

# GLASGOW'S SOLUTION OF THE HIGH COST OF LIVING

## Municipal Slaughter Houses and Markets Have Kept the Prices of Meat Within Reasonable Limits---American Meat One-Third Cheaper Than Here.

By the Hon. Frank I. Cohen, Master of Works of Glasgow, Scotland.

**S**INCE my arrival in this great country I have taken a keen interest in the "high cost of living question," which seems to absorb much of the attention of the public, and rightly so, because meat is one of the staple foods of every country. If the New York authorities would emulate Glasgow methods, the citizens of this city would be able to get their meat at reasonable prices. Under existing conditions it is an utter impossibility.

Why do not the authorities of New York make it their duty to establish public meat markets and slaughter houses, so that all butchers may kill their own animals, and sell in the one open market, regulated by the city? The City Council of Glasgow enacted a by-law that no firm of butchers could keep meat in cold storage beyond ten days, no matter how much stock they had on hand, thereby taking out of the hands of all greedy concerns the privilege of withholding meat and the chance of robbing the people, as they seem to be doing in this country at present. This would show the advantage of municipal ownership.

In Glasgow we have what is known as a fair-rent court, which by a special

so numerous that it would require a catalogue to locate them all. In spite of our large population, (we have two millions, just half of New York.) it works admirably and is very much cheaper. If so in Glasgow, why not right here? The price of foreign meat (American) is 33 per cent. cheaper than in New York, partly due, I think, to the competition of the Argentine meat supply, which is a very large percentage of the foreign meat trade in Glasgow. About 85 per cent. of the foreign meat supply arrives as live stock and is slaughtered at a place named Yorkhill, on the Clyde, (two and one-half miles from Glasgow,) thus preventing any contagious disease from entering our city. After the meat is inspected it is sent to the dressed meat section to be sold.

It will be of interest to Americans, and especially to my own countrymen in the United States, to learn the wonderful rapid strides that Glasgow has made in municipal ownership, especially in markets and slaughter houses. In Glasgow we have the best equipped markets in the world.

### How the Markets Started.

I am sure the taxpayers of this city have no knowledge of the origin and reason for inaugurating our markets. When the City Council saw fit to erect a public slaughter house in the City of Glasgow in the year 1744, the fleshers (butchers) of the city used their own



