooner or later to provide the city with modern market enclosures. What exactly does this mean—is it suggested that the existing marts are to be allowed disintegrate and crumble away? If that be the intention, all that remains to be said is that there is a lack of constructive ability somewhere. We are inclined to think that the statement to which we have referred is not to be taken literally—that it is to be regarded as a piece of evasion. But the question at issue is too big and important to be treated in this haphazard manner, as the future of the markets is a matter of primary importance to a city so closely linked with agriculture.



WHILE the functions of the Trustees are, in existing circumstances, largely nominal, they should be capable of providing a set of proposals that could possibly be the means of preventing the markets from falling into complete ruin. Should they find themselves incapable of making a forward move they should resign so that the Corporation, County Council and Chamber of Commerce would be obliged to accept full responsibility. The problem of the markets must surely be capable of solution, either by direct approach to the High Court or by special legislation.