

grower nearer the metropolitan area, who normally arranges for his own transport and for selling in the market.

The principal factor in the cost of transporting fruit and vegetables is the cost of loading and unloading. As a result, there is relatively little difference in the overall cost of freight even from as far away as Mildura, more than 400 miles from Melbourne. For example, peas carried by bulk transport from Mildura to Melbourne cost about only three shillings more in freight per 50 lb. bag than those transported from within 20 miles of Melbourne. This slight difference in freight is more than offset in most instances by the cheaper cost of production in country areas, and in some instances by the better climatic conditions.

The question then arises, have orchard and vegetable growing areas in the metropolitan area any special advantage? For the more perishable and bulky vegetables, proximity to the market is undoubtedly still an advantage. In addition, many of the metropolitan market gardens have the advantage of access to a continuous supply of water, which enables them to grow three crops a year compared with one in most areas dependent on normal rainfall. However, supply of water may well be a limiting factor in the future as Melbourne's population grows. Unless the market garden areas of Melbourne can be assured of a continuous water supply as the population increases, they will lose one of their chief advantages.

It may therefore be concluded that:

(a) Melbourne is becoming less and less dependent on purely local supplies of fruit and vegetables, as a result of which a wider range is more constantly available.

(b) In general, Melbourne is less dependent on local supplies of fruit than of vegetables. The more perishable fruits such as peaches, seem to have the greatest local advantage. Most other fruits can be better grown elsewhere.

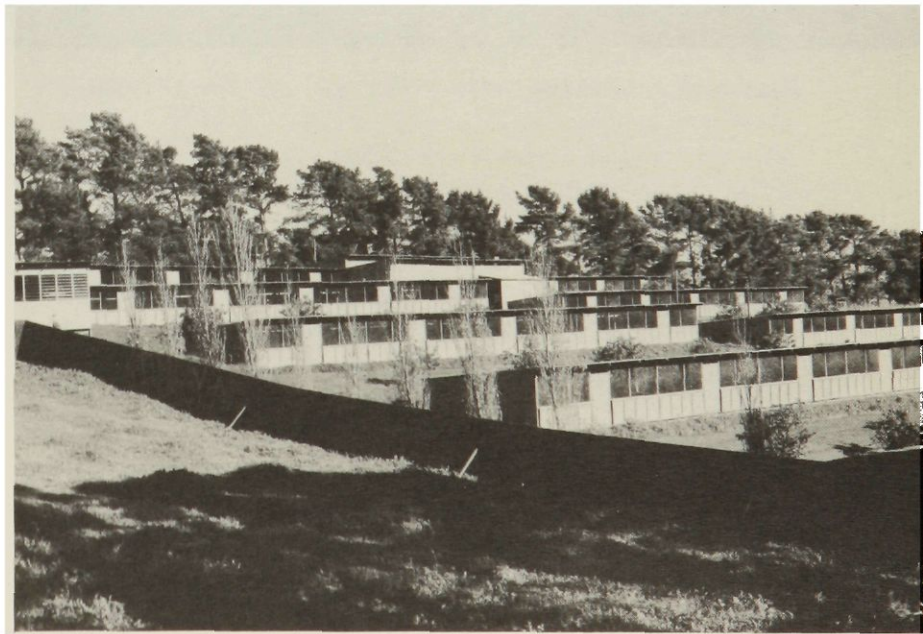
(c) For certain vegetables, such as cabbages, cauliflowers, brussel sprouts and lettuce, the Melbourne area has distinct advantages, but most of these crops are grown near the planning area boundaries and do not conflict with urban development. Most other vegetables can be grown equally well in more distant centres where adequate water is available and the climate is suitable.

(d) Although there does not seem to be any vital reason why either the Doncaster or Moorabbin-Dandenong areas need be retained indefinitely as fruit and vegetable growing districts if the needs of urban development were considered paramount, they would be more intensively used for their present agricultural purposes if the areas were reserved for rural purposes and a true rural value established for the land. Removing the uncertainty of the effect of potential subdivisions on land values would tend to ensure greater stability in the development of the area for rural purposes. However, further growth of large-scale vegetable production in areas such as Kooweerup and Werribee could well reduce the importance of vegetable-growing land in the metropolitan area.

(e) Other agricultural activities and grazing within the planning area are merely the natural use of available rural land and are a relatively small factor in providing for Melbourne's overall food requirements, except that some land is needed as holding paddocks for marketing and killing livestock.



*Orchards near Doncaster*



*A poultry farm to the south-east*





*Flats overlooking the river in an inner suburb*