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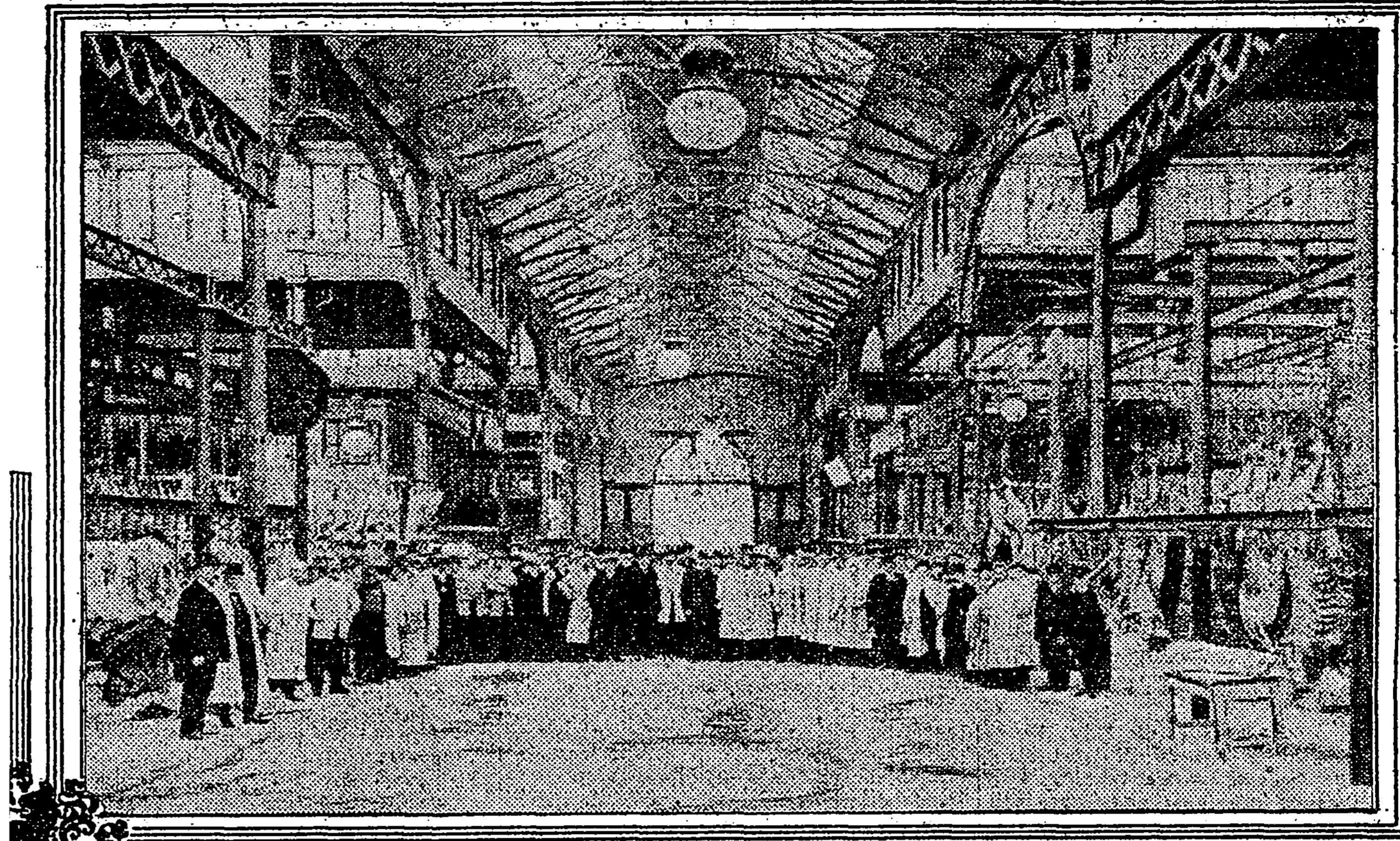
the slaughter house and the old bridge over the Clyde at Stockwell Street, and two years afterward an order was passed for having the market causewayed. It does not seem, however, to have been used for business before the end of 1782.

