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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
BUREAU OF THE CENSUS  
SAM. L. ROGERS, DIRECTOR

STUDY OF CARTAGE COSTS  
IN THE  
CITY OF WASHINGTON

▽  
PREPARED BY  
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## INTRODUCTION.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE,  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY,  
*Washington, April 25, 1917.*

The study which follows should not be understood as a final and accurate census, but rather should be taken as a preliminary inquiry into a subject of large and general importance, affecting every man and woman in the United States. I have felt increasingly for some years past that in giving so large an amount of attention to the matter of freight rates we were dealing with the obvious and too much neglecting the important. This does not mean, of course, that the matter of freight rates is even relatively unimportant. Far from it; but it does mean that the factors in the cost of distribution which we may group into the word "cartage" are more costly and more important than railway freight rates, and that this subject has almost been ignored in our public thought. Stabs have been made at it here and there, often as incidents in other movements, with consequent reaction upon cartage costs. Such is the case with the good-roads movement, with the coming of the automobile truck, and other things which will occur to any thoughtful man. Yet no one seems to have grasped the tremendous item of cartage cost as a whole, to have estimated it at its true importance, or to have attempted so much as to study it thoroughly on a large scale to find how serious a problem it is. It is one of our largest wastes, but seems to go almost unheeded by students of public matters.

The study will show that in the city of Washington cartage is a good deal larger item of cost than freight rates. This is true, although, as the statement says, no attempt has been made therein to include the cartage costs incident to the delivery of food supplies and other commodities brought into the local market by the farmer and truckman from the surrounding country, nor indeed does the statement cover any form of cartage from the country into the city, and vice versa. It should be remembered also that the city of Washington is not an industrial town, and therefore the element of cartage involved in factory operations is almost wholly absent. There are few if any large mercantile warehouses, and the cartage cost involved in their operation is also lacking. Neither does the study include the cartage costs of general storage warehouses or household moving.

The estimates made are conservative, and it is more than probable that if the census were intensively conducted into all the phases of cartage activity in Washington the figures would be increased. The study is submitted in the thought that it may arouse questioning and may lead to action which will in time definitely determine what the size and nature of the problem presented by cartage costs is and show how best to deal with it.

WILLIAM C. REDFIELD,  
*Secretary of Commerce.*