### Acts of Parliament.

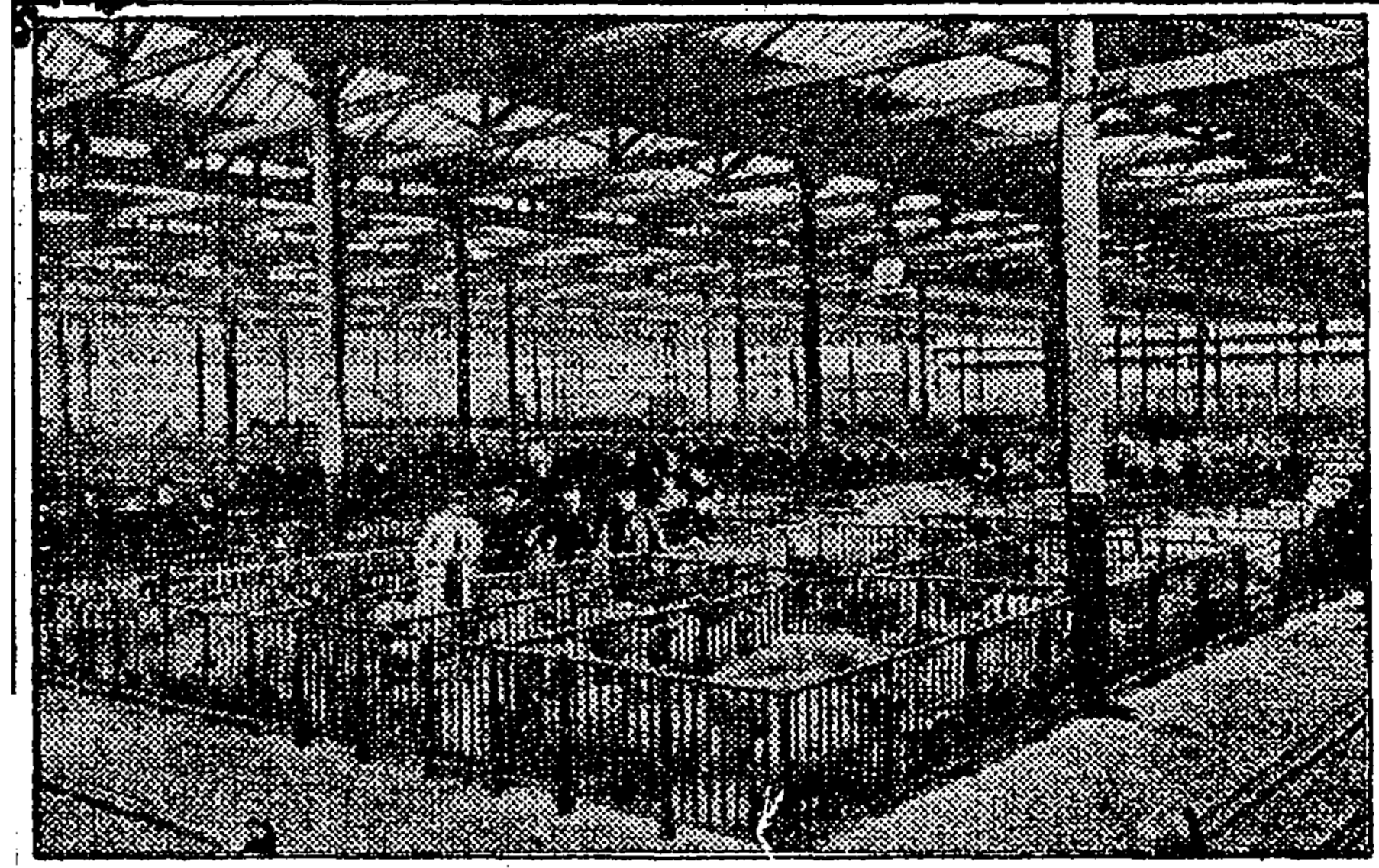
Hitherto the markets and slaughter houses had been regulated by the Magistrates and Council under the usual powers possessed by them under the city charters and at common law, but in an Act of Parliament obtained in 1800 for extending the royalty of the city, regulating the police and other purposes, various statutory provisions relating to markets and slaughter houses were inserted. The act permitted the Magistrates and Council to establish rules and regulations for the management as they might judge fit and expedient.

By an act of Parliament passed on June 20, 1806, the Magistrates and Council were authorized to continue Clyde Street eastward from the south end of Stockwell Street to the Green, thus appropriating part of the site of the existing slaughter houses, to remove these buildings, and to erect new slaughter houses on a piece of ground situated a little to the east of the Merchants' House, between Bridgegate Street and the line of the proposed continuation of Clyde Street. This act, so far as concerned the formation of a new street and the removal of the old and the erection of new slaughter houses, the Town Council proceeded to put into operation in the end of the year 1809, and the works seem to have been completed within about two years thereafter.

In the course of forming the eastern continuation of Clyde Street the live cattle market was removed, and the former practice of selling in the open streets seems to have been reverted to. With the view of putting a stop to the inconvenience thereby caused, the Town Council, in March, 1816, ordered a committee to report on a proper situation for a public market for cattle and sheep. Shortly afterward the proprietors of houses in Clyde Street petitioned the Town Council against the erection of a market there, and the proprietors and occupiers of houses in Stockwell Street complained of the markets for black cattle held in that street. As the



Main Passage of Meat Market.



Interior of the Cattle Market.

result of the inquiries and negotiations following upon the remit of March, 1816, the Magistrates and Council in June, 1817, purchased land from William Lawrie, who was a member of the Council at that time. He had to resign, because no member was allowed to retain his seat and receive money from the City Council while a member. That plan is in operation still. It maintains the integrity and fidelity of our City Council. The amount of the purchase was \$8,264 square yards of ground in Graham Square as a site for the new live cattle market. The price consisted of a ground rent of about \$450 yearly. In the end of the following year the completed market, with house, stable, shed, and other erections, and permission to levy market dues, were let to a trackman from Candlemas, 1819, to Whitsunday, 1821, at the yearly rental of \$4,275.

In 1824 the Town Council purchased additional ground, consisting of a park fronting on Duke Street, for enlargement of the cattle market. The park consisted of three and one-half acres and the price was about \$10,850. Part of this ground was appropriated as a market place for the sale of horses, as sanctioned by an act of Parliament, which act also authorized the exaction of market dues. By another provision in the act the Magistrates and Council were authorized to establish a market for the reception and sale of raw hides in the vicinity of the slaughter houses. By an act passed on June 30, 1845, the rights of the Corporation of Glasgow and of the Incorporation of Butchers in the slaughter houses and in the beef and mutton markets, (situated in King Street and Bell Street respectively) were transferred to the Trustees under the Markets acts. Under the powers conferred by the act of 1845 slaughter houses in Scott Street, Cowcaddens, were also established in 1846. The ground acquired for that purpose extended to 3,412 square yards, part of the Milton estate.

Various other acts were passed by Parliament relating to the subject and in 1866 slaughter houses were established at Victoria Street, off Eglinton Street, on the south side of the city. The ground then acquired as a site consisted of two plots of ground with a cumulo area of 4,865 2-9 square yards; price \$18,735, besides allocated feu duties amounting to about \$390 yearly. An adjoining steading, containing 895 5-9 square yards, was acquired in 1875 at the price of \$17,500 and an allocated yearly feu duty of \$90. Additional borrowing powers were obtained in 1871 and in 1877 the acquisition of additional properties for enlargement of the markets and slaughter houses was authorized and power conferred to close Graham Square as a public street. On the additional

ground acquired under the latter act a dead meat market was erected, and it was opened in September, 1870. Further borrowing powers were procured by the Markets Commissioners in 1884, bringing up the authorized amount to \$230,000.

The areas and valuations of the sites of the markets and slaughter houses between Duke Street and Gallowgate, acquired previous to 1904, stand thus in the Corporation's account:

Area in English Sq. Yds.	Money.	American Money.	
Cattle market, horse bazaar, and inn	42,439	258,000	\$285,000
Meat market	4,248	6,000	30,000
Slaughter house	13,700	19,000	95,000
Total	60,387	\$84,000	\$420,000

Extensive additions to the cattle markets and slaughter houses were sanctioned by the provisional order which was confirmed by Act 4, Edward VII., passed on Aug. 15, 1904. The lands authorized to be acquired were situated within an area bounded by the west side of Hill Street, the south side of Duke Street, the west side of Bellgrove Street, and the north side of Gallowgate, and power was also conferred on the corporation to stop up Moore Street, Graham Square, and the portion of Armour Street between Hill Street and Moore Street.

The property acquired under the act of 1904, including portions of closed streets, covers an area of about 22,298 square yards, and the cost, as appearing in the corporation's accounts, amounts to \$870,070.

Of that property an area of 3,547 square yards has been appropriated for the extension of the meat market at an allocated cost of \$138,490, and 11,402 square yards have been used for extension of the slaughter houses, at an allocated cost of \$133,755. The remainder of the ground, embracing an area of 7,299 square yards, has not yet been utilized for markets or slaughter house purposes, and the buildings thereon are at present let to tenants.

### The New Slaughter Houses.

The requisite properties having been purchased, plans for the extension of the slaughter houses were prepared by A. B. McDonald, City Engineer. These were submitted to a committee of the corporation and representatives of the Glasgow United Fleshers Society. Before deciding upon the plans, it was considered desirable that a joint deputation of the corporation and the society should visit and inspect markets and slaughter houses on the Continent and in London. The report by this joint deputation was submitted to the Markets Committee on Feb. 15, 1900, and shortly afterward the plans were finally adjusted and the works proceeded with.

As completed the new buildings are thus described by the City Engineer:

The buildings occupy almost the whole area between Duke Street, Hill Street, Gallowgate, and the cattle market, and have been erected on the most modern principles of arrangement and equipment.

The walls facing the streets are built of stone outside and of enameled brick inside. The inside walls of the main passages are of terra-cotta brick; the division and screen walls of the killing rooms are of reinforced concrete, four inches thick, by which form of construction a considerable saving of space is obtained, when the area is limited, as in this case. All the walls are built with cement mortar. The walls of the main passages are carried up six feet higher, with opening side lights for ventilation.

The fencing of the cattle, sheep, and pig pens is built of steel, with cast-iron posts. The gates of the sheep pens are double-acting and locking.

The feeding troughs are of enameled iron, set on steel supports.

The cattle when tied up are divided off by steel posts so that the animals can not overlap one another.

The floors of all the pens and killing rooms are of red freestone, and the passages of limber asphalt.

The piggery—built fourteen years ago—has been rearranged; the divide

of the hangers in the cooling space having been altered from 6 feet 7 inches to 8 feet, and all the intermediate columns taken away. The stoking pens are made to suit the new arrangement—the pigs of ordinary size, instead of being killed on the floor, is hoisted by a small motor lift and killed while hanging. Thereafter the carcass slides on a tube rail and down a spiral dropping without splash into a scalding tub. The large pigs are still killed on the floor. In a central position, and quite separate, is a large gymnasium where it is intended, over and above the usual exercises, to instruct and train young butchers to a certain degree of proficiency before they will be allowed to slaughter animals.

Adjoining the gymnasium is a bothy, or kitchen, with appliances for cooking. There are also five spray baths in this block fitted up in the most modern system; the division floor and walls being constructed of impervious terrazzo slabs, fixed to cast-iron standards, wood being used only in the doors.

Ample lavatory accommodation is provided throughout the buildings.

The tripery has been remodelled, and the lighting improved by extra glass in the roof. Fireclay enameled tubs have been fitted in for steeping tripe after it has been cleaned. About 140,000 sheep tripe and 35,000 bullock tripe pass through this department in a year.

Chilling accommodation on the ammonia compression system is provided in the slaughter house for 180 carcasses.

An extensive system of overhead runways, known as twin-bar type, is being erected throughout the buildings. It will connect up all the different sections. Owing to the natural fall of the ground, the running will be very easy, and much handling of carcasses going to the meat market will be saved. The return of the trolleys will be almost automatic. These, when empty, will be run to the lower end of the meat market and will there be hoisted by a small motor lift to the higher level, running back by a gradual fall in the runway to the different sections of the slaughter house. The lifting tackle will be electric, one motor working two lifts in each killing room.

The entire buildings will be lit by electricity.

Storage accommodation when completed will be: Cattle, 745; sheep, 4,000 and pigs, 1,100.

The number of animals slaughtered in 1910 was 310,699, made up as follows:

Cows, bullocks, and calves..... 61,133  
Lamb, sheep, and goats..... 210,300  
Pigs..... 39,266

An ambulance room has been provided for first aid, having the most modern fittings and equipment.

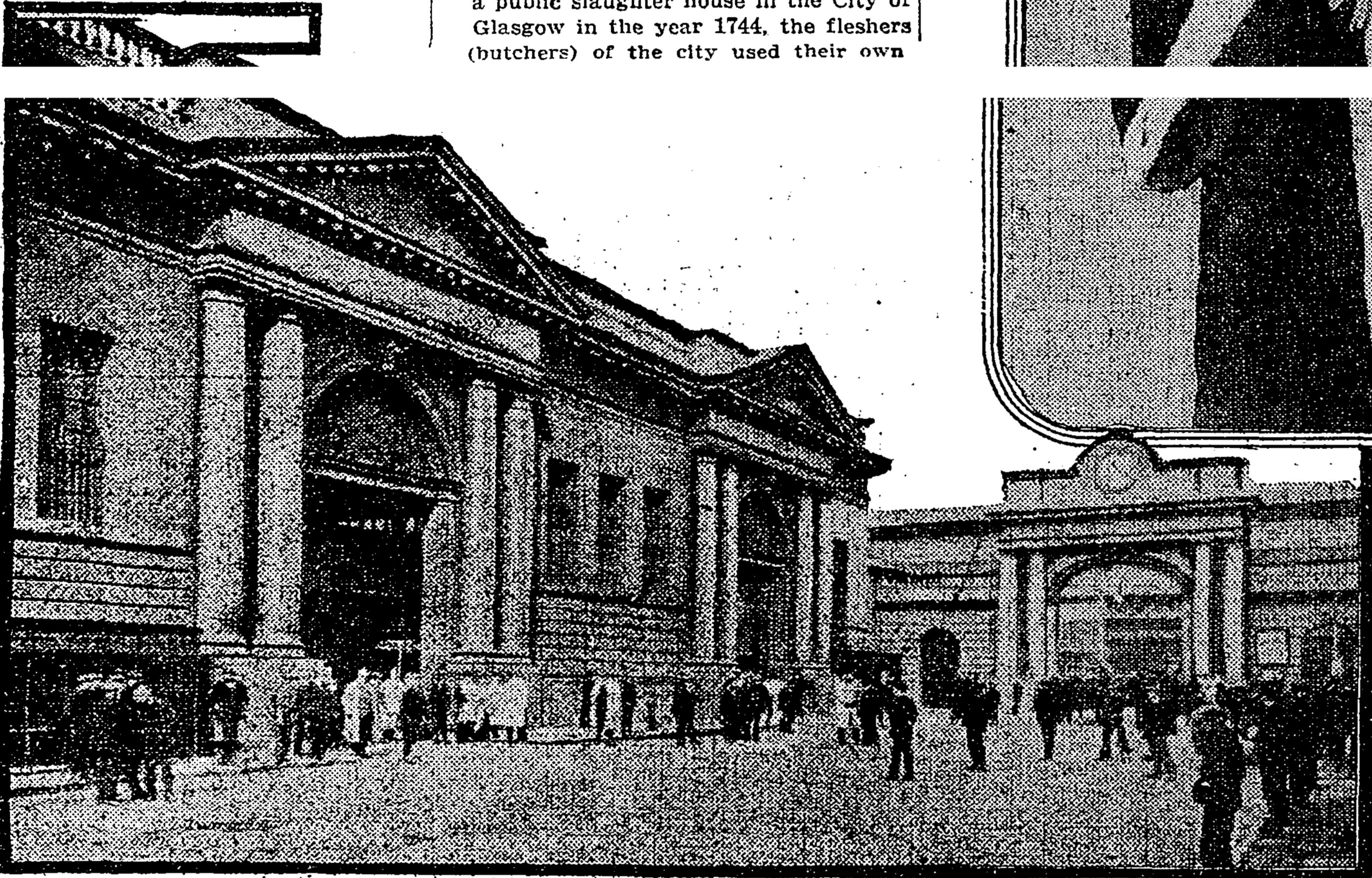
Ample accommodation is provided for the Veterinary Inspector, who will have a large laboratory, private room, inspectors' rooms, a public office, and lavatory with spray bath, four with accommodation for sixty-four carcasses; also ample provision for condemned carcasses, &c. He will be able to remove a carcass on the runway from any part of the slaughter house.

A difficult subject in all slaughter houses is the cleansing arrangement. This has been faced here on quite a large scale. A subway having been built under the main passages and under the killing rooms, with a receptacle under each room large enough to contain a cartload of manure. A sluice with a chute projects into the subway, so that when the sluice is opened the contents drop direct into the carts, which have access by a separate gateway adjoining the entrance. The walls of this subway are of brick, faced with Portland cement, and the ceilings are of reinforced concrete.

The cost of the buildings when the alterations and fittings are completed will be about £126,000. This does not include the cost of the ground.

I would like to say in conclusion that my experience of fourteen years in a strenuous public life, as a member of our City Council and Master of Works of the City, has given me the opportunity to assert that we are not slaves of private corporations. The humblest citizen has a pride of ownership in the markets and there is one paramount consideration of public ownership, the profits return to the people to be used as they see fit. In New York City, judging from what I have seen, the profits go to private interests. I am not altogether entirely in sympathy with municipalizing everything, but when private enterprise does not do things in an equitable way, then it is the duty of the City Council or local authorities to step in and take over or to start such concerns as will give the greatest good for the greatest number.

I am sure that in this country, as in my own, the honest working man does not look for charity or help from any large-hearted philanthropist. What he really wants is legitimate facilities for getting his foodstuffs at a reasonable price. None of the municipal undertakings in Glasgow is regarded as a charity. The people themselves own them and regard them as their personal property. Let the market and slaughter houses be run and owned by your local authorities, and wait for the excellent results that will accrue.



Entrances to Meat and Cattle Market, Glasgow.

act of Parliament arbitrates all the rentals that are proved to be exorbitant. Prior to the establishment of this court the landlords used to raise the rents, much as they do in New York, with the result, as most people know, that the rent of the stores has to be paid by the customers. This action of the Council has kept the high cost of living down in Glasgow.

The meat purveyors in Glasgow formed a trust, in 1900 to fight the Wholesale Co-operative Society, which was owned, by more than half a million of the inhabitants, mostly of the working class. The manner of operation of the trust was to raise the price of meat by selling only to those favorable to the trust. Secondly, they refused to sell meat to the Co-operative Wholesale Society. The authorities of Glasgow were greatly assisted in solving the meat problem by the Co-operative Society.

It might be well to tell what the co-operative movement really is. About thirty-five years ago the Scottish people began to realize that they could purchase collectively better than they had been doing, and, once started on the road of collective success, they inaugurated branch stores in all districts where they could get fifty members who paid the small sum of 1 shilling and 6 pence, (36 cents), 12 of which went for a book of rules, and 24 cents, as their first installment of 25, (25¢), which is the share of the capital stock required of each member. The balance of the share was paid by profits. The profits were credited to them as dividends until their share of £5 (\$25) was paid up. Afterward the dividends were paid in cash. Many of the members depend on such dividends to pay their rent.

A meat war started at once, until the City Council adopted a resolution that if the members of the trust did not supply meat at ordinary market rates to those desiring to purchase and to the Wholesale Co-operative Society, they could no longer retain their stalls and booths in the city market. The keen competition thus created by the rival concerns has reduced the price of meat to a minimum. The Wholesale Co-operative Society, being owned and kept by the working people to supply themselves with meat at cost, has given to Glasgow the best and cheapest meat in any part of the world.

At our municipal cattle market you can buy a single head of cattle, have it killed and dressed. You have the privilege of removing the same after inspection, if so desired, or have some hung up for sale in one of the sections reserved for that purpose. This prevents the creation of any trust in the home supply of meat. The City of Glasgow has only two commodious premises for animal food inspection. One for foreign and the other for domestic. In New York your places are

premises for killing animals. In September, 1866, at a time when the population of the city was about 35,000, the Town Council took into consideration that it had hitherto been the custom for the fleshers to slay animals on both sides of the street in Trongate, (like Broadway, a business centre) which, to use the words of the Council minute, "is verily loathsome to the beholders, and also raises an filthy and noysome stink and flew to all manner of persons that passeth that way, and is most unseemly to be seen"; and it is added that such a practice did not prevail in any other "well governed city" within the kingdom. (I hope my readers will comprehend and appreciate the Old Scotch.)

As a remedy for these unsatisfactory conditions the Town Council ordained that in future no fletcher should kill cattle, sheep, or lambs in view of the passersby, but that each should provide houses in back premises for these purposes, "as is done in Edinburgh and other well governed cities."

At the time when Trongate was used by the fleshers the flesh market was situated on the north side of that street, on ground through which Candleriggs Street (Main Street) was subsequently formed. The market was erected in 1643 on a site which had been acquired by the town in 1637. That flesh market, with subsequent extensions, was retained for more than a hundred years, but was eventually superseded by new markets erected in King Street. The Trongate building is described by John Ray, an English traveler, who visited Glasgow in 1662, as "a very neat square flesh market, scarce such an one to be seen in England or Scotland."

Following their order of 1666, the Town Council in 1689 allowed the fleshers to have such space at the back of the flesh market as they might find convenient "for killing of their flesh"; and in the following year there is a reference to the fleshers building booths there. In addition to the Trongate market, used by the town's fleshers, the landward fleshers had a mutton market on the north side of Bell Street. The fleshers there were apparently not observing the new rules, and in 1669 the Town Council ordered them to desist from killing animals on the street.

The establishment of a public slaughter house was proposed in 1734. As a result of negotiations, a plan for a slaughter house was adopted in June of that year. Part of Skinner's Green was selected for a site, and an agreement was made with tradesmen for its erection. By September the building was finished, and instructions were given for the construction of inclosures "for keeping the live cattell taken there to be slaughtered."

The Magistrates and Council thereupon ordained the whole fleshers to remove from their slaughter houses within the city to the new premises, for the